

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Tuesday, June 17, 1975

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. SPEAKER: We have as guests in the Speaker's gallery and the public gallery, members of a notable international group, the Moral Re-Armament movement. They are from India, Great Britain including Northern Ireland, Australia, South Africa, Kenya, The Netherlands, the West Indies, three states of the United States, three provinces of Canada including Alberta, together with His Excellency, Tianethone Chantharasey, the former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Laos.

I would ask our visitors to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to the members of the House, 25 young Albertans accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Keast, and Mrs. Keast and the bus driver, John Laur. They have come from the Grand Trunk High School at Evansburg. We are to meet with the Solicitor General right after question period. I understand Mr. Keast and our Solicitor General are old-time friends.

They are seated in the members gallery. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the House.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our friend from Vegreville, who is attending a Commonwealth parliamentary conference in Quebec, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly, 35 Grade 10 students from Holden, along with their teacher, Mr. Shykora. They are in the members gallery, and I would ask them to rise at this particular time.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure this afternoon of introducing to you, and to the other members of this Assembly, some 40 very active Grade 9 students from the Boyle school in the Village of Boyle in the Athabasca constituency. This afternoon they have with them their teacher, Mr. Peter Avasthi; one of the parents, Mrs. Badry; and the bus driver, Mr. Alec Harmata. They are in the public gallery. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a delegation of the joint planning committee of the Pass Medical Centre in my constituency who will be meeting this afternoon with the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care and the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works. They are, Mr. Mel Cornett, chairman of the hospital board, and members of the joint planning committee: Mr. Bob Elliott, Mr. Alex Wells, Mr. Doug Walls, Mr. Ernie Luini, and Dr. John Irwin. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would like to ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the answer to Motion for a Return 126, which is contained in the two cartons; and Motion for a Return 139, as ordered by the House.

I may need more than one page, Mr. Speaker.

MISS HUNLEY: I just emptied my purse.
[laughter]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Environment -- Oil Spills

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Environment and ask if he's now in a position to indicate to the House the extent of the environmental damage caused by the break in the pipeline in the Swan Hills area?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't have anything further to report since the last time I reported to the House. The damage was minimal. The clean-up was satisfactory. We expect to get a full and complete report, including the details of the repair to the pipeline break, within a few days. At that time I'll be glad to report.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is he in a position to indicate to the House what steps the Department of Environment and the Energy Resources Conservation Board will be taking for the development of a master disaster plan for each of the major pipelines in the province?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding a fairly effective plan is in effect. As the hon. leader is aware, the primary responsibility lies with personnel of the ERCB, and they usually call in people from the Department of Environment. The portable equipment known as OSCAR seems to respond adequately. Of course the safety equipment with the warning devices, which is attached to most pipelines, is fairly effective.

As far as any breaks or spills, of course, department personnel report to me as soon as we hear of these. I'm surprised at the number of small ones that are cleaned up very effectively every week. The recovery system works so well the general public doesn't even hear about them.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. Is he in a position to indicate to the House the revised spill contingency plans which operators of the major pipelines must now file with either the Energy Resources Conservation Board or the Department of Environment? The question revolves around what steps the Department of Environment or the Energy Resources Conservation Board plans to take if, in fact, these updated plans don't meet the specifications of either the agency or the department.

MR. SPEAKER: The latter part of the hon. leader's question is certainly hypothetical, but the former part is in order.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, not too long ago a roles document was issued which outlined in some detail the responsible and common roles of the ERCB and the Department of Environment. That has been distributed to all the companies as an information bulletin. As I say, the revised system, according to that roles document, seems to be working very well, from the experience I've had with it to date.

AOC Loan -- Drilling Rigs

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Business Development and Tourism regarding the Kenting venture with the Alberta Opportunity Company. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the House how long the rigs must stay in Canada?

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I thought I indicated that in a response to an earlier question. The number of years for the payout of the loan is eight. That is the length of time the rigs in question are to remain in Canada.

MR. CLARK: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly where that condition is set out? Is it set out in a letter to the company?

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's set out in the agreement between Kenting and the Alberta Opportunity Company to proceed with the loan.

MR. CLARK: Supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to indicate whether he would be prepared to table that agreement in the Assembly?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to check to see whether that's possible.

Hospitals Labor Dispute

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Hospitals. Would he advise the House if any progress has been made in the walkout at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary as well as the University Hospital in Edmonton?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, the latest information I have, which was close to noon this morning, was that the workers at the Foothills Hospital and the University Hospital were returning to work.

Land Development -- Red Deer

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works and ask whether the government or his department has received any reports about excessive land speculation in and around the City of Red Deer in contemplation of projected petrochemical development?

MR. YURKO: Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, but I'd be happy to check into the situation to see if we have received any.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Have there been any discussions with officials of the City of Red Deer concerning projected housing requirements as a consequence of petrochemical development?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, during the last two months I have met with most mayors of the larger urban centres in the province. I certainly met with the mayor of Red Deer and some of his aldermen, and had in-depth discussions about the housing problems in Red Deer and what might develop if, in fact, additional industry is located in the Red Deer area.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has the government developed any special programs to provide funds to projected growth areas to deal with land assembly?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, land assembly is an integral part of the Alberta Housing Corporation's functions. There is \$4 million budgeted for land assembly this year at the request of the municipalities. The Alberta Housing Corporation has now funded land assembly for many centres throughout the province, including some which are growth areas.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is any of the projected land assembly budget designated for the Red Deer area?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, on the basis of the advice given to me by the mayor and some of his aldermen, the City of Red Deer happens to be in a rather unique situation in terms of having purchased land for housing developments on its own. It does, in fact, have an excellent program in this regard as to both land banking and servicing.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question to the hon. minister. Where do things presently stand in terms . . .

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

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, could the hon. minister advise the Assembly where the possible or projected speculators' tax now stands in terms of the government's review?

MR. YURKO: I wasn't aware that the government had a speculators' tax under consideration. I recognize the Premier indicated in the news release on housing during the course of the election that that matter would be under review. That matter of land speculation is, in fact, under review, but no definitive ideas or directions have been formulated as yet.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could add to my colleague's answer by telling the hon. member we have been monitoring the effectiveness of the Ontario legislation in this area. But it is much too early to give any indication of what the results of that review will be.

Optometrist Fee Negotiations

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. In light of the present stalemate in negotiations between the Optometric Association and the negotiating team from the minister's department, can the minister advise if some principle is involved or if some policy decision is required to bring the two parties back together?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, the negotiating committee has met with the Optometric Association on numerous occasions. Part of our concern is that there is quite a disparity among payments made in the western provinces. For example, Manitoba pays \$9; Saskatchewan, \$12; Alberta, \$18; and B.C., \$10. In view of the fact we are already paying considerably higher, we felt it was well to take a good look at what increase was justified. The matter hangs there at the present time. I have the matter under consideration and am hopeful of being able to make a firm decision one way or the other within the next few days.

Tourist Promotion Grants

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. I've received a letter from the manager of the Alberta Tourist Council's Zone 4, in which he suggests there has been a blanket stop order on all grants to organizations throughout the province.

Would the minister care to comment whether it is true there has been a stop order issued on grants to tourist councils?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, relative to the tourist associations, that would have to be referred to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could report on that question. The situation is this. We were interrupted in our procedures for the development of orders in council and their passage by a delightful occurrence, which happened to be an election. That delayed our procedures somewhat. The order in council has now been drafted and our new act has been through second reading. Once it proceeds through committee stage and is passed, the regulations governing grants also become law. The grants will then proceed. There has been no real delay, any more than the delay legislation usually brings.

MR. COOKSON: Perhaps I could ask a further supplementary of the minister. Mr. Speaker, are the grants on a per capita basis within that particular area? If so, is the plan to increase the amount of grant per capita?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, the grants are not made on the basis of a per capita arrangement. They are made in this way: we have an organization of private sector individuals called the Travel Industry Association of Alberta and 14 zones throughout the province which represent those tourist-destination areas which we have sort of allocated. The tourist zones make proposals to the Travel Industry Association of Alberta for grants of money which are normally matched by the tourist zone people. The grants are made on the basis of the excellence of the tourist promotional proposal and have little bearing on the number of people that zone represents.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The minister indicated the reasons for the grants being held back. Would the minister indicate whether the grants to the tourist zones in the past were approved under legislation with no regulations approved by Executive Council?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, each grant given in the past by Travel Alberta has proceeded through legislative council and was approved by the Executive Council of the province. None has gone forward without that approval.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Why does the government feel it can't use that same approach this year, if it's as legal as the minister points out it was in the past?

MR. DOWLING: Well, we feel some improvements are required in the grant system. It does take time to develop that approval, and we're in that process now. It will proceed by the normal route. I suspect that by mid-July our regulations, and so on, governing the department will be in place. At that time, I suspect the order in council will be expedited. We have been in touch with a number of zones and will be in touch with all of them by letter this week to indicate the procedures that must be followed before the grants of money are made available. We have suggested to each zone organization that they go to the bank for interim financing.

Land Development -- Red Deer (continued)

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, to supplement my answer to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview in regard to land banking in Red Deer, the Alberta Housing Corporation did, in fact, buy 495 acres in 1973 in Red Deer as part of its land banking program.

Optometry School

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. My information is that two or three years ago a committee was assembled to investigate the need for a school of optometry in western Canada, particularly Alberta. I wonder if you could give me a progress report on that committee?

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I am fairly jealous of the other half of my portfolio, that of manpower.

However, in answer to the hon. member's question, which might be better addressed on the Order Paper, I should like to give this brief information to the House through you, sir. A committee of optometrists recommended to the previous Minister of Advanced Education, and before that likely the Minister of Education, and now Advanced Education and Manpower, that a school of optometry be put together in Alberta or somewhere in western Canada. This is being examined by myself and the four ministers of advanced education in western Canada.

Tar Sands Environmental Research

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Environment. Will the recently announced federal-provincial oil sands environmental research program be conducted through the Alberta Environment Conservation Authority?

MR. RUSSELL: No, it won't, Mr. Speaker. It's a joint program of the two departments of environment, federal and Alberta.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Will the directors of this program be in contact with the similar environment program conducted by the Syncrude consortium, in order to prevent overlapping of the studies?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that goes without saying. An industry group of 25 to 30 companies is involved in this, as well as the 8 major group classifications under the 2 joint government studies that will go on for about 10 years.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the results of this study be made public? If so, will regular reports be issued?

MR. RUSSELL: Inasmuch as this is the first year of the operation, Mr. Speaker, I'm only hazarding a guess. At this point, I see no reason the information shouldn't be made available. It deals with more or less the natural environment up there. The studies will be of a research type. I think that information would be useful to the public.

Schools -- English Instruction

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Education. It arises out of the comments by the minister to the educational communications conference in Calgary. The remarks attributed to the minister are that Alberta students are wasting one or two years just grappling with the English language.

On what studies by the department or the university did the minister base that comment?

MR. KOZIAR: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased the hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked that question. It's an interesting subject, one that has been touched on by many people in the past. I believe it was George Bernard Shaw who suggested that the proper pronunciation of the word 'ghoti' would be "fish" -- the 'gh' being 'f' as in "enough", the 'o' being the 'i' sound as in "women", and the 'ti' being the 'sh' sound as in "nation".

You can imagine the consternation of children when, having spoken the English language and having learned it well in their first few years of life, they come to transpose that language into written form and find that the sound 'f' for example can be reproduced by the 'gh' sound, the 'ff' sound, the 'lf' letters, and so on. We can carry on that particular discussion in many areas.

MR. CLARK: Carry on, carry on.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, the suggestion was made at that particular conference because of the fact we are dealing more and more with technology as an aid to our educational systems and to communications. We are looking at computer-assisted instruction, audio-visual methods, and many new methods of instructing and communicating. We now use copying systems, Mr. Speaker, where if we take a page and lay it on the Xerox machine, what we laid down is reproduced. When we take a picture of a person, say of myself, the reproduction of that picture is not a Picasso-like image with my nose on one side of the face and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. minister would agree that the benefit of his remarks should not be limited to the Assembly.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question. Is the minister aware of a language called Newspeak which George Orwell used in his book, 1984?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition is clearly encouraging the minister to . . . Perhaps the hon. leader might also not confine the benefit of the question to the Assembly.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. When did the Department of Education make the decision to move in the direction of changing the alphabet rather than strengthening the curriculum?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the suggestion was food for thought for the people involved in communications and technology.

One of the things which would be of interest to the hon. Leader of the Opposition is that the metric system was first developed 200 years ago, and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps a thing of such historic moment might be dealt with in . . .
[laughter]

The hon. Member for Clover Bar followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know if the minister or the department is considering using phonetic language.

MR. KOZIAK: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's important to realize that we have the entire generation . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister is not obliged to answer the question, but perhaps the answer should bear some relation to the question.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the department considering using phonetics, going to the phonetic language?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, although I enjoy this very much, I want to explain to the hon. member the difficulties involved. The entire English reading population has been schooled . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Perhaps we might deal with this topic on another occasion.

AADAC Research

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the hon. minister responsible for health and social services. In light of the fact that alcohol consumption in the province is increasing, I'd like to know if the minister can indicate the rationale behind the disbanding of the alcohol research department of AADAC.

MISS HUNLEY: I believe, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is a little confused about what was dissolved. According to my information, the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, as an economy measure, decided that rather than having in-house evaluators, they would have their various programs done by outside evaluators if and when required. This decision was reached last week. Their intention is not to reduce programming, which they feel is the essential part of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. I agree with that concept of their responsibility.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for clarification. Did the hon. minister say there will be something to replace the research and evaluation section of AADAC?

MISS HUNLEY: As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, from the commission, they feel that rather than have in-house evaluators they will be able to acquire the evaluation on a contract basis, which would be an economy they felt was necessary.

DR. BUCK: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the hon. minister indicate if the five people who will be losing their jobs will be placed elsewhere in the department?

MISS HUNLEY: As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, some of those who were working in that particular section will be moved to other positions within the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. The others were on a contract basis, and their contracts will be terminated.

DR. BUCK: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, on this matter. Can the hon. minister indicate why the director of Henwood Rehabilitation Centre was let go?

MISS HUNLEY: No, Mr. Speaker. I believe in letting management manage. The Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, I believe, are managers. If they feel something is in the best interests of operating an effective program, I expect them to take those responsibilities seriously and do what is necessary.

Labor Legislation -- Maternity Leave

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Labour. It is a question I put to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health during her estimates, but she referred it to you.

What is the government proposing to do with respect to maternity leave legislation? Are there any plans to introduce such legislation by the government?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, before any such legislation could be placed in the category that the government is proposing to introduce it, it would have to be carefully studied by caucus. I can assure the hon. member that I've had quite a lot of advice in the area. A number of representations have been made in regard to the appropriateness of that type of legislation. Comparisons have been drawn to my attention in respect to other jurisdictions, which I certainly find relevant and of interest.

However, the matter is still under consideration at a departmental level, and the caucus has not yet been asked to consider it. All I can say is that I'm very interested in it, and it's under advisement.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is he able to give the Assembly any indication as to the timetable of this interest?

MR. CRAWFORD: Interest timetables are something we might be more familiar with in some other fields, Mr. Speaker. I know there are critical periods of time involved in the whole issue. That point won't have gone over the hon. member's head at all.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is, no.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Does the government support the concept that working women's seniority should be guaranteed through maternity leave legislation?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, that's a question of what the whole content of legislation, if it is introduced, should include. I would have to say I haven't yet formed my own views fully on that particular point. I am looking forward to meeting at least one delegation which wants to elaborate on a brief already provided on this issue.

Communications -- Northern Alberta

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier. At what stage of development is the government's policy with regard to communications, especially television, for northern communities?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe we could usefully report anything to the House on that matter at the moment. There have been ongoing discussions by a number of departments looking at the matter, but I think I'd prefer to take notice of it. If there's something I can usefully report to the hon. leader in the House, I'll do so.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question. Have discussions been held between ministers of the Government of Alberta and CTV, also the Canadian Radio-Television Commission?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, they may have. I'll have to check into it and advise the House.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. While the Premier is checking into it, would he also check to see if there have been discussions between members of the cabinet and CFRN TV in Edmonton with regard to a commitment made during the election campaign with Slave Lake?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to do that.

Mobile Home Sites

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question about mobile home site costs and rentals. I'm not sure which minister it should go to. I'll direct it to the Minister of Housing and Public Works, but it might perhaps go to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Is the government monitoring rental rates charged by mobile home site owners in the Province of Alberta?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, yes, to some degree when complaints are received.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, has the government received any complaints from the City of Calgary concerning substantial increases in monthly rents charged by site owners for mobile home dwellers?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I am receiving letters constantly in regard to rental increases, and I have received some letters from residents of a mobile home park. I have taken the opportunity to write to the company and request some information in regard to their rental increases and the possibility of indicating to me why some of these rental increases, as high as they were, are in fact necessary.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. What steps is the Department of Housing taking to make new mobile home sites available throughout the province, especially in areas where there appear to be substantial increases in the monthly rents?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, the mobile home area of providing houses is a program administered by the Alberta Housing Corporation. This program, like so many, is at the mercy of the approval process we have in Alberta today.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. Does "the mercy of the approval process" mean the program is in fact operating, or is it still waiting for some mercy?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, mobile home parks have to go through the normal process of local authority approval as well as provincial planning authority approval. Some of these approvals do, in fact, take a considerable length of time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. Is funding available through Alberta Housing Corporation for mobile home sites? If so, is that funding contingent upon a moderate or controlled rate of rental, similar to the low dividend housing the federal government had in effect some time ago?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I think a question of that magnitude might better be explored during the course of the estimates of the Department of Housing and Public Works.

Defensive Driving Courses

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Transportation in regard to defensive driving courses offered in our high schools as well as by the AMA and other organizations. Are any statistics kept whether the accident rates are actually lower for people who have had an opportunity to have these courses?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, that's one of the areas in any safety evaluation that would have to be done; to see whether, in fact, the defensive driving courses, the driver education programs, we have in the province are really doing the job we hoped they would. That certainly will be looked at in the survey we're contemplating.

Oil and Gas Pricing

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. Could he report any further progress with regard to possible face-to-face or telephone negotiations with the Prime Minister with regard to oil pricing?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, no. I have nothing further I could usefully report to the House at this time.

Oil Industry

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Business Development and Tourism and ask if his department has engaged a consulting firm in Calgary to assess the situation that small Alberta and Canadian oil companies find themselves in at this time.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, some time ago we did have some communication with members of that part of the business community who indicated they were, in fact, having some problems. We assessed the situation on our own and from that point proceeded with a study by Foster Economic Consultants, which is now under way.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. Would the minister be in a position to tell me why the minister from Calgary didn't know about the study?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

Kingman School

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could take this opportunity to answer a question posed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar some time ago, with respect to the Kingman School. Subsequent to the posing of the question, I received a written report from the County of Camrose seeking approval for the closing of two schools, the Ferintosh and the Armena schools. No reference was made to the school at Kingman. Subsequent to the receipt of the letter, I took the opportunity of checking this out further and was informed that it was not the intention of the county to close the school at Kingman.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

171. Mr. Notley asked the government the following question:
What was the total cost to the Government of Alberta of each of the following consultants' reports:
- (a) The Loram International Ltd. report and executive summary of February 4, 1975, regarding the construction costs of Syncrude's Mildred Lake project and utility plant.
 - (b) The Price, Waterhouse & Co. report of February 1, 1975, entitled Accounting and Audit Review of Syncrude Canada Ltd.
 - (c) The Hu Harries & Associates Ltd. report of January, 1975, entitled Syncrude Impact Study.
 - (d) The Foster Research Limited report of January, 1975, entitled Economic Evaluation of Syncrude Project.

MR. LEITCH: We accept the question.

172. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:
1. How many abortions did medicare pay for in 1974?
 2. What was the total amount of money paid by medicare for abortions in 1974?
 3. How many of the women aborted were:
 - (a) under 16 years of age,
 - (b) over 16 and under 18,
 - (c) over 18 and under 25,
 - (d) over 25 years and under 35,
 - (e) over 35 years of age?

MR. MINIELY: I'd like that question called for a day or two if I could.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree that Question 172 may go over to Thursday's Order Paper?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

175. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:

1. How many films have been approved by the Censor Board during the months of January, February, and March, 1975, in each of the following categories:
 - (a) family,
 - (b) adult,
 - (c) adult not suitable for children,
 - (d) restricted adult?
2. How many films in each category were rejected during the same period?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I accept the question.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

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

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

1. The number of insurance companies which sold automobile insurance in Alberta as of:
 - (a) May 31, 1974,
 - (b) May 31, 1975.
2. The name of each such insurance company which has completely withdrawn policies covering automobiles.
3. The name of each such insurance company which requires that automobile insurance be sold only to customers who will also buy household insurance.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I move an amendment. Rather than amend each word and date, I submit a substitute motion to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: While the amendment is coming forward, may I suggest that in cases in which hon. members are aware in advance that they may be moving amendments to motions on the Order Paper, it would be welcome if a copy of such proposed amendment might be submitted to the Chair as soon as possible so we don't run into any unexpected situations in the course of dealing with the motion and the amendment.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification. The hon. minister and I discussed this, and we put it in a form such that the information was available.

MR. SPEAKER: Under the circumstances, are you ready for the question? I don't believe I can put the question without reading the motion, or you won't know what you're voting on because it's been redone.

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

1. The number of insurance companies which reported automobile insurance transactions in Alberta to the Superintendent of Insurance as of:
 - (a) January 1, 1974,
 - (b) January 1, 1975.
2. Of those companies reporting on January 1, 1975, the number no longer writing new automobile policies at June 2, 1975, and the names of these companies.
3. What information is available concerning the number of insurance companies that require that automobile insurance be sold only to customers who will also buy supporting business?

[The motion as amended was carried.]

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 of 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 that for 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 and 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 move Motion No. 167 standing in my name. In the portion which was bothering the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, I just bring to the minister's attention that it does say it's the "representatives of the Government of Alberta or any agency of the Government". That's the consultation with the government I want. That's the information I want, not the ski trips, et cetera, the minister was worried about.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, just to be clear. The hon. member has asked, "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".

The question, then, that I raised last Thursday was: is he asking for the trips they made under the terms of the contract they have with the government? The hon. member said, yes. I was prepared to accept it on that basis. However, Mr. Speaker, Hansard indicates that at this point you intervened and said that we couldn't accept it that way and it would have to be amended.

Perhaps, therefore, there has been a communication problem. I was anticipating that the Chair's suggestion of an amendment before they would put the question would have to be complied with.

MR. SPEAKER: As hon. members know, there is always the risk when we make a very informal amendment to a motion as comprehensive and specific and detailed as this one, that we may run into difficulty. Perhaps, since the question of an amendment has been overlooked, if it can be amended briefly at the moment, we could deal with it now. Otherwise the hon. member might wish to arrange to have an amendment brought in on Thursday.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, if the minister can obtain the information for me by putting in the words "as it relates to the contract with the Alberta government", that's fine. That's what we want to know.

MR. SPEAKER: It's necessary to produce Votes and Proceedings after we finish with a motion of this kind, and it would be welcome if we might be specific.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'll move an amendment to 2: "The date of each trip made by a representative of W.J. Levy Consultants Corp. to Alberta, according to the contracts as it relates to the Government of the Province of Alberta". Does that meet with the hon. minister's . . . Fine.

[The motion as amended was carried.]

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

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

1. The number of individuals hired by the Government of Alberta on a contractual basis during the 1974-75 fiscal year, including the total amount of money paid to such individuals.
2. The number of firms or agencies hired by the Government of Alberta on a contractual basis during the 1974-75 fiscal year, including the total amount of money paid to such firms or agencies.
3. The number of individuals under contract to the Government of Alberta as at May 31, 1975.
4. The number of firms or agencies under contract to the Government of Alberta as at May 31, 1975.

[The motion was carried.]

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

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

A copy of all studies done by officials of the Department of Business Development and Tourism or other Alberta government officials or consultants working for the Alberta government on the potential economic viability of Imperial Oil's Calgary refining under the management of Calgary Refining Ltd.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I would urge all hon. members not to approve this motion. It has been the policy of the government for some number of years not to table departmental, interdepartmental, or intradepartmental documents; or documents obtained on a confidential, privileged basis. We hold to that view. However, that decision does not preclude any hon. member from participating in debate on decisions once made. We, of course, welcome that debate.

So I would urge all hon. members to defeat the motion.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, we've been through this ritual at least three or four times this session. This matter of the future of the Calgary refinery has been before the Legislature on at least two different sessions, perhaps three. The minister indicated some time ago in the House that the government virtually was going to do nothing about that. Just recently he finally agreed to sit down with the Alberta Federation of Labour, after initially indicating he wouldn't meet with them. For the minister now to get up and tell the Assembly the government doesn't feel it can let any of this information come forward -- it would seem to me the reasonable thing for the minister to have done would be to say there are certain portions in these reports which are confidential, which may impinge upon Imperial Oil's operation, and we would like to reserve the opportunity to delete those from the return. I think even my friend on my left would have been reasonable enough to accept that kind of amendment.

But almost religiously now, hardly a question period goes by that we don't have this rather lame duck attitude of the government showing through. We recognize that in a report like this there is some information which may prejudice Imperial Oil's operations. But for goodness' sake, those portions could be taken out and at least the conclusions and the rest of the report made available to the members of the Assembly.

I urge the minister to look at Motion for a Return 173 again, ask it be held over until Thursday, and see if he can't be more reasonable in light of the public interest in this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview conclude the debate on this motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly regret that the government has not seen fit either to accept this motion for a return or introduce an amendment to it.

Mr. Speaker, I just can't accept the minister's proposition of, wait until we resolve this thing, then we can debate afterwards without access to the information. The minister well knows that for some time now the employees at the Calgary refinery of Imperial Oil have been attempting to buy the refinery, keep it in operation, maintain jobs in the City of Calgary. They have done, I think, everything one could expect them to do in terms of seeking assistance from several other oil companies. I think they have made a valiant effort to retain that refinery in operation. But, Mr. Speaker, it's important that in order to make a judgment on the future of the refinery, we have information made available to the Assembly; also, that the employees attempting to buy the refinery have some basic information made available to them as well.

We've been assured in the question period on a number of occasions that the government has studied this, that they have obtained advice, that the thing is not viable and therefore they are not going to induce the workers to get over their heads. Well, Mr. Speaker, that kind of paternalism is just not suitable in this day and age. I think the people involved have a right to basic information in order to make sensible judgments.

Again, an amendment could easily have been proposed. If there were certain aspects of this motion for a return which impinged clearly upon Imperial Oil's position -- I doubt that it would, Mr. Speaker, but if, in fact, it did -- I would have been willing to accept an amendment. Instead we have the government simply taking the position that, no, we aren't going to make this information available. No, we're going to keep you in the dark, and that's that. We'll work it out, and after the fact you can have a little debate.

Mr. Speaker, after the fact is not the time to look at studies. After the fact is not the time to have a reasonable, rational debate on public issues. The time to have this, Mr. Speaker, is before the decisions are made. Public officials, both the people involved and members of this Legislature, have a right to this information before the decision is made.

[The motion was lost.]

174. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

1. The number of direct loans and the total amount of such loans obtained from the Agricultural Development Corporation which the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Development Corporation reviewed during the 1974-75 fiscal year due to a default in the repayment of those loans.
2. The number of loans and the total amount of such loans, mentioned in 1, upon which it was decided to proceed with foreclosure.
3. The number of loans and the total amount of such loans upon which the Agricultural Development Corporation honored a guarantee during the 1974-75 fiscal year.
4. The number of loans and the total amount of such loans, mentioned in 3, which were reviewed by the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Development Corporation during the 1974-75 fiscal year.
5. The number of loans and the total amount of such loans, mentioned in 4, upon which it was decided to proceed with foreclosure.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, while accepting this motion, I would like to point out to members of the Assembly, and in particular the Leader of the Opposition, that because of this

particular motion and a number of others relating to the Agricultural Development Corporation, over the course of the past two or three weeks we have had as many as two people at a time from that staff enrolled in trying to find this information.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, my concern and the concern of the Leader of the Opposition too, is that the work of the corporation in approving loans and other things they have to do is not held up. I want to suggest to him that it may be difficult for the answers to be provided before the end of this session. We'll do our best to provide them by next fall.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could ask this question: are there changes in Motion for a Return 174 the minister could suggest which would make it easier to get the basic information from the corporation?

MR. MCORE: No, Mr. Speaker, I can't see any way you can make changes and still provide the information required. However, I do want to point out to the hon. member that it's not possible for us to take all the staff off their normal duties to go through the files for questions like this. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member would appreciate any delay that might be occasioned.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister a question? Does the minister feel that he will be in a position to have this information for us by the fall session, if we start by then?

[The motion was carried.]

176. Mr. Notley proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
A copy of all written information, including consultants' reports or part thereof, dealing with construction cost estimates for the utility plant at the Syncrude Mildred Lake project.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, could I ask the House to agree to have Motion for a Return 176 stand until Thursday?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree that Motion No. 176 is to stand over and appear on Thursday's Order Paper?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

177. Mr. Notley proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
A copy of all assessments, interim or otherwise, done by any official of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources and/or of the Energy Resources Conservation Board since January 1, 1975, of the impact of the Alberta petroleum exploration plan of December 1974 on the level of petroleum and natural gas exploration in the Province of Alberta.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would have to suggest to the House that the government not comply with this motion for a return. As a matter of fact, I would have expected the hon. member quite possibly to withdraw the motion as a result of discussions we had on the subject in the question period and the estimates of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources.

We have agreed to a motion for a return, which has already been ordered by the House, as to the estimated costs of the ALPEP program announced in December. That is being prepared, and I believe the hon. Provincial Treasurer will be tabling the reply as soon as the information is in the final form.

However, as I pointed out to the hon. member previously, the historical period of time necessary to carry out a meaningful assessment on the ALPEP program, while it was announced some five or six months ago, has not passed. We do not have the period of time.

There has been the odd memorandum between members of the department and myself which, as normal, the House does not request and the government does not provide. Other than that, I think it would be only reasonable to allow the ALPEP program to operate for some period of time before a meaningful assessment, interim or otherwise, should be provided to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member close the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the government is preparing information on the cost of the ALPEP program. I would have assumed there would be some interim reports. The reason that this motion for a return is on the Order Paper is that I think it is of crucial importance that this Legislature insist on a full scale monitoring of the cost and operation of that plan.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to the minister, I would simply make the point that if he feels this is too early, perhaps the fall or next spring will be suitable. At that time I will introduce it again.

[The motion was lost.]

178. Mr. Notley proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
A copy of any and all administrative and/or operational guidelines issued by the Government of Alberta to the board of directors of Pacific Western Airlines, to any of the members thereof, and/or any groups of members thereof.

[The motion was carried.]

179. Mr. Notley proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
A copy of all minutes, notes, tapes, and/or transcripts of meetings since January 1, 1973 between officials of the Government of Alberta, its boards, commissions, corporations, and agencies, and officials of:
(a) Alberta Gas Ethylene Company Limited,
(b) Canadian Industries Limited,
(c) DuPont of Canada Ltd.,
(d) B. F. Goodrich,
(e) Dow Chemical Company Ltd.,
(f) Celanese Canada Ltd.,
(g) Allarco Developments Ltd.,
(h) Dome Petroleum Ltd.,
(i) Canadian Hoechst, and/or
(j) Japan Catalytic Chemical Co.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, for the reasons outlined in many previous debates: the matter of confidentiality, the matter of prejudicing the position of one company against another in the market place, the fact that discussions and documentation passing between the companies mentioned -- all 10 of them -- and the Government of Alberta are part and parcel of the material that would go into making a decision relative to the petrochemical industry and its offshoots which would be of benefit to the province . . .

We have no objection whatsoever to the hon. members introducing a resolution relative to the petrochemical industry, debating it, setting forth opinions on how the petrochemical industry could be, or why it should not be introduced into Alberta. However, we do not feel any documentation or, as proposed, tapes, transcripts, minutes, or notes, which are in fact departmental in nature or material given in confidence to the Government of Alberta, should be tabled. I suggest the motion be defeated.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member close the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in making some remarks on Motion for a Return 179, I'm in effect also commenting on Motions for Returns 180 and 181. The minister might just as well save his breath, and I assume his remarks also relate to the other two motions for returns.

I regret this information is not made available, Mr. Speaker. Again, it seems to me that if there are those unique documents which may, from time to time, have such an impact on the competitive position of a company, the onus is upon the government to introduce an amendment.

What is important, Mr. Speaker, is the very point I attempted to make with respect to the Calgary refinery. We are moving into a vital stage of development in the Province of Alberta -- world scale petrochemicals. On the basis of that fact, Mr. Speaker, it is vital that the Legislative Assembly and the people of Alberta know what is going on, that we have maximum information. Again, I have to say, in listening to the minister, that we have this paternalism, which is frustrating. Admittedly the government may be very smug, winning 69 of 75 seats, but that doesn't in my judgment, defeat the argument that the public business should be done in public. Only on the rarest occasions, where the evidence is clear, should information be kept behind closed doors or under wraps.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the possible expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars on petrochemicals in the next 10 years. We are looking at what could be a major breakthrough of historic importance to the province or, on the other hand, a disaster of tremendous import to the province.

Mr. Speaker, because of that fact, because of the options which have to be debated, in my view it is not just something the Executive Council can keep within its private preserve, but something which should be debated in the Legislature. And to be able to debate it intelligently and efficiently, we need access to this kind of information.

Yesterday, during the estimates of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, I have to say the hon. minister did a beautiful job in avoiding answers to all the major questions -- a beautiful job. The fact of the matter is that that kind of debate is not good for the democratic process, because when we come right down to it, Mr. Speaker, these

decisions have to be debated in the Legislature; and to be able to debate them effectively, we need access to information.

Again, I regret very much that the government is not prepared to accept Motion for a Return 179 or the other motions for returns, nos. 180 and 181. I think it reflects a closed-door attitude which is inconsistent with the democratic process.

[The motion was lost.]

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

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

A copy of all correspondence between the Government of Alberta, its departments, boards, commissions, corporations and The Alberta Gas Ethylene Company Limited.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest this motion not be accepted for a number of reasons I and other members have proposed. In addition, one of the arguments proposed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview indicates that since there are hundreds of millions of dollars being invested, we should have this material tabled and made public. I would suggest for that very reason -- since the companies involved in the petrochemical industry, if it should in fact proceed, will be investing hundreds of millions of dollars -- that money or investment should not be lost or jeopardized because the material was made public.

I suggest it be defeated, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a few comments with regard not only to this particular motion on the Order Paper, but the others we have voted against. Because all of these request the type of information which would jeopardize the consideration of people involved in the decision-making process in putting forward their independent views, concerns -- the pros and cons would certainly stop doing that.

Surely, if we're talking about democratic process, we had that on March 26. We may react and say, well, we've heard that one before. But I think the people of Alberta have certainly taken into consideration that in the 43 months prior to March 26, we demonstrated very capably the decisions we had made, and they certainly entrusted us to continue to make those decisions. To say now that we are not allowing the democratic process to carry through is very ludicrous. I'm sure the hon. member knows very well that what he is saying is just a bunch of words put together. He could use a different term; I wouldn't use them here in the House. I wouldn't use them anywhere else either. Nevertheless, they could mean all kinds of things.

I'd simply like to say that the ability for a proper decision to be made must certainly be there out of information that would be provided without any kind of harassment or question of being concerned as to whether the pros and cons, the whys and wherefores, are all put forward. I would just say that when we are voting against these motions, they're in that kind of [category]. Surely the honorable leader of the party he represents isn't about to tell us the people of Alberta didn't know what they were doing in making their decision to allow us to continue to make decisions in the best interests of Alberta.

MR. CLARK: Go back to Japan.

MRS. CHICHAK: Are we to consider that the only people who are able to make the decisions are those who are aligned with the parties in government on either side of us? Certainly not. I appreciate that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview will probably be saying, in his closing remarks, that I am way off base, in effect the direction that is going forward. Well, that may be his opinion. But I still say there is absolutely no way, in our free thinking and just minds, we could possibly say yes to these kinds of questions, motions, on the Order Paper.

My honorable colleagues who are voting against these motions, as we have been and are doing, exercising our democratic rights, fully understanding that what was being asked was improper and would jeopardize the possibility of making proper decisions in the future, or having the kind of information or consultation available to us. It is the decision that's important. And I think the right one will be made.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member close the debate, or are there other members who wish to enter the debate?

MR. MUSGEAVE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a few comments. I agree with the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview that there are occasions when decisions have been made without information being available that perhaps, in his opinion, would have been in the public interest. And some of us, perhaps, share his concerns. However, I would point out that quite frequently the decisions which have to be made are very difficult; time is of the essence, and perhaps we have to rely on the Executive Council to make the right decision. Whether or not that decision is right in the eyes of the people is determined by the democratic process, and I think, as mentioned by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, the people of Alberta obviously happen to agree with those kinds of decisions.

I have another concern, Mr. Speaker, and that is the continual bringing forward of these kinds of motions which are obviously going to be defeated. It wastes the time of this House. But let's assume they did pass. Think of the considerable time they would

waste in departments assembling this material. Think of the kind of atmosphere that would develop. One of the motions even talks about tapes as sorts of shades of Watergate all over again.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have a business climate in this community, or to have a climate in the Province of Alberta which is to be in the best interests of all people -- and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview expressed concerns about the loss of jobs and the jeopardy to the economy -- I would suggest to him that one of the most important things is to be sure to protect the environment in which the business can operate.

Once the data is available to the government in terms of studies, discussions, memoranda, and all the rest of it; if the decision isn't a wise one, then is the time to challenge the government, not on what may have gone on before. When the actual decision is brought to this House for consideration, debate is the time to be concerned about it.

I would like to make one other comment, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is here in the House to hear my rebuttal. That is, to suggest that because a minister answered a question, last night here in the House, in a manner that he may not like, then to turn around and suggest the question was not answered, I think is most unfair, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to speak again, but the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, as well as my honorable friend from Calgary McKnight, prompted me to. Lest the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight be perturbed about my comments concerning the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, I'm sure the hon. Minister of Energy isn't too perturbed about it. He knows that in politics if you can't stand the heat, as Harry Truman used to say, get out of the kitchen. I'm sure he's not losing any sleep over the rather gentle remarks I aimed in his direction.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood also addressed the Assembly on this issue. I would simply make the point that an election is not a plebiscite where the government then has a mandate to do whatever it chooses. An election chooses a Legislative Assembly. No Legislative Assembly ever foregoes the right to probe, to question, to challenge, to obtain information. It simply isn't good enough to say, you know, now that we're in office, let us do whatever we choose. Then in four years time, if you don't like it, take it to the people.

Mr. Speaker, that's not the way our parliamentary system works. We would be abdicating our responsibilities as opposition members if we ever accepted that sort of dangerous proposition. Our job is to make sure the public business is done in public. Our job is to make the government squirm on occasions if information isn't made public. So let's not get carried away with this business that because a mandate was received last March 26, all of a sudden that ends this question, and we can just wait for the announcements in the press for the construction to begin before any argument or debate takes place.

Mr. Speaker, the only other comment I want to make in closing debate is that the minister, in advancing his case for voting down this motion, argues that it would jeopardize private investments. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me there's really little doubt that if petrochemicals are to go ahead, it's going to involve considerable public investment. That being the case, if private business is going to rely on substantial public investment, I believe -- and I don't often agree with the editorial page of the Edmonton Journal, but I believe the observation they made last week about Syncrude foregoing its right to confidentiality once it began, if I can use the term, to drink at the public trough -- it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that argument is a valid one. If these large corporations are going to expect concessions of one kind or another from the public sector, they have also to recognize that important decisions relating to those expenditures require the tabling of information which would otherwise not be appropriate if they were moving completely on their own.

[The motion was lost.]

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

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

A copy of all correspondence between the Alberta government, its departments, boards, commissions, corporations and agencies, and Alberta Gas Trunk Line Company Limited, regarding the AGECL/AGTL petrochemical development at Red Deer.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, for the obvious reasons that have been stated before, I would suggest this motion be defeated.

However, one point the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview did make was that elections don't give a government a mandate to do whatever it wishes. Of course, that's correct. But elections also give all members of this Assembly an equal opportunity to state their case. If they have something to offer, for goodness' sake offer it. Don't be critical of the methods used by government in reaching its decisions, but be critical of the decisions if you think they're wrong. That option is open to all hon. members whether they be on the government side or otherwise. I would suggest that if the hon. Member for

Spirit River-Fairview has some points to make, he should introduce a resolution and make them, Mr. Speaker.

[The motion was lost.]

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Mr. Stromberg proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
Be it resolved that the government give consideration to additional ways and means of financing and constructing sewage systems in Alberta's 400 hamlets.

MR. POSTER: Mr. Speaker, could we move to Motion No. 2, Mr. Stromberg being out of the House and unavailable.

MR. SPEAKER: It's of course automatic that we proceed to No. 2 if there is no one here ready to proceed with No. 1.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

2. Mr. Kushner proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of the province to consider making representations to the Government of Canada to amend the Old Age Security Act (Canada) in such a way that a person who is handicapped to a degree which prevents earning a living shall receive a benefit equal to that payable to a person of age 65.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Horsman]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I spoke for a short period the last time this motion was before the House. I had just referred to the studies presented by the Alberta committee of action groups for the handicapped, which all hon. members received. I commended the reading of those papers to all hon. members, and I hope some have done so.

Dealing specifically with the motion which, of course, is a request that the Government of Alberta request the Government of Canada to do something, I would like to point out that in these papers an excellent example is given as to why it is necessary that handicapped people receive extra funds. I would just like to cite some of those to the House so that the hon. minister dealing with Ottawa on this motion will be able to use these as examples for providing the necessary funding to the handicapped.

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

Now, in the paper dated February 1974, which was a presentation of the handicapped members of the MLA/Handicapped Joint Committee, with their amendments to The Alberta Health Care Insurance Act, a list of items is set out, which those of us who are fortunate not to have a physical handicap may often overlook as being extra expenses forced upon the handicapped.

Dealing specifically with that paper, it points out a number which I think are important. Wheel chairs are just one of them. We find that the cost of a wheel chair runs as high as \$600, without being motorized. Those with motors run from \$900 to over \$1,200. Then we find custom-built footwear as another example. Hearing aids are another example. People of all ages may require hearing aids. Their purchase involves an outlay of several hundreds of dollars.

Of course we are aware that under legislation those over 65 in Alberta can obtain these assists for their hearing difficulties. But that is not true for those handicapped persons under that age with hearing difficulties. Hoyer lifts are also another expensive item, ranging from just over \$250 to almost \$400.

Respiratory equipment for basic home care adds a good deal to the costs. Ileostomy and colostomy bags and supplies: there we find, Mr. Speaker, that the monthly outlay can reach almost \$50. Those are just a few examples pointed out in this paper, Mr. Speaker, which I suggest indicate the real necessity of providing additional funds for handicapped persons.

As the paper points out, there are many disabled Albertans whose basic health needs are not being adequately met or are being met with difficulty, because they are not under 17 or over 65 years of age. They are not recipients of social assistance or covered under workers' compensation. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, these are the people who would benefit from a federal-provincial program, as suggested in the motion, to assist them in overcoming their difficulties as best they can through physical aids.

Other items, of course, are artificial limbs and various things of that nature. It is suggested that private agencies can take up some of the slack, so to speak. That, of course, should not relieve the federal government -- or the provincial government, for that matter -- from the financial assistance required to purchase these, because in many cases the voluntary agencies are hard pressed to meet even a small portion of the demand.

Now, if I may turn to another paper, which was submitted by the members of the MLA/Handicapped Joint Committee in September of last year. This relates to recommendations relating to the Government of Alberta's transportation policy. There are a couple of items in this paper which struck home very hard to me, when I read them. These are examples of what difficulties are faced by handicapped persons in regard to the simple matter of transportation from one's home to one's employment. I want to point out that this is another example of how additional assistance from the federal and provincial governments could assist handicapped persons in making their way in life.

There's one example here, which was known to the chairman of the committee. A handicapped young woman who earned \$20 a day, \$20 a day as a handicapped person, spent \$12 of that amount to get to and from work each day, because \$6 was required for each taxi trip. Thus she spent 60 per cent of her income on transportation. Now, this person could obviously not afford to work if it were not for the fact that she lived with her parents, free of charge. That, Mr. Speaker, is another example of the necessity of providing assistance. There's an example of a young lady who tried to make her way in life. Can you imagine how you and I would feel if it cost us 60 per cent of our income just to get to and from our place of employment?

There's another example, cited in this paper, of a resident of the Lethbridge Auxiliary Hospital who had an appointment with her eye doctor. In order to go, she had to hire an ambulance, and the trip cost her \$30. At the rate of \$30 per trip, as the paper says, few people could afford to go anywhere.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge all hon. members to support the motion of the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. In supporting this motion, I suggest to this House and to the hon. members that by passing the motion we are buttressing the stand already taken by ministers of this government in conferences with the federal and provincial government representatives over the past few years. Both the present minister and her predecessor in the Department of Health and Social Development have gone to these meetings and requested that the federal and provincial levels of government co-operate in providing this type of service to the handicapped.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that the members of this Assembly support the motion, so we can do what we can with the Government of Canada to provide those physically handicapped persons with the assistance necessary to help them make their way until they are eligible for old age pension benefits, whenever that age may come. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to support the motion of the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to add a few more points. I made my points quite clear on June 3. I know most hon. members are quite concerned about the costs of implementing such a program today. On the other hand, it's not at all tying the hands of the minister and the provincial government, working with the federal government to try to reach the best deal possible for the handicapped. I may add, it's well overdue.

The question which now probably comes to mind to many of us is that of qualifying for benefits and possibly abusing them. There again, as I'm sure we already know, precedents have been set. Such programs are in operation in other provinces. I'm sure we can possibly learn from them and their experiences, to prevent people taking advantage of and abusing this program.

At the moment, there's hardly any incentive for handicapped people to function as normal people, or even so they can work. Under the assistance act, as I understand it, if they make more than \$50, they are liable to be questioned and disqualified. It destroys the incentive for them to go ahead. There again, that program has to be improved in such a way that it's done on some sort of sliding scale.

The urgent thing, as far as I'm concerned, is transportation, which deprives many handicapped people from functioning. In my opinion, if they were to be given some form of assistance so they would be able to obtain transportation -- and transportation generally just has to improve -- these people would have the incentive of being able to move, as far as obtaining a job is concerned. I know there are many who can possibly get a job and work part-time. But under the present program it doesn't seem to be feasible.

Housing, of course, is very important. I know of one particular person who's handicapped and apparently living in one of our auxiliary hospitals and, at the same time, is trying to go to university. I think, if adequate housing and adequate finances were provided for these people, maybe they could fit back into our family units. Maybe even adequate housing should be provided for them. If we do not provide the kind of transportation which is really required so they can function even as far as obtaining an education is concerned, it just compounds the situation. It's an area where not only do we not have enough information at this time, but this government probably hasn't done as it properly should, also the previous government. I only urge at this time that we support this motion, if the hon. members would, certainly give the go-ahead for the minister, and not tie his hands in any way, if this motion is approved, to reach the best settlement possible for our handicapped people.

[The motion was carried.]

3. Mr. R. Speaker proposed the following motion to the Assembly:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to set up an Alberta assured income plan for handicapped persons, thus ensuring a minimum monthly payment of \$255.

MR. R. SPEAKER: In my debate with regard to this motion at an earlier time, I indicated we would be moving into a new area which really hasn't been explored on this basis in the Province of Alberta. We're not sure how many people we're really talking about. It could be 3 per cent of our population in Alberta, or up to one out of seven individuals, depending on how you define the term "handicapped". I feel, though, that that certainly is not a barrier. It could be overcome by definition, by some research, by statistical collections to give us a means or technique to establish priorities.

As I indicated the other day, I feel we could move into some areas immediately. The number one area I mentioned was with regard to respiratory polio victims. I think we can all recognize these people were affected by a disease or ailment not of their own making. They were responsible people, active in community living, and then, with this ailment, there was a change in their lives. That didn't mean they wanted to lose their independence, but many of them have and have been placed in institutions in full care, placed in positions where they are totally dependent on others. They would like to do things on their own but, because of financial assistance, without a guaranteed income, they were unable to do so.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that's the whole intent and idea of a resolution like this: to move into an area where we can help people to help themselves and be independent and live in the best manner possible with their fellow citizens in the Province of Alberta.

There are certainly other areas we can look at in establishing a priority system. I can suggest some from my own practical experience. For example, there are certain people maintained in beds across the province who don't really need a lot of medical care or personal counselling, but just need financial help to carry on. We have non-institutional people who have certain physical or mental handicaps and who need a guaranteed income to live with independence. We have part-time people who are working, who are handicapped, but need extra income to supplement their responsibilities. There are people who have to live in institutions because of certain health needs. At the same time, they would like to interact with the community, or interact as much as they can in normal day to day living like anyone else. I feel that having an assured income would certainly help this type of person to live better in our society.

Mr. Speaker, in many of our social programs we often overemphasize such things as counselling, professional help, professional assistance, professional motivation, care programs, and programs that act as crutches to help the individual in society, when all he or she really needs is an assurance that he or she has a guaranteed income to take care of basics of food, clothing, and shelter each and every month. I think this program, if we looked at it on that basis and used that principle, could cut back a lot of the social programs and some of these programs heavily oriented by professional staff or by the number of staff per the number of individuals they look after. We might have results just as good as we're having right now.

I think, Mr. Speaker, in order to look at this kind of direction, we have never really said to people who can do research or planning and programming that maybe this is the way we want to go. The usual orientation towards establishing more social programs is: (a) how many staff do we need, (b) what kind of facility do we need, and (c) where are the people we're going to look after. Maybe we should start the other way and say, there are people out there who need some type of assistance to be independent. Maybe we should say, what do they need personally, and pass the money directly to them so they can be independent.

Maybe I'm generalizing, because I really don't know all the various people in this group. But I have observed, from my own experience, a number of programs or socially concerned or professional groups which have attempted to put together what they thought was best for an individual. Very, very costly programs, many of them going up to \$.5 million or \$1 million a year in operation costs. If you just looked at those programs -- and I can certainly give examples of this -- you would find that often costs are between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per individual served. If we gave that money to those individuals, they could live pretty high on the hog and hire their own professional. Maybe the results would be as adequate and just as good.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking, number one, that government reassess that kind of direction and maybe go in the direction of guaranteeing income rather than trying to assure there are programs in society which cause dependency on help programs; secondly, that we look at this whole concept of independence and think, well, maybe first of all we should guarantee basics: food, clothing, and shelter.

People say we do that through welfare programs or public assistance. But that still doesn't make people independent like the senior citizen who receives a cheque from Ottawa each month. That person feels that cheque is sent to him. He doesn't feel it's a handout or a stigma -- maybe it is. But with a welfare or public assistance cheque, followed up by a social worker who checks on living habits, attitudes, type of clothes, et cetera, we have a dependency situation, a supervision situation which I don't think is really necessary in many situations. So that's the second thing: we should look at this direction of independence. In order to do this, Mr. Speaker, I think it is time, and very timely, that the government of this province consider what I've called here an Alberta assured income plan for handicapped persons.

There are many books written on guaranteed income plans for all the citizenry. I think we have the opportunity here, Mr. Speaker, to try this type of program in the area of handicapped people to see if the concept will work, to see if independence is established, to eliminate the wrinkles that often go along with government programs. I feel, Mr. Speaker, now is the time we could try. We have some extra dollars that could be funnelled in this direction.

In saying that, though, I do not necessarily see this program superimposed upon many other social programs. There could be areas where we could withdraw, back off, because when we really assess certain individuals, maybe all they need is an independence that goes along with financial assistance. I feel this kind of program could do just that. Mr. Speaker, on that basis I move this resolution.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure this afternoon to speak to what I regarded as a major priority when I was campaigning not so many months ago.

Before I commence those remarks, however, I'd like to pick up some comments made by the hon. Member for Little Bow as he closed his first portion of this debate. He said all he was asking for, Mr. Speaker, is that government reassess, evaluate, and consider the concept of independence versus dependence. Mr. Speaker, my reading of the resolution is quite different. The resolution states, in fact, that this Legislative Assembly urge the government "to set up". It already has arrived at the conclusion this is a very desirable program, and it is not asking for an assessment. Now I don't want to get off base in terms of my concern here. But on the other hand, I do not wish the hon. member's closing statement to obscure what his motion really does ask. So let's put that into perspective.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that in the throne speech debate I mentioned my concern as I campaigned for persons in a handicapped situation, persons who are at a disadvantage. In my opinion these people -- from what I have observed at least, there are not all that many as a proportion of the population. There are some, Mr. Speaker, whose situation is the most serious, I think, that we have in our society at the present time. I mentioned in the throne speech debate that I felt my priorities had changed in the four years from the previous election to this most recent one. Prior to our programs for senior citizens, this was the largest group who were at a disadvantage in terms of what inflation was causing. Now I believe if we have not made life perfect, at least we've improved life tremendously. Mr. Speaker, I had many of them tell me that they were able to live comfortably and with much less concern for tomorrow than they had a few years earlier.

So, Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this motion, I want to first establish that I feel the area of assistance to the handicapped is my topmost priority if we're looking at the differential between the ability of our citizens in this province. These are the ones who most desperately need our attention.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say I'm not unaware, in fact I'm very well aware, of the opinions of the Alberta Committee of Action Groups for the Disabled. They have made their point to me in meetings and as individuals. I think their request should be considered.

Mr. Speaker, in the third instance, I'm aware the minister is concerned for this group of people. I'm also aware, Mr. Speaker, that other provinces are, or have undertaken programs, some of them less than we have in Alberta at the present time, some of them more. Mr. Speaker, in all that the hon. Member for Little Bow commented, he identified a number of challenges to anyone proposing a program of this nature, but I think he dealt ineffectively with them.

First, he acknowledged at the outset that he doesn't know whether we're talking about one in seven people in our population, or a much smaller number. Mr. Speaker, I have been concerned, when I tried to sort out my own thoughts as to the nature of the group which I felt was my topmost priority, the handicapped. Who are they -- especially if we're going to try to develop programs to assist the handicapped in terms of basic income, as this resolution requests.

Who are the handicapped? I took a look in the dictionary, because there are many ways of approaching "handicapped", and discovered a definition which I think we well ought to keep in mind: a disadvantage that makes achievement unusually difficult is a handicap. Mr. Speaker, many of us at different times have been handicapped. Many of us in this Assembly have been handicapped in various objectives we've tried to achieve. We may come from different backgrounds and go into a school which is in a different type of community, has different standards and a different social background from what we've been accustomed to. That for a short time is a handicap.

If we start to apply it to income, Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of some of the problems that come to me, problems arising out of dissatisfied persons affected by the Workers' Compensation Board. I don't like to think on it very often, but often I'm forced to. I have now come to the conclusion that the most frequent, the most troublesome, and the most persistent problem I get is of a worker who says, the doctors, or the Workers' Compensation Board acting on the advice of doctors, has stated I'm not disabled, but I am disabled.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure there is any solution to the problem of some of these people. Sometimes the argument is whether they are, in fact, disabled or not. I submit to you that this resolution has to deal with that question first and foremost, and deal squarely with it because we're talking about handicap or disability from the perspective of earning an income. We ought to recognize at the outset that we're going to encounter differences of opinion. They will not be resolved by the expert advice of the medical profession. They may be resolved to the satisfaction of the medical profession, but

they're not resolved to the satisfaction of the people who claim they are being hard done by those judgments.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that opens up a whole series of questions which I would just like to draw to the attention of the Assembly. Is a handicapped person one who has one foot shorter than the other, one leg shorter than the other, requires a back brace? What is a handicapped person from the point of view of this resolution?

Mr. Speaker, I should relate to the Assembly that at one of my more recent meetings with the Alberta Committee of Action Groups for the Disabled, they endeavored to make several points to me in respect of a basic income, a guaranteed income. I'm sympathetic to their proposal. But under my questioning of who is handicapped and trying to ascertain what they thought the program might be, it came out that first of all, that group would split off all mentally retarded or mentally affected persons. In other words, the first thing we do with handicap is remove all those people incapacitated in any way for mental reasons.

Now I don't know what members of the Assembly will think of that, but that automatically has a major bearing on this particular resolution. If they are prepared to go that far -- and I'm not saying that all are, but I know some are, from discussion and from questioning -- how much further should we go with it? Let's just talk about the physically as opposed to the mentally handicapped. I leave that question with you, but it's a question we had better look at.

I'm left then with the question of what degree of physical handicap we are looking at here. I could relate, as I have mentioned, a number of stories about workers' compensation problems which I find very difficult. I could ask you to think about the situation where it is clearly established that a worker was injured at work, so that the responsibility for income of that worker resides with the Workers' Compensation Board. The board rules that the subsidy or pension for the worker is very small, because the degree of physical disability is, in its opinion, minor and the worker could very well adapt to other work or perhaps even go back to his former occupation if he so desired. Are we going to put in an assured income plan for handicapped people, which he surely would consider himself to be, which in effect would overrule or take precedence over the decision of the Workers' Compensation Board? It's a question I think we had better think about before we get into this too far, Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as I am very sympathetic to the problem and think we should do something about our handicapped persons.

Mr. Speaker, I have the definition used in Prince Edward Island, which might be of some interest to the Assembly. It interests me because I think it's a lousy definition:

A person who has a physical, mental, psychological, emotional, or other impairment that impedes him from participating to the best of his ability in social and economic activities.

MR. CRAWFORD: That covers us.

MR. YOUNG: Yes, that covers us all.

Mr. Speaker, when I read this I had a little difficulty with it, because to the best of our ability -- our ability is obviously governed by our physical conditions. It seems to me that what we do within the best of our ability is strictly a self-starter, a self-stimulated decision; it shouldn't be defined as it is in this respect. I think that's way too broad, and incidentally my understanding, from researching it as best I've been able to in the last three months, is that it is one of the broadest definitions in all the provinces. I'm not sure if the minister would concur in that, but my research has turned up that this has got to be the loosest, most open definition there is.

Mr. Speaker, while we're on this resolution, I want to point out that I'm not sure whether all handicapped persons -- and in fairness to the Member for Little Bow, he also made this point, or at least alluded to it -- should receive this income. What about those in establishments which are supported publicly, those whose conditions are so critical and so difficult that they have relatively little opportunity to make use of an income of that nature? The hon. Member for Little Bow, as I mentioned, alluded to it and felt he should skate away from it rather quickly, I think.

Mr. Speaker, I know we have had brought to our attention -- at least some of us as members of this Assembly -- the feelings of some members of society that there are persons now in publicly supported institutions who must be there not of their own choosing, but simply because that is the condition in which they find themselves, and who are receiving support from the province, which is going into a bank account because they have no way in which they, as individuals, can make use of this to become independent, if you will. So it is building up in a bank account.

There are other situations where complaints have been made to me that on pension day relatives descend, get signatures on the cheques, make off with these cheques, and don't appear again until the next pension day. Would we be setting up a situation like that for some of our handicapped people? If we would, I submit it does nothing to achieve the objectives of the Alberta Committee of Action Groups for the Disabled, or for the hon. Member for Little Bow in terms of his concept of making persons more independent.

Mr. Speaker, I regard this resolution as requiring consideration of another aspect of what I observed in relation to the physically handicapped, and that is whether we should look at this program before we look at a program which might assist them more in some of their unusual expenses.

I had occasion to speak to a number of people who are not institutionalized, who are living at home with the support of their families. I say support not only in the

financial sense, but in the caretaking and maintenance sense, because often they require assistance in dressing or in other aspects of everyday living. It was brought to my attention by these families that they are subject to unusual costs, unusual expenditures, for different types of equipment, which they felt was the straw that was not at that point breaking the camel's back, but at least was straining the camel's back most vigorously. In other words, from their expressions to me, I was led to believe that they would put the priority in terms of assisting with some of the special medical or related expenses which their handicapped relatives would have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think if we're going to look at what's in the best interest of the handicapped persons -- and if we're talking about the physically disabled group who are impaired to a degree which is obvious to us all, and not to a degree which is doubtful and debatable -- we should be looking at whether the money should first go toward the type of program which would assist with expenses, or whether it should go toward the type of program which is a straight outlay for a monthly income.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to go on record as saying that we've already passed one resolution which in many respects is similar to this one. It surely does reflect the opinion of this Assembly that this is a serious and difficult matter of concern to the Assembly. I find the fact that we have another resolution piggybacking it, Mr. Speaker, somewhat disconcerting. I suspect that the hon. Member for Little Bow, when he skated away from some of the points that he raised, raised the resolution and may skate away from it as well.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say once more that I think the Assembly should examine this resolution with care. I think it's an important resolution, but I think a lot of debate is required to establish the true priorities and the most pressing need. The worst thing this Assembly could do, the gravest injustice it could inflict upon the handicapped people, would be to urge the government to go into an ill-conceived program which would run expenses not anticipated by the Assembly, which might lead to a hard and very critical attitude on the part of the general public and cause a turning away from the situation of handicapped persons. I think that would indeed be unfortunate, because they are deserving of our attention. Again I say, let's look at it carefully and debate some of the ramifications of this very broad and general motion.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the resolution which the hon. Member for Little Bow has brought into the Legislature. It has actually gone a little further than the resolution we passed earlier. Basically, it puts the onus on the Province of Alberta to raise the necessary funds for the handicapped. The other resolution asked the federal government of Canada to raise funds for this program.

I think the Member for Edmonton Jasper Place touched on the crux of the problem in the resolution. That is an attempt to identify what is meant by the term "handicapped". Situations occur in the constituency, and they call me to ask for some form of provincial assistance. In one in particular, the male in the family asked for assistance to purchase some equipment, whereas the partner in the family was earning upwards of \$15,000 a year. Under this resolution, that person would probably qualify for \$255 a month. I'm not sure whether the Member for Little Bow was really intending that, where one spouse is handicapped and the other is earning a good, average, high income, the intent is to provide \$255 to that spouse.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I have a very dear and close relative who is 94 years old. She can't see and doesn't hear too well. But I'll be darned if I could convince her she's handicapped. So I suppose in a sense, if it were left to the individual, she wouldn't even accept the \$255 a month.

These are different situations one might run into in determining what is meant by "handicapped". In another case, a lady has been in a wheel chair for upwards of five years with muscular dystrophy. She has never asked for assistance; she maintains her independence and has a very loving husband who provides the facilities, the home, and the comforts one would expect from a married couple.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how far government can really go in terms of social services to people. For the record, I would just like to review this afternoon what the Government of Alberta has done and is doing for the handicapped. I suppose one could classify practically all of our social services as services to handicapped in one form or another. It may bore you to some degree, but I would still like to review the various costs and breakdown of what we are doing for handicapped people in the province.

I went through the Estimates. I didn't have an opportunity to participate during committee study, but for example, in nursing homes alone, the province provides almost \$29 million a year to maintain facilities and conditions acceptable to senior citizens and others who are handicapped in various ways. I don't think anyone can dispute the value and the amount of money involved in this.

This year, the hospitals benefit plan is expected to cost in the neighborhood of \$400 million. I presume that would have been the total budget of this province just a few short years ago. These are approved hospital costs; they also include salary costs, which have increased by some 30 per cent and indicate to me, and I'm sure to members of the Assembly, the kind of spiral that inflationary costs are going through.

The health care deficit -- \$29 million. I understood the province formerly hesitated even to enter into contract with the federal government and finally, because of various

means and forms of pressure, was required to become a part of the program. [They] hoped it would become self supporting yet, today, a few short years later, we have a deficit of \$29 million. That could easily be a \$15 to \$20 deficit per person in the Province of Alberta.

We extended assistance to senior citizens for eyeglasses and all the other aids that come under health care -- and they are a separate part. The projected cost is almost \$13 million for the coming year.

We have made provisions for the aged, people over the age of 65, people who are handicapped in various ways. This is in the area of \$14 million again this year.

Over \$52 million is being provided for mothers with dependants, either legitimate or illegitimate -- whatever term you wish to use -- but certainly the single parents in our society. Those with physical disabilities -- and I would certainly classify them as handicapped -- over \$18 million, almost \$19 million, this year. So we do have various programs designed to help those unable to help themselves.

Almost \$6 million for mentally disabled people. Almost \$10 million for assistance to employable people who for various reasons are unable to find work. This is a strange figure when one considers we have the lowest unemployment of any province in Canada. We still have to pay out, and will pay out, \$10 million to assist those persons.

Over \$6 million to those who are assisted at the municipal level because of various means. That doesn't include the assistance by the municipalities themselves.

Homes for chronic physically and mentally handicapped people, \$6 million. When we talk about handicapped, are we talking about hostels for example? Young people who travel around the areas -- some of our more aspiring hard-working people would consider them handicapped -- \$2 million; and youth centres, \$2.5 million. The youth centres I am speaking about are for emotionally disturbed young people.

Preventive social services, one of the programs I think the former government initiated in the province, has a budget of well over \$8 million. This program -- and I support it; I think we can afford some money on some of the social problems in the communities and the municipalities throughout the province -- is designed to prevent, hopefully, some of the social problems which otherwise compound themselves. Over \$8 million is provided for it in the budget this year.

Over \$42 million for senior citizens pensions -- this covers the blind, the disabled, and so on in that category, and probably includes the guaranteed minimum income.

For children in foster homes, \$19 million. One might classify these as handicapped people, these young people who have no parents or have been taken away from their parents. It will cost the province over \$19 million this year.

Provision for health units, controlling communicable diseases, and all the services offered by health units, over \$18 million. Mental health services, another \$3 million.

Then, Mr. Speaker, you have the large institutions in Ponoka and Edmonton for mentally disordered problems, \$19 million. Handicapped community services, almost \$3 million. Retarded children, children with various emotional disorders, the Deerhome in Red Deer, well over \$16 million; almost \$3 million at the Baker centre. Last but not least, for those people who are suffering from alcoholism and drug abuse, well over \$5 million.

I want to put these in the record so there is no misunderstanding, Mr. Speaker, that the province and our government are doing a tremendous job towards helping the handicapped in the province. This figure totals well over \$750 million a year. If you use the figure of 2 million people in the province, which is high, it works out to \$370 per person per year. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a pretty substantial amount towards our handicapped, and I don't think we take second place to any province in Canada with regard to the assistance we are giving to the handicapped in the province.

To conclude, the term used in the resolution is too broad. Where does it stop and where does it start? Someone suggested that all our people in the jails are handicapped. I don't think they are handicapped, but maybe they do. And maybe for a reason.

Does the resolution intend not only to pay out \$750 million for all the social services in the province, but in addition to pay those handicapped people who are costing, in terms of \$750 million, \$255 a month over and above? That point was never made. But I can assure the members, if that is the case, we had better shut down and go home, because we are not going to be able to pay the light bill.

The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo said yesterday that over the weekend he accidentally placed his finger under the lawn mower -- a typical lawyer, he's not sure how to handle his equipment, I guess -- but it required two or three stitches and he was unable to dial or use his telephone. He thought he perhaps could qualify. I'm not sure whether the Member for Little Bow intended that to happen.

DR. BACKUS: Mr. Speaker, I can quite appreciate the difficulty of the hon. Member for Little Bow in formulating a motion which would express his concern in this area, a concern I believe we all share. I think in his opening address he indicated first the problem he was facing in trying to formulate this and trying to define "handicap". Secondly, he indicated that what he was really looking for was some sort of program to give the handicapped more independence.

I think, of course, the very definition of handicap does to some extent indicate a degree of dependence, or a lack of independence. Therefore I can understand his difficulty in trying to arrive at a motion which would resolve this problem. But the motion he has put forward certainly does raise some very large danger signals in my opinion.

To begin with, there is the real problem of defining the handicapped. One hon. member spoke of the fact that some doctors say, you aren't handicapped and the person says, I am, and an argument develops. He was suggesting that maybe we don't need the doctors to assess the degree of a person's handicap. I think probably this is right. I happen to be a member of the profession who believes nobody comes to a doctor unless he is handicapped. If he is not actually physically ill, if he is just a hypochondriac, this indeed is as much an emotional or a mental handicap as a physical illness. Therefore, I think anybody who comes to a doctor must indeed be handicapped in one area or another. The responsibility of the doctor is to try to define the degree of physical handicap as opposed to the degree of emotional handicap in every patient he sees.

On the other hand, I think a great many people who are handicapped don't go to the doctor. I think we don't even need to go outside this room to recognize a number of people who consider themselves handicapped. Our hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview felt he was handicapped because he couldn't get all the information, confidential or otherwise, that was provided to the Executive Council and upon which it makes its decisions. I think many of us feel we are handicapped in the matter of being able to express ourselves in public and, therefore, sometimes hesitate to stand up and enter debate when we would otherwise like to.

I sometimes think, too, that even the very physically fit people are handicapped. Indeed, because they are physically fit, they are expected to bear the brunt of physical effort in our society and, therefore, are handicapped perhaps in being able to appreciate some of the more cultural activities they themselves might like to do.

The hon. Member for Little Bow pointed out that there was a real difference between people on social assistance and the senior citizen who had his old age pension. He was pointing out that the senior citizen had this feeling of independence, because he didn't feel he was on social assistance when his cheque arrived from Ottawa all the time. I think this is very true. I think the real difference here is the assessment of the reason for giving a person social assistance, whether it's an old age pension or welfare. In the one instance, the only deciding factor in whether a person gets an old age pension is age. This is something that happened 65 years ago, and it doesn't make any difference whether they prepared for their old age, for their retirement; whether they worked hard all through their life but didn't make very much money to set aside; or whether, in fact, they worked hard all through their life and ended up with a very large and comfortable income or investment that would provide for their old age. When they reach the age of 65, they receive an old age pension.

Therefore, because there is no judgment factor in it, they can feel independent about receiving this cheque from Ottawa. I think, as far as your welfare person is concerned, the person on social assistance, there is a judgment factor. We decide whether that person, in fact, has the ability to earn his own income, whether he has means of support, and whether he is capable of retraining to bring him to a stage of being able to earn his own income. Based on all these assessments, he may be paid social assistance. I think, in fact, the person on social assistance is as much a handicapped person as some of those who are physically handicapped. Whether they are handicapped because it's a single mother with five children to bring up or somebody who for either educational or other reasons is unable to make an adequate income to support himself or his family, these are all still handicaps.

I think it would be very hard to give the physically handicapped person that feeling of independence the old age pensioner has, because there would undoubtedly be an assessment of that person as to whether he really was handicapped, the degree of handicap, whether his handicap was actually a physical disability that was unavoidable, or whether, in fact, it was an emotional unwillingness to cope with a situation.

We so often see among the handicapped one person paralyzed from the waist down, confined to a wheel chair, who makes enough income to support himself and his family. He gets around, is active, eventually gets enough money together to buy a car, is able to transfer into the car, and leads a relatively independent life. On the other hand, we also see a similarly handicapped person who gives in to that handicap and is either confined to an institution, where he is looked after hand and foot or, in fact, becomes dependent on welfare or his wife and family look after him.

Therefore, there is bound to be that assessment by others of the degree of handicap a person suffers. This will take away from the person the feeling of independence that the old age pensioner has just because he's 65.

I therefore believe that perhaps what is needed here is a little different attitude toward social assistance. I think under social assistance, a person who, because of his physical handicap, is unable to make his own income probably feels guilty, uncomfortable, or dependent, in receiving social assistance. On the other hand, a person who, because of his educational handicaps, is unable to sustain himself or his family and has to have social assistance -- really, are they all that different? Isn't social assistance, in fact, a form of guaranteed income?

I would, however -- because I believe the hon. Member for Little Bow is searching for something we're all looking for -- like to suggest that maybe we need to seek out those people who are presently utterly dependent because of a lack of assured income and who are kept in a state of much more subjugated dependence than they would be if they, in fact, had an assured income. I kind of hesitate to put in this class the people who, as a result of respiratory polio, are confined to an iron lung. I think if, in fact, they were given a simple assured income of \$255, they might then be moved out of the institution and be able to live at home. They would not be independent. Either their \$255 would be

totally inadequate to pay for a nurse or an attendant to care for them as they would require, or their unpaid wives would lose a large degree of their independence and have to look after them at home. Sometimes we do have to consider the greater good. Sometimes maybe by making one person more independent, we in fact deplete the dependence of others.

I think his recommendation is good, though, in that it brings to the attention of the government a need for this whole problem to be looked into. I would like to suggest that in looking at the handicapped, the first step that should be taken is to assess the degree of handicap, whether it's the minor cut end of a finger or the lack of information from Executive Council, or whether it is one that really makes those persons utterly dependent, unable to look after themselves, or reduces somewhat their ability to get around the town so they're confined to a house.

We are developing in medicine a kind of ladder of dependence or independence for people -- this is more in the field of physical medicine -- in which we can assess for everybody, including hon. members here, the degree of disability or the degree of handicap which that person has. It can be scaled not on the amount of movement they can get from a finger, leg, or toe, but, in fact, their ability to do those normal things required of living like going upstairs, getting into bed, getting dressed and undressed, or carrying out the normal toilet procedures of washing and so on. All these can be scaled in such a way that I think handicapped individuals could be assessed as to their degree of handicap. We would then want to look at the prognosis of their handicap. That is, is it a temporary thing, is it something that's only going to be for a short while, or is it a permanent thing, is it something that's going to gradually get better or worse.

Then I think we want to look at the potential of re-training that handicapped person. This is an area where a lot of work is being done, but I think a lot more needs to be done. Retraining some of these people into different jobs which they can cope with would give back to many a degree of independence they have lost.

One would then ask whether there is something which would give that person independence or the ability to be independent: whether it's a phrenic nerve stimulator or a nerve stimulator which would keep the lungs working for them, keep the diaphragm working, which is expensive equipment; whether it's an artificial leg; whether it's a wheel chair; whether, it's a means of transportation; or whether and included in this, it's an assured income. I think, as the hon. member says, there are a lot of handicapped people who presently are utterly dependent on institutions and programs provided by the government, who, if they had an assured income, would be independent of those programs and could go on their own.

But I think this must be looked upon as only one of the many factors which could, in fact, provide independence for these people. Two hundred and fifty dollars a month would not anything like cover the equipment that might be necessary for the respiratory handicapped person. It can be terribly expensive. The artificial kidneys which people need to be independent are terribly expensive. That amount of money would nowhere cover that, and it might be some other route they need to take. If, in fact, they were provided with the artificial facilities, they could then go ahead and lead active productive lives with independence, where they wouldn't need the assured income.

I think though that under this heading, an assured income should certainly be looked at in each individual case. I can only recommend that maybe the approach to this is a much better individualization of the problems of the handicapped than trying to come out with a program of assured income for all in which you are going to catch a lot of people who think they have handicaps.

If they can be assured of an income, they're going to be quite sure they have handicaps, right through the gamut of people who, in fact, have handicaps where an assured income of \$250 isn't going to do anything like permit them to live a decent independent life. I think the really important thing is to develop an individualized program which looks at each of these people individually to try to arrive at a most satisfactory program for that person.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to participate in the debate on this resolution. I think in many ways it is an excellent one. I have some reservations and concerns. Of course, I'll want to bring those out in my debate.

The principal idea, to express the concern we all have in this province for the handicapped, is a very important one and should certainly be recognized. Although it may seem perhaps that our concern or our priority with regard to handicaps is not where it ought to be, I really think it is. Some of my colleagues have, to this point, expressed in their remarks many of the areas in which we as a government have been providing assistance and support to the handicapped.

I have to say at the outset that this in no way meets the need which exists in this province. But by the same token, we really have to explore the very vastness of assistance, the whole problem of the needs, before we can embark on a program as directly suggested in the resolution. That is where my concern lies, whether the resolution will enable us to carry out just what the resolution suggests.

In looking at the whole matter of assisting those less fortunate, with regard to the terminology of handicapped in whatever form, we really must look as well at the many existing mechanisms providing assistance, and whether a plan such as put forward in the resolution would harmonize with the many types of programs and assistance that now exist or whether, in fact, it would jeopardize the benefits now being realized and received by those handicapped in the many various forms.

I think we all in this province are firm believers that each and every one of us should be entitled to an independent living to the extent possible for each of us. When I say, "to the extent possible for each of us", I do not mean by that, to be dependent on assistance given to us, and that determined by our independence, but what we, as individuals, desire or should desire in the way of independence, giving consideration to all circumstances.

I think we need to look at the question, as has been raised, of how we would define a handicap. What would the numbers be? Would we fall into a kind of trap that in order to keep the numbers down, we put inflexibility into the definition of a handicap? With regard to such an assured income plan, there would need to be, I think, some kind of guideline as to when one becomes eligible for full and total support and when it might be partial.

Then comes the question of those who are handicapped in various ways, perhaps not totally physically or mentally. The nature of their handicaps is such that it might be difficult for them to have or find employment -- not that they are not capable of performing, but simply, has society a broad enough outlook to take the risks to provide employment. Will it then revert to a position where we no longer need to take the risks because there is a guaranteed income? I think that kind of reversal would do irreparable harm to the individual -- emotionally, mentally, psychologically, physically, in every way, because that would tend to cause individuals perhaps to turn inward, into themselves, and feel they are a detriment to society rather than of assistance to society.

I think, if we consider some of the assistance now being provided through many and varied programs, we must recognize benefits are provided not only provincially, but federally and municipally as well. We mustn't forget about the many volunteer agencies providing benefits and assistance. How would these be affected by such a plan?

Mr. Speaker, I think today we have had many points of view expressed on the concerns. I have just started outlining some of the kinds of problems we are facing with regard to determining who might be eligible. It seems to me that statistics might be at hand as to what has been happening in other provinces which have implemented some program. If we are to take a figure -- the hon. member who introduced the resolution indicated the possibility that some 3 per cent of the population is handicapped and would require the assistance. On that kind of basis alone, and we really do not know what the figure is, but if we took that as a premise, the annual cost, on the basis that such individuals would not have any income, would be estimated at \$150 million annually.

Now, it's not necessarily only the dollars we need to be concerned about, because the individual and the need must be taken into account. But what does it do to all the other benefits that are being provided through the various programs? I think we're all aware that there has been a review between both the federal and provincial governments of income security in Canada. A study has been taking place, which, I expect, will be concluded within a reasonably short time. But I think before we can consider embarking on an independent plan, it would be important for us to take into consideration the benefit of that study, and explore the very broadness of what, in fact, must be included. Do we then terminate all the other services, or how do we align them with the guaranteed income plan, and to what extent do we expand or detract?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make many more remarks on this. I would like perhaps to gather a few more statistics on some. I'd like to have an opportunity on another date to continue in this debate, so I move to adjourn debate on this motion.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: I move we call it 5:30.

4. Mr. Horsman proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta consider the introduction of legislation which would:

- (a) empower courts in all matrimonial causes to divide the property of the spouses between them;
- (b) require courts in arriving at such division of property to consider the contribution in dollars and effort made by spouses; and
- (c) remove by amendment such inequities as may exist in Alberta laws relative to matrimonial property rights.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is very late in the afternoon to introduce a topic of such great importance in International Women's Year. However, for the few moments still available to me I should like to do so.

As the hon. members are all aware, this is International Women's Year as declared by the United Nations. Therefore, I think it is most appropriate that we discuss the question of property rights, or matrimonial property rights, because by and large those rights affect women. The fact is that the rights . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Fifty-fifty.

MR. HORSMAN: But that is not true, my honorable -- my learned friend, I was going to say, but the hon. member is not accurate when he says it is fifty-fifty because that, as most

hon. members should be aware, is not the situation today in Alberta, or in Canada for that matter. There have been recent court cases which have brought this home very markedly to many people, particularly in Alberta, and particularly to those engaged in agriculture. So, it is not accurate to say it is fifty-fifty. I think, Mr. Speaker, this Legislature should take the lead in Canada in moving toward an amendment of the law or of the laws as they exist.

I just want to advise the hon. members, Mr. Speaker, that when the people of Medicine Hat-Redcliff elected me to this House, they elected somebody who believes absolutely, without any question whatsoever, in total equality of rights between the sexes. Mr. Speaker, I mean that most sincerely, and that applies to rights and opportunities. Over the years, in my practice of law . . .

DR. BUCK: [interjection]

MR. HORSMAN: I beg your pardon.

[interjections]

I don't seek the opportunity suggested by the hon. Member for Clover Bar, and I'm sure he doesn't either. Most hon. members didn't hear the interjection, which is just as well.

Having practiced law for several years, I have had many occasions to deal with the question of distribution of property arising out of break-ups of marriage, either through divorce or judicial separation. I can assure the hon. members who have not shared that experience that there are many inequities in the law which need correction, and need correction now.

May I just say that Alberta can take the lead in this area. After all, it was Alberta women who took the lead in this century mind you, in having women declared to be persons by the laws of this land. I think Albertans should take great pride in the fact that this leadership came from this province. In addition, at the provincial level under the leadership of our Premier, we have an Alberta Bill of Rights which, in its first section, provides for equality of sexes in the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law. In addition, under that same leadership of the hon. Premier, we have The Individual's Rights Protection Act of 1972. I just want to quote from the preamble for a moment:

WHEREAS recognition of the inherent dignity . . . equal and inalienable rights of all persons is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world; and

WHEREAS it is recognized in Alberta as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all persons are equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, age, ancestry or place of origin [and so on.]

Mr. Speaker, those are pieces of legislation where leaders have led some of the rest of the provinces in Canada to introduce similar types of legislation. Alberta has led Canada in other ways. I must give credit to the previous government for the introduction of an ombudsman. This type of leadership, I suggest, can be displayed by this Legislature bringing forward legislation to lead the rest of Canada in providing amendments to the laws as required to bring about equality in regard to matrimonial property rights. It is for that reason, Mr. Speaker, that I place this motion on the Order Paper.

I would like to quote just briefly, if I may, from a resolution passed by this Assembly in 1971 -- I've been referred to the Alberta Institute of Law Research and Reform -- which has resulted in the publishing of a working paper on matrimonial property. I commend the reading of this paper to all hon. members, particularly to those new members. That resolution said this:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Government of Alberta request the Institute of Law Research and Reform to study the feasibility of legislation which would provide that, upon the dissolution of the marriage, each party would have a right to an equal share in the assets accumulated during the marriage, otherwise than by gift or inheritance received by either spouse from outside sources.

Mr. Speaker, this paper sets out in some detail on a preliminary basis the difficulties faced by women in particular in regard to enforcement of what should be their rights and what the people of Alberta really believe the rights under marriage should be.

Before this matter comes up again in the Legislature, I recommend that all hon. members obtain and read a copy of this document published by the Law Reform Commission of Canada, and entitled Working Paper No. 8 on Family Property. If the hon. members, none of whom I hope fall into the category of male chauvinist pigs, read and understand these documents, I'm sure we will have an opportunity of meaningful debate on the topic of matrimonial property rights when we come to debate this matter again.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the hour, I move to adjourn the debate. I hope it will be noted that I commenced speaking at 5:20 and that the position on the Order Paper will be accordingly protected.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Everyone has obviously agreed to adjournment of the debate.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, while the clock stands to 5:30, may I remind the members of the House that Subcommittee B will be meeting this evening at 8 p.m. in the Carillon Room to consider the estimates of the Department of Municipal Affairs. The Northeastern Alberta Commissioner will be present.

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

[The House rose at 5:30 p.m.]