

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Tuesday, March 16, 1976 2:30 p.m.**

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 21**  
**The Hail and Crop**  
**Insurance Amendment Act, 1976**

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 21, The Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 1976. This bill, Mr. Speaker, is designed to provide a faster and more orderly method of obtaining the 50 per cent share the federal government pays of Alberta farmers' crop insurance premiums.

[Leave granted; Bill 21 introduced and read a first time]

**Bill 20**  
**The Municipal Government**  
**Amendment Act, 1976**

MR. JAMISON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, The Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1976. The purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to amend Section 20 of the act to define clearly those persons who have the right to petition for annexation of land from one municipality to another.

[Leave granted; Bill 20 introduced and read a first time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 20, The Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1976, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased today to have in your gallery, sir, a distinguished Canadian and distinguished visitor, accompanied by our own Ombudsman, Dr. Ivany.

As members are well aware, and as I am pleased on occasion to be able to compliment our predecessors in office in having the first ombudsman in North America, this approach has been emulated in other jurisdictions in North America. We have in your gallery today, sir, the first ombudsman for the province of Ontario, accompanied by his wife. I'd like the members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome Arthur Maloney, Q.C., and Mrs. Maloney.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you, and to the Assembly — and I can see them, I assure you — a School and Community class from the University of Alberta, 24 in the members gallery accompanied by their professor, Dr. B.Y. Card, scholar, educator, and friend. I should ask them to rise and be welcomed by this Assembly.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the House, a group of students from a Belgravia Grade 5 class. They are accompanied by their teacher, Miss Bancroft. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the House.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to introduce to the House 21 students from Worsley School in Grades 5, 6 and 8. They are accompanied by teachers, Jerome Cherry and Nan Cherry; a parent, Mrs. Anne Thompson; and bus driver, Gordon Hagen. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to stand and be recognized by the House.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the House, two distinguished Albertans from Medicine Hat, the president and the secretary of the Library Association of Alberta, Mr. Peter Colebrook and Beth Milne. I would ask that they stand and receive the acknowledgement of the House.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the legislative library two copies of a report called, *Evolution of Pollution Abatement Technology as applied to the Alberta Oil Sands*.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file two copies of the *Report of the Alberta Mission to Europe* in September and October 1975. Copies are available for members of the Assembly.

In addition, I wish to file a letter and a telegram: a letter to the Premier from Mr. Paul Gerin-Lajoie of the Canadian International Development Agency; a telegram to the Premier from Mr. MacEachen, the Minister of External Affairs. Both comment very favorably upon Alberta's participation with regard to the Guatemala earthquake emergency.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**Aircraft Maintenance**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Transportation. It's with reference to comments the Deputy Premier made in the House Friday concerning co-operation between PWA and the government in providing a hangar at the Edmonton International Airport.

The question really is: will the hangar be available for use by PWA, or is it to be used solely by Wardair?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, my initial understanding of the arrangement between PWA and Wardair is that

Wardair, being the owner of the large aircraft that require the hangar, will be principally using that particular hangar.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, in light of his answer that Wardair will principally be using the hangar. Have there been discussions between the minister and Wardair about the possibilities of PWA or third-line carriers in the province being able to make use of that facility at the International Airport?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions along that line. I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition would be aware that Wardair is available to do maintenance on other air lines' aircraft on a commercial basis. I am sure that will happen. As I said on Friday, I believe there can be substantial savings to both Wardair and PWA in the maintenance of the larger aircraft in a joint operation.

MR. CLARK: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In the minister's comments Friday in the House, he talked in terms of the creation of 200 to 300 jobs.

In that particular situation, is the minister referring to those 200 to 300 jobs in the course of construction, or are those long-term, permanent jobs after the maintenance operation is located and operating back here in Edmonton?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea how many people will be involved in the construction. The figures I gave had to do with the actual people involved in aircraft maintenance, in the training of aircraft personnel, that kind of thing. They would be permanent, long-term jobs.

MR. CLARK: A third supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. What procedure will be used for contracting out the construction of the maintenance shops? Will it be public tender?

DR. HORNER: A part of the agreement amongst the three parties covers the tendering practices: that they should be normal commercial tendering practices.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The question was: will there be public tender? The minister used the term, normal commercial tendering practice.

My question to the minister once again is: does normal commercial tendering practice mean public tender?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I've been assured that, while the selection of the primary contractor has been made, the subtrades are going to be publicly tendered.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Was the initial prime contract awarded by public tender?

DR. HORNER: My understanding, Mr. Speaker, was that it was an invitational tender because of the constraints of time.

#### **VS Services Ltd. Contract**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether the contract with VS Services at ASH/Deerhome in Red Deer will be a cost-plus arrangement or a firm, fixed contract?

MISS HUNLEY: No, I'm not in a position to answer that at the moment. I am prepared to give a commitment to file the contract in the House after it has been successfully negotiated.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the House the government's policy with regard to instructions given to the senior civil servants doing the negotiations? Are the senior civil servants aiming at a firm contract price?

MISS HUNLEY: The officials were instructed to negotiate the best kind of contract which would enable us to deliver service in a satisfactory manner, due to the specialized nature that is required. We were also interested in what the net saving would be: whether it could be saved by different firms receiving the tender for either the housekeeping or the laundry, or whether we should go for one group to handle the three. We were looking for the most economical and efficient long-term benefit for the people of the province and the residents of ASH/Deerhome.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. In light of the fact that we don't know whether it's going to be cost-plus or a fixed amount, how does the minister know we're going to save a million dollars?

MISS HUNLEY: We know what it has cost us in the past, and we have projections as to what the contract can be delivered for. Within those parameters, we're negotiating the contract.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question. The minister agreed to check for us earlier last week. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether VS Services have experience in the area of housekeeping work in the course of their contracts in Alberta or, perhaps to enlarge it, in Canada?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes, I have checked that out. They do have that experience, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. At the present time does VS Services have personnel initiating their program at the facility in Red Deer, doing initial studies and plans and whatever is necessary?

MISS HUNLEY: The last word I heard, Mr. Speaker, was that their personnel were there interview-

ing employees who would be interested in moving over to VS Services as their future employer. I do not know whether they are there today, but I know they were there last week.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. The personnel there at the present time are employed by VS Services, and their pay is not involved in this \$1 million saving we have been talking about. Is that correct?

MISS HUNLEY: We will be negotiating with VS Services for the total contract. I expect them, as good managers, to employ their people in the best possible way. No doubt part of it will be in hiring. But the contract does not begin until May 1, so the people there now must come from some other area in VS' management field.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether the contract with VS Services will be signed prior to May 1?

MISS HUNLEY: I would expect it to be signed prior to May 1. We expect it to be implemented effective May 1. I would assume that with the legal technicalities and so on that might occur, it still should be ready for scrutiny by May 1. That's when we anticipate its coming into effect.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister concerning the contracting out to VS Services. This is with respect to employee benefits.

In view of the fact that presently Deerhome employees come under The Public Service Pension Act, does the government anticipate an act to permit VS Services Ltd. employees to come under The Public Service Pension Act? What steps will be taken to ensure the same pension benefits will be transferred?

MISS HUNLEY: We would expect the employees to be employed by VS Services. The negotiations they would conduct would be the same kind that any other reliable employer would negotiate with his employees.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Following your answer, will there be any guarantee that pension benefits will in fact be retained, or will it become a matter of further negotiation?

MISS HUNLEY: I think it's important to know, Mr. Speaker, and I believe, as we've alluded to it in the House, though I would have to check to be sure, that any person who has been employed at ASH/Deerhome for five years or longer can do whichever they wish. They can remain with the CSA but work under the direction of VS Services. Anyone with less than five years is expected to move over to VS Services if they so desire. If they don't wish to, then they would perhaps be able to move into another area in ASH/Deerhome, or do whatever they wish.

### Gasoline Retailing

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Has the government given any consideration to introducing legislation during either the spring or fall sessions to provide for functional divorcement of gasoline retailing from the major oil companies?

MR. HARLE: Not that I'm aware of, although I would refer that question to the Minister of Business Development and Tourism.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we are not anticipating legislation at all.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to report to the Assembly whether or not an understanding was reached at the most recent meeting with the Automotive Retailers' Association? If so, what was that understanding?

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can. On February 12, in response to a request by ARA, the Premier and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and I met with representatives of ARA. At that meeting we indicated that we would examine their proposal, which was twofold. One was functional divorcement from the retail area by the major companies. The second was a wholesale price for gasoline which would be the same to all the retailers.

We are now in the process of examining that presentation. On March 1 we accommodated a meeting with five major wholesalers of gasoline in order that we might examine the position of ARA from their standpoint as well. We are still examining the whole process, Mr. Speaker. We also are awaiting the report by the Isbister Commission in Ontario, which we understand will be forthcoming very quickly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary to the hon. minister. Does the government agree that company-operated self-service stations constitute unfair competition to private service stations?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is clearly making remarks appropriate for the opening of a debate.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, let me rephrase that. Has the government obtained any statistics to evaluate the impact of company-operated self-service stations in relation to the normal privately owned service stations?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we have examined the situation of the automotive retailers in Alberta as it compares to other provinces. Bearing in mind that we have the lowest corporate tax, the lowest personal income tax, no sales tax, and a number of great advantages like that, we feel our retailers are in a

more promising position, a more substantial position, than our . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member was stopped from asking an opinion. Now he's getting it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly of a time frame in which members of the Automotive Retailers' Association might expect an answer to their requests re number one, functional divorcement and, number two, a wholesale price?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I'm not in a position to indicate a time frame. However, we are really looking to the Isbister Commission of the Ontario government, and what its findings will be. Our assessment at the moment is that complete functional divorcement, which is proposed by the ARA, would in fact mean that the average automotive retailer would have to purchase his station, with a value of some \$300,000. He would probably be compelled, with perhaps another two or three retailers, to purchase a delivery truck worth some \$70,000.

Those situations and facts, along with many others, are being examined. We do anticipate the Isbister report will come out sometime in the late part of the year. We couldn't act precipitously in this regard without seeing what other jurisdictions now have under way.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have one final supplementary question I'd like to pose to the hon. minister. I asked the minister whether the government has any statistics on the variation in the wholesale price of gasoline to retailers throughout the province. There's a substantial difference, as the minister would know, between the major city centres and some of the rural areas.

My question really is: has that difference grown in the last three or four years?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer that specifically. I can say we had definite agreement from all the wholesalers of gasoline with whom we have had discussions that their price to all their outlets would reflect cost savings. In other words, if transportation was provided by a retailer in purchasing gas, that would be deducted. They would charge their flag carriers for the credit card situation. They would obviously charge them for their advertising program. They would charge them for the transportation to their pumps, that kind of thing. Where the credit card and advertising didn't apply to a station, that would not be charged. In other words, the cost to the retailer would reflect cost savings.

MR. CLARK: One further supplementary question to the minister. Has the government given consideration, during the course of the review the minister now has under way, to asking the wholesalers not to open any more self-service stations until such time as the government has reached a determination as to the representation made to the government by the Automotive Retailers?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we have had considerable commitment from the major companies. They indicated that wherever possible those companies that would be self-service would be offered to a lessee to operate, rather than be company line operations. We also have an indication from them that, as far as is possible, they will limit the number of self-service stations to be opened, bearing in mind that they have a market responsibility to their company as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think it should be reflected here that the demands on the consumer are considerable these days. What is happening in the market place, in retailing gasoline and the expansion of self-service, is an indication that people are now looking for cost savings wherever they can be obtained.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I didn't make my question clear. I apologize to the minister. Has the government had discussions with the wholesalers about the possibility of no more self-service stations being opened by the wholesalers until such time as the government has reached a final determination on the matters brought to the government by the Automotive Retailers' Association?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we have had discussions with all the majors regarding the limitations on self-service, bearing in mind the responsibility to the consumers of Alberta.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question. I'm pleased to understand you had discussions about them. Now could you tell us what commitments you got out of the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Could the hon. member please refrain from addressing the minister personally.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, could the minister enlighten the Assembly as to the results of those discussions? Was the minister successful in getting a commitment from the wholesalers that no more self-service stations would be opened up until the government has finalized its deliberations on the Automotive Retailers' presentation?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated twice now, we have had discussions with the majors and have asked them to limit the number of self-service stations as far as is possible, without unfair competition to those people who are carrying their flags, bearing in mind the responsibility they owe to the consumers of Alberta.

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

MR. NOTLEY: Can the minister advise the Assembly a little more clearly just what this limitation means? Will it be a certain number of additional outlets? Will a ratio be established? Or will there be an outright moratorium?

MR. DOWLING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how I can make myself any clearer. I think I've stated the position as well as I can.

### Age of Majority

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Attorney General. Are young men and women over the age of 16 and under the age of 18, who are charged with criminal offences, charged in juvenile court or adult court?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, there was a recent case of the district court, concerning the age of juveniles in this province, which it was decided to appeal. Since that time, there has been a judgment by a Supreme Court judge relating to a young person 16 years of age which would appear to reverse the earlier decision. The appeal has not yet been heard. I have not yet had the opportunity of seeing the latter case decided by the Supreme Court, and I would like the chance to review that before I comment further on the subject.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville, followed by the hon. Member for Bow Valley.

### Agricultural Societies Grants

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I guess when I waved, it was a wave of welcome to one of my constituents. Since you have given me the opportunity, I'm going to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Could the hon. minister advise the House whether he has ceased the guarantees to agricultural societies and, if so, would he elaborate on the reasons?

MR. MOORE: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't quite understand the member's question.

MR. BATIUK: I was wondering whether the minister had ceased giving guarantees to agricultural societies and, if so, the reason for it.

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker, we haven't.

### Rural Telephones

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones. Could the minister indicate AGT's policies for individual line service in rural areas; for example, where farmers or summer-cottage owners temporarily disconnect their phones on these lines and then have them reconnected?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did ask me that question on Thursday and I indicated I would search into the details of the matter. I was out of town yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not yet in a position to do that. But the commitment to the hon. member certainly stands.

### Immunity from Prosecution

MR. GHITTER: My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Attorney General. Would the Attorney General kindly advise the House whether an official of his

department authorized the city of Calgary police force to grant immunity from prosecution to the woman involved in the tragic incident in Calgary last weekend?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, no such authorization was granted by the chief Crown prosecutor in Calgary, by anyone else in my department, or by me. I think it should be clear that the police forces of the province have no capacity whatever to make deals or to grant amnesty with respect to the bringing of charges against persons in the court. The responsibility for the administration of justice and for law enforcement rests with the office of the Attorney General and his agents and, in this sense, not with the police officers. There was no such deal, offer, or arrangement.

MR. GHITTER: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the hon. Attorney General regard the situation as being such that his department is not bound by the immunity provisions of the police force and, as a result, the prosecutions could still be laid against the woman involved?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is either expressing or seeking a legal opinion. Perhaps he might do that otherwise.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

### Nursing Aides

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It's regarding the agreement for nursing aides.

Is the government going to provide funds so the hospitals may provide back pay of \$75 a month to the date of April 1, 1973? Has this been decided at this point?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had indicated yesterday, in reply to a question from, I believe, the hon. leader, what commitment I had made to the Alberta Hospital Association and to the hospitals in Alberta. When we have a firm figure there are two elements. There is the retroactive pay and there is the annual cost that will come into the hospital system as a result of the agreement between the CNAs and the AHA.

In reply to the specific the hon. member has raised, Mr. Speaker, I believe we will have to include the retroactive pay with our final assessment of the annual cost in the system, and fund in one amount. As hon. members would know, the reason for that is of course that we could try to fund the retroactive pay separately, but because of the fact that we're firming down the figures and because of the fact as well that the House is in session, we are not in a position to pass funds at the present time to cover the retroactive pay.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister with regard to nursing aides. It is not clear at this time whether or not they fall under The Crown Agencies Employee Relations Act. Is there a body clarifying this jurisdiction with regard to bargaining at the present time?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is asking a question which is in the field of labor negotiation and labor law. I would be inclined to refer that to my colleague, the Minister of Labour.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I was busy reading some correspondence when the question was directed to my honorable colleague, so I would ask the hon. member to place his question again.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. It's not clear whether, for bargaining, the nursing aides fall under The Crown Agencies Employee Relations Act or under some other act at the present time. Is there going to be clarification, or has this clarification been made at the present time?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, my understanding would be that it depends on which board employs the nursing aides in question. The ones involved in, say, the Foothills or University Hospitals would perhaps still come under The Crown Agencies Employee Relations Act, but others would not.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Do I take it, Mr. Minister, that the government has accepted the principle of full retroactive pay?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's a question of whether the government accepts the principle. I think if we refresh our memory, Mr. Speaker, the facts were that action in this matter was originated with the Human Rights Commission under The Individual's Rights Protection Act passed by this government in 1972. Subsequent to that, an actual court action was taken by certified nursing aides in Alberta. The result of that court decision is now in. Mr. Justice MacDonald has handed down his decision.

The result of his decision still had to be worked out by agreement between the certified nursing aides and the Alberta Hospital Association. All the hospitals in Alberta have assigned their bargaining rights to the Alberta Hospital Association. So the final disposition of the matter, as I indicated yesterday to the House, was one arrived at between the Alberta Hospital Association, as the bargaining agent for the employer hospitals affected, and the Alberta Certified Nurses Aide Association, as the group negotiating on behalf of the certified nursing aides who are affected. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, this is by far the majority of the nursing aides in the province at this particular time.

That agreement and court decision is one which the province definitely feels bound by, as I'm sure all hon. members would agree.

#### **Violence in Sport**

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Attorney General. What means does your department have to monitor the amount of violence in sport?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, we don't have a special sport, violence, or monitoring section in the department, if that's what the hon. member is referring to. [interjections] Other than MLAs, yes.

The investigative and evidence-gathering capacities of the police forces of the province are primarily the route through which charges are brought before courts. In this case it would proceed in this manner, through the police forces of the province.

#### **Alberta Gas Ethylene Company**

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Business Development and Tourism. Is the construction start for Alberta Gas Ethylene at Red Deer-Joffre still on schedule as specified in the permit?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we're constantly monitoring the progress being made by the proponents of involvement in the petrochemical industry in Alberta. We are looking forward to having another meeting, very quickly, with the principals of the companies involved. It is our feeling that things are going pretty well on schedule, bearing in mind the very large number of things that have to be accomplished: meetings with the National Energy Board, permits from that board, construction ordering, and so on. We think they're fairly well on schedule. We're keeping in touch with it and I have a meeting scheduled within the next number of weeks.

#### **Physicians' Incomes**

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Would the minister assure the House that in the future, annual reports of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission, in addition to revealing the annual gross incomes of M.D.s and other health professionals paid under that commission, would clearly, boldly, prominently indicate that this is a gross figure and does not reflect the medical doctors' overhead.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member, as a matter of fact I'm somewhat surprised because I think, for the first time in the annual report of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Commission, there was a definite statement to indicate that persons should not interpret the average figures as either the gross income or the net income of physicians in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, we cannot say more than that in the annual report. Of course, other than the physician himself, only the federal Department of National Revenue actually knows the actual net income of the physician when income tax returns are filed.

DR. BUCK: It's very adequate.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm not surprised at all because I brought this up last year.

But, Mr. Speaker, the supplementary question is this: would the hon. minister confirm, agree, or acknowledge that the Alberta Medical Association report which indicated that the average net income

was \$28,000 — and from that, Mr. Speaker, that the medical doctor must subtract life insurance, sick pay insurance, and income tax . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Are we going to work over the contents of this report question by question?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think it's a very important point for public relations, because people have the misguided idea that doctors earn a net amount reflected as a gross amount.

May I ask it as a supplementary, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, and acknowledging the importance of the topic, perhaps he would like to put an appropriate resolution on the Order Paper.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, just a brief supplementary on that topic then. I hope the Speaker will allow this supplementary.

Does the minister then agree, acknowledge, or confirm — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, if I may have the attention of the minister — the fact that the average medical doctor's earning life is less in years, that the average M.D.'s earning starts late in life, and his life is less . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order. Perhaps outside the House the hon. member might get that question directly from one of his colleagues.

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you for your patience, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the hon. member was representing the people of his constituency or the medical association.

AN HON. MEMBER: Tell us about dentists.

AN HON. MEMBER: And then the lawyers.

#### **Crime Compensation**

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the hon. Premier. In light of the recent tragic shooting in Calgary and the fact that there will be no compensation by the city of Calgary and very little compensation by the insurance company involved, I'd like to ask the Premier if there's any avenue open for some compensation to the people who own the property.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, as hon. members are aware, that matter was raised in the House yesterday by the Member for Calgary Buffalo. I think it presents a very good case. If we can move rapidly enough and deal with the situation with some possible degree of retroactivity — I hope we can — I hope hon. members would respond in an affirmative way in the House.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Would the hon. Premier look into the fact that The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act can possibly be amended to include real property being damaged, as well as assault on bodies?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. Perhaps I should have elaborated upon my first answer. That is what I really intended to express in my response to the hon. member.

Yesterday the Attorney General pointed out that the present position didn't allow such compensation. The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo was noting, as the hon. Member for Clover Bar has, the difficulty of that. We think it's something that should require quick action on our part to reassess. If we feel there's a practical way to do it and do it quickly, we'd like to do so — bring an amendment before the House and hope for a positive response.

#### **AEC Shareholders List**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs or the Attorney General. It follows from the question I asked yesterday with regard to the availability of lists of shareholders of the Alberta Energy Company.

Has the minister had a chance to check into the matter?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I have made some inquiries. I'd like to follow up with some further inquiries and report again, if the member will ask the question tomorrow.

#### **Regulations for Notaries**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Attorney General, if I may. I wonder if the Attorney General could advise the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, whether any projected changes are now being considered in the bonding regulations for notaries public.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I've had no such discussions on that matter, although I think I understand the problem to which the hon. member is referring. In view of his experience, I think it would be appropriate that we look at that matter. We'll be happy to do so.

#### **Boundaries Advisory Committee**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Could he indicate to the House the present status of the group looking at municipal and school boundaries across the province? When might we expect a report?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This is one of the most contentious issues facing municipal districts and counties. I understand the last meeting was held in the special areas just two weeks ago. I believe the committee has now retired to write its final report. I cannot give an exact date when it will be received, but I would imagine within three or four months.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the minister. Is it the intention of the minister to keep the committee functioning, or is it the government's intention to disband the committee, once the government gets the final report?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to the section of The Municipal Government Act which gives the government the power to adjust boundaries arbitrarily once the committee is sitting. I haven't yet decided whether we'll disband that committee. Yet I'm sure there will be ample opportunities for all MLAs to participate in decisions which will have to be considered.

#### **Malt Plant — McLennan**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, if I could, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and ask whether he's in a position to report to the Assembly on the current status of the proposed malt plant in the town of McLennan.

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to give the Assembly any undertaking as to when — in view of the fact that the announcement was made early in December — he'll be able to report to the Assembly on the nature of the plant, who the principals are, and some details about it?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the proposed plant, which was announced in December, is being developed by the private sector. The only commitment I could give is that when the people who are involved in that development provide me with additional information and ask that it be made public, I can do it. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Alberta has no direct involvement in the operations of that proposed project.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question for clarification. Can the minister advise the House whether federal funding under DREE will be made available to the plant, and whether the ADC will be involved in any way?

MR. MOORE: I could not answer either of those questions at this time, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that the project partners have made an initial application for assistance under the nutritive processing agreement. Quite naturally, that application has not been approved. As far as I am aware, no application whatsoever has been forwarded to any of our lending institutions.

#### **Nutritive Processing Agreement**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise the House whether Ottawa's current austerity program has had any impact on funding under the nutritive processing agreement, whether there's been

any cutback, phasing out, or qualification of federal cost sharing under this agreement?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps I'd refer that to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we certainly haven't any definitive information as to the federal government's plans at this time. Those will undoubtedly appear in detailed or spending programs which they might put forward, or in the budget.

If the hon. member wishes to put the question on the Order Paper as to its precise form, I think I could find out whether concurrence with the federal government could be achieved with regard to their plans in this area.

#### **Sexsmith Rapeseed Plant**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture and ask if he could give us some indication as to the Sexsmith rapeseed plant. Where does it stand with regard to its application for additional funding from the Ag. Development Corporation?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that they are in the initial stages of making an application to the Ag. Development Corporation for some assistance by way of a loan guarantee. That application has not yet been dealt with by the board of directors of the Ag. Development Corporation.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Will the minister be in a position to confirm to the Assembly whether the application is for an amount in the vicinity of \$7 million?

Could the minister also give some indication as to any other financial commitment the province has, direct or indirect, as far as the Sexsmith plant is concerned?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, at this time I could not confirm what the amount of the application to the Ag. Development Corporation might be.

The question of the total financial involvement of the Government of Alberta, through co-op activities or otherwise, is one that's quite detailed in nature. I would be willing to provide the information to the hon. member at some other time. He could perhaps put it on the Order Paper if he wishes a total reply.

#### **Medical Care Costs**

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Would the minister confirm that by far the major expenditure in medical care is hospital care; and of that high expenditure, the major cost is the salaries of non-medical workers?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question, certainly I can indicate that, historically, when medicare began we were one of three provinces that retained a premium system. Because of that fact,



plus the very significant rise in hospital costs in recent years, in the case of Alberta it's valid to say that, on a net basis, that part of the hospital side of the cost financed out of public funds is substantially higher.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we also have to be conscious of the other side which is the gross payments out of medical care that result in premiums levied directly to Alberta citizens.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, then a supplementary to clarify the fact that the major portion of the hospital care expenditure, which represents the major cost of medical care, is for non-health professional salaried individuals.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, the one thing I must say to my colleague, relative to the Legislature, is that a lot of these representations were made to me at the time, of course, that the medical profession was indicating what increase it should be receiving under the agreement. I cannot in any way confirm or agree with specific representations made by the Alberta Medical Association, or in fact with specific representations made by my colleague in the Legislature.

#### **Elk Island National Park**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I promised the hon. Member for Clover Bar I would ascertain a rumor on the phasing-out of the recreational facilities at Elk Island National Park.

Perhaps I could take this opportunity to say that I have caused inquiries to be made and it appears that, certainly with regard to my department, there is no correspondence with the appropriate federal minister. There have been no discussions and no suggestion in any way, shape, or form that there is any plan for the phasing-out of that park by the federal government. It would appear the alleged rumors are groundless.

#### **Spruce Cliff Centre**

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Little Bow raised a question a few days ago and I agreed to provide an answer. He inquired about the status of the employees at Spruce Cliff.

There were 23 employees. Twelve have been absorbed into other positions in the provincial civil service, four have resigned for personal reasons, and seven have not as yet been placed.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

MR. SPEAKER: I've been asked to say that the first meeting of the public accounts committee, which had been intended to be held on March 17 at 10 a.m., is going to be held on March 24 at 10 a.m. That's March 24 at 10 a.m. for the first meeting of the public accounts committee.

While I'm on my feet, when the hon. Minister of Agriculture was introducing Bill 21, it was in fact, although it was not mentioned at the time, accompanied by the recommendation of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor. If the Assembly would agree,

we can confirm that the bill has been properly introduced.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

#### **head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

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

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

Copies of all studies, documents, and submissions prepared by, for, or submitted to the Department of the Environment which deal with the Canadian Johns-Manville Company Ltd. plant to be located in the Innisfail area.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to amend that motion by adding the following after the word area: "but excluding applications for the permits under The Clean Air Act and The Clean Water Act that contain privileged technical proprietary data on the manufacturing process to be utilized at the plant, and that correspondence involved be shown subject to the concurrence of the parties involved". I discussed the proposed amendment with the hon. Leader of the Opposition and explained the reasons for it. I believe we can comply with the motion for information by adopting the amendment.

[Motion carried]

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motions for Returns 116, 117, 118, and 119 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

106. 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 Minister of Social Services and Community Health and officials of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development concerning possible federal and/or provincial funding of the Calgary Urban Treaty Indian Alliance.

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to move an amendment to Motion No. 106 by adding at the end of the question, "subject to the concurrence of the officials of the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development".

[Motion carried]

108. Mr. Taylor proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

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

With reference to the Calgary Regional Planning Commission,

(a) the total amount of money provided by the Government of Alberta to this Commission in each of the years 1965-66, 1970-71, 1973-74, 1974-75;

- (b) the number of persons employed by this Commission in 1965-66, 1970-71, 1973-74, 1974-75.

[Motion carried]

111. Mr. Taylor proposed the following motion to the Assembly:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the number of accidents, compensable under The Workers' Compensation Act, which occurred in petroleum drilling in Alberta during the years 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, and 1975, and the number of such accidents in each year which occurred in each of the months of December, January, February, and March.

[Motion carried]

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

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

A list of all direct loans to Alberta farmers or farm companies made by the Agricultural Development Corporation during the period October 1, 1974, to December 31, 1975, showing as at January 1, 1976, in each case the name of the farmer or farm company, the total principal outstanding, the arrears of interest, and the arrears of principal.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, in past years we have provided to the Assembly and to members a list of agri-business loans and the outstanding amount in each case. It has not been the practice in the past to provide a list of individual farm loans or loans to farm companies.

In the annual report of the Ag. Development Corporation for the year ending March 31, 1975, which was tabled, we did provide a breakdown of direct loans to farmers by region. We also provided figures with regard to the number of loans and arrears in the amounts involved.

I would want to say to members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that certainly our view is that the loans made to individual farmers by that corporation usually contain information which should be considered private and confidential. I would think that the very concept of the corporation and its relationship with individual farmers throughout the province would be in real jeopardy if we began to release the total information about the amount of loans an individual has, the arrears there might be in an individual case, or how far that individual is behind on his payments. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I think all hon. members understand our feelings in that regard. I would like to ask the members to decline this particular motion for a list of direct loans, arrears, and so on to individual Alberta farmers or farm companies.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member conclude the debate?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that what we are expanding upon, what we are talking about here, is public funds. The precedent has been set by

the Alberta Opportunity Company providing this information. It is also public funds, Mr. Speaker. It lists the people who borrow funds. It gives their names, the names of the companies, and the amounts that have been borrowed.

Mr. Speaker, there should be absolutely no difference between that return and this one. If this were a private company, a private bank lending private money, I could go along with the hon. minister. But it is not. It is public money being lent to Alberta farmers. I feel that individuals who are turned down by the Ag. Development Corporation have the right to know why their application was turned down and a neighbor across the road, possibly with the same type of situation, is accepted. I think the man who is declined that loan should have the opportunity to find out who has borrowed the money, and who has not borrowed the money.

It's quite obvious that the former Minister of Agriculture has laid his edict upon the new Minister of Agriculture and said no, because . . . I challenge that former minister. There are many loans that have had political influence. That's why those loans were made. I think we, as members of this Legislature, should be able to decide also if some of these loans were made with a political background.

Now that's a pretty serious charge, Mr. Speaker.

DR. HORNER: [Inaudible] . . . charge, without foundation.

MR. CLARK: Oh, look who's talking.

DR. BUCK: Well then, Mr. Speaker, maybe the hon. Deputy Premier can tell me if it's more than a coincidence that his former executive assistant just happened to know who all the people were who borrowed funds from the Ag. Development Corporation, and if there's more than a coincidence that many of these people happened to be at a particular campaign rally in Fort Saskatchewan, and if it's more than a coincidence that a lot of these people phoned me after and said, you know, we were asked to be at that function. If that isn't political coercion, Mr. Speaker, I don't know political coercion. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: You sure don't.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, really, these are public funds. The precedent has been set. I don't want a big list with the names and the defaults posted on the wall. But I think it's our responsibility, as members of the Legislature, to know how these funds are being expended.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nonsense.

DR. BUCK: Fine. The hon. members can say "nonsense". But I'm sure the information is probably available to them. If it's available to the executive assistant, it's most likely available to the government members.

Mr. Speaker, it's quite obvious this motion is going to be rejected. But I would like to ask the hon. minister if that information will be made available to us on a confidential basis, as the former Minister of Agriculture promised the opposition side of the House

that that information would be available to the members on a confidential basis. If it is, I will accept that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, could I rise to a point of order? My point of order is, in closing a debate, you do not introduce new material.

Without taking sides in the debate at this time, I would suggest that the speech given by the honorable mover should have been given when he moved the motion, in order that some of these things could be answered. When they're answered in the closing of the debate, when things are left hanging, it's not fair to other members in the Assembly.

I'm not raising a particular point at this time, but I would suggest that this type of information be given when a person is moving a debate, not when he's closing the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to the point of order, of course, we have a slightly special situation here. Routinely, the mover of such a motion does not speak in favor of the motion. Perhaps in some instances, the mover might anticipate that the motion might run into some kind of disagreement or opposition, and speak to it on the first opportunity.

To handle the matter strictly according to fairness in debate, possibly the mover, in concluding the debate, should be confined to rebutting those points which have arisen during the course of the debate, rather than raising new points which, in fairness, other members do not then get an opportunity to rebut.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, may I repeat my request? Would the hon. member permit a question?

DR. BUCK: Certainly. The member can ask a question just about any time he'd like, Mr. Speaker.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering if the hon. member would tell us whether the previous government's farm purchase board [not recorded] lists of loans issued to individuals, and how they accounted for the \$11 million they had to write off on this type of loan.

DR. BUCK: Would you like a debate, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Without at the moment dealing with whether the question strictly arises out of anything said by the hon. member, I would say, subject to argument, if there's going to be any, that it's probably a proper question. If the hon. member wishes to answer, he is free to do so.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member can ask that question of public accounts. I think the accounts of the province are available for that time. If he wishes to discuss it at that time, it would be fine.

MR. CLARK: And there are no caveats filed by the Auditor either.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, on that point of privilege, I'd like to say I can't quite recall all the things the hon. member has just said in closing the debate. But I'd like the opportunity to review *Hansard* to see, on a point of privilege, whether he has not raised something he should retract.

[Motion lost]

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

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

- (1) Copies of all application forms, contracts, and correspondence now held by the Government of Alberta which passed between the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation and the Playwrights' Co-op of Toronto in respect to the grant given to that organization as documented in Sessional Paper 112/75;
- (2) The appropriation number from which the grant was paid.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to amend Motion No. 113, that it be subject to the condition that the correspondence referred to in part (1) of the question be tabled only if the writers of the correspondence agree to it being tabled.

[Motion carried]

#### head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

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

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to amend permit number 73-AP-054 issued pursuant to Section 4 of The Clean Air Act to force a reduction of Syncrude Canada Ltd. sulphur dioxide emissions from the current permitted level of 287 long tons per stream day to a level not exceeding 60 long tons per stream day and, where practicable technology can be made available prior to Syncrude Canada Ltd. going on stream, to a level less than 60 long tons per stream day, consistent with such technology.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to move Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper, I believe that we, as members of this Legislature, should be conscious of the importance of maintaining the highest possible environmental standards in the oil sands development of this province. It has already been mentioned in previous debates that the Syncrude arrangement itself, in many respects, places the Government of Alberta in virtually a conflict of interest position because we are now a major part of that project. The more stringent the environmental standards are, a portion of that cost will have to be met by the taxpayers of Alberta.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, while acknowledging that fact, it seems to me we have to ensure that our obligation is not only to the production of oil today, but is to the protection of the environment today and tomorrow. In dealing with this issue, I want to touch upon a number of separate matters, all relating to the

question of reducing the emission of sulphur dioxide at the Syncrude plant.

A few weeks ago we had quite a kerfuffle between the federal and provincial ministers over environmental standards at the Syncrude project. The federal Minister of the Environment was quoted as saying that he wanted the best possible technology used. This led the provincial minister to indicate clearly that he didn't want Ottawa trespassing on the jurisdiction of the province of Alberta.

I must confess the federal minister is not the most diplomatic politician in the world. Perhaps the best way of describing his approach is to say — and I remember this phrase once used by Jenny Lee, the famous Member of Parliament in Great Britain, talking about the late John Foster Dulles, he is as diplomatic as an elephant treading on eggs. I suppose one can make the same comment about Mr. Marchand's role in this matter.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I think most members of the Legislature would recognize that a minister of the Crown for the Government of Canada has to consider obligations. When you look beyond the boundaries of one province, when you consider that emission control will not only affect the province of Alberta but the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan, clearly the federal government does have some obvious role to play. I find it rather strange in a sense, Mr. Speaker, that the minister reacted as he did at the time. Hon. members of the Legislature will recall the great furor that took place in 1971 over, I believe, the Bennett Dam and the suggestion made at that time by the members of the opposition in this House that the former government had not looked after the interests of Alberta, in terms of making sure that a B.C. proposal didn't adversely affect the people of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of emissions from the oil sands, not only do other provinces have a stake in this, but clearly so does the federal government. When the minister plays the role of advancing provincial rights in this particular instance, I would just refer him to the very adamant fight conducted in 1971 in the Legislature when the contingent of 10 at that time was on this side of the House.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I believe provincial rights may have an important place in Canadian politics — no question about that. But I really don't think we should be arguing provincial rights at the expense of qualifying environmental standards in any way, shape, or form. I would also say, however, Mr. Speaker, that does not justify the lack of tact or perhaps the somewhat unskilful intervention of the federal Minister of the Environment. But we shouldn't use lack of diplomacy as a justification to try to present the argument that the federal government has no real interest in environmental control, because clearly, Mr. Speaker, it has.

I want to deal with a number of specific questions relating to sulphur dioxide emission in the oil sands region. First of all, I think we have to look, Mr. Speaker, at the potential dangers. I emphasize the word "potential" because no one really suggests, Mr. Speaker, that the emission of 287 long tons per day will, in fact, lead to all the consequences outlined. But given the right set of circumstances, it can in fact create potential hazards.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, in 1974, when the summary

of the Conservation and Utilization Committee report was tabled in the House, even in that summary the suggestion was made that given the right combination of atmospheric conditions, killer fogs similar to the London fog of 1952 could in fact arise.

As I look at the appendices to the Conservation and Utilization Committee report, Mr. Speaker, the concern is perhaps a little more clearly drawn. For example, on page 24: "Generally the climate poses severe problems for industrial pollution dispersion." Or on page 31: "Elevated inversions . . . can trap pollutants in the valley and create a uniform mixture of high concentration" on a frequent basis. Or page 37: "The potential for serious problems due to fog formation in the Athabasca Tar Sands area is significant."

Or on page 37 again, the report warns of "unacceptable frequency and duration of air and land vehicles due to fog." Again on page 37: an "unacceptable level of fog-borne pollution damage to humans, plant, fish, wildlife and equipment". Or page 39: "Sulphur Dioxide may react with water to produce sulphuric acid with subsequent fallout to surface or collection by vegetation."

Mr. Speaker, these are the concerns expressed in the appendices to the Conservation and Utilization Committee report, the summary of which was presented to the Legislature in 1974. However, the appendices go into the concerns in a somewhat more detailed way.

But, Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, we have the memo prepared for the former Minister of the Environment, Madame Sauve, which makes it clear that the federal government, as a result of its investigation of sulphur dioxide emissions, is very concerned. I quote from that memo:

Syncrude's assessment of environmental effects from sulphur dioxide emissions was to predict ground level concentrations based on a single stack [in] ideal weather conditions. This is a simplistic approach because it does not consider total emissions of SO<sub>2</sub>, adverse dispersion conditions nor the effect from other operating plants in the area. In addition the long-term potential problem of cumulative deposition of sulphur emissions in regional and transboundary sites was not reviewed by Syncrude . . .

With the release of large volumes of water vapour, we are concerned with the potential for formation and persistence of widespread fog in the area. This fog, along with sulphur dioxide, could produce a serious human . . . hazard.

Let me just restate that last comment, Mr. Speaker: "This fog, along with sulphur dioxide, could produce a serious human health hazard." Mr. Speaker, that information is contained in a memo to the former federal Minister of the Environment, Madame Sauve.

Mr. Speaker, one can get into the argument, which was touched upon last fall, as to why the appendices of the Conservation and Utilization Committee report were not released along with the summary of the report. Clearly, the summary of the report mentions the potential problem of killer fog, but when one reads the appendices, the concern is much more clearly expressed. I would simply say, Mr. Speaker, when that information was obtained by the government, not only should the summary have been tabled

in this House, but quite clearly the appendices should have been tabled as well.

I note, looking at the *Edmonton Journal* of October 31, 1975, a very strong editorial making it clear that that particular newspaper felt the appendices should have been tabled. The editorial is entitled "Suspect Guardian". I'm sure hon. members, and most especially the hon. minister, have already read the editorial, but rest assured the points made are valid.

Mr. Speaker, the question I think we have to look at seriously, in assessing the issue of reducing sulphur dioxide emission in the oil sands region, is first of all: do we have the technology to reduce emissions? There's no point in talking about reducing the emissions from 287 long tons to 60 long tons if that technology does not exist. We really haven't the time to engage in a theoretical debate.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that there is very strong evidence to indicate that we do, in fact, have the technology today. In Environment Canada comments relating to documents comprising the Syncrude environmental impact, on page 4: Commercially available units capable of achieving an overall sulphur recovery efficiency of 99 per cent could reduce SO<sub>2</sub> emissions to approximately 20 long tons per stream day. Through the application of the best practical technology, total SO<sub>2</sub> emissions could be reduced from 287 long tons per stream day to an estimated 40 tons per stream day.

Mr. Speaker, in a news release submitted by the Save Tomorrow — Oppose Pollution organization based in Edmonton, dated November 14, 1975:

Alberta environmental officials acknowledge that it would be possible to reduce Syncrude SO<sub>2</sub> limits to 60 long tons per day from 287, if Syncrude was forced to use the best available technology. The deputy minister also acknowledged at the meeting that the Syncrude permit could be modified to include this technology.

That's a quote, Mr. Speaker, from a STOP news release dated November 14, 1975, which was submitted shortly after a meeting with officials of the Department of the Environment.

Mr. Speaker, I quote both the Environment Canada statement, as well as the STOP news release, to indicate that there is pretty obviously, at this stage of the game anyway, technology which could in fact reduce the sulphur emission level. If the technology is available, Mr. Speaker, why the delay in implementing the new technology?

Mr. Speaker, as members know, Syncrude was permitted to implement a design freeze at some point in history — probably July 12, 1973, the date of their permit — after which they were not required to upgrade their pollution control technology. At that time, the 287 long tons per stream day was judged to be the lowest possible SO<sub>2</sub> emission rate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's fairly obvious the government has come to the conclusion that, because the commitment had been made to Syncrude in 1973 to proceed, and that commitment had imposed a level of 287 long tons per day, the government should follow through, regardless of the consequences to the environment. I simply suggest to the minister and to the government that that is false economy indeed, not only in the short term for the company, but certainly in the long term for the people of Alberta as a whole. We should insist on the best possible standards.

Mr. Speaker, we've had various estimates of the cost of employing the best possible standards and in fact bringing the level of emission down to the amount I've suggested in my resolution. I understand that in the discussions the STOP people had on November 13 with the departmental officials, the figure of \$40 million was estimated.

Mr. Speaker, I've just had an opportunity to glance very quickly at the report the minister tabled today. As I look at that report — and again I emphasize that I've only had a very, very few minutes to review it — it would seem to me that the cost, according to this report, would be more in the neighborhood of \$18 to \$20 million, as opposed to \$40 million. I'd be interested in hearing from the minister whether the figures in this report are correct, or whether in fact it is closer to the \$40 million figure.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the issue, in terms of what position we take, should not be the short-term economic position of Syncrude; although I suggest to you that a \$20 to \$40 million expenditure, while important, is not something which is beyond the pale when you look at the way in which the increase in Syncrude's investment, the increase in the cost of building the project, has spiralled in the last two years.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, when the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources was talking about Syncrude the other day, I believe the Leader of the Opposition asked him whether it was on target. He said, yes, within a million dollars here or there — here or there a million dollars. Mr. Speaker, what we have to ask ourselves as members of this Legislature is, if we can talk in that kind of casual approach — here or there a million dollars — surely to maintain the best environmental standards possible, we should be insisting that that additional investment be made now.

I well remember the former Minister of the Environment, when he was in opposition, making the point over and over again that you should engineer your proper safeguards, your pollution control, into the project; that it is far less expensive to do that while the project is being built than to have to start over from scratch four, five, or 10 years after the fact.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that under these circumstances, surely the question of whether we should reduce these emission standards should be based on the cost benefits of doing it. Yes, there's going to be a cost. But, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the benefits to the people of Alberta over the long run would be greater than the cost.

Again, I quote from the STOP organization. They did a cost-benefit study, Mr. Speaker. They concluded that the overall benefits from employing the best technology would far surpass the cost. They estimated a cost, at that time, of about \$40 million. STOP has calculated that the dollar savings of reducing Syncrude SO<sub>2</sub> emissions to 60 long tons per stream day, less the capital cost of the necessary technology over a period of 25 years, comes to something over \$200 million. Their figures are \$228.9 million.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not in a position today to be able to say whether this information compiled by STOP is accurate or not. But, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the Legislative Assembly should be demanding from the minister that the government

itself has done a cost-benefit study, and that cost-benefit study be tabled in the Legislature, so that we in fact know the costs and benefits of the best technology being employed in the Syncrude venture.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the members of the House that rather than asking the department to do that cost-benefit study, it should be conducted by the Environment Conservation Authority. They should be asked to compile a cost-benefit study. It should be tabled in the Legislature so that, in fact, we're able to make this judgment on the basis of objective information supplied by an objective government body.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at one point in researching this resolution, I was interested in the fact that there may almost be a case of discrimination against GCOS. The government is ordering Great Canadian Oil Sands to reduce their sulphur emission levels, although that really couldn't be argued convincingly by anybody, including the officials of GCOS, because we have had excesses where GCOS has been above the standards some 233 times. I notice, Mr. Speaker, that the government has given GCOS until October 1, 1978, to come forward with answers as to how the company intends to reduce its sulphur dioxide emission levels.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to just comment briefly on that. October 1, 1978, is the time they are asked to come forward with some answers. Not reducing, not plans, not machinery or technology in place to reduce sulphur dioxide. The minister, in fact, has given GCOS two and a half years to look about and decide what answers they come up with as to the approach they are going to take. It may be five or 10 years before we get any action, but two and a half years to come up with an answer. Mr. Speaker, this is certainly being very generous.

The same minister, with respect to the many instances where GCOS has exceeded the sulphur dioxide rate, made the comment that his department prefers working with companies which are violating emission levels to improve their technology instead of automatically laying charges against them. Well, Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves. There's really little doubt that seems to be the government's policy. But I would simply say that it makes a bit of mockery of the principle of justice when you have a law which has been violated on 233 separate occasions, but the minister still says his responsibility, in his judgment anyway, is to work with the company in resolving this problem, as opposed to laying charges.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if we could really follow that same course of action in dealing with the average citizen in his or her conflict with the law. Whether it be the individual who breaks the speeding law — we had the Solicitor General yesterday tell us that, in fact, there is no leeway and rightly so, there should be no leeway — or whether it deals with a more clear-cut criminal activity, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the law must apply equally to everybody. I find it somewhat alarming to see that we pass legislation and then we take the cavalier approach of well, Mr. Speaker, we prefer working with the company to iron out these little problems as opposed to laying charges.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just draw my remarks to a conclusion here by looking at some of the past comments by the Conservative party. I thought the best statement of the whole situation was summed

up on January 23, 1973, by the hon. Mr. Yurko in a speech to the [Instrument] Society of America, Calgary section, re tar sands development and strategy. I'd just like to quote, Mr. Speaker, from that very excellent address:

Water effluents or atmospheric emissions will have to be controlled to the limits of technology in order that serious environmental degradation be prevented.

"To the limits of technology," said the minister. Well, Mr. Speaker, that certainly was a very wise and prudent suggestion. Therefore, it seems to me that the government would be enthusiastic about endorsing the resolution I have placed before them today, because that certainly is consistent with the arguments presented by the minister.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, is there a danger from the present emission levels? The answer, quite clearly, is yes, there is a danger. That "yes" doesn't come from a group of extreme environmentalists; some in this House are quick to charge groups like STOP with being extreme environmentalists. It comes not only from these people, but from government reports, federal and provincial reports. Some of the provincial reports were a little slow in getting out to the public, but now that they are there, there's really no question, Mr. Speaker, that the danger exists — no challenge to that question at all.

Is it possible to bring in a technology which would reduce the danger? Again, Mr. Speaker, quite clearly, when one looks at both federal and provincial officials, the argument is yes, it is possible to improve the technology. Will it be costly? No question about that. It will be costly, Mr. Speaker, but I suggest to you that it will not be nearly as costly as trying to get by without insisting on the highest possible standards.

Mr. Speaker, in the course of this Legislature we will be talking a great deal about our heritage and about the government's much discussed heritage trust fund. Well, one of the things we have to consider when we talk about heritage is the kind of environmental legacy we're going to leave to future generations. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that as members of this House, it is our responsibility to insist not only that adequate technology be used, but the very best technology be used, and that we should accept nothing less than that.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I think the resolution of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is certainly timely and worthy of debate, not, I submit, from the standpoint of the validity of the resolution, but rather that through public debate here we might clear up some of the errors and distortions that have been expounded recently on the subject.

I'm sure most of these distorted and often incorrect statements have been uttered by well-meaning but generally misinformed people. Nevertheless, these statements do tend to frighten many people needlessly, and if they were generally believed by the public, they could be harmful to a great project.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think it should be made clear that the criteria for the evaluation, control, and monitoring of environmental impact are clearly defined in Permit to Construct No. 73-AP-054, as the hon. member mentioned in his resolution. The criteria were issued in this permit by the Alberta

Department of the Environment on July 12, 1973. In the permit [are] such items as stack height, which is defined as a minimum of 600 feet; clear gas emission temperature, which is specified as 450 degrees Fahrenheit; concentration of sulphur dioxide in the flue gas; the maximum rate of release of sulphur dioxide in the flue gas; the maximum rate of release of sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere from the main stack — and that's defined, as members know, as 287 long tons per day; the recovery of elemental sulphur from the sulphur recovery units — and they're defined, on a basis of a half-hour average, not to exceed .06 parts per million or, if you like, 150 micrograms per cubic metre. I sometimes think, in this case at least, that the metric number is perhaps easier to comprehend than parts per million.

Also in this document, ground level concentrations of nitrous oxides are not to exceed a half-hour calculated rate of .06 parts per million; particulate emission is not to exceed .2 pounds per 1,000 pounds of gaseous effluent; height of the two flare stacks, at 235 feet. Criteria for the containment of tank vapors, floating tank roofs, and numerous other criteria are all clearly spelled out in this approval, which was granted on July 12, 1973.

Mr. Speaker, Syncrude has designed and is building the Mildred Lake plant to conform to every criterion, every standard, laid down by the Government of Alberta. Furthermore, the experience and the ability of the Alberta Department of the Environment are well known. We were one of the first jurisdictions anywhere to establish a department of the environment. I will give credit to the previous Social Credit government for establishing the Department of the Environment. I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition will be pleased that this is the second time today he's been so commended.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's very honored.

MR. CHAMBERS: Under the first environment minister, the Hon. Jim Henderson, under the Hon. Bill Yurko, and now under the Hon. Dave Russell, our Environment Department has become a recognized model and is, I submit, respected worldwide.

I think it's also important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the environmental standards in force in Alberta are as stringent as those anywhere in the world today. For example, on one-hour average maximum ground level concentrations of sulphur dioxide, Alberta permits a maximum of .17 parts per million, while the federal Department of the Environment permits .34 parts per million, exactly double. Similarly, for a 24-hour average maximum ground level concentration of sulphur dioxide, Alberta permits .06 parts per million, while Canada permits .11 parts per million — again almost double. Similarly, for the same 24-hour average maximum, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency permits .14 parts S02 per million, an appreciably higher number. I think we all recognize that they have a much greater sulphur dioxide problem than we have anywhere in Alberta, or in Canada for that matter. The 600-foot stack design criterion that Syncrude is employing results in a calculated maximum ground level concentration of .04 parts per million, well within the prescribed .06 parts per million limit.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that sulphur

dioxide is a deadly gas. It's one that mankind has always had to put up with. Worldwide sulphur dioxide emissions are estimated to be in the order of 440 million tons annually, with over 65 per cent of this amount coming from natural sources. These might include volcanoes, coal seams burning through spontaneous combustion, emission from muskeg, marshes, and so forth. This produces a natural background S02 level of 2 parts per billion or, on the other scale, 5.7 micrograms per cubic metre.

However, it was not really until the twentieth century that sulphur dioxide and the associated sulphates in the atmosphere became a major concern. Why did that happen? What caused it? Well, it was really the twin phenomena of rapidly increasing population and the almost exponential growth of industry as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Also, people moved from rural areas into urban concentrations and crowded into urban sprawls to the point where the S02 emissions became a real concern.

I think the danger of sulphur dioxide was finally brought to light in the disastrous episodes that members are aware of, the so-called killer smogs the media people like to talk about — the big one at Donora, Pennsylvania, in 1948, and the other one in London, England, in 1952. It's interesting to note that the major contributor to sulphur dioxide in these places was private dwellings, although industrial emissions — and again these were from coal-fired boilers — were major contributors. Nevertheless, the coal burned in the home heating units produced a major part of the sulphur dioxide which resulted in those catastrophes.

Many people died in those episodes. Although it's been said that the persons affected were generally those already on the point of death, there's not much question that their deaths were accelerated. The estimated sulphur dioxide level at Donora was 2 parts per million or 5,720 micrograms per cubic metre, while in London the level was 1.37 parts per million or 3,800 milligrams per cubic metre — exceedingly high levels. Also, these extended over an appreciable period of time.

Coal, of course, is a major worldwide source of man-produced sulphur dioxide. As oil and natural gas grow more scarce, society has to return to a coal base for energy. Then sulphur dioxide emissions will, of course, be a growing concern. I might add that Alberta is fortunate in that Alberta coals tend to be very low sulphur compared to coals produced in the eastern United States certainly, and in many other parts of the world.

Sulphur dioxide affects the respiratory system. It's believed — and my medical friends might substantiate this or not — that S02 alone is absorbed high in the respiratory tract, while the sulphates can be delivered deeper into the lungs, causing more serious lung disease. Adverse health has been associated with continuous — and I'd underline that word "continuous" — sulphur dioxide exposures in the range of 80 to 120 micrograms per cubic metre or .03 to .045 parts per million. Sensitive vegetation can stand .05 parts per million indefinitely without any effect. Vegetation does not incur any damage until you get into the range of .1 to .3 parts per million. I think members are all aware that prolonged exposure to sulphur dioxide causes corrosion and damage to

metal, and damage to paint.

What about the emissions from the Syncrude plant? Mr. Speaker, there are two basic areas of sulphur production. At full production, the sulphur recovery plant will have an inlet stream containing some 994 long tons of sulphur per stream day. It's designed to operate at 95 per cent efficiency, thereby producing 945 long tons per day of elemental sulphur for market. The tail gas from the sulphur plant will contain some 49 long tons of sulphur per stream day.

If Syncrude were to spend as much again as has been spent on the entire sulphur plant, using the best currently available technology, possibly an additional 3 per cent efficiency could be obtained, which would result in a maximum additional recovery of some 20 long tons per day. A very expensive operation, I submit, for a very small return, using a large energy input and entailing additional operating problems to boot.

From the other aspect, the fluid cokers, a coke product — which as members know, will be stored — will have a 9 per cent sulphur content, which of course makes it relatively unusable at this point in time. Therefore, if you equate that 9 per cent, 233 long tons per stream day of sulphur will be stored with the coke. The tail gas from the fluid cokers will contain 94 long tons per stream day. The two streams, 49 long tons per day from the sulphur recovery plant and 94 long tons from the fluid cokers per day, will be combined with other process gases and burned in the CO boilers.

What emerges from the CO boilers is sulphur dioxide — the villain, if you like. This passes through electrostatic precipitators, which are 95 per cent efficient. Then the flue gas goes to the 600-foot stack, where we get that 286 number, 286 long tons per stream day of sulphur dioxide. If you equate that to elemental sulphur, it's 143 long tons per day.

Mr. Speaker, this plant design, contrary to what the Member for Spirit River-Fairview says, incorporates the very best practical technology available today. Furthermore, the plant incorporates proven, workable technology. We know this technology will work. It's not experimental [technology] which might be breaking down and failing, probably on a regular basis. The emission pollutants will be well within Alberta standards. I'd like to repeat that the Alberta standards are one-half the federal standards.

As I mentioned, a variation of the so-called Stretford process — which I think members have probably heard of — could be used to extract a minor additional amount of sulphur from the sulphur recovery unit tail gas at appreciable capital cost and energy input. There is no proven process for treating flue gas at this time. Several processes are in the experimental stage. But to my knowledge, at least, these have yet to operate anywhere on a commercial basis successfully for any sustained period of time. Furthermore, these are very expensive processes, entailing high operating costs as well as high capital costs and high energy input. They also produce a polluting waste product, which in turn must be disposed of in some fashion.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, we should let the people who are in dire need of flue gas clean-up — those people who reside in densely populated areas of the U.S.A. and the U.K. where they are burning high-sulphur coal — perfect the technology, [and] not put

ourselves in a non-competitive industrial position by attempting to set needlessly high standards when our present standards are more than adequate and there really isn't any problem.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to discuss the question of the so-called ice fogs that has been raised by the media. The example some critics have used is Fairbanks, Alaska. The fact is, of course, that little or no realistic comparison can be made between Fairbanks, Alaska, and the Mildred Lake site. Contaminants in Fairbanks are associated mainly with the automobile, the internal combustion engine. They are emitted at ground level in a city with a mountain backdrop similar to Los Angeles, whereas the sulphur dioxide at Mildred Lake will be emitted from a 600-foot stack. Because of the heat in that stack — as I mentioned, a 450-degree minimum leaving the stack — the height of the stack, and the velocity of the gases rising through that stack, the plume will rise to at least 1,200 feet, and probably considerably higher, before it begins to disperse.

In general, temperatures lower than minus 30 degrees Celsius are required for ice fog conditions. The low, ground-level temperatures for ice fog conditions are normally associated with steep, ground-based inversions where perhaps 100 metres above the ground, the temperature may only be minus 15 degrees Celsius. Hence, only 100 metres above the ground, the temperature would be too warm for ice fog to form. With the height of the stack we have at the Syncrude plant, the buoyancy of the plume will result in an effective stack height whereby the likelihood of the plume and sulphur dioxide mingling with ice fog is highly remote.

The other term that is bandied about — and it has been here again today — is "killer fog". Studies of so-called killer fogs indicate that particulates and long-chained hydrocarbons known as alkenes have been present. The design of the Syncrude plant is such that no alkenes will be emitted — period — in the flue gas. As I mentioned before, the electrostatic precipitators will be 95 per cent efficient, so particulate emission will be extremely minor. As a result, the possibility of such a fog ever being created is extremely remote indeed, if not literally impossible. Furthermore, the Great Canadian Oil Sands plant has been in operation for eight years without producing anything even vaguely resembling a killer fog. I don't think we need to worry.

Mr. Speaker, in my view it's unfortunate that the phrase "killer fog" has ever been used in connection with an oil sands plant. There's no comparison between the type or the quantity of emissions from the Syncrude plant and the emissions such as caused these killer fogs in Donora or in London. Scare phrases like these maybe sell a few newspapers, I don't know. But in my view, they certainly frighten many people needlessly. Therefore, I'd like to suggest that the use of such scare phrases in any way, shape, or form as applied to oil sands plants is irresponsible on the part of the persons who apply them.

Mr. Speaker, I'd now like to make what I consider the most important point of all. On July 12, 1973, this government issued permit to construct No. 73-AP-054 through the Department of the Environment. As a result, a \$2 billion plant was planned. It was well advanced in design and construction. This plant is designed to meet the environmental criteria



laid down in this government approval. Much of the engineering is complete, as is a significant portion of the construction. You could visit the Syncrude Mildred Lake site today and see the completed and very expensive 600-foot flare stack, complete with the blinking aircraft warning lights. Having met the construction criteria, the plant will then get a five-year permit to operate, which should extend through 1983.

This plant was designed using the very best practical technology available at the time. I suggest to you that to change the criteria now — even if it were possible to meet a lower emission standard, as is proposed in this resolution, even if some brand new technology had just been developed yesterday which would enable a lower number to be met — I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that to change the ground rules now would be the height of irresponsibility.

Mr. Speaker, to even hear this kind of suggestion from the leader of the New Democratic Party must make business people and investment people everywhere shudder. Surely the NDP are not that irresponsible. Come to think of it, when you look at what they did to the oil industry in Saskatchewan and what they're proposing for the potash industry now, maybe they are. In any event, Mr. Speaker, I would hope the public would be aware of this debate and of what the member has proposed in his resolution, and therefore keep in mind what the hon. member and his cohorts would do if they ever had the chance.

You know, a lot of people in Alberta depend on this oil sands plant for work, directly and indirectly. A lot of people in Alberta are going to depend on future oil sands plants for employment, directly and indirectly. Mr. Speaker, to those knockers of Syncrude, I would say this: in my view, this is by far the most important project under way in Canada today. Canada is now facing a growing balance of payments deficit. The major contributor to this deficit in the future will certainly be our ever-growing shortfall in oil. This situation is bound to worsen. Barring some miracle in offshore or Arctic exploration, synthetic oil from our oil sands offers, in my view, the only chance for Canada to regain self-sufficiency in oil and not be dependent on foreign oil sources.

The Syncrude plant must be successful, for other oil sands plants to follow. Mr. Speaker, if Syncrude is not successful, I don't think there will be any other oil sands plants for a long time to come. If Syncrude is successful, I think a series of oil sands plants will be built. One day, as a result of oil sands production, Canada will once again be self-sufficient in oil. In my view, those who would destroy the viability of the project by attempting to force needless and unduly harsh environmental standards are doing an immense disservice, not only to Syncrude, but to Alberta and to the Canadian nation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would ask members to vote against this resolution. Let's get rid of it once and for all.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I hadn't planned to take part in this debate so early in the afternoon, frankly, because I had looked forward to a contribution by either the former Minister of the Environment or the present Minister of the Environment. I think their taking part would have added a great deal to the debate.

Let me say at the outset, in light of the comments made by the member who sits on the Syncrude board, I don't want anyone inside or outside this Assembly to consider my remarks in the vicinity of knockers of the Syncrude project. But let me say frankly, because I raise some questions with regard to the whole Syncrude question, I want to have the record clear that it's a matter of raising questions — questions which I think we do far better to address ourselves to now, rather than when we are some five or six years down the road.

Let me say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, a member of the Assembly who has attempted to wade, if I might use the term, through the tremendous amount of information tabled with the Assembly with regard to this project — be it information from Syncrude itself, from the Alberta Department of the Environment, from the ECA, from Environment Canada, or from STOP — would have to do almost nothing more than spend his time taking not a short course, but a long course in terminology before he could find the available information very meaningful. I've raised this matter with a number of the groups involved. Apparently I haven't been very successful in getting them to make their information reasonably understandable, so that people who are concerned about various aspects of tar sands development would know what really is happening.

I know the official opposition found itself in that situation some months ago. We commissioned a gentleman from the University of Alberta to go through the information from Syncrude, from the two environment departments, from STOP, and from some other groups. I suppose it would have been much easier for us simply to sit on the information, wait three or four years and say at that time, why weren't you concerned about these matters? We felt at that time, and feel today, that a rather responsible approach is to try to be concerned in some of the preventive aspects for problems we're going to see down the road, if in fact they become problems.

At the outset, I think one has to say — at least from where I see the situation — no one really knows how serious the problem is going to be from the standpoint of the environment in Fort McMurray. No one knows specifically how unimportant the problem is going to be.

I would have to say at the outset of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed and appreciated very much the comments made by the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder. But one has to remember, when we look at the Syncrude plant in Alberta today, because of the corporate make-up of Syncrude now, that we find ourselves in a situation of having at least the potential for a public conflict of interest. I say that frankly, because the government, the people of Alberta, the Legislature have or will have over a billion dollars tied up in Syncrude. Look at the equity participation by the province. Look at the infrastructure in Fort McMurray, the road up to Fort McMurray, the contribution by Alberta Housing Corporation, the power plant, and the pipeline.

Let's face squarely what we're looking at here. We're looking at a project which I think the vast majority of Albertans want to see go ahead. But we're looking at a project which the government of the day, regardless of who the government is, now has got at least a billion dollars — likely closer to \$1.2

billion — committed to this project. Very frankly, if the project has problems down the road, this government today has its political neck out some distance. If there isn't a good rate of return, if the project doesn't work well, let's face it, there's going to be tremendous pressure on the government of the day to make some adjustments.

I think the first thing members on both sides of the House have to appreciate is this potential conflict of interest situation. There's no way we can simply say it isn't here. It is. The member who sits on the board of Syncrude made the point that the permit will be reviewed in, I believe, 1983. That is true. But members of the Assembly, let's remember that in 1983, the Department of the Environment will be making recommendations as to what should happen to the permit. If Syncrude is having very serious problems at that time, let's not be so naive as to say there is going to be pressure to make changes in the standards. If we recognize that, at least we're at first base.

But it seems so many people in this province tend to gloss over that. I think that's why there are certainly some legitimate concerns by people when they look at this potential conflict of interest. Frankly, it's one of the reasons I personally don't think we should be getting involved in more of these government/business partnerships. However, obviously the government doesn't listen to me, at least on that matter. I'll leave that comment there. I think it is important that we recognize the conflict of interest situations here, regardless of where we sit in the House. That's with us.

The second point I want to make is that I have been quite impressed with the work the Environment Conservation Authority did on the tailing ponds matter raised in the Assembly some two or three years ago.

Looking at the report, from my limited understanding of the situation, I think the ECA did a good job. People I've talked to in the industry seem to think the ECA did a reasonably good job in looking at the problem and coming forward with its recommendations. People in the academic community who, I suppose, would be considered as — I was going to say wild-eyed or blue-eyed environmentalists, and we need those people around, too — but I think people who are really concerned about the environment respect the job the ECA did on this particular occasion.

I raise this point because, with the conflict of public interest we have today, or potential conflict of public interest as far as Syncrude is concerned, perhaps the one agency that still has a great deal of credibility with the public is the ECA. I don't agree with all the recommendations the ECA has ever made. I don't suspect any other member does either. Despite that, the ECA has withstood the attacks of the Deputy Premier as far as the Paddle River situation was concerned. The ECA has stood up to the government on its decision as far as the dams on the Red Deer River are concerned. The ECA has made some pretty straightforward recommendations as far as the eastern slopes are concerned. We don't know how many have been listened to. But in fairness to the new Minister of the Environment, I think he's moving in the right direction. I hope that doesn't mean he's moved. But I think the minister is moving in the right

direction as far as the eastern slopes are concerned.

So I think we could, as an Assembly, restore a considerable amount of confidence to a lot of Albertans if we were to give the ECA a free rein to hold hearings on various environmental problems in the tar sands region. Members will recall that my colleague, the Member for Little Bow, raised this request in the fall session last year.

I make the proposition once again to the members of the Assembly. It seems to me the ECA has at this time, or appears to have, the kind of independence, the kind of credibility with people who are concerned in this area, to do the job needed.

One other comment as far as the ECA is concerned: it seems to have the ability to take the tremendously complex information that comes forward from all these different agencies, Syncrude and so on, to put it in layman's language, to get it into the hands of those people who are concerned, and to make it possible for people, on a not very sophisticated basis, to come to the hearings and make their point. People don't have to have lawyers, consultants, chartered accountants, and so on to make hearings or presentations before the ECA. I certainly commend them for that.

The last point I want to make as to the motion before us today is simply this: I don't want to lessen the proposition that's before the House. But let me say to the members of the Assembly that the emission problems from Syncrude and from GCOS aren't the only problems we have in the tar sands area today.

I suspect that, before very long, one of the most serious problems in the tar sands region of Alberta is going to be the question of land reclamation itself. Members who haven't had the chance to go up to the tar sands might very well look at the kind of success we've had to date in the tar sands area as far as land reclamation is concerned. When you consider the kind of task before the government, before the companies involved, the question of land reclamation is going to become increasingly important down the road, and not very far down the road.

If we place a priority on this today, here is an opportunity for us as a Legislature to give pretty reasonable leadership to industry and to government departments. Whatever decision the government makes as far as land use is concerned in this province, one of the areas that has to be of more importance in the future is the kind of land use, the kind of land reclamation, we're going to have in the tar sand areas of the province, especially in the Fort McMurray area. So let us not forget that very major and very legitimate concern of the future.

As members of the Assembly, let us also not forget the problem of employment of native people on the tar sands project. It's my understanding that this government has not, to date, really come to grips with that problem.

Members are well aware of the financial problems of the town of Fort McMurray, and certainly some of the social problems prevalent in Fort McMurray itself. We simply can't treat Fort McMurray like any other town in good old Alberta. It isn't. It has unique problems, and despite the political problems for the Minister of Municipal Affairs, some unique steps are going to have to be taken sooner or later as far as Fort McMurray is concerned. The sooner it is, likely the better off we're going to be.

So in conclusion, I'd like to make four points to the members of the Assembly. First of all, let's once and for all recognize that we have the potential conflict-of-interest situation as far as Syncrude is concerned. Let's not bury our heads — I was going to say in the tar sands — let's not bury our heads in the sand and try to wipe that one off the slate. It's there, it's best we recognize it, then act accordingly as government and as members of this Assembly.

Secondly, let's recognize the tremendous, complex information that's now available for individuals. It's virtually impossible for the average person who's concerned about the environment in the tar sands to really know what the heck is going on.

Thirdly, I would urge the members once again to consider the idea of giving the Environment Conservation Authority the role of environmental ombudsman as far as the tar sands area is concerned. It seems to me that would go some distance, legitimately, [toward] making it possible for concerned groups of individuals to raise matters there. I see no reason why the ECA couldn't have yearly hearings, and more often if necessary, with regard to various aspects of the development in the whole tar sands area.

The fourth point I want to make is this: the problem we're discussing today is certainly a legitimate matter to be raised at this time. Let's not try to delude ourselves into thinking that's the only problem we're going to have, or we have now, as far as tar sands development is concerned. We desperately need some leadership from this government as far as land reclamation is concerned. We desperately need some leadership from this government as far as the financing problems of Fort McMurray are concerned. We desperately need some action and some definite leadership from this government as far as the question of natives and native employment is concerned in northeastern Alberta.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join in this debate for a few moments if I could. I think my colleague, the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder, has dealt very well with the technical aspects of the problems we're faced with. I'd like to make just a couple of comments with respect to general government policy. But before I leave my introductory sentence, I think Albertans are darn lucky to have a member like the one from Edmonton Calder representing their interests on the Syncrude board, because we've got a very exciting and pioneering development going on up there with Syncrude.

As the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, it's very difficult for most people in this House, in fact for most Albertans, to wade through the reams of very technical data that come before us. It's very easy — and many groups have been tempted — to select only the odd, rather sensational sentence that might be contained in a report and base a case on it. I believe the responsible position to take is to try to assess very carefully what the facts are, what the situation is, to continually monitor the development, to continue with our research, and to review at reasonable intervals the requirements by way of permits to construct and licences to operate.

This is the approach we've been taking. The evolution of technology in the oil sands area has been very interesting and very rapid, Mr. Speaker. For

instance, the technology now known and available for use in Syncrude, as opposed to that which was available and was used in GCOS, is quite exciting when you make the comparison.

Incidentally, GCOS has been in operation for several years now. It's interesting to note that in 1974 the sulphation results of readings taken throughout Alberta show that for the town of Fort McMurray the 1974 yearly mean was in the range of .06 parts per day per 100 square centimetres, whereas it was .14 for the city of Edmonton, and .15 for the city of Calgary. So, in fact, the sulphation results for the cities of Calgary and Edmonton are about 2.5 times worse than for Fort McMurray. But I haven't heard any members or any of the public raising their voices about that.

I only mention it today to try to give the thing some proper perspective. I think it's fair to say, in continuing [my] remarks about GCOS, that for persons who go up there, or for scientists who have actually taken tests or observed the results of somewhat in excess of eight years' operation of that plant, there are literally no visible results of pollution devastation as a result of the operations of the GCOS plant. There are, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition says, problems with the tailings ponds and with land reclamation. We know that, and that is being worked on.

Insofar as Syncrude is concerned, I think the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder related the technicalities of the emission levels and the total emissions by way of long tons that could be wasted every day. We know those will be improved in future. We've told Syncrude, in letters to them, that their emission standards and methods of control will be reviewed at the time the licence to operate is issued, and that it will be reviewed at reasonable intervals from time to time. I think that's a reasonable attitude to take.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview had some comments to make about the government being somehow hand in hand with GCOS. I think I detected a note of criticism when he referred to my earlier remarks that the philosophy of the Department of the Environment — one which I support — is that if an industry is having a pollution problem, we prefer to work with them in solving their problem, rather than shutting them down and prosecuting them.

We've done that with many industries in Alberta, and generally it's working out quite well. In some few cases, we have had to issue stop orders, with the attendant results of loss of income for Alberta industries and loss of jobs for Alberta workers. Those are the final, very responsible steps that always have to be considered. But in the case of GCOS, I think the total time they were in contravention of our standards was less than .5 per cent of the total time they've been in operation. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to submit to you that I think for a new kind of technology, pioneering the way they are and maintaining the standards they have in trying to meet standards that are the highest in Canada — in fact, I believe in North America — 99.5 per cent efficiency is a pretty good standard and one which should not be taken lightly.

The other point that has been raised is the involvement of the federal government in this matter. I don't think it was quite the way in which the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview outlined, and I

would like now to outline the true situation. I know my predecessor in office, the hon. Mr. Yurko, submitted substantial information to the then federal Minister of the Environment, Madame Sauve. Her people prepared an assessment and a report on the basis of information that had been submitted and, again, that's been assessed by the provincial department.

We also have a provincial-federal task force on pollution control matters with respect to the Syncrude project. I think it's fair to say that most people in Alberta Environment and Environment Canada are trying to take a realistic attitude toward this very exciting project, and trying to be reasonable in a way that will guarantee the safety, aesthetics, environment, and good conservation techniques in this Alberta project.

I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that I was rather surprised at the response the hon. Mr. Marchand gave, shortly after his appointment as federal Minister of the Environment, in a question period when he was responding to a question put to him by Mr. Ed Broadbent. Now I don't know where Mr. Broadbent is getting his information on Syncrude, but I think whoever is giving him advice is giving him one or two bum steers. He's falling into the trap of using the rather sensational approach and, I think, tending not to pay attention to the duller, true facts of the situation with respect to the pollution control situation at the Syncrude plant.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Calder did mention the possibility of using another technique insofar as the treatment of sulphur dioxide is concerned. That involves a limestone scrubbing process, but it in turn produces 800 tons of gypsum tailings per day, and those have to be gotten rid of. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, when you talk of that process, you're involved in a situation that hasn't been proven in a large-scale working plant like Syncrude.

Insofar as the federal government is concerned, I just want to make this point: we are making complete and full information available to them. They do, of course, now have a member on the board of Syncrude. We've offered, and in fact requested on more than one occasion, to review better technology, if they know of it. So far, that has not been submitted to us.

I concluded my letter to Mr. Marchand by trying to assure him that Alberta would use its authority in this field and recognize its responsibility to make sure the project proceeded in a safe and clean manner in the best public interest. I think that's quite a different situation from the other kind of reaction the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview attempted to portray.

We know, Mr. Speaker, there are unsolved problems, because it's a new kind of undertaking that is under way in Fort McMurray. That's the very reason Alberta and Canada have entered the joint 10-year, \$40 million environmental research program in the oil sands area. When you say that quickly, it doesn't sound like very much. But I think it's a pretty hefty mark on the credit side of both the Canadian and Alberta governments that they've given that time and money commitment to that kind of research, because \$40 million for environmental research is a lot of money.

I tabled today in the Legislature another review, a report by outside consultants that had been done at our request to see if, in fact, we were following proper procedures, if the best practical technology available at the time of the design freeze was being used, and to see if we were overlooking anything. I'm satisfied that report assures that Syncrude and the Alberta government, and in fact all interested parties, have been proceeding properly.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say this: I want to reinforce the commitment Alberta has given, along with its partners, to attempting to get the Syncrude development under way in a manner that will permit production of that valuable resource from the oil sands, in a way that will be safe insofar as conservation techniques and protection of the Alberta environment are concerned, and in a way that will encourage and make it possible for future plants to proceed.

In light of that commitment, and if members balance very carefully what the true facts are, backed up by data, and consider the research program that is under way, consider, for what they're worth, the scare stories that have been promoted — and I think quite innocently and perhaps with good intentions by some well-meaning groups — when you put everything in balance, the only thing to do with this resolution is defeat it.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in making some remarks to conclude the debate, I am more concerned after listening to the minister than I was before he spoke. Mr. Speaker, the remark that somehow all is well with GCOS because [during] less than .5 per cent of their operating time were they in contravention of provincial standards — with great respect to the hon. minister, it would not, in my judgment, be something to boast about if a company were obeying the law only 99.5 per cent of the time. A burglar may be obeying the law 99.5 per cent of the time, but he burgles your house that .5 per cent of the time. [That] makes him less than an honest person.

In my judgment, Mr. Speaker, for a minister to stand up and say all is well, the company is in contravention of provincial standards less than .5 per cent of the time — which we've heard so much about today. Mr. Speaker, if we hadn't heard so much about these wonderful standards, it might be a different matter. Both the Member for Edmonton Calder and the minister spoke about these very high standards. Then he turns around and says, of course, they only apply most of the time, not all the time. Mr. Speaker, in my view, .5 per cent of the time is a rather serious problem and shouldn't be lightly glossed over.

Mr. Speaker, I think before reviewing or analysing how we vote on this resolution, we have to ask ourselves who is uttering the warnings. The minister made reference several times to the true facts of the case, suggesting that groups like STOP and others are spreading scare stories, and that when one balances the equation, there really isn't too much to worry about. Oh, a few problems down the road,

perhaps, but not really too much to worry about because we're looking at all the facts.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that one of the things members of this House will have to give some regard to before they vote on this resolution is that the people who are shouting the warning at this stage are not the politicians on this side of the House, or even the STOP people for that matter. The initial warnings have come from some of the consultants or officials who've worked directly for the Government of Alberta or Environment Canada, experts who are saying, hold on, there is a potential problem. All one has to do — and I suggest to members of this House that before they vote on this motion, they should be aware that the quotes I cited when I spoke on this matter are from the appendices to the Conservation and Utilization Committee report. Mr. Speaker, no one can say that particular committee was staffed by a group of far-out environmentalists who weren't able to understand the technical information in the first place, digest it, and come to some sort of reasonable conclusions.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat again: at this point in time, the warnings are from people who do know what they're talking about. They are saying, look, let's be careful of the route we take.

Mr. Speaker, in my judgment, the argument the Leader of the Opposition raised is one which, frankly, members of the Legislature have to assess very carefully. Because of the involvement of the Alberta government in Syncrude — one can argue over what that involvement is. We know for sure there's a \$200 million equity investment, a \$200 million loan, a \$300 million-plus power plant, and a \$150 million pipeline. You're at \$950 million before you look at the infrastructure costs of \$250 million. We're looking at the neighborhood of \$1.2 billion. Some may argue that figure, but as the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources said the other day, it could be a million dollars here or there.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is: we're spending — and I say spending because I think that the word "spend" is probably better than "invest" when we look at Syncrude — a lot of money on this project. What's going to happen in 1983? What's going to happen if we find that the economics of the project are not that good, that the price of oil has not reached the level predicted to make any money out of Syncrude? Will we then say to the Syncrude consortium ... and keep in mind that a very heavy investment is made by the Government of Alberta. Keep in mind that 50 per cent, or 56 per cent, as I recall the Premier saying in the last provincial election, of the profits were to come to us. If we have to choose between profits coming back to the province and insisting on changes in pollution abatement technology which would be very expensive, which route is the government going to take? Mr. Speaker, I say to members of this House: the concern about a potential conflict of interest five years down the road is not political rhetoric, but is, in fact, a very legitimate concern.

I want to deal with one other point before concluding debate. It seems to me that what we need before we vote down a resolution of this nature is some objective cost benefits on the best pollution control equipment available. Mr. Speaker, the STOP people have done a cost-benefit study. But they

would be the first to admit that their study is not the be-all and end-all. I simply repeat what I said in my earlier remarks: we, as members of the Legislature, should have on our desks an independent cost-benefit study, not commissioned by the Department of the Environment, but by some organization that has at least a claim to neutrality. The Environment Conservation Authority would obviously — in terms of Alberta, anyway — be that kind of organization. I would say that the concept of setting up the ECA as a long term watch-dog in the oil sands is a good one. I support that. But in terms of dealing with the specific question of getting the best possible pollution control technology, bringing down the emissions as suggested in this resolution, we should have at the very least a cost-benefit study conducted by the ECA.

I would say to hon. members that before we overemphasize the importance of the project — and no one in Alberta really quarrels with the importance of the project — the fact of the matter is, we should not be lulled into a false sense of security about the environment.

I'm a little disturbed when the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder talks about needless but unduly harsh environmental standards. Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned about that because the appendices to this Conservation and Utilization report of government officials — not of STOP people, but government officials are the people who say, there is a problem. There is a problem with existing standards. It isn't good enough to say that our standards are better than Ottawa's. That may well be true. But surely, when are we going to sit back and say, inadequate standards, whether they're in Ottawa or the United States or wherever they may be, are good enough for us in this province? Surely we have to heed the warning signals of our own experts who are saying, watch, there is a problem down the road.

As a bit of an aside, I notice the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder mentioned the potash takeover in Saskatchewan. Not getting into a debate on the virtues of nationalizing the potash, I'd simply say that at least it was done in the Legislature, rather than on a Premier's patio, which I think is instructive and might well be the best way the Alberta government should pursue future developments, either taking over businesses or joint ventures. Mr. Speaker, I think the Legislature is the place for that kind of discussion.

In general conclusion then, let me just come back to the basic argument that has to be presented. Is there a potential problem? Yes, there is a potential problem. No one says there's going to be a killer fog tomorrow, but there is a potential problem. Do we have a technology which can reduce the emissions? Yes, we do. Will it be costly? Yes, it is. But I have had a little more chance to read the report tabled today, and I see that we're looking at about \$20 million, not the \$40 million figure.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say that if we're genuinely concerned about our responsibilities as members of this Legislature, we should insist on the highest possible standards, the best possible standards. In my view, because we do have the technology at this point in time, the resolution the members have before them is a reasonable one and merits their support.

[Motion lost]

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

2. Mr. Clark proposed the following motion to the Assembly.

Be it resolved that, the Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Alberta to give a higher priority to educational grants programs within the provincial budget and to revise commitments already made by the Minister of Education with such revisions to be included in the 1976-77 Estimates of Expenditures.

[Adjourned debate: Mr. Zander]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Member for Drayton Valley, Mr. Zander, is absent today by reason of sickness, but he has no objection to the debate proceeding. So I would suggest any members who are now prepared to debate the motion or continue debate of it could continue at this time.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to have the opportunity this afternoon to participate for a short time in the resolution presented by the Leader of the Opposition. I wondered, though, when I read the resolution — perhaps I can quote it to refresh the memories of the members of the Legislature. It says:

... that the Assembly urge the Government of Alberta to give a higher priority to educational grants programs within the provincial budget and to revise commitments already made by the Minister of Education with such revisions to be included in the 1976-77 Estimates of Expenditures.

What crossed my mind was what a difference a day makes, and what a difference an election makes. I happened to run across — and perhaps the Leader of the Opposition's mind could be refreshed — a statement he made back in September of 1971 when this position paper on education in Alberta was prepared. In that statement, the Hon. Bob Clark, who was then the Minister of Education, said: "If educational costs continue to increase at their present rate, education will consume the total gross national product by 1994."

I suggest to the members of the Assembly that unfortunately these things sometimes come back to haunt the members of the Assembly. Here we have a resolution asking the province to spend more money on education, and just prior to this time, as Minister of Education, he was applying curbs on the cost of education. I think the Member for Drumheller alluded to some of these problems of costs in his speech earlier. I was really interested in his remarks on the costs of education and the way in which we might try to balance these costs.

This particular article I refer to, which again is a position paper, was prepared by the education committee, Alberta Chamber of Commerce. It refers to some of the tremendous problems, Mr. Speaker, that we have in trying to keep education costs under control.

Education is important. I don't want anyone in the Assembly to assume from what I'm saying that education isn't probably one of the most important

investments we can make. I have four youngsters going through school at the present time, and I just can't help but reiterate the importance of quality education.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

In this report, to give you an idea of the kind of problems that cause escalation of costs, the Chamber of Commerce made the following remarks. I know this only too well because of my own experience in the field of education. I quote from this document:

The practice of paying an annual salary comparable to other employment standards for a shorter period of actual work has disproportionately escalated such costs.

What they're saying, basically, is the major confrontation we go through every odd year, or every year now, of trying to settle contracts between teachers and the school boards. So that part of the Chamber of Commerce assessment is the kind of costs already built into the system. Apparently, there's really not very much we can do, or wish to do, about it.

The other point they [make] in this article is:

Salaries are negotiated by a most powerful employee organization in the province of Alberta. So far, no school board or group of school boards has been able to keep the ever-increasing demands within reason.

That's a major statement. I defy anyone to disagree with that kind of position.

The Member for Drumheller, in his talk the other day on this resolution, spoke about the problems of teacher-pupil ratios. I thought the Assembly might be interested, since, for some reason this is really a part of salary negotiations, just what ratios do, and how our ratios here in Alberta relate to ratios throughout other provinces.

This is the most recent information on pupil-teacher ratios: British Columbia, at the present time, has a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:20; Saskatchewan has a ratio of 1:21.28 — they even calculate it to the second decimal. I don't know how you split children up, but it's amazing what you can do with figures. Ontario has a ratio of 1:20.1; New Brunswick, 1:19.76; and Alberta, at the present time, 1:18.86. Now if you include support personnel in your calculation, which is likely what has happened in these other figures — and this includes principals, vice-principals, psychiatrists, psychologists, reading experts, et cetera — then the ratio is 1:17.36.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to give you some idea of the impact this kind of ratio has on the total cost to the province, if you increase the ratio by one pupil, it involves a total cost to the province of \$25 million. If we were, for example, to bring our ratio up to the ratio now in existence in Saskatchewan, we would be talking of approximately \$100 million. This is a spectacular amount and indicates essentially what it's all about.

I thought the members of the Assembly might be interested in comments [about] the things I saw when I was in Malawi, a little country in Africa. I was particularly interested in education, and I asked to go on a tour of the school system in a huge city. There's no doubt that they took me to one of the best schools in the city. Their facilities left much to be desired. I think it costs about \$3 to send a child to school, and

that's \$3 a year. Consequently, a large number of young people are not able to go to school at all.

In this particular school, I went to a room of Grades 1 and 2. Some of them were up to probably 13, 14 years of age, and had had their first opportunity to attend school. I counted something like 70. In fact, we tried to get a picture of all of us, including the students in this classroom, and they couldn't all be included in the group picture. Here was a lady teacher attempting to instruct 70 plus young people, starting them out at the Grade 1 level.

I mention this simply to compare that situation with what we have, and are so fortunate to have, in Alberta. It's literally impossible, physically impossible, totally impossible, to instruct that number of children in a classroom. I wouldn't want anyone to think I'm advocating this sort of thing, particularly at the elementary level. Now there may be some question when you get into the junior/senior high level. I think larger classes could be handled quite readily. But this gives you an idea of a contrast between educational systems, and how fortunate we really are here in Alberta.

The other interesting thing I noted [is] in the junior/senior handbook put out, I think, by the Department of Education. The 1975-76 handbook shows that over 300 courses are offered in some of our larger schools in Alberta — over 300 courses. This gives you almost the total concept in contrast to some of the smaller high schools that offer in the area of 30 to 35 courses. I would venture to say that we probably have a fair number of successful people in the Assembly who attended schools that offered, at a maximum, 30 courses.

So, if you're really talking about putting more money into education, let's start talking about some ways in which we can actually cut some of the costs of education. In my opinion, there's no way we should be offering 300 courses in some of the larger institutions in the province. Surely some of these courses could be picked up in adult education, at a later date. Education doesn't start the time you walk into school and stop when you walk out. I just question the wisdom of offering this random sampling. Mr. Speaker, if we're really serious about trying to cut costs, or serious about our educational system, let's have a good hard look at some of these problems.

I suppose I could talk about the quality of teachers in our classrooms. In my experience I found there were some outstanding, dedicated teachers, and then you have the other spectrum. Teaching is like a lot of vocations or professions. You have some who are capable and some who aren't. Even in the area of politics, some of us are successful and some of us aren't. That usually happens every election in the province. But the same rule can be applied in education.

The professional people take the stand that, granted, this person is not yet qualified, he is not capable in the classroom. But we're going to upgrade this particular person, and he will become successful in the classroom. I just want to say that with some people it wouldn't matter; you can't upgrade them. I suppose the same rule applies to politicians too. If we're going to protect those who aren't qualified and are not capable of instruction of a class, they are going to downgrade the calibre of education, the

quality of instruction, and the whole educational system.

This is really what worries me about our educational system. I happened to pick up an article which came as a result of a study made during education week. It was a survey of some 2,700 Albertans who were asked their views on schools as part of this year's education week. It ran from March 1 to March 7. Sixty five per cent of those 2,700 thought that the involvement of the public, particularly parents, was less than adequate in decisions affecting basic education. About half as many thought their involvement was adequate. There can be no denying, then, that the majority of Albertans appear to feel shut out of the schools.

At this time, I'd like to say that in my observations as a teacher, a parent, and a school trustee, I have noticed this gradual division occurring between parents and the school. It's a culmination of a number of things. Probably centralization is as much to blame as anything. Professionalism, if you want to use this term, the right to strike, certainly hasn't complemented the good feeling we used to have between parents and teachers. These things, whatever they are, are definitely evident and I think we, as legislators, would be hypocritical if we were to suggest they weren't there. They're there, and they're quite evident. Studies show these differences are there.

[There were] other responses to this questionnaire by parents. I quote: They're too damned progressive. I thought the schools should give more attention to the 3Rs — an opinion shared by many experts who view with alarm the declining reading and mathematics scores right across North America. When asked about high schools in particular, the response was the same. Forty-two per cent thought the high schools should concentrate more on basic skills and leave training for a specific line of work to post-secondary education — again, an opinion shared by many experts.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I'm wandering a little off the context of the resolution, but I just wanted to bring to the attention of the Assembly that all is not well today in our school system. It wouldn't matter really how much money you poured into it. It isn't going to be money that really settles the problems. It's going to be things that are much more important and much more fundamental.

I'd just like to make a couple of other comments. I read a very interesting article about co-operative education. If you're talking about cutting costs in schools — and I'm thinking in terms of vocational training — an experiment is going on in the States which has caught hold in Canada. We seem to have to import everything from the United States. I'm not sure why. Even the Alberta Teachers' Association manages to import an awful lot of speakers to their conventions. I'd like to see more use of Canadian talent, because I'm sure we have it.

Instead of giving students instruction, we'll say, for the first half day in school, then putting them into a vocational shop area to get training in the vocational field, a lot of schools are now starting to make use of facilities outside the school. They are given instruction for the first half day in school, and the balance of the day they go out to work under an apprenticeship program, whether they're taking weld--

ing, mechanics, or one of the vocational courses. If we're talking about cost cutting, I think this is an excellent area to look at.

We know that all our students are not capable of high school education and further training in universities. I find that in my experience with my own children. They are as different as night and day. There has to be lots of flexibility in a program, and one way of achieving this is by making facilities and making use of the community around the school.

It cuts costs, and I think it achieves what it wants to, because that student likely is going to go out into the working world later on. He'll not only learn how to perform skills in the shop — if he's working in a shop — he'll learn how to meet potential customers. He'll develop a personality. He'll develop a feel for private enterprise and for working for an employer. It just has to be a wonderful kind of program.

I'd just like to touch on what the province has been able to do for the disabled and handicapped. I think the province of Alberta is playing a leading role in this particular area. I was looking at the various programs, the increased funds that go into some of these programs, and I can't help but commend the minister for periodically releasing, in this last month or two, some of the funding for education. It really helps those people at the municipal level to determine just how to lay out their budgets for the year.

So I'd like to commend the minister for the way in which he is approaching the budget. It used to be that you never heard anything until it passed in the Legislature, then all hell broke loose. In releasing some of these things, they have an opportunity to shift a little bit in their own financing.

The minister has released a number of figures for the handicapped. I notice, for example, that we now have well over 8,000 young people who are taking learning disability courses. We have well over 1,000 who are institutionalized taking special courses. I think overall, including mentally handicapped, hearing impaired, over 13,600 young people are taking these special courses.

The figures I have in front of me indicate the kind of money the province has been putting into these special areas. The cost of educating handicapped children rose from \$3.5 million in the '70-71 period to well over \$10 million in the 74-75 period. This is an increase of 188 per cent in this area.

[One] of [the] things being done, particularly for rural Alberta, is the flexibility of the grant structure. This is done by means of grants to some of the schools that are dropping in enrolment, and to some of the smaller schools. There is some flexibility in busing, and this is a real assistance to the smaller

schools in the rural areas. I can't help but commend the minister for building this flexibility into his program to allow for this kind of thing.

In my own constituency only last year, we were able to provide funds for one of our last small country schools to convert two classrooms into a small auditorium, which they use for physical education, particularly in the wintertime. It's been of great assistance. So I don't think this goes unnoticed by the people.

I'd like to touch on one other thing, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about flexibility in education. One of the comments in this recent report on special educational services is from a study on learning assistance. This has to do with several zone areas that were set up and provided with funds for handicapped. They have suggested: "... to reduce the discrepancy in service between rural and urban school systems." And further, "... financing of special education in Alberta be done in such a way as to minimize the discrepancy in service between urban and rural areas."

Mr. Speaker, they're talking specifically of our special education program. I hope the minister is able to take a close look at this and perhaps provide some flexibility, because it does cost considerably more to provide this special assistance in the more isolated, lower population areas.

In general, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to sum up by saying that the province has done a great deal towards allaying the major costs of education by picking up the foundation program. We pour, I suppose, a third of our total budget into education. That's a major amount. I think that municipalities, school boards, can do a lot of trimming of the fat, and I think they [had] better have a hard look at just where their funding is going. I think we can keep costs under control and still give a quality education, which is far superior, by the way, to perhaps any kind of education anywhere else in Canada, if not in the world.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at half past two.

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