

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Tuesday, March 15, 1977 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 213****The Dental Health Services Act****Bill 214****The Dental Health Workers Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce two companion bills: Bill 213, The Dental Health Services Act; and Bill 214, The Dental Health Workers Act. As I pointed out, the bills are companion bills. They are designed to establish a system of dental care for children in Alberta ultimately up to the age of 12.

[Leave granted; bills 213 and 214 read a first time]

Bill 22**The Beverage Container Act, 1977**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Beverage Container Act, 1977. The purpose of this bill is to introduce a new act which will replace the existing one and will improve upon the very popular beverage return system now in effect for the citizens of Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 22 read a first time]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to introduce a distinguished visitor in your gallery today, Mr. John Crosbie, M.P. Mr. Crosbie is one of the newest members of the House of Commons, representing the constituency of St. John's West in the province of Newfoundland. Mr. Crosbie was formerly a member of the Executive Council in the Newfoundland provincial government and is on a fact-finding tour through Alberta regarding energy matters. I would ask Mr. Crosbie to rise and be recognized by the House.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group in the members gallery, Mr. Stan Daniels the president of the Metis Association of Alberta, and the other members of the executive of that organization. I would ask them to rise and be recognized on this occasion.

MR. ZANDER: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to this Assembly 35 young men and women from the Frank Maddock High School in Drayton Valley, who are accompanied by their two teachers Mr. Matthews and Mr. Thiessen. They are seated in the members gallery, and I'd ask them now to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you, on behalf of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, 15 students from the Alberta Vocational Centre. These 15 students are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Manning. They are located in the public gallery. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate them for taking an interest in the legislative process, and I hope they will find their visit very pleasing. I'd ask them to rise and be recognized by the House.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to be able to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 45 young ladies and gentlemen from grade 9, Edith Rogers Junior High School. They're accompanied by their teacher Bill Gordon, who very obviously is able to encourage the students to take an interest in their government. I would ask them to rise in the public gallery and be recognized.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to introduce nine grade 12 students from Holden High School in my constituency. They are accompanied today by their principal Mr. Shykora and their chauffeur Mr. Grinde.

Mr. Speaker, at this time may I also mention that just a few days ago the Holden arena was quite an issue in this House. I would like to let the students know that I just got word of the approval of \$92,000 for it, so I think they'll go back with good news. [applause] Mr. Speaker, I was going to ask them to rise and be recognized, but apparently they have done so.

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual reports of the Alberta Art Foundation and the Glenbow Alberta Institute, and the first annual report of Alberta Culture.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file with the Legislative Assembly the Alberta Housing & Public Works Capital Construction and Furnishings & Equipment reports in relation to this year's budget and indicate to the House that a copy of these two documents will be placed in their cubbyholes.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the annual report of the Department of Agriculture, as required by statute. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to file the fifth annual report of the Surface Rights Board.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file the province's Interim Financial Statement for the nine months ended December 31, 1976, and in response to the applause from the opposition desks advise them that

this is within days of the dates on which they were filed in the last two years.

MR. CLARK: They were late too.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table a reply to Notice of Motion No. 197, asked of this House by Robert Clark, the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table the response to Motion for a Return No. 207.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

Department of Housing and Public Works

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to place before the Legislature the details of the residential land development program which was first announced in the throne speech. This new program will consist of front-end financing for the purchase and servicing of land by small residential construction companies.

The objectives of the program are twofold. First, the residential land development program is expected to bring more competition into the land development industry. Secondly, it is expected to lower the costs of serviced residential lots for house construction.

This program is the last of a three-part program aimed at increasing the availability and reducing the costs of lots by land banking and servicing. The three programs are: number one, land banking and lot servicing directly by the Alberta Housing Corporation; secondly, land banking and lot servicing through co-operation between the Alberta Housing Corporation and Alberta municipalities. Today I'm announcing the third program, which is land assembly and lot servicing in co-operation between the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and medium- and small-sized housing construction firms.

The details of the residential land development program are generally as follows: \$25 million of financing at today's rate of 10.5 per cent will be provided this year to the private sector. On each approved project, financing will be provided by the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation for the following: the cost of the land, planning and preparation of the subdivision, administrative and holding costs, all on-site servicing, off-site servicing not funded by the municipality and which must be paid for by the builder. The maximum loan available on any project is limited to 90 per cent of the cost of servicing plus land purchase or a maximum of \$10,000 per single family lot. The maximum repayment period is three years.

To qualify under the program the gross annual revenue of the housing construction firm, including its subsidiaries and affiliates, shall not exceed \$10 million. The primary source of revenue must generally be derived from the construction and sale of housing units. The maximum size of any project shall not exceed 150 residential lots or 50 acres of land, whichever is less.

Normally 50 per cent of the single family lots and 50 per cent of all multi-family lots shall be priced so consumers can purchase homes that are priced under the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation's starter

home ownership program and direct lending program. Maximum house price limits under these two programs are \$42,000 and \$46,000 respectively.

Where possible, up to 10 per cent of the single family lots must be offered for sale to the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation at an agreed price for use by house building co-operatives or for sale directly to individuals qualifying under the province's co-operative housing action program.

Mr. Speaker, generally only large land development companies have the capacity to obtain front-end financing at reasonable interest rates in order to bring large parcels of serviced lots on the open market. The residential land development program will permit many small residential builders to re-enter the land development business and thereby stimulate more competition in the house building and lot servicing market.

Thank you.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a very brief response to the announcement by the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works. Might I say on this occasion I commend the minister for the announcement he has made today. After commending the minister, I can't help but take the opportunity to remind him that in 1975 my colleague the Member for Bow Valley proposed a resolution that dealt specifically with this question of front-end loading costs. That motion urged the government to give serious consideration to a move not exactly as was done today but essentially in this direction. Where it isn't my job to compliment the government on that many occasions, on this occasion we are naturally pleased that two years later the government has moved in this direction.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Anti-inflation Program

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. My question follows the indication given to the House on February 25 by the minister. On that day the minister assured us the government would provide members of the Assembly with the results of its very modest inflation monitoring program prior to a decision being made on whether Alberta would stay in the program or opt out. Recognizing also that the minister indicated a decision would be announced after the fifteenth and before the thirty-first of this month, I would like to ask the minister when we might expect the results of the modest monitoring program.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, it will be after the fifteenth and before the twenty-third of this month.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, might we have a supplementary answer from the minister, hopefully as definitive. When does the government plan to make its announcement with regard to a decision whether it will in fact stay in the program or opt out?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, some time before the twenty-third of this month.

Rural and Native Housing

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the second question to the Minister of Housing and Public Works and ask if he's in a position to indicate what the priorities will be in the \$14 million rural and native housing program announced in the budget.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, the priority in the rural and native housing program is to get as many housing units on the market as possible. As I've indicated earlier there are obstacles in the field of getting housing on the market under this program, and some time is necessary to make the program fully effective. It is my intention to review some aspects of the program when I get an opportunity to deal with my estimates. It is also my intention to indicate to the House at some point the fact that production under this program is expected to increase during the course of the coming year.

MR. CLARK: In light of the minister's comment that production of the program is anticipated to increase during the coming year, that's not saying a great deal. I'd like to ask what targets the minister is aiming at. Of the program's \$14 million, what portion will be spent in the area of native housing, and how many units are we looking at? What is the government's target?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, if my memory is correct, I believe 300 units are targeted with respect to the \$14 million in this year's budget. As I've said to the House before, it is very difficult to indicate just exactly how many units are going to be built this year. I've indicated earlier that quite a number of lots have now been secured. We are indeed not only proposing but working on subdivision approval for a large number of acres. It's very difficult to suggest exactly what will be accomplished in any particular year, as it is for any housebuilder and land developer — and the Alberta Housing Corporation acts as a land developer and housebuilder on this program. However, if I do make any predictions with respect to actual targets we hope to attain this year, it will be during the course of discussing the estimates in the debate on Housing and Public Works.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say this on the program: there seems to be some understanding, if you wish, that it is directed entirely toward Metis housing. It isn't. It's related to Metis housing as well as housing for poorer families generally throughout the northern part of Alberta. Indeed there may be an expansion of the program beyond just the supply of Metis housing during the course of next year.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the minister. Of the \$14 million in the budget for 1977-78, what portion is anticipated to flow back from the federal government, or do you anticipate federal funds in addition to the \$14 million?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, the rural and native housing program is funded 75 per cent by the federal government and 25 per cent by the provincial government. Nevertheless, all the appropriation must be included in the Alberta Housing Corporation's budget,

in that the money is not collected from the federal government until after the unit is built and the finalized structure is approved by the federal government. The budgeting process is such that even though 75 per cent of the moneys will be re-collected from the federal government, all the sum must nevertheless be included in the budget of the Department of Housing and Public Works.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether the 300 houses will be built by the tender procedure?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, thus far the Alberta Housing Corporation's policy in terms of acquiring units is done by way of open tender or selective tender, as laid down by the board of directors. In regard to the selective tender process generally more than two companies are invited to bid on a particular housing project. Thus far the Housing Corporation has not had instruction from its board of directors to change that policy. The policy in relation to open and selective tenders will continue to be followed unless, of course, the board of directors of the Housing Corporation makes an exception or indeed passes an alternative policy.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Is it possible within the program for an individual or a group of individuals to obtain financing to build their own home or homes?

MR. YURKO: Perhaps I should obtain some clarification from the member in regard to his question. Is he specifically speaking or inquiring about the rural and native housing program or about other programs available which can be used for building your own home, through a co-operative program for example?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'm referring specifically to the native building program.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to native building programs then indeed in the budget there is a new grant program for individuals building log housing throughout the isolated communities as well as the Metis colonies.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. Perhaps if I try, I can squeeze two supplementary questions into one. Does the government at this point in time have any breakdown of this \$14 million between Metis housing and low-income housing that would not be considered Metis housing?

The other part of the question is just for clarification on the amount of money that can be expected back from the federal government. Is there any ballpark figure in view of the fact that Section 40 deals with the capital costs, and there are obviously going to be some administration costs. What can we expect back from the federal government?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the first part of the question, the general emphasis in priority is related to the provision of Metis housing, because the need is certainly great in that area. The actual distribution between Metis housing and the supply of housing for other poor families in the north is difficult

to project at this particular time.

In regard to the clarification on the amount of funding provided by the federal government, Mr. Speaker, it would be appropriate if I looked at the agreement we signed before I actually answered that detailed question. Nevertheless I can suggest that capital funding, capital funding of 75 per cent is related to a total price of \$41,000 per unit. If the unit exceeds \$41,000, then in some projects the provincial share may indeed exceed the 25 per cent.

In relation to a provision of some of the administration costs, I believe there are clauses within the agreement where some money is provided in this area. I can't remember the amount of money at this time, but indeed the administration costs are shared between the federal government and the provincial government.

MR. SHABEN: A supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister made any representations to the CMHC in Ottawa that would allow access to this program to families who live in communities with 2,500 population or more?

MR. YURKO: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have on a number of occasions. I am pleased to inform the member that the community of Slave Lake has been approved as an area which exceeds the 2,500 population figure.

Tendering Procedures

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. Mr. Premier, through you, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a tendency by the government to go to a selective or invitational tendering method. Has it become government policy or have guidelines been established as to how we should go about tendering public projects?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, because there are a number of variables within the government system, I'd have to take notice of that question and respond either directly or through one of the ministers. We'll be prepared to do so.

Gasoline Prices

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Business Development and Tourism. This is a follow-up question [to] that asked by the Leader of the Opposition as to the relation of gasoline prices at the pumps. In light of the fact the report tabled by the Treasurer gives us the gasoline prices for only two cities in Alberta, can the minister indicate what monitoring procedure the department has to indicate gasoline prices in Alberta?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we do not have and have not undertaken a monitoring system in the Department of Business Development and Tourism; however, we did some monitoring in Consumer Affairs some time ago on a selective basis. I'm not in a position to say whether that's still in place.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Can the

minister indicate if that monitoring is going on and how extensive it is?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, there have been occasions when monitoring of retail gasoline prices in various communities throughout Alberta has been done. I would have to take the question as notice to check any further details though.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, while the minister is searching, can he find out if that information is available on a company/company basis or just right across the province?

MR. HARLE: I will take the question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. The minister has indicated monitoring from time to time. Has the government given any consideration to commissioning a study to assess the differences in cost of gasoline between the two major urban centres and the smaller centres of the province, and to compare that with differences in past years?

MR. HARLE: Not that I'm aware of, Mr. Speaker. But again, I can check that particular point.

Renter's Assistance Program

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Has the Provincial Treasurer or his department received any complaints with regard to the Alberta renter's assistance credit because of the policy of allowing a refund only to the spouse with the higher taxable income?

MR. LEITCH: Yes we have, Mr. Speaker, and have been reviewing the matter. Hopefully we'll find a solution to some of the complaints we've received which in our view were legitimate and should be resolved.

Indian Treaty Commemoration

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. minister of native affairs. Has the minister any information on the Indian treaty commemoration at Blackfoot Crossing and the proposed visit of Prince Charles to Alberta this summer?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In response to the hon. Member for Drumheller, as all members of the Assembly will recall, we are currently commemorating the hundredth anniversary of treaties 6 and 7.

You may also recall, Mr. Speaker, that last year a visit was made by representatives of the two treaty areas to London, where they paid homage to Her Majesty the Queen. An invitation was extended to the Royal Family for an exchange visit this summer. That invitation was extended by the chiefs of Treaty 7 on behalf of all treaty Indian people in the two treaty Indian areas. The invitation has been accepted. Prince Charles will be attending various events in Alberta this summer. He is expected on Wednesday, July 6, at Blackfoot Crossing on the Blackfoot Reserve, where a re-enactment of the original treaty will

take place. Thursday, July 7, Prince Charles will be inducted into the Kainai Chieftainship at Stand Off, Alberta, on the Blood Reserve. It's expected he will open the Calgary Stampede the following day.

The plans are not completely finalized, Mr. Speaker. When they are, a joint announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace and by the Indian treaty commemoration program here.

Rent Control

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and ask if he can advise the House whether the 27 per cent reduction for rent regulation in this year's budget presupposes the end of rent controls on or before December 31.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, at the moment all I can say is that the budget was prepared on the basis of the present statute. The decision whether to extend the temporary rent regulation measures program will be made as indicated in the Speech from the Throne.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the answer to my first question, is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly why there is a reduction in the budget both in funds allocated, a 27.9 per cent decline . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Surely that's a matter which will arise perhaps on a number of occasions in the discussion of the estimates.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can put the question in a slightly different way. But on a point of order, on the last question we did discuss a matter that came up in the budget concerning the rural and native housing program, and there is some merit in finding out information before the estimates.

My question to the hon. minister is: is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly why the government proposes to reduce both the budget and the manpower for rent regulation this year?

MR. SPEAKER: The same question put again. If on a previous occasion a question escaped or got by the Chair relating to discussion of the budget, then I regret that. But I would hesitate to accept it as a binding precedent.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, not dealing with the budget, to the hon. minister. Is it the government's intention to phase out rent controls during the current year?

MR. HARLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the answer to that question was sufficiently covered in the Speech from the Throne. A decision will be taken when the government has arrived at its position on the matter.

MR. NOTLEY: Supplementary question for clarification. Has the government made a decision yet whether rent controls will end on a specific date, or will there be a phasing-out?

MR. HARLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I said in my previous answer.

MR. CLARK: Supplementary question to the minister. Is it the intention of the government to announce a decision on rent control prior to the end of this month? I ask that question because of the three-month lead time needed.

MR. HARLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, when the government has made its decision, it will be announced in the House.

Motorcycle Safety Helmets

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Transportation and Deputy Premier. Would the minister indicate to the House whether he has received a petition from a group in Calgary requesting that wearing of helmets with motorcycles be made optional rather than compulsory? Would he indicate to the House the disposition of that request?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, it is correct that I did receive a petition from a group, relative to the question asked by the hon. member. My response to that group was that motorcycles are an entirely different classification than an enclosed automobile. It was my view that they should continue to have to wear helmets when they operate them.

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether he has information to indicate that safety helmets are not as safe as indicated previously by the Canadian safety association and the medical association.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, the hon. member will have to do his research in another manner.

Natural Gas Price Increase

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones. Would the minister inform this Assembly how much in dollars and cents will be realized from the rebate to each consumer due to the change in natural gas?

DR. BUCK: Put it on the Order Paper.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered that in question period yesterday in response to a question posed by the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps the member could consult *Hansard*, and if the matter is not clear I would be happy to discuss it with him.

Physiotherapist Legislation

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health is for further information with regard to the Alberta physiotherapists and questions I asked of the Attorney General the other day. Has the minister had any representation from persons in the province that physiotherapy is being practised by persons who do not meet the qualifications outlined in The Chartered Physiotherapists Act?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I had a most interesting and useful meeting with members of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists of Alberta. They brought that to my attention in the course of discussing their wishes to have their act opened and rewritten. As a result of our consultation, I believe they understood there would be some delay before their act could be opened. I found them very receptive to some of the problems we must deal with when it is opened. I thought the meeting was most useful.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In the discussions, could the minister indicate whether consideration was given to allowing physiotherapists to form their own self-regulatory organization such as other professions [have]?

MISS HUNLEY: Well, that's part of the proposal before us. Their legislation is being examined in my department in consultation with them. We do as much as possible to accommodate the wishes of various organizations, but we have to keep in mind of course that there are often two sides to a particular issue. We will of course be looking for some direction from this Legislature when the legislation is brought forward.

Cow-calf Program

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Agriculture. On behalf of the cow-calf operators in the province, and in view of the deadline date for filing applications to the assistance program, I wonder if the minister could indicate whether there have been some late filings in that program.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that a number of people have written my office or telephoned to say they did not in fact learn of the program until after the January 31 date. As to numbers, I'm not sure, but it's perhaps in the order of one to two dozen persons.

MR. COOKSON: I wonder if I could ask a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, and ask the minister whether he has any knowledge of the total dollars involved, and perhaps as a further supplementary whether any consideration might be given to extending that deadline. I'm thinking of the vehicle licensing coming up.

MR. MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, in late December consideration was given to extending the deadline for applications, and it was extended one month to the end of January. At that point in time we had applications from 25,800 persons that totalled just slightly under \$43 million. As to the numbers of people who may not have made application for a variety of reasons and yet were eligible, I'm really not aware of what they are, except that I know a few have approached my office with respect to wanting the deadline extended. In view of the numbers who did apply and were successful in having their applications approved, I would expect there are very few who did not make application.

Coyote Population

MR. KIDD: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. I wonder if the minister could impart to the Legislature any information he may have concerning the decrease in the coyote population in Alberta due to extensive slaughter of coyotes in the province this winter.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, that's a very difficult question to try to answer in one question period. Certainly I should indicate right off the bat that there hasn't been any marked decrease, although there has been an increase in the number of coyotes taken this year.

Municipal Growth Grants

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It flows from that portion of the announcement the minister made yesterday dealing with the extraordinary growth grants. Is it the intention of the government to have this as an ongoing part of the municipal grant program, or is it in fact a one-year venture?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we will consider seriously the possibility of extending that program, based on information which will be given to us such as population changes and rates of inflation which will be experienced through 1976. At this point I cannot say conclusively we will extend it.

Rail Line Abandonment

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Transportation. Because VIA Rail Canada Inc. is designed to reduce subsidies payable to CNR and CPR, has there been any indication from the federal government that its program of rail abandonment will be pursued less vigorously?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been any indication relative to that. I would think that the federal government won't take any action relative to abandonment until such time as Mr. Justice Hall reports the findings of his commission. I would think that some of those findings would have to be correlated with the proposition of VIA Rail as it extends into western Canada.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. minister. Is any date set for the report of Mr. Justice Hall?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I understand we're expecting it in the next month or two. It's dependent upon translation and other matters. We're hopeful it will come out as soon as possible.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Transportation. Was the government of Alberta asked to nominate a director to the board of directors of VIA Rail?

DR. HORNER: No, Mr. Speaker.

Residential Land Development

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works flowing from his ministerial statement to the Assembly today. Dealing with the third point on page 2, the maximum loan available being limited to 90 per cent of the cost of the serviced land purchase or minimum up to \$10,000 per single family lot, my question is: has the department compiled statistics to outline the scope of that provision in the two major cities where land costs have escalated so dramatically in the last three years?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the department does have many statistics in regard to land and servicing costs of bringing lots on stream throughout the province.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Bearing in mind those statistics, is the government satisfied that the \$10,000 ceiling is in fact workable in the two major areas, given the rather sizable increases in land costs, to make it possible for small builders to obtain lots and get into the field?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, the degree of workability of the program in the two major urban areas will be determined during the course of the next year.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is it the government's view that, given this particular provision, the emphasis of this program will be directed toward the smaller centres where land costs would fit into this particular provision?

MR. YURKO: Again, Mr. Speaker, I might answer that as I answered the previous question. That will become evident as a fact or not as a fact during the course of administration of the program during the next year. Of course, the program can always be adjusted and changed if it is necessary.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, is the minister in a position to give us an estimate of the number of small residential builders who will be able to take advantage of the program? What kind of ballpark figure is the minister looking at?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I don't have at my fingertips the number of residential builders throughout the province who might be able to take advantage of the program. I would like to suggest that it is fairly substantial.

Native Education

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. It has to do with the minister's advisory committee on native people's education. I would like to know if the minister can indicate what response the advisory committee received in its request to have input in the workings of the committee.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, the six committees advisory to the minister are very active. They meet with me from time to time, meet without me regularly, make recommendations, and I respond to them in the best way I can.

DR. BUCK: It looks like the minister doesn't even know what committees he sets up, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order, order.

DR. BUCK: Well it's quite obvious he doesn't, because he's just waffling around. Mr. Speaker, it's the minister's advisory committee on native people's education that was set up last fall, and the representation was supposed to have been made in November and December. I want to know what response they received.

DR. HOHOL: I tried to tell him. I guess I can suggest he ask the committee if he doesn't find my response full enough.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it's the minister's committee, not my committee. A supplementary to the minister. Can the minister indicate when this report will be finalized, and if it will be finalized will it be tabled in the Legislature?

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that as a question to respond to at some later date.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if he has met with the committee?

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I think we're talking about two different committees. I don't think . . .

DR. BUCK: Unbelievable.

DR. HOHOL: No, it's believable he doesn't know what he's talking about, Mr. Speaker.

Surface Leases

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Has the minister had under consideration or had discussions with the Surface Rights Board in regard to a standardized contract with surface leases between landowners and oil companies?

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I discussed that matter with the chairman or members of the Surface Rights Board. I did have some discussions with some interested individuals about two weeks ago in that regard, but not with members of the Surface Rights Board.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister received any complaints where oil company officials had landowners sign a lease contract that states payment is hereby received when in fact the payment comes as much as six months later?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I have had one or two concerns expressed to me in that regard.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister given consideration to publishing a pamphlet or any other form of publication which would make landowners aware of their rights?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I expect to have within the course of the latter part of this session a publication from the Department of Agriculture which would outline in some brief detail at least the laws of the province with respect to The Surface Rights Act and other related matters. I'm hopeful it would include the kind of information in that area that would be helpful to our citizens.

Chamber of Commerce Recommendations

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour and ask if he has yet received recommendations from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce to have the Board of Industrial Relations review the granting of the Alberta Energy Company and Syncrude pipeline contracts from a standpoint of determining if any existing statute or regulations were circumvented or violated.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the government did receive a representation from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce which in its text expressed the view that the government had acted understandably and correctly in declining to interfere with the operations of the boards of directors of the two companies in question, and went on to make the suggestion that some review of the overall policy take place in the manner referred to just now by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

My feeling is that that would not be an appropriate role for the Board of Industrial Relations to perform, and that if policy changes are contemplated the government would take them under consideration.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, the second recommendation flowing to the government from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce was that government introduce right-to-work legislation at the earliest possible time. Has the minister responded to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on this recommendation?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, no answer has been given to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. My feeling on reading their representation was that they wished that we take under advisement the whole area of policy, and would not have expected us to reply in regard to a major area of government policy by way of a communication directly to them.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, so there's no misunderstanding then, a supplementary question to the minister dealing with the two recommendations from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce dated February 24. The government does not interpret the recommendations from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce to ask for right-to-work legislation? That's the government's interpretation, that the Calgary Chamber of Commerce is not recommending right-to-work legislation? Is that the way the minister understands their presentation?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I have no objection to reflecting a little bit further. In respect to the hon. member's question, I don't have before me the document, which I read with some care, from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce accompanying a letter from its president. Representations on changes in the law were very widely and broadly made by between 50 and 60 Alberta groups at the hearings I presided over not long ago in Calgary and Edmonton, gaining the input of labor, management, and public interest groups in regard to labor legislation. I made it clear at that time that the government's reactions to those proposals would be made in due course.

Native Business Incentives

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Premier. It flows from questions put on Friday, March 4, to the hon. Minister Without Portfolio responsible for native affairs concerning the so-called equity fund for native Albertans. Has the government given any consideration to the concept of a fund to provide seed money for small business loans on an incentive basis for native people, not restricted to the rules applied by the Alberta Opportunity Company, but on more of an incentive basis?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe elaboration on this matter would be useful. My memory of the answers given by the hon. Minister Without Portfolio is that they were inclusive relative to the matters raised in the hon. member's question today.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification to the hon. Minister Without Portfolio responsible for native affairs. Can the minister advise whether it's true that several native leaders in Alberta as well as officials of the Alberta government visited several American points to examine programs similar in scope to the proposed equity fund?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview checks through his correspondence he will find that following such a visit our office made available to all members of this Assembly the results of the fact-finding visit. Those results included information obtained in Denver, Colorado and in the Lexington, Kentucky area, as to how various peoples, primarily minority groups, are helping themselves. We've used that information in an attempt to work with various government agencies and departments to have a better understanding of what's happening.

One of the things I find a little difficult to appreciate is on one hand the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview has suggested that we should be more open as a government with our information . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly the hon. minister is now getting into the area of debate.

MR. NOTLEY: Supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister advise whether the government did in fact consider an equity fund?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I think I adequately answered that question on Friday, March 4.

ADC Lending Rate

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. In view of the recent lowering of the prime lending rate by 1.5 per cent, has any consideration been given to lowering the direct lending rate of ADC?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the Agricultural Development Corporation considers its direct lending rate every six months, and the schedule has generally been in October and April. As we're only a very short time away from April, I expect that considerations with respect to the interest loan will be undertaken within the next four to six weeks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Question 114 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns 101 and 115 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

104. Mr. Notley moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
With reference to Order in Council 785/73 (hereinafter called "the regulations") and subsequent amendments, a list containing:
- (a) the name of each person appointed as an executive officer under the regulation, and the name of his or her minister;
 - (b) the date of his or her appointment and, where appropriate, termination;
 - (c) a list of the rates of payment of fees authorized by the President of the Executive Council for each executive officer over the period May 22, 1973, through January 1, 1977, giving the effective date for each rate;
 - (d) the total sum paid to each executive officer for each of the fiscal years 1973-74, 1974-75, 1975-76, 1976-77, under Section 9 of the regulations (automobile expenses); and
 - (e) the total amount, for each executive officer, of payments under Section 8 (general expenses), and the total direct cost to the government, for each executive officer, of benefits authorized by Section 5(3).

[Motion carried]

116. Mr. Notley moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
The most recent figures compiled by the Department

of Housing and Public Works, or its agents, on the land holdings of the various land development companies in both the Calgary and Edmonton areas, as referred to by the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works in the Assembly on March 7, 1977.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, it would be appropriate for me to make some very brief remarks in connection with this motion. It arose from the question period, I believe, on March 7 of this year, at which time the Member for Spirit River-Fairview asked me a question in regard to the merger of Abbey Glen and Genstar.

I answered by indicating that the department had compiled figures in regard to land holdings. I want to assure the House that my reference, in regard to the member's designation of the two companies, was to public companies. Indeed, I want to make that distinction and suggest to the member that the information is certainly available to him as it is to the department, in that the information is available in the companies' annual reports. The department has compiled this information from the annual reports.

We're certainly prepared to submit it to the member, but with the recognition that he could just as easily have done this work for himself and obtained the information in the usual manner, because it is public information.

AN HON. MEMBER: The reprimand is agreeable.

MR. SPEAKER: If there's no disagreement as to fact here, then there would be little purpose in putting the motion. It would appear to be out of order as a motion attempting to seek documents that are already public property.

117. Dr. Buck moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

With respect to the trip to Europe by the Minister of Business Development and Tourism during January 1977:

- (1) the date,
- (2) the destination[s],
- (3) the name of each person accompanying the minister,
- (4) the total cost,
- (5) the cost of:
 - (a) travel expenses,
 - (b) accommodation expenses,
 - (c) entertainment expenses.

[Motion carried]

118. Mr. R. Speaker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

The name and position of every person employed in the office of Executive Council as at January 1, 1977.

[Motion carried]

119. Mr. Clark moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

The name and position of every employee of a government of Alberta department, board, agency, or commission in possession of or entitled to possession of a pass for free travel on Pacific Western Airlines as at January 1, 1977.

[Motion carried]

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file the return to Motion No. 119. In short, there aren't any; there's no intention of making any available.

120. Mr. Mandeville moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

The name and position of every person employed in the Office of the Premier as at January 1, 1977.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Moved by Dr. Walker:

Be it resolved that the Alberta government consider leaving one parking space vacant in front of each provincial building for the use of vehicles carrying disabled persons so that they might more readily load or unload their passengers for easier access to government services, and that municipal governments of all larger cities in Alberta be encouraged to leave one parking space in each city block expressly for vehicles carrying disabled persons.

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, there's an old saying that God helps those who help themselves. There's another old saying, too, that God helps those who help others. In proposing this motion to the Assembly, I would like to try to help a large group of disabled people in the province who have been an outstanding example of people helping themselves. Their lobbies to members of the Assembly, although at times a bit bothersome, are a very good indication of their efforts to get government involvement in their programs.

What is the point of having special ramps, special toilets, special doors for handicapped people if they cannot get anywhere near the building to start with because of lack of a loading or unloading zone for them in front or on the side of the building? Could we not leave just one parking space? Perhaps you could paint it blue, green, orange, or whatever color turns you on, to mark such an area. Or perhaps we could have special stickers on cars of disabled people, so they could park in otherwise restricted areas. Could we not also put some pressure on our city administrations to try to establish similar areas in downtown blocks, so these brave and often very adventuresome people could give vent to another common human failing, that of spending money. It doesn't have to be on essentials either; they can spend it on some of the little frivolities that might brighten up an otherwise uninspiring day.

These people do not want pity or handouts. They do want facilities reorganized just a little bit to accommodate them. Our government already provides 12 parking spaces for disabled people in front of our public buildings. But private organizations have done even better than this. You know, in this House I listen to an awful lot of people doing an awful lot of blathering about an awful lot of subjects and taking up an awful lot of time. But in this single instance can we not do something that's useful, humanitarian,

and timely, and promote a cause that will very considerably assist these underprivileged members of our society?

Our greatest resource in Alberta is not oil, not gas, not coal. It's people. Anything we can do to assist this people resource and give them a little boost once in a while and leave them a space to park so they can go in and recharge their batteries, be it only by complaining to a civil servant or an MLA or whatever turns them on . . .

This is a simple straightforward motion calling not for money, nor labor, nor indeed for a great deal of high-intensity thought of any kind, but for a minor provision of government regulations and a similar simple suggestion to city authorities to follow suit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add a little to the blather the hon. Member for Macleod spoke about. I support the motion, but not entirely. There is no question that the number of handicapped people in the community is increasing, partly from industrial and auto accidents, and other similar tragedies.

As healthy people we all know the frustration in finding a parking space. If it's not near our destination, we can at least walk half a dozen blocks. It won't hurt us. A crippled person obviously has to be close to his destination. This is particularly important in new buildings in our downtown areas. Where the various authorities are modifying the buildings, they are providing ramps and making sure the structures will accommodate wheelchairs and stretchers. Obviously parking has to be near the front door in most instances.

In order to make this more effective, particularly in the cities, perhaps the parking should be for emergency vehicle space. As the hon. member mentioned, it should be clearly marked. I think that's one of the unfortunate things happening in our cities now. Many curbs are being lowered at the corners to accommodate wheelchairs, but I would suggest that if we had routes clearly marked for wheelchairs throughout our downtown areas, there would be more use of them. While I've seen a lot of curbs that have been lowered to accommodate wheelchairs in the last year and a half in our major cities, I have yet to see a wheelchair on the street making use of them. Perhaps we should have a publicity program to make sure they are used, and that everyone becomes conscious of them.

I suggest that if we had this emergency vehicle space, it could be used by ambulances, police, or fire. There could be very severe penalties if anyone else used it at any time.

Mr. Speaker, I have a little concern with the second part of the motion. I think it's very good of us to nudge our cities now and again, but we've got to remember we are also strong advocates of local autonomy. I think we should leave it up to the cities to carry out studies on traffic and pedestrian flow, and let them determine the place and number of parking spaces. I couldn't accept the idea of a space in every city block, because there are thousands of city blocks. I suggest that wouldn't be necessary.

This motion, Mr. Speaker, gives me an opportunity to raise other issues again, particularly on safety and prevention of accidents that unfortunately create handicapped victims. According to some of our medi-

cal authorities, the number of people becoming totally handicapped is almost at epidemic proportions. I still find it regrettable that our government doesn't support seat belt legislation. Studies in many parts of the world indicate it works.

I still think our whole society in Canada has a laissez-faire attitude toward drunken driving. It results in death and lifelong crippling injuries. We should reduce the speed limits. I know my colleagues in the House may not agree with me, but I still think it would reduce the number of serious accidents. I think all of us should have more concern for safety hazards in our automobiles.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would say that every member of society should have a more positive attitude to making our work places less hazardous.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a comment or two on the resolution, and commend the hon. Member for Macleod for bringing in the resolution. Like the last speaker, I certainly support the motion in principle. But one or two things in it bother me somewhat.

The first is in regard to leaving a parking space vacant in front of each provincial building. If that were done in front of this particular building, a crippled person — particularly a wheelchair person — would have quite a long way to go, because the ramp is at the east end of the building. I suppose we could take the words "in front of" not literally but as the closest to the entrance of that building. If that were the meaning of the words, I could certainly accept it. I don't think it would hurt us at all to leave one empty space in front of our provincial buildings for wheelchair people, wherever there are wheelchair people coming to the government.

The other point was already dealt with by the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight, Mr. Musgreave, in regard to leaving empty spaces in every city block. I find it very irritating when trying to find a parking space in Edmonton or Calgary to find empty spaces reserved for taxis or this or that group. They're completely empty. It's really a waste of space except when that taxi or particular group is there. I think that should be kept to a minimum. Then again, who's to say where the crippled or wheelchair person wants to go?

I would much rather have a system in our cities — if our cities would go for it — also around our provincial buildings, where people who are crippled, who have difficulty moving about, or who are confined to wheelchairs, would have a distinctive marker on their vehicles. These vehicles could park at any parking spot in any city or in front of any provincial building — even the space reserved for MLAs, if necessary. That insignia of the crippled person or wheelchair patient would be sufficient for them to use that parking space. I think that would be a real service, because the person could get as close as possible to the place he wants to go.

I don't think it would hurt the finances or the local autonomy of any city or town in the province to provide this gesture for people who are handicapped to the point of moving about in wheelchairs or who are crippled and move about with great difficulty. I think it would be an excellent gesture, and is certainly not going to hurt the finances but is going to help each of those individuals a great deal.

So rather than simply somebody in city hall or in a government department deciding which parking stalls would be left empty, I would much rather see a program where the government would provide a conspicuous sticker for a vehicle — it could be put on the windshield of a taxi if the taxi is waiting for him — that would permit that person to use any empty parking space he can find in front of provincial buildings or anywhere in our cities and towns. I think that would provide a real service and a real boost to these people. Certainly they have enough handicaps to deal with now without being subjected to those the rest of us are subjected to in trying to find parking spots in our cities and so on.

They still might have difficulty finding a parking space. That might be resolved by leaving some parking spaces available where they are going to be used to a considerable degree, such as uptown, in front of the Legislature Building, and so on.

So I'm certainly going to support the resolution, Mr. Speaker. But I would certainly like to see the government provide some special conspicuous label, sticker, or card that crippled people may carry that would entitle them to park anywhere in the province while they are doing their business and required to be out of their vehicles.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in support of this resolution. The principle of establishing a parking area for people who have a handicap, or are using a wheelchair, is certainly good. It was brought to my attention earlier this year on a trip to the United States. We happened to be visiting a shopping centre one afternoon, and I noticed that in front of each main entrance a parking space was left for handicapped people. I thought, what an excellent and exceptional idea. I had never noticed that in any of our shopping centres in Alberta. I thought, maybe there's some way that idea can be transferred. Possibly shopping centres in some areas do have it.

But I think the point of this resolution as such, and the reason I'd like to support it, is that by passing the resolution we can get the idea across the province that it is a good idea. As the government of Alberta, if we do this in front of each of our public buildings, we set a good example. If at the same time we can encourage local government to do the same, we in turn get them to set a good example to local businesses and shopping centres, et cetera. For that reason I certainly support the resolution, and want to make those remarks known here this afternoon.

As far as the mechanics of how it's done and by what method, I'd certainly suggest the resolution be referred to the committee on the handicapped. There are some excellent people and young people on that committee. I'm sure they could make recommendations to the ministers sitting on the committee and to this House as to how the procedure could best be carried out. But the principle is good, and on that basis I would like to support the resolution.

DR. PAPROSKI: As I rise to speak very briefly on this motion, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to register support for the motion and urge all members to do so also.

Mr. Speaker, the comment I want to make is this: although more should be done in the total area for the handicapped — maybe in housing, jobs, and basic support — this certainly is a good step in the right

direction. I again want to register support for this particular motion, and I urge all hon. members to support it. I know many of the handicapped will appreciate this because of the assistance they will receive.

Thank you.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to take part in this motion — to take part in the blather, as the hon. Member for Macleod said when he started — mine is going to be quite short.

When I was in England last year, I noticed some of the vehicles over there. They have a special small car for the handicapped that is allowed certain parking privileges in certain areas. That somewhat overcomes the idea of the Member for Drumheller for a distinct sticker. They have this certain kind of vehicle, as well as a sticker if they have another car. I think that part is quite important, because there may be a lot of places where we wouldn't be able to paint curbs or mark them off properly. With stickers on vehicles, we could overcome a lot of the trouble in that. And [it would] be much easier to enforce if it was being abused.

The only thing about parking in any city block is to take that literally. I believe the hon. Member for Drumheller suggested that one doesn't necessarily need to take the context of this motion literally. It would say that a spot be left open at an entrance way *per se*. I would take a city block as not necessarily having to be every city block, and especially not anywhere that it creates any kind of hazard to free movement of emergency vehicles.

Talking to some of these people, I think the one thing that came up was: if we do this, the one thing that may cause us some cost for upkeep — and it would be quite minimal — is where we do have a spot like this we must assure keeping the snow free all around this particular parking spot. As far as I take this motion, possibly the only cost involved would be just to keep the snow [away] to allow free movement of a wheelchair.

As has been said here this afternoon, these people are not looking for handouts. They want to go their own way and do their own thing. This would be just a small thing we could do towards enabling them to do their thing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried]

2. Moved by Mr. Donnelly:

Be it resolved that the government give consideration to exemption from universal workers' compensation coverage pursuant to regulations under The Workers' Compensation Act, based upon

- (a) representations received from industries or associations establishing low risk or satisfactory alternative coverage,
- (b) individual applications where both employer and employees join in an application for exemption.

MR. DONNELLY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on this motion, let me say how important I feel it is, important because we are talking about people's freedom of choice. I won't read the motion at this time — you all have it in front of you — but I would like to say that the motion arises out of the select

committee's report that was tabled here last fall. It is the number one recommendation of the committee:

It is the policy of the Government to implement universal coverage. Your Committee agrees with the concept of universal coverage as contained in section 9 of the Workers' Compensation Act: . . .

Your Committee recommends, however, that the Minister of Labour give consideration for exemptions under the Regulations to representations that may be received from industries or associations showing good reason for such.

Section 9 in The Workers' Compensation Act reads:

This act applies to all employers and workers in all industries in Alberta except the employers and workers in the industries designated by the regulations as being exempt.

After reading that, you may wonder why I have the motion here. What brought it to the attention of the committee, and the reason I've put it on the Order Paper, is that during our sittings in the year we were together and preparing the report, [there] was an OC dated December 10, 1974, which lists the industries that will be going on workers' compensation on January 1, 1976, January 1, 1977, and January 1, 1978.

In going through some of the so-called industries on the list, I came across such things in 1976 as barber schools, mushroom growers, and shoeshine parlors [that] were automatically going onto workers' compensation. In 1977, there's one I don't understand: shopping centres wherein elevators are not installed. I haven't figured that one out yet. But '78 was the best one, I think: alarm clock and wake-up services, bed-wetting prevention services, escort services — I don't know, maybe they don't get along out there — legal services, which I'm sure will interest the lawyers here, music arranging and piano tuning.

Now these are all very good trades, and I'm sure people in Alberta are doing very well at them. But I can't call these risk industries. Maybe the piano will fall on the piano tuner, but I think that is rather fair out. I think what we get down to in this situation is the case of universality and individuality. I think the people of the province of Alberta should have a voice in their affairs. If they're going on workers' compensation, I think these people should have the opportunity to make representations to the minister to be exempt by regulations. When these people are considering whether or not they should be on compensation, I would warn them of the consequences of no coverage. Now I may start sounding like a politician: on the one hand and on the other and going round in circles. I agree with universal coverage. But I feel the individual should have the opportunity and right to choose whether he wants to go on workers' compensation under the Workers' Compensation Board, or whether he wants to get his own insurance.

We have a number of insurance companies in Alberta, and they're a very important part of the province. They should be able to participate in the insurance policies. After all, that's what the Workers' Compensation Board is: an insurance policy.

Now if you refer to the resolution, this is just what I have asked: that the industries or associations establishing low risk should be able to make their presentations to the minister or, if they can show the minister they have alternative coverage, that should

be fine. If they're happy with the coverage they have, let them live with it. Let's not tell them where they have to get it.

The second part of the motion is the individual applications where both the employer and employee have agreed they don't want workers' compensation. Surely to goodness if they don't want it, we shouldn't be here to tell them they've got to take it. Certainly at that point a decision would have to be made and they would either be exempt or would have to prove to the minister that they have alternative coverage.

Now I don't want to sound like I'm taking an unfair shot at workers' compensation, because I'm not. I think I can stand here in all fairness and truth and tell you I think it's a fine organization, well staffed, and well managed. It's the healthiest workers' compensation board in Canada if not North America. But I think it's up to the Workers' Compensation Board to go out and explain to the people what they have to offer. I don't think the Compensation Board should be able to sit back and wait for the government to tell people to get workers' compensation.

As I say, I talk in circles a little here, Mr. Speaker. But I do think there should be universal coverage. Any worker or employer is wise to have coverage. I think every worker should be covered. All I'm saying is that that coverage should not come just from the Workers' Compensation Board.

If I could add a personal feeling on universal coverage through just one organization, I would have to say I find that unfair, impractical, and smacking of socialism.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak on this motion I think it merits repetition for the record, because those in Alberta who may read the debate on this motion may be confused. So if I may have the permission of the House to repeat the motion:

Be it resolved that the government give consideration to exemption from universal workers' compensation coverage pursuant to regulations under The Workers' Compensation Act, based upon

- (a) representations received from industries or associations establishing low risk or satisfactory alternative coverage,
- (b) individual applications where both employer and employees join in an application for exemption.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary Millican should be congratulated for bringing this to the House. I think it's a very contemporary motion, in view of the order in council he alluded to. It may be of assistance to the members of the Legislature to provide some fundamental background regarding workmen's compensation, which has bearing upon the decision they have to make. Mr. Speaker, I say this with humbleness despite the fact that I served on the first select committee in 1973, then on the advisory committee to the minister which was recommended by that select committee and, subsequently, under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Calgary Millican, on the second select committee of this government in 1976. I don't consider myself an expert, Mr. Speaker, but I'm certainly much better informed and more sensitive to the problem and certainly realize the importance of workmen's compensation for all workers of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, a number of important principles should be stated, in order that we better deal with this motion. First, the intention is that workmen's compensation should do and does the following: one, minimize accidents and/or loss from accidents now largely of course, as hon. members will know, a role played by the occupational health and safety legislation, but also a continued role of workmen's compensation. And here, of course, prevention is a very important and dominant feature. Two, treatment and rehabilitation for the injured workers, to offer them all the support necessary to bring them back to gainful economic employment; and three, to compensate injured workers and their dependants. Now, Mr. Speaker, I underline that because other insurances very often do not compensate injured workers and their dependants for lost wages, reduced earning capacity, and other specific losses resulting from work-related accidents.

Mr. Speaker, in making these statements, and to clarify, I would like to say this: regarding accidents, industrial safety must be a positive approach. Of course we must consider prevention, industrial health, pollution control, and so forth. Where accidents occur, treatment, rehabilitation, and compensation must be provided and paid for with the sole and most important purpose [of] getting him back to work as quickly as possible or giving him the support he may need if he has a permanent disability. The rare exception under compensation, Mr. Speaker, is serious and willful misconduct of the worker. Mr. Speaker, I say that because it is such a rare event. Compensation usually — invariably — covers the worker unless there is serious and willful misconduct of the worker which can be proven.

Mr. Speaker, if there is doubt under workmen's compensation, the benefit goes to the worker and/or his or her dependant. This is a very important concept, Mr. Speaker, and a basic philosophy behind workmen's compensation in Alberta. It may not be the same in other provinces, but in Alberta it is a central philosophical and practical point which, to my knowledge, the Compensation Board has been following since we took office. I know the hon. Member for Calgary Millican knows this very well [from] our deliberations and hearings across the province. I have no record prior to that period.

The program of workmen's compensation, Mr. Speaker, is a sound program, but not welfare. It reflects the worker's previous economic activity and is entirely unrelated to the worker's financial obligation. In other words, Mr. Speaker, compensation is approximately at the rate one receives if one were well. Compensation is funded by the employers. I repeat, compensation is funded by the employers as a collective liability based on the legitimate cost of doing business.

Mr. Speaker, there's an exception to that, since we took office in 1971: the upgrading of old pensions, widows' pensions, which the hon. Member for Calgary Millican so strongly supports. I know this government has participated in that funding by updating those old pensions.

Dealing more specifically with the motion, Mr. Speaker, and to be clear [on] what the act states under Section 9 or 8, I believe — that'll be clarified when *Hansard* reports me — if I may read, in part:

This act applies to all employers and workers in

all industries in Alberta except the employers and workers in the industries designated by the regulations as being exempt.

Mr. Speaker, to date exemptions are very, very few. This may be changed with the adoption of this motion, or it may change because of a change of policy of government. From my information the only exemptions that still exist — that is, they're still excluded and not intended to be included at this time because of any order of council — are approximately 30. The rest are dated. They are to be included in either 1977 or 1978. The types that are still excluded and not listed to be included at any time are things like auto racers, farming, workers in the collection of urine from pregnant mares.

Mr. Speaker, we laugh at some of these items. The hon. Member for Calgary Millican indicated some of the exemptions and wondered whether there was any risk in those. I agree with him. But at the same time, in all seriousness, the hon. member and members of the Legislature, I'm sure, would agree that the collection of urine from pregnant mares could be a hazardous situation. You could get killed. Having said that, it's of course a matter of opinion in all these cases.

Mr. Speaker, I believe universal coverage is desirable for the protection of the worker and the dependants. But at the same time, as the hon. member has indicated, I also believe the worker should have a choice either to receive compensation or to take out coverage that will provide that worker with similar benefits. But that is the catch, Mr. Speaker, take out a plan that will provide the worker with similar benefits. That is the difficulty. Although the worker has a choice when he joins an organization or an industry, does he really have the choice of manipulating that industry to get the proper plan or a plan approximately analogous to compensation?

Simply and clearly, Mr. Speaker, does that plan really cover quick, prompt, complete, continuous coverage at a low cost for the worker and for all his dependants with no legal hassle, no delay after he's dead or totally disabled and, even more importantly, surrounding all that, where the benefit of doubt always goes to the claimant?

Mr. Speaker, I underline that last part again because it's so important. There was doubt in a case, dating back to 1949, that I took active part in, trying to secure benefits for a person. All that had to be shown was reasonable doubt, and that individual in fact received compensation in 1976. That, I think, reflects on that particular philosophical point. Those who argue otherwise, I suggest, have not compared all the features of other insurance nor the features of workmen's compensation, which comes to the point of the hon. member's comment, that this should actually be demonstrated by the Compensation Board to the industries and the workers. Mr. Speaker, the other thing is that they simply do not feel any coverage is needed.

Other plans give something, but no plan other than compensation gives the security, lifetime protection, rehabilitation, treatment, and support for dependants for the same dollar cost. Even if there is reasonable doubt, they will get it. If a worker chooses the other side and takes a plan or chooses no protection at all, and this can happen, or there is inadequate protection, the whole central problem falls on the doorstep of the entire society. Who picks up the tab? Every

citizen, every taxpayer. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, there is no mistake in that. Government will, government must help those in need. We just passed a resolution for those in need, the disabled. I suggest if a wife, widow, or widower with children comes to the doorstep of government, they will receive help.

It's so vital that workers who are in a hazardous position or in an apparently hazardous position should be protected, because the liability is there and the possibility exists. Mr. Speaker, one can make arguments on both sides of the motion. I'm going to try not to be hazy about this, but just give you about five or six points on both sides of the motion so hopefully the hon. members may better judge for themselves which way they should vote.

Mr. Speaker, universal compulsory coverage versus universal voluntary workmen's compensation. Under universal compulsory compensation, all must be under that coverage. There are no exemptions and no choices. Under universal voluntary compensation, all can be covered, but there is a legal exemption and there is a choice. In his motion the hon. member of course indicates there should be that choice. I'm attempting to draw these conclusions very carefully.

Again, under universal compulsory workmen's compensation, workers and their dependants will be covered and protected under this act, and a program — second to none in Canada, probably in the world — will be brought into force for all workers, whether they're in offices, low risk, high risk, to protect the worker and his dependants. Under universal voluntary coverage, the worker and the dependant will not be covered under the same program unless there's an equal. I suggest that equal has not yet been found by any insurance plan. They will require coverage and risk under some plan, whatever it may be. I suggest it probably will not be adequate. The worker and the dependant will receive assistance from the plan on a limited basis, be cut off and, if there is inadequate funding, the worker and/or the dependant will unfortunately seek assistance elsewhere. That "elsewhere", Mr. Speaker, may very well be the government of Alberta.

The second point under universal compulsory legislation is that government off and on upgrades the pension and disability benefits, as with widows. Under any private plan there is no upgrading of coverage, never has been, and never will be.

The third point, Mr. Speaker: under universal compulsory coverage, choice is taken away. But it follows the historical trade-off between employer and employee. They made that decision historically. We're not going to argue the high risk, but we argue a low risk: a risk being low, of course, until you get killed or disabled. If the roof falls in and you're a secretary, it's just as high a risk. The choice of universal compulsory [coverage] was made historically for some industries. That right of the worker to sue the employer was given up so there would be quick, adequate, continuous, complete coverage and no delay. The individual will in fact receive benefits while there is discussion regarding who is responsible.

If there is any doubt in the members' minds regarding suing of the employer by the employee, Mr. Speaker, I suggest they turn their attention to the United States of America, where cases go on for one, two, three, four, five years. The individual doesn't get paid while he is disabled and loses a good portion of

his benefits through litigation.

Mr. Speaker, under universal voluntary workmen's compensation, the choice is there of course. This is a good point. He can choose any type of insurance program he wants and pay for it. But the question here is, does the worker really have a choice in choosing the plan? I suggest he will have a choice if the organization is really formulated at the earliest stage and he is just joining a barber industry and the barber industry was just forming a worker/employer relationship. But the plan is there for the barber industry. The plan is in my office, and when an employee joins my firm or the firm of the hon. Member for Calgary Millican, the probability of him changing the plan is really zero. If it's inadequate, he'll take it anyway because he's on the job and he wants a job, which is the central point. I am suggesting, really, that the employee rarely has a chance to change the situation.

There are only two more points, Mr. Speaker, under universal compulsory workmen's compensation. Of course all are covered even those who are apparently in a low risk area — and I've indicated before, it might be a disaster. In either case the individual, the worker, doesn't give a damn if it's low risk or not. If you are injured and disabled, you'd like to be covered. Unfortunately you're not, if you're not covered. Under universal voluntary, Mr. Speaker, the argument is that a disaster rarely occurs in a low-risk area. It rarely occurs, but it does occur. The waitress or waiter who handles cooking in front of customers, and there's an explosion and [he or she] gets burned seriously and/or dies, is no longer low risk.

The fifth and last point under universal coverage, Mr. Speaker, is that all are covered. Employees do not have to barter with employers, and they have the best coverage available [at] the dollar cost. It's part of doing business. Under universal voluntary compensation, the employee and the employer agree, [but] chances are the employer will probably choose the less costly coverage, the less effective coverage, unless the employees as a group stand their ground. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that is not likely to happen except during a strike or negotiation of labor disputes.

Of course a number of other arguments can be made on both sides in terms of coverage, length of coverage, dependants' coverage, and so forth. Mr. Speaker, the important thing is that with compensation, there is ongoing improvement of coverage and the fringe benefits — for example, death benefits, burial benefits, ambulance service, and so forth — are incomparable with any other insurance plan unless you pay a lot more dollars for it.

So concluding, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that workers' compensation quite clearly provides — and I think all members will agree — sound, tried and proven protection for the worker and the family. The worker and the family, not just the worker. I emphasize the family again, Mr. Speaker. Where there is doubt, compensation will go to the worker and the family.

So the real task here, of course, is demonstrating to the workers the obvious advantage of being under compensation coverage. I think the responsibility here lies with the government as well as the Workers' Compensation Board to sell the program to those groups who have doubt — namely, the farmers and maybe the teachers in this province — not in a false

way, not in any propaganda way, Mr. Speaker, but just laying the facts on the table. I can't see how they could logically refuse this unless there were some other benefit we are not aware of.

Mr. Speaker, in general I would rather see universal coverage clearly for all people, all workers in this province, because all society will in fact have to pay if the worker is disabled and unable to care for himself or his family. The principle of choice, which I strongly adhere to, is great if the results of that choice don't involve us, the citizens of Alberta. But it does, and it will, because our commitment is to those in need in a clear and unequivocal way.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, if a group desires exemption, that group must show why, how they will protect themselves against injury in their work place, and how they will protect their families. They must offer an alternative coverage, and that alternative must be comparable.

Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to make a few comments on Motion No. 2 before the Legislature this afternoon, both the hon. Member for Calgary Millican, who raised this particular issue, and I happen to be members of the minister's advisory committee on workers' compensation, a position the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway occupied for some time as well. Since the hon. Member for Calgary Millican proposed the change, perhaps it is worth while for me to look at the alternative arguments from a slightly different vantage point, but [from] almost two years on the Minister's Advisory Committee.

I might say many of these arguments have already been expressed rather well by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway. It's not very often I compliment the hon. member, but I must confess his arguments were put extremely well today.

We have to remember a number of things, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the position of the organized trade union movement throughout North America has been to fight for the expansion of the workers' compensation concept and to make it universal. That is the position not just of the Alberta Federation of Labour. If you check the record of the United Mine Workers, or unions wherever you are in North America, there is one pretty strong common thrust when it comes to this question of compensation: they support the principle of a workers' compensation board.

Historically, as the Member for Edmonton Kingsway pointed out, what really took place was a *quid pro quo*. In return for giving up the right to sue an employer, the compensation board was established so benefits could be provided to the claimant, the injured workman. It was not just a scheme to assist the worker. There was in fact a trade-off. It's important that we recognize that trade-off existed historically when the Workers' Compensation Board developed, so that when one looks at this question one sees among many, but not all, people in the business community very strong support for the Workers' Compensation Board and the concept of universal coverage.

I'm not suggesting that is a position of every businessman, because obviously some businessmen would prefer not to be included within workers' compensation. Nevertheless there are many in the business community who, accepting the basic philos-

ophy behind the development of workers' compensation in the first place and recognizing they are not then going to be caught with suits, find the concept very attractive. As members are probably also aware, benefits paid to claimants under workers' compensation are not taxable.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us singles out "representations received from industries or associations establishing low risk or satisfactory alternative coverage". The first concern I would express is the issue of low risk. Obviously most of us would quickly agree that if you're working in a coal mine in Grande Cache, you'd want to be covered by workers' compensation. So the Member for Calgary Millikan would not be changing that. But many areas where coverage is now extended are, quite frankly, marginal risk.

However, when the individual is affected by an accident — and the Member for Edmonton Kingsway cited cases of a secretary or a waitress — the fact of the matter is that that individual is still injured. I would argue — and I think those who argue for universal coverage would contend — that even in the case of industries where there is a low risk, the benefits of universal coverage to both the employer and the employee far outweigh any of what might seem to be the temporary advantages of being able to opt out.

Let me also make it clear there's really no advantage to the employee opting out. Clause (a) says "satisfactory alternative coverage", and then Clause (b) talks about both employer and employees joining in an application for exemption. We have to remember, of course, that the basis of making contributions to the workers' compensation fund is from the employer. It's a cost of doing business. In no way do employees make any contribution. So I frankly find it unlikely that an employee now covered under the workers' compensation plan would want to be excluded from the plan from a monetary point of view. You might have a very tiny number of people who would not want to be covered by workers' compensation for religious reasons. But certainly no employee I know of would want to be exempted from a plan that the employer pays for and that is incorporated into the basic cost of doing business. So (b), quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, except for the occasional exception where people might have religious objections — but those would be minuscule compared to the tens of thousands of workers covered by the present compensation plan in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the proposition we have before us would undercut the workability of workers' compensation. I would suggest it is inconsistent with the historical development of workers' compensation and that, if enacted, it would lead to negotiation, one important aspect that has become accepted as fact. What's going to happen under (b) if there are exemptions to workers' compensation? Obviously the workers and the [employer] are going to seek some kind of substitute. As a matter of fact Clause (a) says, "or satisfactory alternative coverage". That means going to some private insurance company.

Obviously before too long there will be debate over who's going to pay for this. Will it be paid for by the employer? Will the premium be paid for by the employer in total, or will it be shared by the employ-

ees? If you allow exceptions, I just can't imagine that there won't be some employers who will say to their employees, we can get this excellent deal from insurance company X, but it's going to cost this much in premiums; we propose to pay half and think you should pay half. Mr. Speaker, that would negate one of the important principles of workers' compensation, namely that the employer pays. It's passed on as a cost of doing business in return for a trade-off: no suits if accidents occur, but the employer pays. That's always been the basic principle behind workers' compensation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I find it highly unlikely . . . I could just assure Members of the Legislative Assembly that if the government were foolish enough to follow this recommendation and make changes, they would have a real battle not only with the organized trade union movement through the Alberta Federation of Labour, who have made their position extremely clear, but I suspect with many workers who are not members of trade unions at all but have recognized over the years the tremendous benefits that accrue to both employer and employee from the present set-up.

I'm not suggesting that as we go along it won't be necessary to make changes. As a member of the minister's advisory committee, one of the most troubling aspects has been this whole question of widows' pensions. Nevertheless the operation of the board has been: (1) administered competently and well; (2) meeting the needs of the working people of Alberta; and (3) avoiding either legal battles over who pays for compensation or alternatively bringing this question of compensation into the area of collective bargaining. So there are, in my judgment, tangible benefits to employers out of the present arrangement.

That being the case, Mr. Speaker, while I can appreciate some of the arguments about right of choice, I disagree with them. I would argue that you could look a long way and it would be very difficult to find any private plan that could touch the workers' compensation program in this province. As a matter of fact I happen to think we in the province of Alberta have the best workers' compensation plan anywhere in Canada. But when looking at alternatives, there's just no way you could match the alternatives. Even if you found a private insurance company that would in a given year match the dollar-for-dollar payments, how we would deal with the tax question is one issue. Number two, as the Member for Edmonton Kingsway pointed out, private insurance plans are not going to be upgraded as are workers' compensation benefits. And number three, perhaps even the most important part of the whole compensation approach here is the therapy that is basically a part of workers' compensation. You're not going to have private plans that will provide the therapy that exists as part of workers' compensation, whether it's in North Dakota, British Columbia, New Brunswick, or Alberta. So from the vantage point of individual employees, I just can't imagine that they would seriously want to entertain a change.

Part (b) troubles me in one other area as well. As I mentioned before, I can see that a very tiny number of people may want to exempt themselves from workers' compensation for religious reasons. Dealing with almost any public program, we have that sort of desire. We have people who don't want to pay taxes because of some religious reason. We have people

who don't want to do X, Y, and Z because of religious reasons. Even though I may disagree with them, on balance one can appreciate those arguments being posed.

But the situation in low-risk shops or operations where you don't have a trade union to protect the workers rather troubles me, where individuals are probably not overly conscious of the danger of accidents because it is a low-risk situation, and where the suggestion is made by the employer that, look, we don't want to be part of workers' compensation; let's submit a joint application from the employer and the employees. I can appreciate that in certain instances there would probably be employees without anyone to protect them who might very well say, well, gee whiz, if that's the price of keeping the good will of the employer, maybe I'll join him or her in a joint submission. So it seems to me that by moving in this direction we open the door to an undercutting of the effectiveness of workers' compensation and, if you like, a substitution of what may become more a patchwork provincial system. I would express that fear in any event.

Having said those words, Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude by advising the members of the Assembly that being able to sit on the advisory committee to the minister for the last two years has been extremely useful. We have representation from industry and labor, and the hon. Member for Calgary Millican and I represent the members of the Legislature. In our work in the last two years, I found a new sense of respect for the operations of the board. I frankly believe that rather than moving in this direction we should be moving even more toward universal coverage, as I believe the thrust of the argument of the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway suggested.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words too on the second reading of the resolution introduced by the Member for Calgary Millican, Mr. Donnelly.

I take a little different view from that of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. Although I support the concept of workers' compensation just as vehemently, we haven't got universal coverage in workers' compensation today; we've never had it in this province or anywhere else in the world as far as I know. Workers' compensation hasn't been undermined and hasn't had the dire effects the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview envisions if this resolution is passed. We haven't got it — I think I have to emphasize that — and I am doubtful if it was ever envisioned by the founders of the workers' compensation concept.

When the workers were covered by insurance policies, [there was] a great deal of unfairness, and concern arose among working people. Because in many cases it was a case of whether the worker or the employer could hire the most clever lawyer to decide whether the worker got compensation. In many cases the worker who felt he was properly injured in industry would not get the decision of the court.

As the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview said, there was a trade-off. Workers said, we'll give up our right to sue if we can be assured of an individual board, not tied to employees or employers, to decide whether we have a proper claim for compensation. From that beginning has grown the present idea of a

workers' compensation board made up of a representative from employers, a representative of employees, and an independent chairman appointed by neither one.

Our present board in the province of Alberta has that make-up. The chairman is appointed by the government. Even though he was a strong, excellent labor advocate, when he became chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board he became independent of both labor and employers, and must make his decision on the merits of each claim. In my opinion, our present chairman has done that to a tremendous degree.

But when we come to saying that every group of employers and employees must be under workers' compensation, that's when I have to say I can't go along with that idea of universality. In my view the government doesn't have all the answers and shouldn't be telling the people what's good for them. The government should be carrying the judgment of the people.

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview says he knows of no group of workers that doesn't want compensation. Well he didn't sit on a legislative committee, or he would have known at least one group. The teachers of this province have made it very, very clear they do not want to come under workers' compensation. It was the teachers' groups that came to us and said, we don't want to be forced into compensation. I and other members asked them, did you ever pass a resolution at your annual meeting asking your executive to negotiate with the Workers' Compensation Board for compensation? Never. They had made some resolutions at their annual meeting asking for extensions and expansions of the plan they're now under, but they had not asked to come under the Workers' Compensation Board.

They are opposing — at least no teachers' group came to us and said, we want to come under the Workers' Compensation Board. Every one said, we don't want to, we're happy with our own plan. Is the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview going to say that the Legislature should say to those people — when both the employer and the employee say, we're happy with our own plan — that we know better than you. You have to give up your own plan. You have to take workers' compensation.

What position would the government of this province be in if it took that attitude? In my view that's not an attitude for governments to take. It might be in some countries, where the government tells the people what's good for them. But I don't want that type of government in this land. I want the government to carry out the thinking of the people, not tell the people what's good for them. Consequently, I support the resolution.

I want to deal with two or three groups. For many years my constituency was almost entirely labor or labor-oriented, with three-quarters of the people who sent me here being members of one union or another — mostly of the United Mine Workers of America — and they did come under workers' compensation. I would be very surprised if any coal miner, even though he's not happy with the decision he got from the board, would want to change that concept. They're generally happy with the workers' compensation concept, and the matter has improved over the years.

When the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview says today that the employer pays and passes it on to the consumer of that product, that's right today. But that wasn't right just a few years ago. As a matter of fact, I was on the Legislative committee that recommended that employees no longer pay for compensation. That was in my lifetime in this Legislature. Before that every employee had to pay a part of the cost. And that was based on the fact that industries under compensation can pass on the cost.

I personally believe that if a person is injured in industry, industry should pay for the loss of that arm, that foot, or that life. It should be added to the cost of the product being produced. I agree with that concept; that's my concept of workers' compensation. That can't be done in all industries, but [it can] in the industries that were under the board when the change was made. To a large degree I suppose it's still so today: the employer can pass on the cost of workers' compensation and it's paid by the people as a whole. I think that's a sound concept.

The farmers of the province generally were in one of the groups that came to us and said, we want compensation, but we can't pass on the charge. They said, we have no way of passing on the costs of compensation to the people who buy our product. Because we all know the prices of many products of the farm are set. They don't have any say as to what they sell. It's the world price in regard to wheat. They can't set their price; they can't increase it because compensation and other costs are taking them over the point where they're making a profit. The farmers can't do it. So they came and said, yes we want compensation. The farmers do want compensation; I'd like to see them come under compensation. But they say, we can't afford to pay it on the basis of present assessments.

Let's just take a look at the farmers alone in regard to this aspect. I have seen a number of people who have been injured on farms. It's a hazardous industry. Every year there are a number of fatalities. A fatality costs Workers' Compensation today about \$100,000. If a man is killed, the cost is about \$100,000. You can't measure the life of a man in dollars, but they have to plan on paying the various costs connected with that death: looking after the widow, the children, et cetera, for many years. It's amortized, and \$100,000 is the average cost of a fatality.

Last year in the province of Alberta there were a number of fatalities on the farms. Some have been in operating tractors which upset, and the boy or farmer or hired man was killed. Others have been caught in machinery. I'm not going to outline all the hazards of farming — there are hon. members who know that far better than I — but I've seen enough accidents on our farms to know that it's a hazardous industry. I saw a young man who lost his arm when working on the combine. That father would have been glad to have paid almost any price for compensation had he known that was going to happen. But we don't know about these things. Thousands of other farm families have not had a serious accident of that nature.

Well the farmers came to the committee and said, the board will take us under compensation for the price of \$5.50 or \$5.25 per \$100 payroll assessment. That sounds pretty high at today's rates. Let's just notice what the problem is in that regard.

Under workers' compensation in coal mining there are different classes. The deep seam mine is far more hazardous than the open pit mine, so there is a different rate for the deep seam mine and the open pit mine. There's a tremendous difference between those two rates.

In farming there are also very great differences. At the present time some farmers are covered under workers' compensation. For instance, Group 158 have a rate of \$2.75 per \$100 payroll. That includes general farming, dairy farming, stock farms, production of beets and potatoes, special crops, custom harvesting. Mare farm PMU: they get theirs at \$2.75. Group 159, poultry farming, get their compensation at a rate of \$1.10 — the hens don't kick back. Fur farms, landscaping, hatcheries, beekeeping, mushroom plants, greenhouses, nurseries, market gardening: all those farmers pay is \$1.10, a very, very reasonable rate.

But how is the rate set? The rate is set in accordance with the number of accidents occurring and the cost that's accrued. Rightly or wrongly, the Workers' Compensation Board made an assessment bringing all farmers under The Workers' Compensation Act, and their rate was then \$5.25 or \$5.50. They can do it for \$4. They think they could cover the actual costs of accidents and so on for \$4 per \$100 payroll.

But every class has to build up a reserve. The coal miners have built up a reserve, because every year someone is killed and all of a sudden \$100,000 has to be looked after. If that had to be put on the annual rate of the workers' compensation, it would make an exorbitant rate. So they've worked out an excellent scheme of gradually building up their reserves. That's why the Compensation Board says that to start with we would have to add \$1.25 to the \$4. Then if the accident rate is good and the claims are lower than what that will pay, we can start lowering the rate. That has been the basis upon which the Compensation Board has set its rates.

In regard to the fatalities and to the extra \$4 that happens, there are times when you have a very bad accident rate during one year and a great amount of costs go out. If you had to cover that with the annual rate, the assessment would go very high. But because the board sets up a reserve for those bad years for fatalities, for the lung diseases that take a number of years to develop, in case a number come all at one time a rate has to be set higher. Then as the reserve grows and gets to a sufficient height they adjust the rates, which is a good businesslike way of doing it. I don't think there is much concern among employers — maybe a little among some who think they should be in a different class — but certainly little or no concern among employees the way this is done.

Now what happens in regard to farming? The farmers generally have come and said, we want coverage because there are problems on the farm. I know one farmer who had a very serious injury. The man — a married man with a family — was off work for several months. The farmer simply continued to pay him his full wages. However, every farmer doesn't do that, maybe economically he couldn't do that. But that has been done.

But generally the farmers have said, we want coverage. Then they've said, \$5.50 per \$100 payroll is too high, we can't afford that. Their alternative

was that the Compensation Board set the rate at \$2.50 for a period of one year and see what the deficit is, then have the government pay the deficit by direct subsidy. Now that's one way of doing it. If the government were prepared to do that for each group that came in, that would solve the problem. After one year's experience you would have some indication of what that annual rate would have to be.

But that would depend on the taxpayer picking up the charge that properly should be paid by industry. That's where the sticker would come, I think, in regard to the government. You would have to sell this to the taxpayers of the province. Many would say, why are we going to be required to pay for the compensation for such and such an industry?

Well that might be a precedent, and if it were done it would solve their problem. But on the basis of the figures of the Compensation Board, they would need the \$4, plus \$1.25 to build up the reserves and look after bad years in order to cover the farmers.

Now the farmers are one problem. I think if the government today were to say, starting April 1 every farmer is going to come under the workers' compensation legislation of this province, there would be a revolution among our farmers. Because many farmers have no interest in coverage. Many farmers figure they can't afford to pay it. Certainly this year, when farmers are not too buoyant with money, to put an extra charge on them suddenly would be wrong.

I go along with the suggestion of the hon. Member for Calgary Millican. He said, let's carry their judgment. Let's go to the farmers' union meetings and carry their judgment on the importance of workers' compensation. Let's carry their judgment on the matter of suing. Because in all the insurance policies now carried by farmers, a suit is required. You must go to court, the same as workers did in the early days of compensation. I don't like that. I don't think the government likes that. Certainly the committee didn't like that. But that's the way it is.

So I think it's important in the next few years that we carry the judgment of the farmers in regard to the importance of workers' compensation. If the government is in the frame of mind where it wants to subsidize this great backbone industry without establishing a precedent for every other industry, I think it would be an excellent program to get it off the ground. Too many people today are being injured on our farms, for which there is no compensation.

The Mexican government took a very definite stand in regard to Mexican workers who came into this province. The Mexican government said to Canada, our workers will not be permitted to work in Canada unless you cover them with workers' compensation. So any farmer who now hires a Mexican worker in this province must apply to the Compensation Board and cover those workers. Of course the Compensation Board says, if you have three Mexican workers and two Canadian workers, you have to cover all your workers. You can't pick and choose and say, we'll only cover the Mexicans.

Well that's one of the leverages leading people to want compensation on farms. I want compensation on farms too. But I'm not prepared to tell the farmers what's good for them. I'd much rather carry their judgment.

Now in regard to the teacher situation, it's a different problem entirely. Here we have both the

school boards and the teachers, both the employer and the employee, saying, we do not want coverage under the compensation act. We like the coverage we've got, our coverage is better. They argued before the committee and argued with members of the committee as to why they wanted their own particular plan.

Maybe they're right. But whether they're right or wrong, should the government tell them that it knows better than they do? It's their money paying for it, it's them who are getting the recovery when they have accidents and sickness and so on. Again I agree that the workers' compensation program is better than any insurance policy, but the teachers don't seem to think so. I certainly think it would be a mistake for any government, unless it was a socialist government, to say to them, you have to take compensation, we know better than you, we're telling you what's good for you. That's not the concept of most people in our province or in our country, and it's certainly not my concept. There again, even though the teacher, the employee, is paying part of the insurance policy, he still doesn't want to switch over to compensation at the present time.

I think a good case could be made at the teachers' annual meeting to show compensation is better than what they have today as far as injury is concerned — it doesn't cover sickness. But let's carry their judgment. Let's not tell them what's good for them. They're not illiterate. They're all educated people, the boards and the teachers, certainly the teachers. They can do their own thinking, and they don't have to have anybody tell them what's good for them. They'll work it out themselves if they get all the facts. I think we should be giving those facts to them.

In my view the terrible things the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview foresaw, the breaking of the backbone of compensation, just wouldn't occur, because we don't have universality now. Most of this is applicable to those who are not now covered by workers' compensation, and that's a point the hon. member should remember.

To sum up what I have to say in regard to this particular resolution, I want to commend the hon. member for presenting it. In my view it's a resolution typifying the attitude that governments reflect the thinking of the people. It is not a resolution that indicates government knows best what's good for the people. I can't see anything different happening in the future if this resolution is passed in regard to the coal miners, the laborers, and so on who today are and want to be covered by workers' compensation and who don't want to have to go to the courts or to insurance companies to get compensation when they have a board where they can have appeal after appeal after appeal. As a matter of fact, under our present set-up there's no end to a worker appealing and re-appealing to a board if he doesn't think he's getting satisfaction. Let's sell that idea to the other groups. Let's not tell them, we know better than you what's good for you.

In my view this is an excellent resolution, and I plan to support it in second reading.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments today about the resolution that my friend from Calgary Millican has put forward. But I'd like to take a little different tack. I'd like to talk a little bit

today about that endangered species, the employer.

I'm not necessarily talking about the employer in Alberta who's resource related. I'm not necessarily talking about the employer who is building things in Alberta. I'm not talking about the one who is servicing the oil field industry or the one who is fabricating or designing for consumption within the province. I'm talking about that bold, brave soul who has set up through courage and initiative to build a product that's going to compete in Alberta and outside Alberta.

This particular fellow, as I envision him, probably has 10 or 20 people on his payroll. He arrived at this thing in the very essence of courage and foresight. He went to the bank, or wherever else. He built, designed, planned, sold his idea to those he borrowed money from, then began in business. Throughout the term of business, whenever there was a mistake, whether it was in his accounts receivable or his material flow or his choice of equipment, he paid for it. And if he didn't pay for it swiftly, there was a knock on the door shortly thereafter with his banker or his other creditors asking for remuneration — and they mean forthwith.

This man of courage in Alberta is alive and well. But he is alive and well in trying circumstances, Mr. Speaker. Not only does he have the normal business problems, with very little consideration in terms of all the other support schemes available to many segments of our society; he's also left with the problem now of having places in Oklahoma, Texas, and Ontario that aren't as fortunate as Alberta in terms of the tempo of their activity, and therefore in order to cover their fixed cost, they are exporting at their cost into the Alberta market.

In addition to that problem, Mr. Speaker, there are some very large projects being consummated in Alberta that require special labor treatment so as not to interrupt the progress of that particular plant or facility.

This young man I am talking about, who has the small manufacturing facility, is having to compete with Syncrude and others for his key personnel, particularly welders and skilled tradesmen. Believe it or not, the experience of these gentlemen is that for a very few cents an hour their loyal employees will flee their premises and seek employment elsewhere.

It concerns me particularly, coming from Calgary, because as you go further north and you approach Fort McMurray you tend to be more involved in the Fort McMurray circumstance. Because of freight and other requirements, in Calgary they're not so fortunate. As a result, if they don't maintain the labor levels required in Fort McMurray their people flee to Edmonton and then to Fort McMurray, causing a very grave shortage of talented tradesmen in Calgary and its surroundings.

So I'm interested, Mr. Speaker, to listen to the comments of some of my colleagues, who suggest that somehow or another the government through its largess is the one who is contributing to workers' compensation. In fact it's the employer. Now I don't think the employer I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker, the one who has the small manufacturing facility, is an irresponsible man, nor is he without a social conscience. This man, I suspect, is willingly and happily involved in workers' compensation for all the people working in his facility who are exposed to any hazard.

What I have to say is that this resolution from my colleague is an absolutely essential part of the right of an employer to decide whether or not he can stay in business, what percentage of his profit should be directed in what areas. In my view, after he has completed his obligation to social and other responsibilities of his employees and their families in a hazardous circumstance, surely he has the right to decide, along with the rest of his employees, whether or not they're going to be involved further in his plan? So I wholly support this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JAMISON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few remarks to the resolution by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican. Having been on the select committee of the Legislature, travelled the province, and heard many submissions from all walks of life, it came through to me loud and clear that what we are doing in the form of compulsory universal coverage — which really, sticking to the resolution, is whether or not this is what is wanted by the people of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, sticking to the resolution itself and not getting into the merits of compensation — because I believe compensation certainly is a tremendous type of insurance for many, many industries — going back to the beginning of compensation, I believe it started in the coal mines in a risk type of industry where people were taking their lives in their own hands going down into the mines and so forth. At that time it was the responsibility of the employer to make compensation for serious injury or even death.

Mr. Speaker, what I am concerned about are the small businessmen and small industries. I concur with the remarks by the hon. Member for Calgary Glenmore. I think putting universal coverage or compulsory compensation on small businesses is just adding another form of tax on those businesses. Small businesses today are really having a tough struggle to just stay alive. In my work with the select committee, the question continually put forth by our group was, who's going to pay for this? In each case the person making the presentation said, the employer. How does the employer get his money back? He passes it on to the consumer. Mr. Speaker, I think passing this on to the consumer has gone just about far enough.

In the case of the ASTA and ATA, they presented a very excellent brief to the committee. They do have insurance coverage, and they're quite happy with it. I really deplore the day any government, whether it's this government or another, makes things universal and compulsory and tells us just what we have to do in business and in life.

So, Mr. Speaker, rather than go over the remarks by the hon. members, I would just like to say this is a very worth-while resolution and the members here should support it. It's not running down The Workers' Compensation Act or the Workers' Compensation Board in any way, shape, or form. In a type of industry where risk is involved, workers' compensation coverage is possibly the best insurance you can buy. But in the case of a small business, adding another tax on that business may just be the difference of whether it stays in business or not. I would urge all members in this Assembly to vote in favor of this resolution.

Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in this debate, the hon. members will recognize that I took my time. I did so to allow ample opportunity for a member of the official opposition to rise in this Assembly and state for the record the views of the official opposition on this matter of great importance to the workers of Alberta. However, I note that no one from the official opposition rose to take part in this debate. I thought it would be worth while to point this out, and it should be noted.

DR. BUCK: We didn't want to.

MR. HORSMAN: Now that I have the attention of the hon. Member for Clover Bar, I will comment on the resolution. I found it very interesting this afternoon to listen to the participation in the debate by members of the opposition — not the official opposition, but members of the opposition — and members from the government side.

I have had the opportunity, as I'm sure all members have, of reading the report submitted to this Legislature in November 1976 by the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Workers' Compensation. It is particularly interesting to note recommendation (1). This resolution which the hon. Member for Calgary Millican has moved is based upon that recommendation. It is a recommendation of considerable importance to the people of Alberta, to people currently covered by workers' compensation, and to those in industries or enterprises included in the order in council of December 1974, alluded to in the remarks of the mover of the motion, because over the next few years it is recommended that many more individuals, workers, groups, organizations, and so on will come under the coverage of workers' compensation. Therefore it is of great importance that this matter be debated and the views of the Legislature be made known to the people of Alberta.

My interest in workers' compensation goes back a number of years to my first summer job, Mr. Speaker, when I had an unfortunate work accident which would have meant a great deal to me that particular summer had I not been covered by workers' compensation. This was not in this province, but in the province of Saskatchewan.

DR. BUCK: Selling ice cream.

MR. HORSMAN: I wasn't selling ice cream. As a matter of fact, I was making ice cream in a dairy. Since the hon. Member for Clover Bar is awake and listening, I thought other members of the Assembly would perhaps be interested in hearing what happened on that occasion.

AN HON. MEMBER: You might be, we're not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: There's not unanimity for hearing the experience, so I will not relate it to you. Those of you who wanted to hear it can blame those who did not.

I think it would be useful to review for a moment a comment or two made by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I was pleased indeed to hear his remarks, recorded forever in *Hansard*, that Alberta

has the best workers' compensation plan in all of Canada. I appreciate hearing that from the hon. member, because it's not too often we hear that type of compliment from him about policies of this government or the preceding government. I think that's excellent. It's recorded in *Hansard* forever as some of the interjections by the hon. Member for Clover Bar during a previous debate in this Assembly were recorded forever in the clear amber of the prose of the hon. Member for Banff. That was a memorable phrase in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I certainly intend to remember it, and perhaps even frame it in my office, because I thought it was so remarkable, especially coming from an engineer.

The other thing the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview said today in this Assembly, which I think is worth keeping in mind, is that in some of these smaller organizations, some of the smaller companies where no trade union organizations are in place, there is not the same degree of protection for the workers.

The second part of this resolution concerns me as well. It refers to exemptions from the regulations where both employer and employees join in an application for exemption. In smaller businesses where there are limited numbers of employees — and this is a concern of mine, as it was a concern of the hon. member — it may be that in those instances undue pressure may be placed upon the employees to acquiesce or join with the employer in the application for exemption from the regulations. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that is a very real and legitimate concern for members of this Assembly. I think it was indeed useful that the hon. member raised that concern in the debate today.

I do think, however, that if the resolution is to be adopted by the Assembly and consideration is given in the future to this type of exemption, it really is incumbent upon the government to ascertain clearly that the decision by the employees to join with the employer in asking for an exemption is made without undue pressure and without bullying on the part of the employer. Despite the view of some members of this Assembly that all employers are altruistic and their interests are all lily-white and pure, I have some concern that that is not always the case. Quite frankly the necessity for trade unions and the trade union movement would probably never have risen if this attitude on the part of employers had been in effect in previous years. So that is a legitimate concern, Mr. Speaker, and I really do share that with the Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

In turning for a moment to the remarks of our colleague the hon. Member for Drumheller, I wasn't surprised to hear him say his views differed slightly from those of the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I don't think that's at all surprising. But I do appreciate having the hon. member's views on this very important subject, keeping in mind the fact that he has been a member of this Assembly for many years and has served it as a private member, as a member of Executive Council and, as he indicated, on previous standing select committees of this Assembly considering this matter of workers' compensation. In fact he served on the committee whose report, which was submitted last fall, is now before the Assembly. I did appreciate the outline he gave of his views on this subject and in particular his reference to one group,

the teachers, who do not wish to come under this coverage and who, in consultation with their employers, have provided adequate coverage otherwise.

One of the most telling arguments in favor of the resolution presented today by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican is that this very large number of people who contribute in a very meaningful way to the development of our society are not prepared to accept this type of coverage even though it is available to them. Having taken and expressed that attitude through their regularly constituted organization, through conventions from time to time, and by resolution clearly understood by the members of their organization, it would really be quite improper for our government now to insist that this type of coverage be forced upon them.

We are not operating a dictatorial form of government. I think we must provide the type of option available in this resolution to those types of organizations who know what they are doing. Anyone who comes here and says, well they really don't know what's good for them, they don't know what they're doing, must be laughing up their sleeve.

I was interested as well that the hon. Member for Drumheller discussed the question of compensation to farmers and farm employees. That indeed is a very difficult area. It is alleged that they want compensation. But there is some indication that somewhere down the road there would be the necessity of government subsidization. Mr. Speaker, I for one am not prepared to support that notion today. I would have to be very seriously convinced of the merits of that type of subsidy request before I would support it. There may be compelling arguments in support, but I haven't heard them as yet, Mr. Speaker. They would have to be compelling indeed. Perhaps we will hear them from some of my colleagues who have constituencies with large numbers of people directly engaged in agriculture.

Just as a matter of interest, I think it would be useful to point out that I support the concept of worker's compensation whole-heartedly. From my own experience, that none of you wanted to hear about, I certainly . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Tell us now.

MR. HORSMAN: No, no, you've lost the opportunity. The members have lost the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to hear that interesting story from my distant past.

I support the concept of worker's compensation, and I would like to see it available . . . Well by and large it is available to large elements in our society. But I know that my colleague from Calgary Millican has received representations from a constituent of mine. The constituent in question indicated to the committee that as for himself and his company he would pay three times the workers' compensation rate which would be charged to him and his company, just to avoid these communistic endeavors. Now perhaps that terminology was rather extreme, but at any rate it reflected an attitude on the part of this small businessman. He was prepared to do what was right by his employees and make sure they were adequately covered by insurance, but he didn't want to be forced into it. Of course that is the same attitude expressed by the teachers through their organization.

So for those reasons, among others, I really support the intent of this motion. I think the hon. members of this Assembly should carefully consider the wording of the resolution, because it is extremely well worded. It really asks the government to "give consideration to exemption from universal workers' compensation" upon receipt by the government of representations which provide "low risk or satisfactory alternative coverage". Now that's important: "satisfactory alternative coverage". On the other hand — and as I've already indicated, this is the part that concerns me, and my concern is similar to that expressed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview: where individual applications come before the government "where both employer and employees join in an application for exemption". It's well worded and, I suggest, requires the thoughtful consideration of members of this Assembly, and I would support the resolution.

I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, that this debate today has been an educational experience for me, because I've heard the views of a number of my colleagues in this Assembly. I also want to point out how important it is, Mr. Speaker, to take these reports of select committees of the Legislative Assembly and study them carefully. Unless there are very compelling reasons not to accept the recommendations, one should accept them. They are well considered, and the members of these select committees . . . I have just had the experience of serving on the trucking regulation committee, as I've indicated in previous debates in this Assembly. I found that a very useful and interesting experience. The members of the committee, non-partisan because of the fact it is representative of both government and opposition, have an opportunity of travelling throughout the province, of hearing the views expressed by the public of this province, of meeting with groups and individuals directly concerned with government legislation, of considering in a calm and reasoned atmosphere the recommendations the committee will place before this Assembly.

Unless the committees have gone off the deep end somewhere along the line, or there is some compelling reason we should not accept their recommendations, I strongly believe we should accept their recommendations. Therefore I think it is important to consider this resolution carefully in light of the fact that the resolution itself flows from the first recommendation of the Select Committee on Workers' Compensation. For that reason as well, I am prepared to add my support to the views expressed earlier by the mover of the motion and by those who spoke in favor of the resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move the Assembly adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at half past 2.

[The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.]

