

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Tuesday, April 19, 1977 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 210
The Rural Electrification
Association Contract Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce private member's Bill 210, The Rural Electrification Association Contract Act. Very briefly, the purpose of Bill 210 would be to give force to the proposals of the Alberta union of REAs for a new master contract with the power companies in the province of Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 210 read a first time]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I'm most pleased this afternoon to introduce to you, sir, and to the members of the House, 75 students from the Father Leo Green grade 4 class. They are accompanied by Mrs. C. Ritter. There are 15 in the public gallery and 60 in the members gallery. I should point out that grade 4 classes from this school have visited every year since 1972. Several members of the Assembly have been invited and have visited this particular school. I'm looking forward to visiting on April 25 a school in which I feel very much at home, and indeed adopted.

I should like to ask Mrs. Ritter and the students to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce grade 9 students from St. Vincent school in the riding of Edmonton Glenora who are in the public gallery. Some 50 students, they're not as many as those introduced by my colleague Dr. Hohol, but what they lack in quantity they make up in quality. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. Walsh. I'd ask that they stand and receive the recognition of the Assembly at this time.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Department of Agriculture**

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to report to the Legislature and to the dairymen of Alberta the nature of the 1977-78 provincial dairy policy. As members will be aware, the past dairy year has been one of considerable difficulty. Thankfully, the Alberta producers and the Alberta Dairy Control

Board responded in such a way that interruptions in production, management, and delivery were kept to a minimum.

Mr. Speaker, this year the dairy industry should not suffer nearly the disruption which occurred last year. All Alberta's industrial milk producers will be provided a quota at least equal to that of last year, and a number of producers will be able to benefit from an increased amount of quota.

Last year, consumption of fluid milk in the province of Alberta increased by a surprising 6 per cent, considerably more than in any other province in Canada. This has permitted increases in fluid milk quotas and a resulting availability of increased market share quota for distribution.

The priority of distribution of new quota will be to small producers who are not currently operating viable farm units. The first sector that will benefit will be that of the small cream producer. During the past dairy year the cream producer could only participate in the dairy industry by purchasing quota from other producers. The dairy board recognized the problems this policy created. Consequently, in this dairy year a new cream producer will be allotted on deliveries a market sharing quota for the amount of deliveries up to 300 pounds of butter fat. Extra consideration will be given to cream producers currently delivering less than 300 pounds. These people will be allocated quota on the same basis as new producers, to a maximum of 300 pounds.

For cream producers with quota of less than 10,000 pounds wishing to convert to industrial milk production, a special policy is being introduced. Upon application to the Alberta Dairy Control Board, a cream producer will be allotted on delivery additional quota up to 10,000 pounds of butter fat. This will mean, Mr. Speaker, that many marginal cream producers will be able to develop viable full-time dairy operations.

This benefit will also be extended to industrial milk producers with market share quota of less than 10,000 pounds. Upon application, the Dairy Control Board will provide for additional market share quota on deliveries up to 10,000 pounds of butter fat.

Exact details as to application procedures for obtaining additional quota will be mailed directly to each of Alberta's dairy producers. This bulletin should be available to all producers by the end of this month.

One other item, Mr. Speaker, is that in spite of the admirable efforts of the Dairy Control Board and the producers of this province, a small number of dairy producers suffered financial difficulties because of the past dairy policy. If these producers do not qualify for special consideration in the categories I mentioned earlier, they may consider contacting the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation for funds to purchase dairy quota.

Of further interest to these producers will be the dairy development loans, which will provide up to \$12,000 of guaranteed funds. Partnerships and corporations may receive up to \$24,000. These loans include an interest rebate of \$70 per \$1,000 of loan for the first three years. These funds can be used for constructing, altering, or repairing buildings, for purchase of dairy equipment, or for purchase of quota. Producers are advised, Mr. Speaker, to discuss these proposals with the dairy inspectors or the district

agriculturist. This program should significantly alleviate a number of problems some dairy producers are encountering.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that the outlook for the dairy industry is rather promising, in that cheese and fluid milk consumption is increasing steadily and should continue to do so. All of Alberta's dairy producers can look forward to 1977-78 as a very stable and promising year for dairy production.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Planning Act

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the Premier and ask what response he has given to the open request made by Calgary city council at Monday's council meeting that the Premier personally undertake to convene and chair a conference between the provincial government and municipalities with regard to Bill 15, The Planning Act, 1977.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to refer that question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and to the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for liaison with Calgary.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had any formal request to meet with the city of Calgary regarding Bill 15. I understand, however, that a report is coming from the Calgary Municipal Planning Commission. I look forward to that submission.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for Calgary. Has the minister been in contact with the Calgary city council following its passing a motion, I believe at Monday's meeting, at which time it asked that the Premier convene a meeting of municipalities in Alberta with regard to the provincial Planning Act?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, since the Monday meeting I've had no formal request from the aldermen of the city of Calgary to convene a meeting on that particular topic. But I would advise the Chamber that as of March 30, I wrote the representative of the alderman who liaises with me in setting up these meetings, advising him we'd be quite happy to meet with him sometime towards the end of this session to deal with a number of topics I thought might be of interest to them, and inviting them to add to the agenda any other matters they wished. Of course that could include The Planning Act or the timing of the passage of The Planning Act.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In light of the action taken by the Calgary city council yesterday, is it the intention of the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for Calgary to contact the Calgary city council — namely the mayor or the alderman who sponsored the motion; Alderman Donnelly, I believe — and discuss with them the wishes of the city of Calgary? And is the minister prepared to move in the direction the city council has asked the government?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, in the normal course of my duties I am in contact with any number of aldermen from week to week. On this particular question it would naturally be my intention to pursue the matter with them, two or three weeks after the date of my letter, to see if they are in fact interested in meeting.

Might I also say, Mr. Speaker, that at our last meeting in December 1976 — that is, the meeting between the Calgary MLAs and the aldermen — we discussed The Planning Act, its preparation, timing, and other aspects of it in full detail. It was explained to them at that time that it would be a long and complicated document, and that when it was tabled there would be full and adequate opportunity for them to review the document and make full submissions to the cabinet, the caucus, and the Calgary MLAs.

Naturally the timing of the passage of the bill would relate to the volume, extent, and degree of concern about it expressed by municipal people and others.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In light of the fact that the minister's sole responsibility is liaison with the city of Calgary, would the minister please explain to the House the complete breakdown in communication between the Calgary city council and this government on the question of The Planning Act?

SOMEHON. MEMBERS: Order, order.

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, to begin with, that is a misleading question. That is not my sole responsibility. Furthermore there has been no breakdown in communication. I think the hon. member should reflect that the hearings of council are not always the most tempered — that is, the hearings in Calgary — and they're not always the most disciplined. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member might reflect that an election is coming up in October.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, are we to assume the hon. minister is going to run for some office in Calgary?

MR. McCRAE: No, Mr. Speaker. But I thought the hon. member opposite might, so he could get in on some of these very worth-while and credible discussions.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate to us when he's going to have some worth-while discussions with the Calgary city council, prior to that election, and report back to the House?

SOMEHON. MEMBERS: Order, order.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I believe the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight and the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo have supplementaries.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the hon. minister responsible for Calgary affairs. I would ask him if he could advise the House if Mayor Sykes and Alderman Donnelly

were present at the December meeting between the Calgary MLAs and the members of city council.

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I would want to check the records, but it is my recollection that neither of those members of city council was present at the December meeting.

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'm wondering if the minister could advise whether or not any arrangements have been made whereby Mr. Facey, who prepared the paper with reflections on The Planning Act for the city of Calgary, has arranged to meet with the technical people of the hon. minister's department to explain their concerns relative to The Planning Act.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have a technical committee set up to handle exchange and answer many questions which may be presented to us from various municipalities. In fact, next Tuesday the gentleman referred to by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo will be meeting with the technical committee in Edmonton to discuss and consider the recommendations from the city of Calgary.

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Is the minister in a position to confirm the comments made by certain officials of the Department of Municipal Affairs that in fact the regulations for The Planning Act have been finished for some time and are now in a form that could be presented to members of the Legislature?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd have to assume that's hearsay information. It's not information that I have given to this House.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is the information accurate? It's information that has been given to some municipal officials in this province: that the regulations are finished and are waiting to be presented to members of the House. Is that accurate?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know the regulations are in draft form.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Are the draft regulations finished so they could be presented to the House? They're always going to be in draft form until they're approved. But are the draft regulations finished?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, to me the word "draft" suggests "preliminary" and these are in preliminary form.

Prime Minister's Speech

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Premier. In view of the very illuminating and eloquent speech of the Prime Minister last night in Winnipeg, would the hon. Premier please advise us of any new developments in federal attitudes toward the western provinces in general and toward Alberta in particular?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that's certainly a very important question, because the Prime Minister did at some considerable length — and I have a copy of the text of his remarks and have had just a brief opportunity to peruse them — make some statements that to my knowledge he had not made before.

In my view the general tenor of the first portion of his remarks with regard to western Canada is gratifying to the government of Alberta, because it reflects the steady and consistent position we've taken during and subsequent to the Western Economic Opportunities Conference in Calgary in 1973. They're recognition of some of the matters we have been presenting both to this Legislature and to Canada with regard to the new developments in our nation.

Mr. Speaker, the statement by the Prime Minister to the effect that westerners have always "more than carried their weight as Canadians" is, I think, a very relevant one; the recognition that western Canadians "still feel vulnerable" about their economy and look to such areas as the Pacific Rim and the U.S. northwest for trade activity; a recognition which I hadn't heard before although I had been saying it on a number of occasions, that "Canada's centre of gravity has shifted westward" and that there is a desire to spread out "more balanced and diversified regional growth", and that more action is required.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think in balance there does seem to be a reflection of a new attitude by the Prime Minister. Where we go from here is hard to say.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. Premier. In light of the attitude toward western Canada displayed by the Prime Minister in his remarks yesterday, has the government of Alberta given any consideration to proposing another western economic conference with the federal government to take stock of the progress made as a result of the 1973 conference, and to take advantage of the growing understanding of the concerns of the west by the federal government and other Canadians?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, certainly a conference of that nature could be a useful follow-up development, and it's something we've considered and discussed at previous western premiers' conferences. We will be meeting in just three weeks in Brandon at the next conference. Again we will probably review that matter. We do have the statement by the Prime Minister in his remarks yesterday referring to the progress made at WEOC and referring to various examples. He goes on to say, "We know that we still have much more to do." Whether the appropriate forum is another conference, or what we would gain is perhaps a continuation of the pressure we have exercised in the past both as western premiers, western governments, and the government of Alberta working with the federal government, remains to be seen as matters develop. But I underline that the remarks made by the Prime Minister yesterday reflect a recognition of a new attitude which I think is important for Confederation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. Do I take it from the hon. Premier's answer that the question of a follow-up conference will in fact be discussed at the western premiers'

conference in three weeks time, and that it specifically will be on the agenda?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to give the hon. member any impression that we or the other western premiers are of the view that the next logical step in this difficult, evolving matter of provincial rights, balance of powers, and shift of responsibility would stem from another western economic opportunities conference. It's one option.

At the western premiers' conference we will be discussing the follow-up to WEOC in Calgary. We'll be discussing ways we can continue to convince the federal government to follow through on the commitments of what I now think could be referred to as the Prime Minister's 'Winnipeg speech', since we won't allow him to forget the remarks he made yesterday.

Energy Prices

DR. BUCK: Supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that in all the discussions relating to oil prices the provincial government has never come close to reaching the world price, I'd like to know if in the last conference the minister was using any leverage, shall we say, in trying to do something about the freight rates when he was negotiating for the oil price.

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't trying to negotiate freight rates in the discussion on energy pricing, but rather kept the energy pricing matters in a total context of the energy picture.

Cow-calf Program

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Could he indicate whether any of the late applications for the cow-calf grant are going to be processed?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, when the program was initially announced in late September, the deadline for applications was established as December 31, 1976. In November some slight alterations were made to the program. At that time we did not announce any extension. However, nearing the end of December we felt that a number of producers had not yet applied, so we extended the deadline for applications to January 31, 1977.

To have extended it beyond that date, Mr. Speaker, would have meant that all those people who had in good faith made their applications earlier would have had to wait some length of time for their payments. So we have not made any extension beyond January 31, and will not be making any.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate whether there will be any form of appeal for those applications that have been rejected for one reason or another?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is a form of appeal for applications that rest in what I suppose might be described as a gray area, or where information provided by the producer was not considered

accurate by the staff of the Department of Agriculture. That form of appeal is first of all to Mr. Sid Lore, the livestock commissioner in the department who's directing the program, and secondly to the office of the Farmer's Advocate.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate whether the cheques have been mailed to the approved applicants?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, cheques have been mailed to virtually all applicants. More than 25,000 have now gone out. Some — I'm not sure exactly how many at this point — are the subject of the auditor's office seeking either additional information or additional clarification before they can be released. That number, however, is quite small. I hope we would have approved and in the mail by the end of this month even those where we have some problems with respect to the application.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister have a ballpark figure on the number of applicants rejected?

MR. MOORE: I don't have a final figure on that, Mr. Speaker, but in excess of 25,800 applications were received. My information is that more than 25,000 cheques have now been distributed. So the number that will finally be rejected totally is very, very small. But I should be able to have that information within the next couple of weeks.

Dental Care

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's the annual question in connection with dental care for children. Since the hon. minister has been "chewing" on this for the last two years, I wonder if any decision has been reached on the program.

MISS HUNLEY: No, Mr. Speaker. I chew very slowly. Despite the fact that we have gathered a considerable amount of information, we do not have a firm policy on the development of dental care.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has the hon. minister set any time frame for the conclusion of the studies?

MISS HUNLEY: No, we haven't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: A further supplementary to the hon. minister. Is the government considering changing the present legislation for fluoridation, which requires a simple majority in a plebiscite to mandatory legislation, as such is also necessary in a preventive program?

MISS HUNLEY: I agree with the hon. member that the attitudes and policies adopted about fluoridation are extremely important, because I really believe that should be a forerunner of any large scale dental care program. But we are not at the present time considering making fluoridation mandatory. I would hope that all those concerned might see their way clear to

fluoridating their water supplies without the government's intervention in a mandatory way.

MR. TAYLOR: A further supplementary to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. A university report indicates that some 16 communities last year voted in favor of fluoridating their water supply, but there has been no action on the part of their councils. Have officials of the Department of Municipal Affairs discussed this with the municipal officials of those areas?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the 16 communities to which the hon. member refers. But I would be willing to check that and advise the member.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a supplementary of the hon. minister. Could the minister advise if the government is considering allowing municipal councils to introduce fluoridation by simple vote of the councils, rather than having to resort to a plebiscite?

MISS HUNLEY: Not at the present time, Mr. Speaker.

Rent Controls

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I kind of hesitate to ask the question. However, in returning to the Legislature this afternoon, I had very strong rumors with regard to an announcement, and I felt it would be best to ask the minister if he has some new information on rent controls.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, it appears that I should be able to make the announcement by way of a ministerial statement a week today.

Vehicle Insurance

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It's a follow-up question to one I asked several weeks ago on automobile insurance, Mr. Minister. I'd just like a short preamble to explain the situation that was brought to my attention. These are licence plate vendors who, when they ask for the pink slip, find there are pink slips that are very close to expiry. I'd like to know if the minister is in a position to indicate if monitoring is going on to find out, in essence, how many of these insurances that are close to expiry are being renewed.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that we have any present mechanism to monitor the pink cards in that way. However, I will say that there have been discussions with the agents, the IAAA, with regard to this matter, and I'm hoping we can work out a satisfactory means whereby certain suspicious circumstances might be brought to the attention of the Solicitor General.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the House if the prevalence of uninsured drivers in the province is going up?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I would rather refer that matter to the Solicitor General. It comes within his portfolio of responsibilities.

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I've answered that question before, in that there is no way of knowing exactly how many people break the law. There is a way of knowing how many are apprehended in the breaking of the law. As I said before, I feel that too many are driving without insurance. Even one driving without insurance is too many. I have instructed my staff to follow through this year with suspicious cases to which the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs refers, with a view to seizing licence plates if we can prove that a vehicle is not covered by proper insurance.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister in a position to indicate if the withdrawal from the unsatisfied judgment fund has increased recently?

MR. FOSTER: Could you repeat that. I'm sorry. You're referring to the motor vehicle accident claims fund?

DR. BUCK: Yes. I'd just like to know if the minister is in a position to indicate if the withdrawal from that fund has increased dramatically over the past year because of uninsured drivers being on the road.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, one of the factors of course is uninsured drivers on the road, since you can only claim from the fund when you don't know who caused the injury or the other driver was pecunious and without insurance.

I don't have at hand the statistics that might reveal how many of the claims occurred as a result of or involved uninsured drivers. I might take that question as notice, and since my estimates will be up in the House shortly, I'd be happy to discuss it at that point.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Solicitor General. Is the Solicitor General's Department considering bringing in legislation to make it mandatory that insurance companies notify the minister's department that a person in fact has cancelled his insurance or insurance has not been renewed?

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I have been discussing this entire problem with my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and with the industry. To have a sophisticated total registry of insurance would be a big computer exercise, and of course it has connotations concerning privacy of information too. To have all this information computerized so that competitors would know the state of the business of other people in the industry and so on would be a large departure.

However, I have come to the conclusion that short of that big and expensive project, it is possible for us to take action in cases where an agent is extremely suspicious that premiums have not been renewed and that the business probably has not gone to one of his competitors. We can then investigate. If we find that the pink card is invalid and hasn't been returned to the insurer, we have the right to seize the plates.

This would avoid the more difficult exercise of proving that a person actually has been driving without insurance; in other words, the vehicle has to be moving. But we can seize plates — because driving is a privilege and not a right — if we can prove that a pink card is invalid under the present law without any changes.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. minister. In the Check Stop program, is any record kept of the number of drivers who are driving without a pink card?

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to check that. Instructions to police are to ask for pink cards at Check Stops. I would have to check — using the word again — with my department to find out if we have kept statistics on this particular offence.

French Language in Alberta

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. In light of the Prime Minister's remarks last night which, in addition to talking about western Canada, focussed on the important question of language in Canada, can the Provincial Treasurer advise the Assembly whether any special policy has been developed regarding the use of the French language as far as public servants are concerned in the special bilingual districts in the province of Alberta?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware that any special policies or programs have been developed, but I wouldn't like to leave it at that. I'd like to check to make sure of the situation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Has the government given consideration to any training program for public servants who now speak only English or some other language and would like to learn to speak French as it relates to their work within the special bilingual districts in the province of Alberta?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I might mention there are no specially designated bilingual districts within the province of Alberta. That was contained as an option within the federal legislation, but it has never been promulgated by the federal government. There are no such districts in Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps then I can rephrase the question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. In areas where there are in fact large numbers of French-speaking Albertans, have any special training programs been considered?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'll include that in the checking I'm going to do in connection with the first question.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Education on the question of the French language. In light of the Prime Minister's speech yesterday, have any discussions been held with the Edmonton Public School Board in respect to the proposal that the teaching of French in elemen-

tary schools be phased out because of crowded curriculum and, rather more important, lack of funds?

MR. KOZIAK: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Education. In view of the fact there is no provincial requirement for French language instruction at any level in the school system, are there any plans to require schools to offer French language instruction at the elementary, junior, or public high school level?

MR. KOZIAK: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Education. In light of the present concern in Canada about language, have any discussions been held with the Alberta School Trustees' Association or any other organization concerning expanding and making mandatory the teaching of French in Alberta schools at some level?

MR. KOZIAK: No, Mr. Speaker. I've had very fruitful discussions with members of the French Canadian association of Alberta, which led to a change in the ministerial regulations under The School Act and resulted in greater flexibility in the use of French as a language of instruction throughout the province of Alberta, where school boards implement such instruction.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. In light of the current discussion on the future of Canada what priority does the government of Alberta place on teaching French in the Alberta school system on a mandatory basis as part of our contribution to national unity?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I have never really interpreted the desire of the Prime Minister to reflect the nature of the question placed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. In fact, my reading and recollection of what the Prime Minister said last night really bears little relationship to the line of questioning we've had today. It's a matter of ongoing review. We think it's important in terms of the policy outlined from time to time by the government.

Lamb Processors' Co-op

MR. FLUKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Could the minister advise if payouts to the sheep producers of Alberta for lambs slaughtered at the Innisfail plant in the last three months will be forthcoming soon?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. After the decision was made and accepted by the board of directors of the lamb co-op, we put into process the business of arranging financing to pay for lambs slaughtered in the plant since January. I can advise that the producers should all be paid by the end of this week an amount something in excess of \$90,000.

Fish Creek Park

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. I wonder if the minister is in a position to inform this Assembly of the status basically, but more importantly, of how many people have actually visited Calgary Fish Creek in 1976. Maybe he has a projected figure for 1977.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, if the hon. member wishes to have statistics, the means for obtaining those would be the Order Paper or direct communication with the minister.

MR. KUSHNER: Supplementary question. I wonder if the minister can recall how much land we have in fact purchased, and how many acres are in the process.

MR. SPEAKER: That would appear to be a further question dealing with statistics. Perhaps the hon. member could put it on the Order Paper.

MR. KUSHNER: Well, maybe I can proceed to the Solicitor General. Can the Solicitor General inform this Assembly as to law and order and vandalism in Fish Creek in Calgary?

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I haven't quite got the question, but I can make a short statement on the subject of vandalism in general.

DR. WARRACK: We're against it.

DR. BUCK: When was the last time you made a short statement?

MR. FARRAN: The government did agree to fund pilot projects in both Calgary and Edmonton in the area of antivandalism. They consisted of silent alarm systems wired to the central police emergency switchboard covering some 20 schools in each city.

MR. CLARK: He's talking about Fish Creek Park.

DR. WARRACK: We're against it there, too.

MR. FARRAN: Well, I think it is true that there are a number of complaints from residents surrounding Fish Creek Park about juveniles shooting rifles, motorcycles going up and down the grassy slopes of the hills, and fires being lit in the trees. I think I have spoken before on the difficulty a police force has in controlling this sort of misdemeanor from a patrol car.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. Can the minister inform this Assembly what the status of the swimming pool development is in Fish Creek Park?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the progress in Fish Creek Park is going along quite well. In response to the first part of your question, I think some 320,000 people went through the park last year on a day-use basis. I think the progress report for the activity east of the Macleod Trail is coming along very well, including the proposed lake for swimming facilities.

Egg Quota

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. The minister very favorably advised the House that there has been a three million hundredweight increase to milk producers because of the change in the dairy commission. Could the minister advise whether he has had any response to the request to increase the quota to Alberta egg producers?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can. As a matter of fact I was advised yesterday by the Alberta Egg and Fowl Marketing Board that the request I made some six to eight weeks ago for a review of the unregulated layers or small flocks in Alberta has been concluded. As a result, the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency has agreed to new figures which will provide regulated producers in the province of Alberta with approximately 200,000 additional layers. This quota, Mr. Speaker, will be issued on July 1 and means in total, as a result of our representations to the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency and the federal Minister of Agriculture, about \$4 million worth of production during the course of a single year.

Vehicle Insurance
(continued)

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Solicitor General. I see in a report that several charges have been laid relative to pink card production for the Check Stop program, and there were no numbers as to warnings. Does it follow that no warnings are issued if you fail to produce a pink card?

MR. FARRAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's an area of police discretion and, I presume, depends upon the mitigating circumstances of the fact that they haven't found a pink card immediately. It may be somewhere close at hand, and it is possible for the police to refrain from pressing charges and to give a warning.

However, in answer to the hon. Member for Drumheller, I should say that 2,929 charges were laid for failure to produce pink cards at Check Stops during the last year.

The government did recognize when it introduced the concept of mandatory production of the pink card before the sale of licence plates that this was not a total closing of the door, but it was a giant step forward in enforcement of compulsory insurance.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary to the hon. minister. Would the hon. minister know the total number of Check Stops out of which that number did not have pink cards?

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, it is in the report I tabled in the House a couple of weeks ago. It was covering 27,314 check point locations, and the checking of 386,918 vehicles.

DR. WALKER: Supplementary to the hon. Solicitor General. Would a much more severe penalty not help to solve the problem of the uninsured driver, other than worrying about pink slips and so on?

MR. FARRAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's getting beyond my sphere. I enforce the law; the hon. Attorney General concerns himself mostly with penalties.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the minister on a point of clarification. Did the minister indicate these charges were for people failing to produce a pink card? Out of that number, does the minister have an indication of how many people, in essence, did not have insurance? There are cases, Mr. Speaker, where the person has valid insurance but doesn't have the pink card in the vehicle. Does the minister have any figures to indicate if the people who were charged with not producing a pink card were, in essence, without insurance?

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid I haven't got that statistic. We have the same dilemma over the motions for returns on the Order Paper where the charges laid at a Check Stop can't be related to the total number of prosecutions in the province. We'll get to that a little later in the day.

Driver Licence Suspensions

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Solicitor General. I wonder if the Solicitor General in fact could clear the air if there's any validity to the fact that the licence of our mayor of the city of Calgary was suspended for 24 hours due to the fact he was under the influence of . . .

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, no records are kept of 24-hour suspensions, which are in the area of police discretion. Generally speaking the policy is that if the ALERT breathalyzer used at a Check Stop is in a borderline position, or if it is such as to make it unlikely that the driver would still be intoxicated by the time he came down to the police station for the official breathalyzer test, they would use this legal area of discretion. I have no information on this particular case.

Prime Minister's Speech (continued)

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. the Premier regarding the Prime Minister's speech in reference to Alberta and western Canada. I wonder if the Premier would clarify and indicate to the House, in reviewing the key remarks of the Prime Minister's speech, whether he found any key new statements not already made by the Premier or this government or the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question by the hon. Member for Macleod in eliciting the hon. Premier's opinions concerning the Prime Minister's speech got past the Speaker. I would suggest the question period is not suitable for that kind of exercise, and we should not pursue it further.

DR. PAPROSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, I asked for key new statements. However, if that is an opinion I'll ask a supplementary or another question. Does the Premier agree with the analogy of issues drawn

between western Canada and Quebec by the Prime Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, we're still tending toward analysing the speech of the Prime Minister and expressing opinions concerning the importance or other aspects of what the Prime Minister said.

DR. BUCK: Back to the operating table, Ken.

Mannville Hospital

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It flows from the report on the Mannville Hospital tabled in the House yesterday by the minister. Did the firm of chartered accountants have discussions with individuals in the Mannville community other than the hospital's administrator, the board of the hospital, and the hospital's auditor? To put it another way, did the chartered accountants meet with any of the concerned people in the Mannville community in the course of their investigation?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, that's a question which would more appropriately be addressed to the auditors. But seeing as the hon. leader has raised the specific question I will raise it with the independent auditing firm, get their response, and provide it to the hon. leader.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. While the minister is checking with the firm of chartered accountants that did the report, could the minister also ask the firm if they could confirm or otherwise report to the minister that the hospital's auditor spent several days going over the hospital's books just before the special auditors from Thorne Riddell arrived to do the investigation asked for by the minister?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I'll raise that with Thorne Gunn as well.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister, and perhaps he could discuss this with the chartered accounts when he's discussing it with them. Did the minister give any terms or guidelines on the question of wrongdoing for personal gain to the firm of chartered accountants? In other words, did the minister discuss this area with the firm of chartered accountants prior to the firm being engaged to take on the work at the Mannville Hospital, from the standpoint really of criteria the minister was looking at in this particular area? Was there any discussion in that area?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I refer the hon. leader to the general terms of reference communicated by me to the firm of chartered accountants retained to perform the work. The actual terms of reference are in the back of the auditor's report. Because we were working with an independent auditing firm, a private firm of chartered accountants in the Alberta community, the manner in which it was approached was just a preliminary meeting between me and the senior partners of the firm involved, and subsequent arrival

at appropriate terms of reference for the independent audit to look at the particular questions referred to in Appendix A in the auditor's report, worked out between the chief financial officer of the Hospital Services Commission, Dr. Bradley, and the firm of auditors and brought back to me as a recommendation, which I confirmed in writing in Appendix A.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I didn't phrase the question well to the minister. My question is: was there discussion either with the minister or his senior officials with regard to the term "wrong doing for personal gain" prior to the chartered accountants taking on the responsibilities of the special audit?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, basically no, except with respect to the fact that I wanted the auditing firm to answer certain questions. At that time there were local discussions, some of which had been generated throughout the province, that were charges of possible financial wrongdoing. I indicated to the auditors it was important that they examine the financial affairs of the hospital and report within the general terms of reference on the satisfactory financial operation of the hospital, as well as whether or not the board or the administration of the hospital — if there was any evidence of "wrong doing for personal gain", as the auditors reported on page 1 of their report.

Other than that, I took the approach that this is an independent firm of chartered accountants who have neither responsibility to me as the minister, nor to the government, the board, nor the hospital. They would report in an independent manner, and I would accept their report on the basis of whatever evidence they found.

As I stated in the House yesterday and repeat again, a key part of their report was:

While there are a number of matters we wish to bring to your attention, we would like first to report that we found no evidence of wrong doing for personal gain on the part of any member of the Board of Trustees or of the administration.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, just one further question to the minister. In the course of either the agreement set up between the government and the consultants or the verbal discussion, did the minister ask or instruct the firm of accountants to discuss the concerns which had been raised by a number of people in the community in regard to the operation of the Mannville Hospital? Was there specific direction from the minister to the consultants to discuss the matters with people in the community?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, procedures of an independent auditing firm are well laid out by tradition, custom, and basically by professional standards upon which a firm of chartered accountants conducts audits. I did not feel, other than raising the questions I wanted the answers to, that it was my position to instruct an independent auditing firm as to how they would approach their audit or perform their independent auditing function. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the other way: I thought it was important and I said to them that they should examine what they felt they must examine in order, to provide me and the citizens of Alberta with their independent

opinion on the questions raised and the terms of reference.

MR. CLARK: The answer is no.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns 115 and 140 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the motion, I would hope that before long we would be able to deal with Motion for a Return 115. It's been on since the very early portion of the session.

With regard to Motion for a Return 140: having regard for the fact that reference to that information is in the annual report of the Department of Education it shouldn't really take long to make a decision on that report either.

[Motion carried].

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

With respect to the trip to Europe and the Scandinavian countries by Dr. Ken Paproski:

- (1) the date,
- (2) the destination(s),
- (3) the purpose,
- (4) the name of each person accompanying Dr. Paproski,
- (5) the name of each person met with on official business,
- (6) the total cost,
- (7) an itemized statement of daily expenses,
- (8) a copy of every written report arising from the trip.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment in three parts to Motion 139. I will submit the amendment when I indicate what it is.

In regard to No. 4, I would move that the word "official" be inserted before the word "person". No. 4 would then read, "the name of each official person accompanying Dr. Paproski".

The second amendment we would propose is that No. 5 be deleted and replaced by "the itinerary of meetings attended".

The last amendment, Mr. Speaker, would be to cross out the word "daily" in item No. 7. Item No. 7 would then read, "an itemized statement of expenses".

[Motion as amended carried]

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, may I then be permitted to table the answer.

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

The total number of charges laid and the total number of prosecutions under Section 234 of the Criminal Code of Canada as a direct result of the Alberta Check

Stop program during the period January 1, 1976, to December 31, 1976.

[Adjourned debate April 14: Mr. Hyndman]

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move an amendment to Motion for a Return No. 141: that we delete the words "and the total number of prosecutions". Mr. Speaker, the reason is that while we keep a record of the charges laid at a Check Stop, the statistics on prosecutions cover the entire province and don't say whether they come from a Check Stop or from some other quarter.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, would you accept an identical amendment for 142, 143, and 144? I have them all printed in the proper form here. At the same time, I can table the answer to the question.

MR. SPEAKER: If there isn't going to be any debate on the omnibus amendment proposed by the hon. minister, we can perhaps accept it and vote on the amendment as affecting all four motions at once.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly wish to adopt the amendment proposed by the hon. Solicitor General?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: As we call the motions now, unless there is a direction to the contrary, we will be calling the individual motions as amended.

CLERK: Motion No. 141, as amended: Dr. Buck.

DR. BUCK: What would you like, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The amendment has been adopted, but the motion as amended has not been adopted.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, then I move Motion No. 141, standing in my name on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: As amended?

DR. BUCK: As amended.

[Motion as amended carried]

142. Dr. Buck moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
The total number of charges laid and the total number of prosecutions under Section 235 of the Criminal Code of Canada as a direct result of the Alberta Check Stop program during the period January 1, 1976, to December 31, 1976.

[Motion as amended carried]

143. Dr. Buck moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
The total number of charges laid and the total number of prosecutions under Section 236 of the Criminal Code of Canada as a direct result of the Alberta Check Stop program during the period January 1, 1976, to December 31, 1976.

[Motion as amended carried]

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

The total number of charges laid and the total number of prosecutions under Section 238 of the Criminal Code of Canada as a direct result of the Alberta Check Stop program during the period January 1, 1976, to December 31, 1976.

[Motion as amended carried]

head: **GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED BUSINESS**
(Committee of Supply)

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will now come to order.

Department of
Housing and Public Works

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions to the minister?

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, I have just one question I would like clarified by the minister. In the Housing report I see the majority of money going out from Alberta Housing from the Mortgage Corporation is going to builders. More is going to builders than to individual applicants. What method does the minister use to determine that these are going to home purchasers at the right price?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Chairman, an agreement is entered on each spec loan approved under SHOP or the direct lending program. That agreement specifies that the buyer has to meet certain conditions. Indeed a review is done, when necessary, to see that the buyers in fact meet the conditions of the program.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the minister with regard to his recent announcement on the comparison of costs by the Alberta Housing Corporation — the six lots in the Mill Woods area — with other available homes.

At the outset I say to the minister that I thank his office for the opportunity to look through one of the houses this morning. The offer was provided for us to look through more than one if it had been possible timewise.

Mr. Minister, the first area I'd like to pursue is this question of the cost of land. Later we'll get involved in the question of the statements attributed to officials of the Alberta Housing Corporation and to you. But initially this question of the cost of land. It seems to me that what really has happened is the Alberta Housing Corporation acquired land in the vicinity of \$10,000, and went ahead and had six homes built for them in the Mill Woods area.

I think it has to be made very clear that had we been looking at an Alberta builder who went to city hall, my information is that that Alberta builder would not be able to get that lot for \$10,000. It would be in excess of \$20,000. For the sake of following your comparison along, Mr. Minister, where could an Al-

berta builder now get land in Edmonton for \$10,000 so we would have a comparison along the line of the comparison you started to make?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Chairman, I have to ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition a question. There were two news releases on the six homes. Has the hon. Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity to see both news releases, both of them, and read them?

In terms of a specific answer to the hon. leader's question, 50 per cent of the lots in all our land banks with the municipalities are required to be sold at cost to the eventual home-owner. So indeed all those lots meet the condition the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked me to answer. Wherever we land bank, across the province 50 per cent of the lots are sold at our cost. Therefore there is very little or no profit on those lots.

In connection with the Mill Woods land bank — and the second news release explains this — the land was purchased by the Alberta Housing Corporation. All our costs are factored into subsequent sales to the city. The cost to the city, with a small markup factor — and there is a small profit to the city — is then factored into that lot and all the costs of constructing the on-site off-sites are indeed factored in the cost of that lot.

If you consider that the city makes very little profit on the lot as it sold it to us in this particular case, almost at cost — that is, at 55 cents per square foot of land — then the average price of those six lots, which varied between some \$9,000 and \$12,000, is \$10,700. Again, that includes all Alberta Housing Corporation's costs of purchasing that land, holding it over the years — as a matter of fact, compounding the holding costs, I believe, every six months. It includes the cost to the city for holding that land and, I understand, a very small markup. It includes all the costs of the off-sites and the on-sites and the normal profit made by the private sector in providing the off-sites and the on-sites.

Now what has the city done? Its policy is to attempt to prevent speculation on those lots, which are now being sold at cost or slightly above cost — and were sold to us, through the Alberta Housing Corporation, at that price. To control speculation, the city of Edmonton uses a forgivable second mortgage. The forgivable second mortgage creates a profit of substantive proportions on each lot to the city of Edmonton, which can be as high as \$10,000 to \$12,000 per lot on land banked by the Alberta Housing Corporation, or the government, some years ago.

We recognize and know that that additional \$10,000 to \$12,000 per lot the city of Edmonton charges, either directly to a spec builder or to somebody it sells that lot to or by way of second mortgage to people meeting our programs, is a direct profit to the city of Edmonton. So if the lot that we pay \$10,700 for — on an average for the six — sells on the private market for \$22,000, recognizing that all AHC's costs have been factored in the cost of that land over the years of holding since the land bank started in 1970, I believe, indeed that's profit, as it is profit to the city of Edmonton. So in releasing the figures, we released the costs of the lots as they developed through the years, including all costs plus the profit made by the private sector in servicing those lots.

We also indicated in the second news release that:

The City of Edmonton, in order to control speculative profit, apply a [40] year second mortgage to the land in the amount of \$1.60 per square foot. This is forgiven at the rate of 10% per year, i.e. a first purchaser who owned a house and land for 5 years and sold, would have to pay the City of Edmonton an additional 80 cents per square foot of land plus interest.

Now, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to determine how much profit the city of Edmonton has made on those lots, or if indeed he wishes to determine the potential for profit by the city of Edmonton on the Mill Woods land bank, to compare it to the amount of profit that a developer in a comparable position would make, he should ask the city of Edmonton. He might be surprised to determine the potential profit which the buyers in Mill Woods are going to pay as profit to the city of Edmonton: indeed, the total extent of this profit on the Mill Woods land bank. Because it is the policy of the provincial government, wherever it's engaged in its own land banking, to sell to the eventual home buyer at cost.

I say again that he might ask the city of Edmonton for accountability in regard to this profit, what the city of Edmonton is using that profit for. In our news releases, we simply presented factual data and made no comparisons. If the industry wishes, it's perfectly welcome to make a comparison. If the industry says the price of the lot to the industry is \$21,000 instead of \$10,700, indeed if that land was banked and serviced in the same way as Mill Woods, then there is a profit of substantial proportions: the difference between \$22,000 and \$10,700 on that lot to the industry or to the city of Edmonton.

MR. CLARK: I think, Mr. Minister, I might rename you the minister of red herrings, because really the question to you was: where in Edmonton . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: The ministry of fisheries.

MR. CLARK: . . . could an Alberta builder go to acquire land at something close to \$10,700? Mr. Minister, the reason I ask that question is that your first press release was extremely misleading. You can shake your head all you want; it was. Well, the minister says it wasn't a fact. What the minister is now pointing out to us is that on one hand we're talking about the profit the city of Edmonton is making. When the minister made his first release and really his second release, he lumped the whole thing together as the profit Alberta builders were making. You did. You didn't distinguish between the two at all — not so much just in the release but in the comments made after the release.

If the minister had really wanted to get at this question of costs he could have — as he has done, perhaps rather than get six lots, 10 or 15 lots — had Alberta Housing do as they did for two or three, if the minister wanted, and ask a number of builders to come in and do the same kind of thing. Then we'd have had a fair comparison, Mr. Minister, between what your people in the Housing Corporation and the Alberta builders could do.

But what has developed here as I see it, Mr. Minister, is frankly a rather unfair comparison. We're having the Alberta builders — and I hold no brief for

the land developers, I hold no brief in that area at all. But I think the point has to be made that there are some pretty fine builders in this province who, in the minister's own words last night, have made it possible for Albertans to have the finest standard of housing virtually anywhere.

But I say, Mr. Minister, the way you handled this thing, you have brought a real cloud over their heads by really saying there's something close to \$20 per square foot difference. I say to you, the comparison isn't fair because of the way the city of Edmonton, in this case, handles the lot distribution. I'm not saying you're responsible for that, Mr. Minister. But what I am saying is that in my judgment the comparisons that have been drawn by other people from your statements, from the release, are extremely unfair. I'm talking now in the area of the cost of the lots.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Leader of the Opposition can say anything is fair or isn't fair. Nowhere in these two news releases is the word "profit" used. We use the words, "a difference". The difference of \$20 per square foot of house is real.

Now, if the industry wishes to justify that \$20 per square foot, I welcome them to do so. As a matter of fact, that's part of the exercise. When the board of directors of the Alberta Housing Corporation passed its resolution on February 5, 1976, to build six such homes in Edmonton and Calgary, that was the intent. The intent was indeed to establish these costs to the corporation and then publish them. Then the industry can do all the comparison it wishes. That's the intent of the exercise as passed by the board of directors of the corporation.

So it's very encouraging that the industry is rather sensitive. In fact it is very pleasing to me to see that the industry is rather excited and is making the comparisons they are. It's healthy for the industry and for the people who want houses at affordable prices.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make one or two remarks on this particular item.

I'd like to disagree with the minister. I also think he should sometimes look at the implications of some of the decisions he makes on some of these situations he creates. When he created this situation where he was going to do the plan for six houses in Edmonton and six in Calgary, I understand, to try to make the private builder a little more sensitive, I think he did some other things that just have not been just not responsible. I'd like to look at those for one or two moments.

First of all, information went out to the general public — and I'd like to quote from the minister's statement:

That A.H.C.'s construction costs were \$20 per square foot lower than comparable homes built by conventional builders.

Mr. Chairman, what that said is that conventional builders were charging \$20 a square foot more than necessary. That's where it left the statement. The implication could have been that they were making \$20 profit. I'm not going to argue that fact, because people interpret it different ways. But it did say to the consumer on the market that \$20 was built into the costs by private builders that shouldn't be there. Mr. Chairman, that is totally unfair because that is not the

case. We had the opportunity today to observe that first hand; that is not the situation.

I want to say one of the implications of that information that went out to the general public and the consumers is that it has weakened sales in the market place. Sales since this release have slowed down. January and February were better months. I've got to lay that at the door of the minister, because that's the implication. People looking in the market place and saying, where are these \$44 per square foot houses? They can't find them. They go to the houses available and find they're at \$64 or whatever the higher figure is and say, that's too much, there's a rip-off. That whole misconception has been created by the minister and, Mr. Chairman, I don't think that is responsible at all.

The minister can say, well the industry can be sensitive. They can come forward and explain things. But the fact of the matter is: they cannot buy lots at \$10,700. That was the figure used by the minister and his department to calculate the \$44 per square foot cost. If the cost had been \$10,000 higher, it would have been comparable to the market place. If the land cost had actually been as it is to the builder we would have had comparisons.

I feel in my own mind, and from examples provided to us today in our research, that with lots at comparable prices private industry could have built the house even more cheaply than AHC did. That's unfair to the people who are going to rent those homes, or potentially unfair if they were put on the market. We talk about rip-off — its rip-off, right in government.

Mr. Chairman, the minister talks about the fact that he hasn't done something irresponsible in the market place: he has. I think it's up to him today to explain in this Assembly what he really means by this \$20 comparison and admit, one, that land can't be purchased at the same price, and two, if it can, we had better hear about it today.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, if the member knew anything about the housing industry, and knew what he was talking about, he would recognize that the builder is not the land developer. And I sympathize with him. The builder . . .

MR. CLARK: That's who he's talking about.

MR. YURKO: Well, did you meet with any builders who are land developers, who own most of the land in the city of Edmonton and Calgary, and can indeed bring the lot on stream for \$10,000 or \$11,000? Did you meet with them? [interjections] Of course you didn't. You met . . . [interjections] I think I have the floor.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The hon. minister knows very well that when I started the discussion here we talked about Alberta builders. I made it very clear we had no brief at all for land developers, so let's stop trying to lump the two together.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's right.

MR. YURKO: There are a number of companies which are builders and land developers and go through the whole process.

MR. CLARK: . . . just Alberta builders.

MR. YURKO: Well, why didn't you meet with some of the others? Maybe you would have gotten the full story.

MR. CLARK: Maybe you would have got the story . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. YURKO: The member across the way doesn't even realize AHC did not build the houses. The private sector built the houses entirely. Indeed, subcontractors built every aspect of those houses. Of course costs are lower to a big builder. They built only six; volume buying wasn't as prevalent as [with] the contractor who builds 40. Supervision is spread over more houses by the contractor who builds 40. We have no difficulty in understanding that you can build a house of 1,500 square feet considerably more cheaply per square foot than one of 850-odd feet.

We chose the small house because it's the most difficult to build cheaply. It is the most severe comparison there is. We could have chosen the 1,500 or 2,000 square foot house, but we didn't. We chose the most difficult task to perform on a reasonable basis per square foot.

We don't have any difficulty in looking at the average price of multiple listings across the nation to determine the square foot selling costs in Toronto, Ottawa, or Montreal. The member should realize that I made a statement in the House long before this news release, indicating that buyers should beware: if the selling price averaged over \$45 a square foot, the consumer should look for value above that. I made that statement long before I issued the news release. So this total picture is far more complex than the member thinks it is. I suggest he take a look and do a little more research.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, responding to the minister. In the news release the minister presented to us, he does not clarify — and maybe he can point out to me where he indicates he was talking about land developers as such. The news release says:

AHC's construction costs were \$20 per square foot lower than comparable homes built by conventional builders. AHC's square footage cost averaged \$44, whereas conventional builder prices averaged \$64 per square foot based on an indicated average market value of \$55,000 for comparable 864 square foot housing units.

I'm making the point that this is the kind of information that went to the public. Certainly I understand the difference: if a developer has land and there is undue profit involved, and it's not coming on the market at reasonable rates, then it should be open for criticism. Our leader has made a statement with regard to that.

But when we are making a comparison, the conventional builders — the small builder, the man building houses on lots he has to buy on the market in quantities of 10 or 20 or whatever it is — has to compete against this particular statement. That is the concern I have about the statement. I'm talking about the person who has to buy those lots at maybe \$20,000. They aren't developing land. They haven't that kind of access to land. But this statement really

doesn't clarify that. I think the statement has gone to the public and misled them in that sense. We should try to clarify it in our discussion. That's what I'm attempting to do.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry if the member has trouble interpreting and reading the news release. It's not my anticipation to clear it up for him. It's written in English and he should be able to understand it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, he can say that all he wants, but we know this has been misunderstood in the market place. Also, conventional builders feel the minister has made a statement — and he says they are sensitive about it — that their costs are \$20 per square foot more than what the government can do it [for] through letting contracts or whatever. I think the minister has a responsibility to explain that, not only to the builders but to the general public or consumers looking for homes at the present time.

We are saying, and we feel the minister should admit, if the land cost particularly to AHC in this case . . . if land were made available to private builders at the same cost, they could come up with comparative costs of \$44 per square foot just as AHC did. I really don't think the statement has validity in light of that.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I think anyone is pretty naive if they think excessive and high profits haven't been made in building homes in this province. It seems to me the minister is doing the province a service in trying to get those prices down. The man on the street is not concerned because some builder or land developer is irritated. Some of them should have been irritated a long time ago. They have been making excessive profits. Anything the department can do to get that price down within a reasonable range and cut out some of the profit is all to the good.

Instead of arguing in this House the case of those who are making excessive profits, we should be commending the minister for trying to get a downward trend on prices for homes. That's what we need in this province. Two or three years ago we were complaining to the minister [about] the price and interest rate of homes. Over a lifetime, the individual buys two, two and a half, or three homes in paying for one. Surely it's all to the good if we are starting to correct that. When anyone says land developers are not making excessive profit in many cases in this province, they certainly are not aware of what's going on.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I will just try once more to make the point. We are basically discussing the comparison the minister has made publicly. He didn't compare apples to apples. Hair on the minister if he can show excessive profits have been made. But we are looking at, and we are really saying — and I'll say it again — it isn't possible for Alberta builders to acquire land on the same basis the Alberta Housing Corporation did. Now if it were possible that an Alberta builder had been able to acquire a lot along with the Alberta Housing Corporation at the same price, I suspect tenders or amounts would have been comparable or extremely close, perhaps even lower as far as the private builder is concerned.

But the point that has to be made here is: why

we're arguing about this; why we're arguing about that area. You know, we're really doing very little on the question of the large land developers. The minister last night indicated he had some possibilities under discussion, but he'd give us no indication when he was going to move in that particular area, or if he was going to move. And no one objected to the minister's comments in that area last night.

My second point is — and the Member for Drumheller makes a very good point about interest rates. You know, if we want to have a substantive reduction in the monthly payments people are going to make, after we've dealt with the question of the land developer, then let's use some of the heritage fund money — a heck of a lot more of it — to get money in the hands of people at interest rates considerably lower than they're able to get it today. We've used the Alberta Housing Corporation, the Home Mortgage Corporation somewhat in that direction. But that's a second thing we could do.

A third thing we could do is move into the area of the main trunk utilities, and get those right to the edge of the lot. We've discussed that previously in the House. The Member for Bow Valley raised that matter. The point I just want to make once more is that unfortunately what's happening in this case here — we're comparing apples and oranges. We're not comparing the construction costs of the six AHC homes with the homes that small Alberta builders are able to get land for at the same price. That's the group we have our concern for. We're not in any way, shape, or form going to bat here for those people who control large portions of land around Calgary or Edmonton.

In the end it's the consumer who is going to be looking at the kind of figures the minister's talked about, and frankly isn't going to be able to find very often — in fact, very, very seldom — unless the Alberta Housing Corporation is going to build many more homes.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I just want to mention that a week ago yesterday I participated in my constituency in a sod turning ceremony for Engineered Homes, and I made a special point — in view of the comments I had heard publicly — of the minister's statement of the cost per square foot of housing. They indicated to me that not only have they produced housing at \$44 a square foot on an average of 1,000 square feet, but in fact they had them for sale today.

In addition they pointed out, and quite rightly so — and I think perhaps this is the point that's been missing — that there are also houses at \$60 and \$80 a square foot. It's the old story that one can have a Volkswagen, a Ford, or a Cadillac.

I think the point at issue — notwithstanding comments of the Leader of the Opposition which seem to be [on] a somewhat different point — is that housing can indeed be produced and is being produced in Alberta today at \$44 per square foot. On that basis, I would certainly substantiate the minister's statement. That's all.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think the major issue is not to get into this business of comparing apples and oranges. Certainly I agree with the minister when he says there's a vast difference between a developer

who's also in the construction business, and a small Alberta builder. The members of the opposition have indicated that they recognize that difference as well, and that really isn't the issue as far as they're concerned.

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman — though I would differ with the opposition in this sense — that I don't think it hurts in terms of the public as a whole to in fact make everybody — including the small builder for that matter — maybe look at costs a little more carefully, and to make the consuming public look at costs a little more carefully. Quite frankly we've seen in Alberta in the last few years an inflationary psychology among the buying public as well, and an attitude that costs are going to go up, prices are going to rise, and therefore if it's \$60, \$70 a square foot, we're going to have to pay it. It seems to me that I don't often rise to defend the government, and promise not to do it very often.

There is, it seems to me, a legitimate role to play on occasion. To say: all right, watch what you're getting into. Now having said that, Mr. Chairman, what I find a little disconcerting is that the minister, while he is correct in saying that the large developers who are also in the construction business are making a lot of money, he has been vague, to put it mildly, as to how we're going to deal with those kinds of profits. And here the opposition is completely correct.

No one can argue the point that developers who have hundreds of acres of land — land that they didn't pay \$21,000 a lot for, and now they're charging that when they sell a 1,000 square foot home, a 1,200 square foot home, or an 864 square foot home — these people are doing very well indeed.

Now all we had yesterday was the minister saying: well, one of the things we might consider is the local government levying some kind of tax on non-used land, to make it riskier to hold land. That's very commendable, but the fact of the matter is that it seems to me we have to move beyond just considering this matter, and asking ourselves what steps are going to take place and when.

The minister last night — as I read over the transcript — pointed out the profits being made, and on what basis they are being made. Again, he's correct. Profits may not seem like 40 per cent, but if you look at the actual inequity, then a 5 per cent, a 7 per cent, or an 8 per cent profit — if you've only got 5 per cent down, and you're financing the rest, that can mean 30 or 40 per cent. What are we going to do about that sort of thing, Mr. Minister?

It's not good enough, it seems to me, to continue to say: well, we're going to study it, we're going to weigh the options, because Albertans have to face some rather unpleasant facts. Number one, housing prices in this province are the highest in the country. Number two, there seems to be a continual increase notwithstanding the large amounts of money — and no one denies that — we're putting into home building in this province. But it does not appear to have slowed the inflation in home costs.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me there are two areas I would like to see the government pursue with greater dispatch than they have. One, the question of land banking. The minister points out we have land banking in Alberta. That's right. Some \$29 million, if my memory serves me correctly. But the bulk of that land banking is not in the major urban areas but in

the smaller centres. And while that's extremely useful to the smaller centres to have land banking, it seems to me we have to move in a much more deliberate and purposeful way in the two major centres as well as the smaller communities.

I remember talking to the mayor of Medicine Hat a year ago, who advised me that lots — lots I gather are somewhat higher than that now. But a year ago, in the city of Medicine Hat, new lots, serviced lots, were being brought on from the city-owned land bank for \$7,200 a lot. Well, the comparative price in Edmonton at the time was in the neighborhood of \$18,000 or \$20,000. It seems to me we have to move more clearly in land banking.

Now the final point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, again relates to this issue of the small builders. I'm sure we were pleased to see the plan announced three or four weeks ago that would make it possible to assist small builders in acquiring lots. But again, Mr. Minister, that will be useful in the smaller centres where they can acquire the land under the terms of the price constraints set out in that policy. And it would be extremely useful in places like Nampa, Peace River, Fairview, or the smaller centres.

But what is it going to mean in Edmonton or Calgary, where quite frankly the small builders are still going to be caught with the problem of paying excessive prices for lots. Or for that matter even in the town of Fort McMurray, where we have Crown land at \$23,000 for a lot. The program announced by the minister the other day is not really going to assist the small builders in that particular field.

So it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that really rather than getting into a prolonged argument about these statistics, either contained in the minister's releases or for that matter the rejection by the builders and the developers, what is rather more important now to the people of Alberta and to the prospective purchasers of homes is what set of specific policies and time frame the government has set out for dealing with some of the larger problems of land concentration, high developer profits. That's the sort of thing which is more crucial than arguing about whether we're talking about apples and oranges, or peanuts and coconuts, or milk and water, whatever the case may be.

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask a question of the hon. minister because I think I may have misunderstood a couple of the comments he made. Maybe I'll do that and make a comment after. But if the hon. minister would reply, I would first like to understand the purpose behind the construction of the six houses in Edmonton, and they now announce construction in Calgary. I would like to ask for clarification of the statement the minister made earlier, and I think I quote him fairly when he said, it is the policy of the government to sell these houses at cost. I'm wondering, is this a forerunner of a further housing construction program by the government? Was this just an information-gathering situation by the minister? Or is this again the forerunner of a much more expanded program, in which case I can well understand the reason why the Member for Spirit River-Fairview is so laudatory about our programs.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, what I wanted to

MR. GHITTER: I'm sorry but I'd like to make some comments. Was the minister going to reply at the end? Because I would like to know the . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: My questions were going to be with regard to more information on the six houses here, and then to ask for more information about the six houses in Calgary with regard to the terms of reference and so on. So I think we should answer the Member for Calgary Buffalo first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, the minister has quite a list of questions from several members. If you'd like to carry on with your comments and then the minister could answer all the questions at one time. Is that agreeable to you, Mr. Minister?

MR. YURKO: Fine.

MR. GHITTER: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I have no comments. Possibly I'll have no comments whatsoever. It depends on what the minister's reply is.

MR. R. SPEAKER: To the minister then, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to know the sequence of events for the six homes in Calgary. What approach will be used in building those particular homes? Will it be the same as the approach used in Edmonton? Question number three would be: what motives has the minister behind the development of those six homes in Calgary? And fourthly, will homes such as this be built in other parts of the province or in Calgary on the same basis?

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, before the minister responds, might I just say to the minister that I think the question posed by the Member for Calgary Buffalo is extremely important. In light of the project the government's had in Edmonton and the one going in Calgary, frankly does the government plan to become more actively involved in this area? Is this a pilot project and is it to rest there, or does the minister expect that the board of directors of the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Home Mortgage Corporation will become much more actively involved in house building, and either rental or sales in the future?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could answer the question in several ways. I think the Member for Calgary Buffalo is somewhat confused. I indicated that it was our basic policy to sell lots at cost and not houses at cost. There's a considerable difference. The policy in regard to land banking is to land bank with the municipality and then impose upon the municipality the requirement that at least 50 per cent of the lots are sold at cost to qualified buyers under the SHOP and direct lending program. The reason for that is that the lot has to be sold at cost or near cost to build a house under SHOP for \$42,000, or under the direct lending program for \$46,000.

I want to come back to Mr. Gogo's point and indicate that we have many examples where the industry is indeed building a package for \$46,000 under the direct lending program in Calgary and in Edmonton, and for \$42,000 under SHOP — the averages being not much different than \$44 a square foot. And it

does include the land. Indeed, the lots may be considerably smaller. They may be row housing. They may be duplexes. The PUD project in northeast Calgary put together by Daon, which I had the opportunity of opening, involved about 200 homes, all sorts of mixtures. It was in fact built entirely under SHOP and direct lending, under a price tag of \$46,000 for direct lending and \$42,000. It included the land. And the land, as every land developer will tell you, has to be adjusted accordingly to provide a profit on the total package for \$46,000 or \$42,000.

Now the Daon and PUD project lots in Calgary were farmed out to the small builders who built the houses for \$42,000 and \$46,000. So there is no mystery about it whatsoever. Indeed, the profit in houses at \$46,000 and \$42,000 is adequate for builders to build if the land price is reasonable. And the big land developers can supply the lots at reasonable prices to build these homes.

Now in regard to what the Alberta Housing Corporation undertook back in February 5, 1976, a little over a year ago. In the minutes of the board it states:

The Board directed that the Corporation purchase six lots in Edmonton and six lots in Calgary to build homes of various designs that would fit within the SHOP guidelines.

It wanted to test whether the \$42,000 was sufficient and adequate.

The Corporation would act as general contractor and maintain precise cost figures from which could be extracted necessary information.

The Board directed that the Alberta Housing Corporation conduct a cost experiment by building 12 homes that fit within the SHOP guidelines, six in Edmonton and six in Calgary. The experiment to be conducted in such a way as to simulate the actual cost conditions of the market.

That's exactly what the Corporation undertook at the direction of the board.

Now in regard to the type of structure in Calgary, instead of all single-family homes I believe the six will include duplexes so we can get a variation of what the actual costs might be on a duplex rather than a single-family home. And I commend the board. Acting as chairman, I think the board was very wise in terms of conducting this type of experiment, then releasing the data it had before it, which is what it did.

I had some difficulty recognizing that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is more a pitcher than a batter. But I had some difficulty determining on whose side he was batting.

MR. CLARK: Well I'm not surprised. You had difficulty several places.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Then the six homes in Calgary will be built practically the same only that you're considering one or two duplexes on some of the property to look at the various costs. Is that correct?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to get the details for the member if he wishes on the six homes in Calgary. I don't have the details at my fingertips, but if the member wishes we can hold . . . not hold the item but I'm prepared to give him the information.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. Mr. Minister, in the course of responding to questions, you didn't give the House any assurance as to the Housing Corporation's plans with regard to becoming actively involved in building in this area. Does the minister see the corporation building more homes this year along this line? Or can the minister indicate to the House if the corporation will have its activities in that area limited to the six built here and the six built in Calgary?

MR. YURKO: Again, Mr. Chairman, if the member knew the programs he'd realize that the corporation is extensively involved in rural and native housing across the northern part of the province where it has purchased lots extensively, is bringing new areas on stream constantly, using the private sector and building the same type of structure. In the budget there are 300 homes under the rural and native housing program where the corporation acts as the general contractor, goes out and tenders the private sector to build all these homes throughout the north. In some towns there is a package of six, in some 12, in some 13, and in some 15. All you have to do is watch the newspapers to see that tenders are called for weekly in regard to construction under the rural and native housing program. However, except for that program which has a specific direction it isn't the intent of the Alberta Housing Corporation to get involved as a major developer in the Edmonton and Calgary market.

MR. GHITTER: [Not recorded] and I don't think the other members do as well. The hon. minister says it's not the intention to get in as a major developer. To me that implies that there are a lot of minor developers in the city of Calgary putting up 80, 90 homes a year. Is this what we're looking at? I would just like the minister to clarify. Are we getting into the business or aren't we?

MR. YURKO: I tried to indicate that indeed we are now in the rural and native housing program. There is no intention of extending that program into the southern part of the province in a major or minor way. No way at all. We built these six homes on an experimental basis. Apart from that, Alberta Housing Corporation programs are specific. They are basically related to social housing. The whole thrust of the Alberta Housing Corporation is related to social housing: senior citizen self-contained, public housing extensively, lodges, rural and native housing, land banking, and land servicing. Those are the six Alberta Housing Corporation programs.

In regard to the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, mortgage money is supplied to the private sector in a variety of ways through a variety of programs to build directly and act as its own general contractor. I don't know if I'm clear, Mr. Chairman. If I'm not, I'd like to try again.

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Chairman, maybe it's in the question. I'd like then to deal with it further. I understand the minister to say that in northern Alberta they have the expertise of some 300 homes made under the rural and native housing program in concert with the federal government. It seems to me then that those houses are well known to the minister from the point of view of size and what you're doing, in the sense of

costs you're meeting.

I'm trying to get into the area of the six houses in Edmonton and Calgary. Mr. Chairman, my original understanding of what the minister stated was that the purpose of the construction of these houses was to test the market to see what the costs were from the point of view of the SHOP program. Now, if that is all the minister is intending in the construction of those houses, I well understand it, accept it, and say that those parameters are fully acceptable to test the market and understand the cost, so the program will be more meaningful. If that is all the minister is doing, fine. But I'd like the minister to state that that is the case and get rid of the implied thoughts going through this Assembly at the present moment that this is the forerunner of something greater and larger, and we're going to turn around some morning and have the member in the far left corner smiling gleefully that the government is now in the construction business.

MR. YURKO: It seems increasingly difficult to explain the situation. The Alberta Housing Corporation acted as the general contractor or, if you wish, the manager in the construction of these six homes. They were contracted or tendered out. The private sector built them fully. If the question is whether apart from the rural and native housing program it's the intent of the Alberta Housing Corporation to act as a general contractor to build more SHOP and direct lending homes on this basis. That is not so. If the question is whether it's the intent of the Alberta Housing Corporation or Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation as an overall manager of housing construction in Alberta to promote and to see that private industry builds SHOP and direct lending homes, then indeed that's their function. Am I clear?

MR. KUSHNER: I would like to ask the minister if he has any statistics or any figures at all, comparing houses built by private developers. What are the price ranges? How far do they differ? I would think this is one of the reasons these things are done. We're monitoring how far . . . if there's gouging, if you like, going on in the building industry. I don't know of very many homes by contractors in Calgary at \$46,000 and \$42,000 — and I've been in construction all my life. I really don't know of any, be they duplexes or single dwellings — not too many that are of any decent quality. If the minister can show me any new housing, single homes of reasonable quality, being built in Edmonton or Calgary for \$42,000, I certainly would like to see them. Or at least I'd like to have a tour of them.

MR. YURKO: I'd be very pleased to take the member on a tour. Perhaps he could have come with me when we opened up the PUD project, 200 homes all under direct lending and SHOP. When he goes to Calgary next time, [he should] visit the PUD program in northeast Calgary. He will see a great deal of housing built for \$46,000 and \$42,000. A number of construction companies are building under SHOP and direct lending in Calgary. If you wish, I can bring and show that data because we approve projects all the time under the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation.

MR. KUSHNER: If they are, I am certainly prepared to go on that tour and see some of this housing. Because it's very hard for me to believe. I am just wondering now if the minister can in fact give us any statistics since the minister seems to be very knowledgeable in that area, and I know he is. Are there any statistics he can show comparing any variation in price [between] private industry and the development that is being built under his wing? Is there a saving? How do we fit in there?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Chairman, during the course of my budget debate I gave an analysis of the performance of the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation. It's in my speech. I said at that time that its performance was in excess of 90 per cent of the \$242 million allocated the corporation last year, that indeed under the direct lending program there were 1,806 units approved for a total of \$63,600,000, and that under the SHOP program there were 903 housing units approved for a total of \$33,668,000. That's in my speech. I went through various programs. Under core housing incentive program — CHIP — almost exclusively for Edmonton and Calgary there were 2,750 units approved for \$72,889,000. I put the information forward. If the member wishes a detailed accounting of where they are, I'll be prepared to give it to him, but he'll have to ask for it on a more appropriate occasion.

MR. KUSHNER: I will just be a little more specific. Rather than using big figures . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Address the Chair, please.

MR. KUSHNER: . . . I don't learn too quickly. First of all, would the minister indicate how big these lots are and what their prices are, so we can have an idea at least of what the building actually costs. Then if the minister would only give us the dimensions, say, the length and width of these buildings . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Square foot.

MR. KUSHNER: . . . or square area of the building then I'd probably have an idea to sort of monitor what these costs are per square foot, or something.

DR. BUCK: You'd want the heights, too.

MR. KUSHNER: Not really.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about the pitch of the roof?

MR. KUSHNER: That's all right. Don't cry about it. Can the minister tell me the size of the lots and the average size of the houses?

MR. YURKO: Well, Mr. Chairman, people sometimes liken me to a computer, but I'm not that good. I don't carry that stuff in my head, but I'm prepared to dig the information out for you, John.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Chairman, seeing the time, and we had a few more points, could I adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress on the same, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Moved by Dr. Walker:

Be it resolved that the government of Alberta introduce legislation concerning the medical consent of minors, allowing them to approve treatment by a qualified medical or dental practitioner under the same rules and ethics of confidentiality which apply to an adult.

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, the medical and legal professions have been requesting clarification of the laws relating to the capacity of children to consent to medical treatment the same as if they had attained majority. The situation at the moment is that the law as to the capacity of minors to consent to their medical treatment is ambiguous. At present there is case law to the effect that once a child reaches maturity, which may not necessarily coincide with majority, he may act on his own behalf in a number of instances, including consenting to medical treatment.

The medical and legal professions are in a real quandary as to whether or not treatment should be provided to any child in certain circumstances: first, where the child is unwilling to seek treatment where it is necessary to inform his parents; secondly, where the parents refuse to consent to medical treatment which may be in the child's best interests; and thirdly, where the parents are compelling a child to be treated for a condition against the child's wishes.

In discussing these problems with some of my colleagues, the question was continually raised: what was a responsible parent? Were all parents responsible and reasonable, I doubt any change in our legislation would be necessary. But I would advise all hon. members that this is not always the case. I have come across many parents who are incapable of understanding their children, have no idea at all what their children are involved in day by day, and are totally incapable of making any decision, medical or otherwise, for the good of those children. What we are endeavoring to do here is spell out the rights of responsible children of irresponsible parents, as well as the rights of responsible parents for irresponsible children.

How can a medical doctor tell a domineering, authoritative, and often inebriated parent that his

14-year-old daughter is one of the most sexually active girls in the school, or that his son is taking drugs, when his only response would be abusive behavior towards a sibling who needs the love and affection of human beings to fill the void [made] by an uncaring parent. When a child goes to a doctor he trusts, instead of a parent, the doctor must often fulfil the status of that parent/sibling relationship which, in most cases, has already deteriorated beyond repair.

The intent of this resolution suggests only treatment that is in the best interests of the child and his continuing health and well-being. This statement is reiterated in the excellent report on the consent of minors, published by the Institute of Law Research and Reform, in May 1975, and is also the recommendation of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada.

We may ask ourselves: what adverse affect can legislation such as this have? Many parents feel they should have the right to make any decision affecting their children before they reach the age of majority. I can sympathize with their views, and indeed support them, in their own individual families. For these are responsible parents who have maintained rapport with their children. But legislation is not directed toward this type of close-knit family, and the situation would probably never arise.

Then we ask ourselves: what aspects of this legislation might be sensitive and controversial? The definition of medical treatment includes any procedure undertaken for the purpose of preventing or terminating pregnancy. Legislation of this kind could implement provisions whereby a child could consent to her own abortion. British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec have legislation to this effect. But similar legislation promised by the Saskatchewan government was defeated by a free vote in 1973.

In my own experience, a young girl requested an abortion and I referred her to an abortion committee who rejected her request on the grounds she was a minor and required parental consent. By the time she plucked up enough courage to tell her parents, it was far too late. She went on to have her baby, to the great social and mental devastation of all concerned.

I do not want to get involved in the rights or wrongs of abortion. But I do feel that if it is available for an 18 year old, it should also be available for the 13 or 16 year old. Perhaps if doctors were legally able to prescribe birth control pills, we might not have had in this province 71 girls under the age of 15 years receiving abortions during 1975.

Then we come to the question of the need for consent. It was established by the *Saskatchewan Law Review* that touching can be an assault. There is no rash of cases against doctors; there simply haven't been any. But what happens to a child coming into a doctor's office without the parents and the doctor goes ahead and treats that child? Surgery is no different from any other medical procedure as far as consent is concerned. It is essential to a smooth functioning of society that children be able to consent to certain touchings; for example, even at play. So their capacity to consent is limited not by age but by the ability to know and understand what they are consenting to.

Canadian cases have held there is no age below which minors are automatically incapable of consenting to medical procedures, and that it is a minor's right to consent if he is able to understand fully what

is involved in the procedure in question. The committee investigating the law regarding the age of majority in the United States stated:

There is no rigid rule of English law which renders a minor incapable of giving his consent to an operation; there seems to be no direct judicial authority establishing that the consent of such a person is valid.

Then we consider consent by parents or other relatives or guardians. Members of medical and dental professions are rightly concerned about the law and their possible liability. Only very recently have English courts clearly laid down criteria for the effective consent to medical treatment for children. In 1962 Lord Devlin stated:

Physicians will usually seek the consent of the patients' relatives; but, that possibly, in the case of a child, the law does not recognize even the closest relative as endowed with authority to act for the patient.

In the case of *Hewer v. Bryant*, Lord Denning stated that the parental right to custody was:

... a dwindling right which the courts will hesitate to enforce against the wishes of the child, the older he is. It starts with the right of control and ends with a little more than advice.

Lord Nathan states:

Where a child is capable of fully [understanding] the nature and consequences of the particular operation or treatment, he can consent for himself but a physician should only rely on such consent where the operation or treatment is performed or given bona fide in the interests of the infant's own health.

Basically all these arguments boil down to the fact that in the absence of legislation to the contrary, where a child has capacity that capacity extends to consent or to refusal of treatment either for or against his best interest. And once capacity exists in the child, the parents' consent becomes totally irrelevant. In the case of a guardian where the child is [unable] to consent on his or her behalf, the guardian may have authority. But where the child has that capacity, the capacity is absolute and cannot be altered or overridden by anybody else.

At the moment in the province of Alberta we have legislation concerning emergency treatment of minors. Several situations of an emergency nature are already covered in our legislation. In an emergency when a minor is ill or injured to such an extent that delay in treatment would be dangerous, two doctors may sign a consultation slip confirming that opinion, and it is construed as legal interference without further consent for the good of that child.

In the case of venereal disease, The Venereal Diseases [Prevention] Act requires compulsory treatment. Further consent from a parent or any other responsible party is not necessary.

These exceptions to the laws of consent, however, are not what we're dealing with. We're dealing with consent concerning a young person who wishes a private, confidential consultation and is well capable of understanding what that advice and treatment may incur.

How can we correct this unfortunate state of affairs? We have to clear up this whole gray area in consent for treatment by reforming our legislation, not by reducing the stature, importance, or signifi-

cance of the parent but by increasing the responsibility of the mature child who may not ascribe to the opinions, life style, or standards which his parents wish to impose upon him. Legislation should take into account the resentment fostered in minors by the present lack of privacy and the inability to control one's own body. Legislation should contain sufficient flexibility to provide adequately both for the minor who is able and willing to assume responsibility for his health, and for the minor who is not.

At the annual meetings of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, 1972 through 1975, resolutions with a sample draft have been made each year supporting and encouraging legislation concerning the medical consent of minors such as I have advocated. There are three main aims in such legislation: first, to clarify the law in order that minors, in the absence of parental consent, will not be refused medical treatment for the reason that the law is misunderstood or confused; secondly, to recognize that all minor children have a right to adequate medical care and, to meet that end, to establish appropriate procedures for dispensing with parental consent where the parents are unavailable or refuse consent in situations where the health of the child would be jeopardized without medical help; and thirdly, to encourage older minors with medical problems to seek treatment by ensuring that they can consent to such treatment and by granting them a right of privacy.

The *University of British Columbia Law Review* commented in 1974 on British Columbia's attempt to introduce similar legislation:

The passage of Bill 37 can hardly be viewed as a salutary performance. Reaction to its introduction was visceral rather than cerebral. Debate, although well intentioned, was badly informed. A better result would have been obtained had a proper study of the subject first been carried out and made available to the legislators'. As a consequence of this haste, the law has been left in a more unsatisfactory state than before.

That's the way it is in B.C. at the moment.

The Institute of Law Research and Reform in Alberta has made a most profound study of the problem of legislation concerning consent of minors to medical treatment. I would urge all hon. members to read it so that if, as, and when legislation is introduced, we will all have some sort of informed opinion which will allow us to think with our heads instead of some other part of our anatomy as they did in B.C.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I would advocate that legislation include the following first [the legalization] of medical consent of minors of age 16 or over to medical treatment or advice; secondly, that minors, regardless of age, who are capable of fully understanding the nature and scope of treatment can give valid consent for that treatment. Thirdly, when consent is required but refused by a parent or guardian, and in the interests of that child treatment is required, then the joint consultation of two medical doctors or dental practitioners would constitute a legal substitution for consent. Fourthly, that confidentiality be applied to the advice or treatment of minors in the same way and to the same degree as for adults. Fifthly, that minors be allowed to consent to *inter vivos* donations of tissues or organs. In other words, where a twin sibling requires a kidney trans-

plant, for instance, the other twin could consent to give that kidney to his brother or sister. Sixthly, that the present legislation regarding emergency situations be reiterated in the new act. Seventhly, that the necessity of obtaining parental consent no longer be required, but should be actively encouraged where there is no detriment to the minor by so doing. Lastly, that all pregnant minors and all mothers who are minors have the right of consent for treatment for themselves and for their offspring.

Mr. Speaker, I solicit the support of all hon. members of the Legislature for this resolution.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal with the resolution introduced by the hon. member. As Sir Roger de Coverley once said, "much can be said on both sides". I appreciate the excellent research the hon. member Dr. Walker has carried out.

I believe other aspects of the resolution, however, should be very carefully considered. When the hon. member mentions there are incapable and irresponsible parents and incapable and irresponsible children, I think that is true. But the code of ethics has come down through the years and the family is the basis of society in the civilized world today. I don't think some exceptions should change the basic rule. As a matter of fact the Latins said, the exception proves the rule.

If we do anything to weaken family life, we are doing a disservice to the country. And I think we have to look very, very carefully at what this would do to family life. We already have some indications in our society that families are breaking down. This is probably encouraged by the large number of divorces, the looseness of morals, and maybe many other factors. Surely responsible people in this country must be concerned about the breakdown of family life. I think we should be finding ways and means of strengthening family life rather than encouraging an even greater breakdown.

One of the major problems in a home is severe differences of opinion between the father and mother, or between the father and mother and children. In cases where they are not prepared to sit down and discuss the whole item and reach a rational decision, greater breakdown of family life occurs. Where there is rational discussion of the entire problem, the matter can be properly resolved. I would like to think that we as legislators are doing something toward encouraging rationality in our homes, logical and democratic discussion of events between parents and children and between parents themselves where a major difficulty occurs which redounds to the disadvantage of the boys and girls.

This is only one item of family life, but it's a very important item. If the parents or guardian of a child lose the right to decide what's to happen to the body of their child who has not reached the age of majority, I think certain circumstances have to be set out so that we do not add to the break-up of family life.

The hon. Member for Macleod mentioned that understanding should be satisfactory. With all respect to the hon. member I think it would be dangerous to establish a principle like this. I have had students in grades 8 and 9 who had understanding beyond their years, but I wouldn't want to place them in the age of majority so they could buy property, take out loans, marry, adopt children, give medical consent, et

cetera. They may have extreme understanding. They may have a very, very high IQ. But they haven't had experience. I think that has to be added to understanding and IQ.

In my view understanding is not enough to say, we will take this from the control of the father and mother. It may be a factor. If it is a factor, if our young people are reaching the age of understanding earlier than many years ago — and I think this is true; I think that was one of the reasons the age of majority was reduced from 21 to 18 — that is another consideration. If 18 is too high to permit the intelligence of our younger generation to act in a legal way, to do the things you may do when you reach the age of majority, then our technique would be to lower the age of majority and not to provide the privileges to those who have not yet reached that age. Because in that group we're talking about a large volume of people of every type of mentality, all the way from subnormal to extremely high IQ. When we pass a resolution like this, that blanket consideration is very, very dangerous.

I think to make this legal would add to the breakdown of family life, because I know there are families where one of more of the children would arrogantly tell their parents they now have the legal right to do these things and create another barrier to be overcome.

I don't think we should be adding to the barriers and difficulties already there in raising families in this day and age. While I have not had the direct experience of raising a family, I've had a lot to do with growing boys and girls. I have a lot of insight into what's gone into scores and scores of homes, and have many times been asked by parents for counseling and so on.

In my view, before the boy and girl reach the age of majority, they should be very close to their father, their mother or both, and should be able to discuss the most intimate things with their parents. I know many times young people can't do that, as the hon. Member for Macleod mentioned. I've had high school students of 16 and 17 discuss matters with me, and I've said to them, why don't you discuss this with your dad. They would say, oh, I'm afraid to discuss with my dad or my mother. That's unfortunate. But [though] the few don't, thousands do have tremendous relationships with their fathers and mothers. I think that's the thing to encourage, and to encourage others to go that way. Because if two heads are better than one when they're both of the age of majority, then two or three heads are better than one when one of them is under the age of majority.

The difficulties that sometimes arise make one think and wonder. The hon. member spoke in his excellent address about the 15 year olds who have been aborted. He mentioned 75 in the year '75. In the first six months of '76, 30 girls under the age of 15 were aborted in this province, and 845 between the ages of 15 and under the age of 20; all single.

The word "minor" bothers me a great deal. Are we talking about 16 and 17 or about 14, 15, and 16? Or are we talking about the whole group under that "minor" category, any child under the age of 18? How low are we going to go, before a minor could have an operation or an abortion without her father or mother even knowing about it, if that was reasonably possible?

I think the resolution is far too broad. While there's some semblance of reason to the whole thing, I feel frankly that the resolution as it stands would do a great disservice to family life.

Then we come to the point, what about the young men and women who are no longer living with their father and mother, who are self-supporting, living by themselves or living outside, maybe some who have not yet reached the age of majority are married, working and making their own living, not dependent in any way on their parents or guardian. I think that brings us to a different category.

These people have placed themselves outside the home, outside the jurisdiction of their own father and mother and are making their own decisions. While they still haven't reached the age of majority, they are making their own decisions in regard to many, many things. When you consider a young man of 17 who has been living by himself since the age of 14, who has a good job, who is on reasonably cordial relations with his father and mother, but who is not living with them, who is making his own living and his own decisions in every respect, then I think it would be a little unreasonable to say that he would have to go to his father and mother to get consent for an operation. It would not be consistent with the way he is living.

If children, or minors — let's put it that way, because they are not really children, 16, 17, 15, 14, they are young men and women — are self-supporting and not dependent on the parents whatsoever, then their decision is not going to affect family life. It is not going to weaken family life. They have some right to expect that when they are making their own living they should be able to make their own decision in regard to their own body, operations, and other information they require from medical men and so on.

So I place them in a different category from those who are living at home and under the care of their father and mother and who are not self-supporting. I don't however think the word self-supporting is sufficient to cover the whole thing, because many young people today are contributing to the welfare of the home and properly so. They may buy all their own clothes and sometimes in that respect they say, I'm self-supporting. Actually they aren't because they are living in the home and they have many expenses — telephone, laundry, and so on — that they couldn't afford if they were not living in the home. But because they are living in the home and the mother does their laundry, cooking, and provides a great deal of the food, they are able to get by and say they are self-supporting. I think it's definitely important to put the people who are not only self-supporting but living under the same roof as their parents or guardians into a different category.

There's another aspect that bothers me somewhat and that is the matter of emergencies. I can understand the feeling of responsible medical men — and I think most if not all of our medical men are very responsible, they have a keen understanding of child life and so on — the frustration if a child needs an operation immediately and there is difficulty finding the parents, or if it happens to be that the child has irresponsible parents and they are not available. Perhaps we should work out some type of code whereby medical men could act in cases like that where the life of that young person is in danger. Perhaps there

are already some ways of doing that. If not, there certainly should be.

But in regard to "medical consent of minors, allowing them to approve treatment by a qualified medical or dental practitioner under the same rules and ethics of confidentiality which apply to an adult", I think we have to be very, very careful.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am going to amend the resolution by adding "who are self-supporting and who are not living with their parent or parents, or legal guardian", after the word "minors". The resolution would then read:

Be it resolved that, the Government of Alberta introduce legislation concerning the medical consent of minors, who are self-supporting and who are not living with their parent or parents, or legal guardian, allowing them to approve treatment by a qualified medical or dental practitioner under the same rules and ethics of confidentiality which apply to an adult.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I can assume that I'm speaking against the amended resolution?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member wish to have a copy of the amendment? As the hon. member probably realizes, from now until the amendment is disposed of the debate must be confined strictly to whether or not the amendment should be adopted.

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the amendment . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I'm not aware of any right the mover has to intervene at this stage on the amendment.

DR. PAPROSKI: On a point of order. I wonder if we could get a copy of the amendment at least for those who are interested on speaking on it.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Can I assume then that I can speak on the motion as amended? Or just on . . .

MR. SPEAKER: It has not yet been amended. What is before the House now is whether or not the amendment should be adopted, or, if you wish to put it another way, whether or not the main motion should be amended as has been proposed.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that the amendment be defeated because I believe it restricts the intent of the main motion which was to enlarge the opportunities for young people to seek medical care, whether or not they were in family situations that were ones of harmony or ones where the family had broken down, or there was no family as many homes know it.

I think if we adopted the suggested amendment, it restricts the intent of the main motion, which was not to confine it just to the abortion matter, but other matters such as care of children in cases of accident, dental care, or things of that nature. I would therefore urge that the House defeat the amendment.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak on this amended motion which is, if I may read it to be sure

that we are speaking on the same thing, allowing minors who are self-supporting and who are not living with their parents or guardians to have such medical advice, I have no difficulty in supporting the amendment. By the same token I would make it clear that I would object and do not support the main motion, for a number of reasons.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that the resolution as it read originally before the amendment would indicate quite clearly that minors could obtain medical prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation without parental advice, counselling, control, or consent, and yet not have the responsibility and accountability for such action.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate clearly that I do not agree with the main motion. I have no difficulty in supporting the proposition of only those minors who are self-supporting and who are not living with their parents or guardians. So I would indicate to the House that I support the amendment, and urge support of the amendment as stated.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make just a few comments on the amendment as introduced by the hon. Member for Drumheller. I'm one of the members here who would like to indicate again that I believe the hon. Member for Drumheller was trying to help out with this resolution. I'm going to vote against the amendment and against the resolution. Because I think even the amendment to the resolution, if it was passed, would still be contrary to my convictions.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to the point of order which arose a moment ago, I was under a misunderstanding when I intervened with regard to the hon. Member for Macleod. Later on under appropriate circumstances he will of course have the right to close the debate. But he also has the right, on the amendment, to debate the amendment.

DR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was looking here to see what the little book said, and it said in 19[b] members other than the mover must stick to the amendment, but it says I can go ahead and talk all I want.

Mr. Speaker, on speaking to the amendment, I feel the hon. Member for Drumheller has brought out many of the points that I also tried to get over in the debate, but he really doesn't understand the whole import of this bill. It is not to take away rights from responsible parents. It is to give some rights to responsible children who may or may not have irresponsible parents.

What about the parent who would abuse his child if he knew that he had gone to a doctor for some confidential reason that he may disapprove of? Part of the hon. member's amendment is covered in my suggestions for legislation but it is only one of several recommendations, and I feel that if we were to limit it to the child away from home and outside the jurisdiction of its parents, I think the whole import of this resolution and any legislation that might result from it would spoil the whole bill that might possibly be introduced.

I would like to speak against the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Will those in favor of the amendment please stand. This will not be a recorded vote. It is just for the convenience of counting.

[Motion defeated]

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, dealing with the resolution of the hon. Member for Macleod, I think it's important to note that it says "concerning the medical consent of minors". Unfortunately though, it's primarily an issue facing our young citizens, particularly women, who for centuries have been treated like chattels. They've been exploited by men, treated as second-class citizens, and in some cultures they've even been handled as slaves.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh no.

MR. MUSGREAVE: All members of the Legislature have received a letter from the Voice of the Unborn Association of Alberta. They make the point that if this particular motion were passed, we in effect would be supporting a "trend [to] an overall 'permissive' attitude in matters of sex and morals". We'd be supporting a "trend [to] an indiscriminate pushing of 'birth control methods'" and a "trend [to] accepting abortion as simply another method of birth control".

Mr. Speaker, I think it's interesting that of the 15 people who are shown as supporters, 14 of them are men.

MR. DIACHUK: Hooray.

MR. MUSGREAVE: I think that's rather significant, Mr. Speaker. Another thing, I just hope that the organization is a little more factual. It suggests that the former Premier of this province is a member of the Alberta senate; I didn't know we had such a thing. It also lists an MLA who I understand is no longer an MLA. However, that's probably a minor item compared to what we're looking at here.

Mr. Speaker, it's quite true that we have good relationships with our children, but as a parent of four children I unfortunately don't have the good relationship with all my children that I'd like to have. When you have children stretching in ages from 18 to 30, as I have, obviously some of them are from a different generation than their younger brothers.

AN HON. MEMBER: How did you manage that?

MR. MUSGREAVE: By good family planning.

AN HON. MEMBER: What's that?

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I know it may be a humorous thing. The laughter with which the male members treat this whole subject points out the difficulties facing the women in our society.

As a member of a general hospital board in the city of Calgary for seven years — and I was there when the federal legislation was changed allowing abortions to be performed by those hospitals which had set up committees to judge such situations — I always found it tragic that the ages of people who had to seek divorces was so young. This is the part I find most distasteful. It's all very well to say we've got to protect the families, and we've got to minimize

the barriers between parents and children. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, venereal disease is rampant in North America. We know the abortion rate is very high. We know family breakdown is very serious. We know there are children who have no relationship with parents for the simple reason that they don't have any parents to have relationships with.

I'd like the hon. members to think of the difficulties facing children who cannot speak to their parents about intimate personal problems. For example, should a 16-year-old girl receive birth control advice? Should she be fitted with birth control appliances? Should she be supplied with birth control pills? A lot of people would say no. But if you sat on a general hospital board and had to deal with these situations, I'm sure you'd have a different attitude. Should a 17-year-old boy suffering from venereal disease or one who's hooked into a drug problem be compelled to seek parental approval before he can seek medical help?

What about treatment of children injured in accidents where parents are absent. Can they not request help? What about children whose parents refuse blood transfusions because of religious beliefs? I think there are enough parents in this Assembly, regardless of what your religion might be, who would accept the fact that your children are not necessarily toeing the same religious line or principles that you are. You can imagine the tragedy that exists in those families where the parents may not be in favor of blood transfusion, but the child whose life is at stake certainly is. Yet under our present laws he cannot get that help.

Mr. Speaker, in the United States it is recognized that children have a right to health care. And it's recognized by the United Nations in a bill that suggests there should be a bill of rights for children. The Criminal Code of Canada requires that parents care for their children, but nothing in the code allows for children to care for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, those members who look on this in a light-hearted way, who think the family is all-important — and I agree it's all-important. But if it isn't there, I think you should be pragmatic enough to face facts. Suppose a young pregnant girl wants an abortion but her parents oppose it? Suppose the parents want the abortion but the girl doesn't? What about dental treatment? Orthodontia can be useful to a child, but in the eyes of many parents it's expensive and unnecessary. To resolve the conflict is not easy. Parents should know about these problems, but there are occasions when the parents don't know and often find out at the last resort.

Mr. Speaker, overriding all this, particularly in regard to venereal disease, is that public health concerns must be paramount. Most parents would agree with this. But in areas where public health is not important, the provision of contraception and decisions regarding abortion are more difficult problems to resolve. We know the controversy that existed in

Calgary. We now have the birth control association having to resort to taking money from programs not financed by the city council in order to get their grants.

I would hope this resolution, if passed, would convince our government to do the following: clarify the law so minors will have access to medical treatment whether or not they can get parental consent; recognize that minors with medical problems have the right to seek treatment and a right to privacy; and finally the right of minors to have medical care where parental consent is withheld and the health of the child is jeopardized.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I have letters from two medical people. Talking of Dr. Walker's motion, one says:

My personal feeling is that parents should still have some knowledge of treatment given to minors up to about the age of 18, although I do not feel strongly about this.

The other says:

I would oppose this type of legislation in as much as it is aimed primarily at procurement of abortion by minor females. As long as parents are legally responsible for provision of food, shelter, medical care and the rest of life's necessities, it is their inalienable right to be aware of medical or surgical treatments proposed for their minor children.

I agree it's the right of the parent to know. But I do not agree it is the right of the parent to refuse to have them helped, as exists under our present laws.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I have over 20 minutes to speak on this. I want to voice the opinion that I certainly do not support the resolution, for many reasons. In view of the time, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we'll continue with the estimates of the Department of Housing and Public Works, followed by those of the Department of Business Development and Tourism.

I move the Assembly do now 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 5:26 p.m.]

