

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Thursday, April 28, 1977 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. SPEAKER: This afternoon we are honored by a visit from a distinguished officer of our neighbor the Legislature of Saskatchewan in the person of their Ombudsman, Mr. David Tickell, who is accompanied by the solicitor to the Saskatchewan Ombudsman, Mr. Gordon Mayer. They're being hosted today by our own Ombudsman, Dr. Ivany, accompanied by his solicitor, to keep things even, Mr. Alex Weir. I would ask them to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **READING AND
RECEIVING PETITIONS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following petitions be now received: Bill Pr. 1, An Act to Incorporate the Alberta Real Estate Society; Bill Pr. 2, An Act to Amend The Alberta Wheat Pool Act, 1970; Bill Pr. 3, An Act to Amend An Act Respecting the Holding of Real Property by the Alberta Command and Branches of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League, 1977; Bill Pr. 4, An Act to Incorporate the Association of Registered Professional Foresters of Alberta; Bill Pr. 5, An Act to Amend An Act to Incorporate the Society of Industrial Accountants of Alberta; Bill Pr. 6, An Act to Incorporate St. Mary's Hospital, Trochu.

MR. SPEAKER: If there is debate on the motion, it would of course have to be transferred to another time in the House. If there is no debate, I can put the question now.

Having heard the motion by the hon. chairman of the Private Bills Committee and the Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 41
The Public Service
Employee Relations Act

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Public Service Employee Relations Act. This bill arises from the reports of the task force on public service labor relations, which members of the Assembly will recall were filed in the Assembly in

November 1976.

The prime purpose of the bill is to implement the changes on which all members of that task force agreed, and to implement substantially all the additional recommendations made by the government-appointed members of that task force. The bill proposes to repeal The Crown Agencies Employee Relations Act and substantial portions of The Public Service Act, and as a result will regulate under one act substantially all labor relations matters between the government and its employees.

The bill is also applicable to the employees of a number of government corporations, boards, commissions, and other similar bodies. In addition, certain employees of the government or its corporations, boards, commissions, et cetera, who are not now covered by either The Public Service Act or The Crown Agencies Employee Relations Act will be covered by this bill.

[Leave granted; Bill 41 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table response to Motion for a Return 130.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce to you, and to members, some 60 students from Stettler Junior High. I understand they're in the members and public galleries. They're accompanied by several teachers, parents, and drivers. I wonder if they might stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, it's my very great pleasure today to introduce the grade 9 class from Beiseker school in my constituency, 22 students with their teacher Mr. Ray Courtman and librarian Miss Kathy Gibson, here — as they are each year — to visit the Legislature, the Provincial Museum, and other areas of interest, as part of a civic government course they take in school. I'd like to ask them to rise in the public gallery and be welcomed by you and all members.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Calgary General Hospital**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. It flows from previous questions we've asked with regard to mental health care in the new wing of the Calgary General Hospital. Has the Premier had communications or correspondence with the board of Calgary General Hospital protesting the Premier's spontaneous comments in Calgary, I believe last weekend, that funds intended for the psychiatric wing of the General Hospital were allocated for other purposes by the board?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I haven't received that communication, other than what I've read.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. Is the Premier in a position to indicate to the Assembly today if it's still the feeling of the Premier that the Calgary General Hospital board used funds that the government felt were to be used for the psychiatric wing at the Calgary General Hospital for other purposes?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'm anxious to hear further from the Calgary General Hospital with regard to that matter. I think some significant answers have already been given by the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. When I receive that communication, either I or the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care will no doubt comment.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. Is the Premier in a position to indicate to the Assembly today if he did in fact make the statement in Calgary last weekend that in his judgment the board of the General Hospital had used funds that had been allocated for the psychiatric ward at the Calgary General Hospital for other purposes?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. leader, it's well established that the question period is not a vehicle for confirming or denying the accuracy of news reports.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then let me rephrase the question this way: would the Premier care to take this opportunity to clarify the statement he made in Calgary last Friday with regard to the misuse by the board of the Calgary General Hospital of funds that were allocated for psychiatric care?

MR. SPEAKER: It would appear that the hon. member is either inviting or trying to entice the hon. Premier into making a statement in the nature of a ministerial announcement.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then a very direct question to the Premier. Is it the position of this government that the Calgary General Hospital board didn't use the funds allocated for the psychiatric ward for that purpose?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I think the position I've taken and will continue to take on these matters is that hospitals, particularly large metropolitan hospitals such as the Calgary General Hospital, are involved on a global budgeting basis. I think it's extremely important that that hospital board in particular — because it is involved in the first of a major addition, as the hon. Minister of Hospitals has pointed out, with regard to psychiatric beds — recognizes the factor involved that it must look at its total global position, that this government is obviously in no position to accept on a *carte blanche* basis simply what the hospital board thinks is what it requires.

We in government in this province have a responsibility to recognize the very vast expenditures that are already being spent both in terms of general active treatment care and mental health care. It's our feeling, a very definite feeling having regard to the amount that has already been expended, that a very careful assessment must be made with regard to the expenditure in this particular case of the amounts of

money for mental health treatment within that hospital. I am anxious to see that hospital review on a total global basis both its requirements in terms of the balance of its operations and how it is allocating money between the various existing facilities and the psychiatric facilities that are being contemplated.

If members in this House feel that we are in a position to merely rubber stamp requests from municipal hospitals in this area, we are simply going to have no way to exercise the financial restraint, and people who think otherwise are in no way to argue financial restraint.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. What services did the minister agree would go into the psychiatric ward at Calgary when the minister gave it his approval initially?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I never agreed to any services in the Calgary General Hospital. They were proposals that had been made by the Calgary General Hospital. But again, as I indicated yesterday, the opening of the facility is entirely unrelated to the matter the hon. leader has been raising in the Legislature.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Are we in this Assembly to believe that the minister approved the construction without knowing what services were going to go in the area that was being built?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition would be aware of the fact that at the time he was in government no measurement of operating costs was being made at the time capital budget approvals . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] I regret interrupting the hon. minister, but we're starting to get into fairly ancient history. It's well known and in fact is specifically stated in *Beauchesne* that the question period is not to be used to bring up such matters. If that applies to the questions, it surely would have to apply to the answers.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, may I address myself to the specific question related to the Calgary General. Following what the hon. Premier has said, because of the fact that there is a need in the Calgary General and in all capital construction facilities that's been demonstrated at a time when all governments in Canada and in fact throughout the world are concerned about the cost of health care, recognizing that we have excellent quality — it's exactly for that reason that we are asking hospitals in Alberta to take a look at their five-year operating budget projections, so we can have built-in quality but at reasonable cost to the citizens of this province.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, let me rephrase the question to the minister. The question basically is this: what programs did the government approve when it gave the Calgary General Hospital board the go-ahead for the capital construction program? Surely the programs had to be agreed upon then. You

wouldn't approve the construction, then say we'll talk about the program after it's finished.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. Leader of the Opposition is confusing, in the development of a capital facility, the technique which has been used for many years by the Hospital Services Commission called the development of a functional program pending the construction of a capital facility. The development of that functional program is looking at programs that may in the longer term be included in a hospital facility at full development. I believe in that case, Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader is raising a question with respect to program that is totally unrelated to the matter we're talking about.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary question to the minister. Is it fair then to assume that the policy of this government when it approves a capital construction program at a hospital, either for a new hospital or for an addition like it did at the Calgary General, is that the government isn't committed to the program to be run in that facility?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to be totally unaware of the fact that in planning health care programs — as a matter of fact, we just went through that on a national basis — programs take several years to mature. They are phased in once a capital facility is constructed. That's not unusual; that's been going on for many, many years. Maybe the hon. leader should study health care program development, and he might understand the issue.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to clarify a point, maybe the minister needs another \$200,000 worth of consultants to help him.

MR. R. SPEAKER: To clarify the answer.

Rent Control

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It flows from his ministerial statement on Monday of this week. With respect to the caution, warning — call it what you will — to landlords about excessive rent increases, contained in the ministerial announcement, has the government at this stage set any level of increase before it would be "reassessing its position"?

MR. HARLE: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. What special provision will there be to monitor rent increases once units reach the decontrol level?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, as it is the government's intention to present a bill in this Assembly, at which [time] there will be full opportunity to debate such topics as the one raised by the hon. member, I would submit to you that in fact this matter could be gone into in much more detail at that time, rather than in the question period.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question, in view of the fact that information is necessary before the debate. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether or not the department now has before it any specific proposals to monitor rent increases in units once they reach the decontrol level?

MR. HARLE: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there's going to be ample opportunity within a matter of days. At this time I don't think it is of sufficient urgency to take up time in the question period.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I suppose the question of whether it's of sufficient urgency is a matter of opinion. But I'd like to pursue a further supplementary question to the hon. minister and ask whether or not the government has compiled comparative statistics with other . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Order.

MR. NOTLEY: The question is perfectly in order — whether or not the government has compiled any comparative statistics with respect to similar accommodation in other provinces. If so, is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly how Alberta compares with other provinces as far as rents are concerned?

MR. SPEAKER: Apart from the concluding portion of the question being something which under other circumstances might be suitable for the Order Paper, it seems to the Chair that the hon. minister has indicated twice quite plainly that he is not prepared to deal with this topic in the question period. Under the rules of the question period, the hon. minister's preferences in that regard have to be respected.

Meat Packing Plants

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Has the minister received any reports of our major meat packing plants exceeding the profit allowed under the federal Anti-Inflation Board?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I haven't received those yet. But I'll check to see whether or not they exist and, if so, what they contain.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Has the minister received any reports of packing plants taking losses on sales in March and April in order to reduce their profits to comply with the Anti-Inflation Board? In this case, they're causing a hardship, forcing some of our independent packers out of business.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, no, I've not received any official reports in that regard.

Canadian Constitution

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. the Premier. We hear and read a lot about a new and changed constitution for Canada. Has the federal government requested assistance or notified the pro-

vincial government of Alberta that such a meeting is being called for the purpose of considering the points in a new or changed constitution?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that is no. I think hon. members are aware — and I believe I alluded to this last week — that in his Winnipeg speech of April 18, which I hope is going to be remembered by all of us, the Prime Minister mentioned that as a follow-up there would be discussions on the constitution. When the first ministers met in Ottawa in December my understanding was that the matter of the constitution, as I believe I reported to the House, would be on the back burner, so to speak, while other events transpired. But I do think the implications of that are that we could probably anticipate some effort by the Prime Minister — perhaps at the next first ministers' meeting, whenever that might be held in the fall — to reinstitute the question of constitutional debate.

I would like to make one comment on the constitution though, that relates to that. There have been some discussions recently — particularly in central Canada, and by others — that this matter of constitutional debate, which to a large degree represents the question of jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments, in some way should involve a downplaying of provincial governments and a sort of constitutional assembly that involves the federal government and citizens at large who are of a non-elected basis and do not have responsibility to constituents, and then to provincial governments. I just want to outline the position of the government of Alberta: we do not accept that position. If there are constitutional discussions, they should involve the people who are elected to represent in the federal state both the provincial governments and the federal government.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. Premier. Has the government of Alberta prepared the changes it would like to see made to the BNA Act?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the correspondence I referred to in the House last week, being my letter of October 14, 1976, to the Prime Minister on behalf of all premiers, and the reply of the early part of this year — the date of which I cannot immediately recall — together with the matter I raised on the constitutional court, in essence at this stage represents the government's public position. I think it's fair to say there's an ongoing review by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and his department as to any additional matters that might be raised in the obvious process of constitutional discussion that's going to occur.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification to the hon. Premier, flowing from his comments with respect to Alberta's position on a constitutional conference. Is the Premier in a position to advise the Assembly whether the position of the government of Alberta is that constitutional review should be conducted by elected members federally and provincially, or would it be a government to government proposition between the federal Prime Minister representing the federal government and the provincial premiers representing the provinces?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that is an important point of clarification, because I wasn't as specific on that as I should be. I meant elected people in the sense of government. I believe it should be government to government between the 11 governments in Canada.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. Premier. In light of universal public interest in the question of whither Canada, what emphasis would the government of Alberta place on open discussions between the federal and provincial governments — that is, public discussions — so the people of Canada can keep abreast of what is taking place?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I take the question to relate to whether or not discussions at a first ministers' meeting that would deal with the constitution should be open, where the public would have full access to hear and observe the discussions. I've been of the view that, except in certain circumstances such as the rather complex and relatively dull one involving financial arrangements between the various governments, our preference as the government of Alberta is to have these meetings public in the sense that they should be open meetings. We felt the two energy conferences, which were in fact open meetings, worked out very well and improved understanding by Canadians in all parts of the country. Certainly from a standpoint of the province of Alberta, representing our particular point of view, I think we benefit by a greater awareness across Canada of some of the views that have been debated in this Legislature.

So I would certainly hope that we could have any conference on the constitution as much as practical an open one. I would of course still subscribe to the Prime Minister's view that he's all for open conferences and long lunches.

MR. TAYLOR: One further supplementary to the hon. Premier. Will the constitution be one of the topics to be discussed at the forthcoming conference of western premiers?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that's difficult to answer precisely. The Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and I were discussing that matter just moments before we came into the House. The Premier of Saskatchewan has specifically referred to it. I have no doubt that the matter of the constitution will arise, but it would appear to us from the agenda that it will arise more indirectly, relative to such matters on the agenda next week as western economic co-operation and the involvement of the federal government in these matters. We wouldn't see it precisely being a matter because, again, I'm back with my understanding of the discussions last December in Ottawa that constitutional matters are, for the time being at least, on the back burner so to speak.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. It flows from the number of comments that have been made about the need for some sort of public get-together nationally. Has Alberta given any consideration to initiating something that I suppose could be compared to the 1967 Confedera-

tion of Tomorrow Conference to which the province of Ontario gave leadership in hosting in Ontario. Has Alberta given any consideration to perhaps moving in that direction and giving that kind of leadership to the discussion, perhaps holding the conference in Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. leader is well aware that Confederation of Tomorrow was a conference of the premiers of the 10 provinces. At the time when I was Leader of the Opposition the premier of Ontario was kind enough to invite me to attend, and I sat in as an observer. Again the nature of that conference is a conference between provinces.

The next premiers' conference is scheduled for New Brunswick this summer. I think it would be inappropriate of the province of Alberta, having just been the host of a premiers' conference, in any way to detract from the responsibility of the Premier of New Brunswick in the hosting of that conference this summer. I think, at least to this point although it could change, it would be better to flow from the annual premiers' conference.

Airdrie Estates

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Housing and Public Works. I wonder if the minister could inform this Assembly of the method of selection that's going to be made. I'm informed by two telephone calls this afternoon that to this point there are about 1,100 applications to receive lots in the mobile homes of Airdrie. I know very many people are worried at this point in time if they'll be able to qualify.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I tabled in the House the other day the Airdrie Estates brochure which included the marketing policy. I think I also took advantage of the occasion to distribute a copy of the brochure to each MLA. An excellent and adequate description of the marketing policy is on the last couple of pages. In light of that, I don't think I should take the time of the House to explain it unless there is some confusion in respect to details of this policy.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the minister. Has this type of information been supplied for the applicants so they know if they qualify or if they don't, so they can look for accommodation elsewhere?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, a substantial number of brochures have been printed. It's being handled by the Calgary office. I'm certain, but I'll check just to make sure, that a pamphlet will be mailed out to each applicant. If it's not mailed out, of course the pamphlets or brochures are available at the Alberta Housing Corporation offices in Calgary.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that there are more applications than lots, is the Alberta Housing Corporation considering doing as some municipalities do when there are more applications than available lots: a lottery process where you draw lots?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, the marketing policy is fairly detailed and extensive. For example, 60 lots are held for people who are forced to move from other mobile homes and have no place to go. A minimum of 5 per cent of the lots are or will be allocated to senior citizens. Then priority will be given to people who qualify under SHOP. If there are additional lots, or too many people apply who qualify under SHOP, there will be a lottery in regard to those.

In addition to this, Mr. Speaker, a rather innovative part of the procedure is that five lots will be assigned to each mobile-home building company in the province so that each company can place five of their homes on lots for display for a certain number of months. Then the modular houses or mobile-home units will be sold to qualified applicants.

Rent Increases — Fort McMurray

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It's in relation to the affair in Fort McMurray where the rent regulations are being looked at. I'd like to know if the minister has received the report from the rent regulations office regarding a decision on Athabasca Realty's notice of 20 per cent rental increases.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I received information from the board that the order has been issued. I'm not too clear whether everybody has received it yet. But the order has been issued. There are 23 apartments that have had the application for increase reduced to 20.83 per cent. On 208 mobile homes, the application was reduced to 17.32 per cent. On 165 duplex units, the application was reduced to 17.13 per cent. On another 11 apartments the application for a rent increase was refused.

Lethbridge Regional Plan

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Municipal Affairs could indicate the nature and function of the proposed special planning area around the city of Lethbridge and announced by the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not altogether sure what the special planning area was. In fact, my office is checking that now. We are raising the same concerns with respect to the reference to the new planning act.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister as a matter of information. Is it the policy of the government to allow planning commissions to set up separate planning zones within an established planning area?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, while I'm attempting to interpret what is proceeding, I believe the regional planning commission is really assigning a land use category for the regional plan. I think that is within their jurisdiction.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Would the minister be prepared to report more fully in the Legislature tomorrow?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that would be contingent upon my receiving information, but when I do I'll advise the hon. member.

Jasper Place Subdivision

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It flows from a situation in Jasper Place in Edmonton with regard to zero lot line housing. Does the minister consider zero lot line housing as an experimental plan and, therefore, is the minister prepared to give consideration to approval — I think it's under Section 155 of The Planning Act — so the project can go ahead?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, on several occasions we have used Section 155 to which the hon. Leader of the Opposition refers, which is an innovative or experimental subdivision process which short-circuits the subdivision time. However, in the case of Jasper Place we feel this can be accommodated under normal subdivision and transfer regulations. We have suggested the city proceed under those regular sections.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister had discussions with the city, and is the minister in a position to indicate if progress is being made in this area? The information I have received is that in fact the city isn't prepared to make a change in its by-law, and the whole thing is sitting in limbo.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have had an exchange of correspondence, in which the city of Edmonton presented its position to us. We replied, indicating that the normal subdivision process would be suitable. We suggested they pursue that, unless they had some further comments or further innovative subdivision scheme in mind.

NAIT Expansion

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower and ask if he is in a position to advise the Assembly whether he has had an opportunity to fully check the files of the department with respect to furniture for the NAIT expansion.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I am in a position of final analysis. I should be able to respond tomorrow, certainly no later than Monday.

Professions and Occupations Review

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. the Attorney General. Is the government considering the dental hygienists' request to be licensed?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't quite know why that question has come to me, nonetheless I shall answer it. I don't know. [laughter] But while I'm on my feet ...

AN HON MEMBER: You're finished, Jim.

MR. FOSTER: ... let me answer another question related to that, perhaps because it may be behind the member's question. It has to do with ...

MR. SPEAKER: May I respectfully ask the hon. Attorney General if the other question he is answering is one that has been asked.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the other question is implicit in the question put first by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

Just to be sure that I cover all the bases, let me respond to the implicit question and say that I'm sure the hon. member was asking where the government currently is on its policy concerning professions and occupations, since it touches upon that. [laughter] I have been looking for the opportunity of saying something, so I thought I would.

Mr. Speaker, to answer the question, the government is continuing its review of the professions and occupations question. I regret that the consideration by government has taken somewhat longer than it has. [laughter] This is like my estimates!

I would like to suggest to all the organizations out there waiting for the government's response not to expect that response in April or May of this year, which was our early target date. My guess is that the government will not be in a position to consider the legislative guidelines for professional legislation until at least some time in the fall.

MR. TAYLOR: I understand the answer just as the minister understood the question.

Social Assistance

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's a follow-up to a question I asked at the beginning of the spring session. The minister said at that time that she'd read *Hansard* and reply. I never heard anything. I wonder if the minister at this time is in a position to inform us how many of the people that came from other provinces to Alberta in 1976 have received social assistance.

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I see you're shaking your head so I imagine you don't want me to indulge in any guessing games. So I will not do that, Mr. Speaker.

I will advise the hon. member, as I've done before, that we don't keep records of transient people. People may come and we may know that they have only arrived in Alberta. On the other hand, they may have been in Alberta for several months seeking employment and run out of money, then need to come to our offices to seek social assistance until they're able to obtain employment. So that method of retaining statistics is not done by my department.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the minister again. What steps has the minister taken to discourage people who receive social assistance from entering Alberta?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it's the attitude or the philosophy of this government to dis-

courage Canadians from coming to Alberta. Many of us wouldn't be here if that were the case.

MR. KUSHNER: Supplementary question again, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is there any specific time that they have to live in Alberta before they can receive social assistance?

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps I could save the minister the trouble of saying that this is probably a matter of law or publicly known regulation which the hon. member might seek in the library downstairs.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Is there a period that a person out of province must wait before they are eligible for social assistance?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar seems to be trying an end run on the other side of the field.

DR. BUCK: Well, quite obviously when we look at the minister's estimates — but is there a waiting period for people out of province before they are eligible for assistance? [interjections] Is there or isn't there? I mean that's very simple. Is there or isn't there a waiting period?

MR. SPEAKER: Undoubtedly the question is of interest, but it's of the same nature as the question asked by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. I would suggest that the same source of information should be available to answer it.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. minister. What percentage of the amount paid to unemployed employables going through Canada is paid by the federal government?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, I would hesitate to deprive the Order Paper of a question like that.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Maybe the Attorney General could answer that question.

Rural Gas Co-ops

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones. Could the minister indicate what progress has been made by the department with regard to the inspection program to determine the causes of natural gas leaks in natural gas pipelines?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. I know there has not only been considerable work and discussion by the department with the co-ops involved, but there has also been a hearing and examination by the Energy Resources Conservation Board. To give a detailed answer would take considerable time. What I think I would offer to do is make arrangements for the hon. member to see a line-up of all the work that has been done in detail.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate what measures

are taken at this time to make sure no more faulty pipe is being used by natural gas co-ops?

DR. WARRACK: The pipe standards used are those set forth by the CSA, which are industry regulations. There was some doubt that that degree of regulation was adequate. That's where the faulty pipe problem came in.

It's our information that they have reviewed their work and their criteria so as to give much better assurance of protection against faulty pipe problems. We're confident that it's highly unlikely we'll experience that problem again.

Universities Legislation

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Advanced Education and ask if he can indicate to the House when the amendments to The Universities Act will be introduced, or are we going to wait until the universities are dismissed first?

DR. HOHOL: The hon. Leader of the Opposition never passes up an opportunity for a little bit or a great deal of innuendo.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation referred to will be introduced shortly.

Day Care Centres

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health with respect to comments made yesterday concerning private businesses setting up day care centres. At this point is the government considering any special programs, either through incentives or legislative changes, to encourage or perhaps make it mandatory for private companies to set up day care centres?

MISS HUNLEY: No we're not, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the hon. member's interest in the speech I gave to the Chamber of Commerce. I was merely encouraging the business sector to take a look at day care centres, perhaps as a fringe benefit they might offer some of their employees, if they found it was to their advantage to do so.

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether the special task force she has set up will be dealing with this matter she raised yesterday.

MISS HUNLEY: I don't wish to second-guess all the details that will be in the report, Mr. Speaker. I've asked them to deal with the regulations, but also to make other recommendations they felt would be in the interests of Albertans for us to consider.

DR. PAPROSKI: A final supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker, if I may. In respect to her comments yesterday to the Chamber of Commerce, I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether the government will be providing any support direction in establishing day care centres in private businesses?

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly we might overlook it this time, but perhaps the hon. member would ask the question directly rather than in reference.

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry, I missed your point, but I'll try to ask in a direct way.

I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether the department is planning to provide direct support services for private industry respecting day care centres?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would like to really analyse the support to day care centres, we do support day care centres, whoever uses them, if they fit the qualifications through the PSS program and the municipal governments. If you're asking specifically if we're anticipating subsidies to private industries, the answer is no, not at the present time for sure.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary again. The question I was really asking is whether the department will assist private industry in setting up the guidelines, et cetera, regarding a proper day care centre in a private business.

MISS HUNLEY: Oh, of course. I'm sorry if I misunderstood the hon. member. I'm so used to it being financial approaches. Yes, we would give them advice and direction if necessary. There are many very capable people either on the staff of the city or in my department who would be pleased to co-operate.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, may I request leave to revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 25 senior citizens from the Golden Mile Drop-In Centre in southern Alberta, who journeyed to Edmonton to view the younger people of Alberta making decisions and the handling of the affairs of Alberta, notwithstanding the Member for Innisfail and the Member for Drumheller. I would ask the senior citizens, who are seated in the members gallery, to please rise and be welcomed by the Assembly.

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following motions for returns stand and retain their place on the Order Paper: 146 and 147.

[Motion carried]

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

A copy of the special study on foreign students referred to on page 15 of the 1975-76 annual report of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower.

[Motion carried]

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

A copy of the study concerning the development of natural gas pricing strategy for Alberta by Foster Research Ltd. as listed in Return No. 199/75.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I must advise the hon. member and the Assembly that I'm not prepared to accept this motion for a return. In the course of several years of intensive energy price negotiations, it was necessary for the government to compile certain information, particularly toward developing a strategy in dealing with the federal government and other provinces, in the matter of natural gas pricing. The province's strategy position and negotiating position is referred to, in some cases, in the documents requested. I don't believe it would be in the public interest to have this information made public.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, just very . . .

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, just very briefly. It seems to me that the information contained in the motion for a return is basically reasonable inasmuch as the natural gas does belong to the people of Alberta. The question as to pricing considerations has very direct bearing on the income that we, the owners of the natural gas, will receive. Notwithstanding some of the problems, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the balance would argue that this is information the public has a right to know.

[Motion lost]

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

A copy of the study concerning a review of the pricing system for Alberta's natural gas by Charles Gerald Smith, Q.C., as listed in Return No. 199/75.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, again I must advise the House that I'm not prepared to accept this motion. This one requests a legal opinion. The study was called A Study Concerning a Review of the Pricing System for Alberta's Natural Gas, by Charles Gerald Smith, Q.C. — a legal opinion of certain Alberta legislation which would allow us to take a particular stance in our negotiations on gas pricing. As a legal opinion [it] would not normally be tabled, but also in terms of our position in negotiations would not be in the public interest either.

[Motion lost]

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to request permission to withdraw Motion for a Return 150. The

major reason is that the information has already been tabled.

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

A copy of the study concerning the review of relationships between Canada and the United States regarding exported Canadian natural gas, by Foster Research Ltd. as listed in Return No. 199/75.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, again I must advise the House that in the public interest this document should not be tabled.

DR. BUCK: Who decides that?

MR. GETTY: While the previous document I referred to in 148 had to do with pricing negotiations within Canada, Motion 151 deals with a study which provided us with a negotiating position and a strategy having to do with international pricing of natural gas through the United States, our negotiations in relation to the export flowback, and our objections to having an export tax on natural gas, as there is on oil.

Mr. Speaker, the negotiations on that type of thing are still going on, and I do not believe it would be in the public interest to make public this information.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, commenting on Motion for a Return 151, I would suggest to members of the Assembly that the information contained in this study is probably of more crucial importance, considering the entire question of export of natural gas to the United States and the relationship between the U.S. and Canada regarding export of Canadian gas, than either of the other two motions for returns.

Mr. Speaker, first of all it seems to me we have to separate two things. In this motion for a return I'm not asking for internal department documents. In-house documents are one thing; but a study which has been paid for by the people of Alberta, and which outlines the relationships between this country and the United States on natural gas export, is surely something the people of Alberta have a right to know if they are at all to be in a position to make an accurate assessment not only of this government's position with respect to the flowback question the minister talked about, but for that matter this government's position with respect to other items as well. We've had discussion in the House. The Premier mentioned last fall that perhaps we should consider an assurance of natural gas supply in return for a petrochemical tradeoff. To what extent is that affected by the study, Mr. Speaker?

I would just conclude by saying very strongly that this is information which, because it is a study, is not in-house documents. It's a study, paid for by the people of Alberta, that is obviously going to have a major effect on the future of the province. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, the arguments suggest very clearly that this information should be made public.

[Motion lost]

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

- (1) the amount of money in the assurance fund under The Land Titles Act, as at March 31, 1977;
- (2) the amount of money paid to the Provincial Treasurer by the registrar for northern Alberta and by the registrar for southern Alberta during each of the fiscal years 1973-74, 1974-75, and 1975-76;
- (3) the amount of money invested from the assurance fund, and the names and the amounts of the investments;
- (4) the amount of interest earned in each of the fiscal years above;
- (5) the amount of money transferred to the general revenue fund of the province at the end of each of the fiscal years above.

[Motion carried]

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

1. Moved by Mr. Notley:

Be it resolved that the Assembly adopt the following amendment to the *Standing Orders*, to be effective until the prorogation of the Third Session of the 18th Legislature:

Standing Order 8 is amended by adding after suborder (3) the following suborder:

- (3.1) On Thursday at 4:30 p.m. Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders shall be called and debate thereon shall be governed by the following rules:
 - (a) The mover of the bill shall be limited to 20 minutes speaking time.
 - (b) Each other member recognized by the Speaker shall be limited to 15 minutes speaking time.
 - (c) Prior to adjournment the mover of the bill may speak a second time to conclude debate for such of the 20 minutes that he did not use under clause (a).
 - (d) At 5:30 p.m. the question shall be put on second reading of the bill under discussion unless objection to the bill being voted on is made either by one-third of the members submitting a written petition to Mr. Speaker at least 48 hours in advance of the debate, or by 20 members standing in their places when the question is about to be put.
 - (e) The names of objectors filing a petition against a vote on a bill shall be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings the next sitting day after the receipt of the petition.
 - (f) A private member's public bill which receives a second reading shall thereafter appear daily on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders and will be called by the gov-

ernment in the same manner as Government Bills and Orders.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Motion No. 1 would be to change the Order Paper on Thursday afternoon in a very important way. It would require that after a debate has occurred a vote would take place on private members' bills unless, and then the unless is set out: the Speaker receives at least 48 hours notice in advance of debate by one-third of the members of the Assembly or, alternatively, that 20 members stand in their place. But barring those two exceptions, a vote on a private member's bill would take place.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the proposal is modelled on changes that the Ontario Legislative Assembly — or provincial parliament, I guess, is the proper definition of the Ontario Legislature — is undertaking this year. The reasons I suggest for this bill are fairly self-evident, notwithstanding the fact that last week the hon. Member for Calgary McCall succeeded in getting Bill No. 220 into Committee of the Whole — I congratulate him on achieving that — and notwithstanding the fact that one bill made it to Committee of the Whole stage a year ago.

The fact of the matter is that the track record for private members' bills has not been very good. Indeed if one looks over the last number of years: in 1972, 15 private members' bills; only one dealing with changes so far as billiard rooms were concerned got out of second reading stage. In 1973, 22; no bills out of second reading stage. From 1972 until 1977, including the private members' bills which are currently on notice, we have a total of 195 to date. The numbers that have succeeded are so miniscule, we all have hopes for Bill 220. But if it does finally pass Committee of the Whole and obtain third reading, it will be a first. While that's something which should compliment the hon. member who introduced the bill, the fact that we have so few private members' bills passed must clearly bring to our attention the question: is this the best route to follow or should we make some reform in our legislative system so that private members' bills are given more meaningful attention?

Mr. Speaker, the concern that has spawned this type of reform in Ontario — and interest in it is widespread in other provinces as well. There is a feeling that there is a decline in the legislative process not just at the federal level with the very powerful Prime Minister's office, but also at the provincial levels; that more and more the power of government is moving away from the Legislature and is in fact being exercised almost totally by members of the Executive Council or in some cases advisers to key members of Executive Council, senior officials of government, executive assistants, and what have you.

Mr. Speaker, it's worth just looking at the estimates. Way back in 1915, 10 years after Alberta was formed, the percentage of the total budget that was allocated to the role of the Legislature was not large; it was about 1.5 per cent. But it has steadily declined. In 1936, the first year of the Social Credit government, it was 1.33 per cent. By 1955 it had dropped to less than .5 per cent. Now it is in the order of one-eighth of 1 per cent of the total provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not suggesting that you can correlate the amount of money spent on the Legislature itself and say that is an ironclad indication of how much control we have. But if on the other hand you look at the figures over the last years as to the people surrounding Executive Council members, you will find that that part of the budget has steadily grown.

Mr. Speaker, as I say, the concern over what the public perceives as the decline of the legislative function is at least in part because private members are not successful in getting ideas considered in the legislative process itself. We can argue that people can do this in caucus, and we had this government between 1971 and 1975 indicating they were a government of 49 members, all of them cabinet ministers. They aren't really talking about that anymore, Mr. Speaker. When you listen to the estimates it's obvious that outside Executive Council, this government may have purported to be a government of 49 members between '71 and '75, but they are certainly not a government of 69 members. From '75 subsequently, it is clear that Executive Council has a dominant and almost exclusive role.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that that's true in Alberta. But to be fair, that's true generally in our parliamentary systems. It's true in the federal government. It's true in other provinces as well.

There's a growing gap, if you like, between cabinet and non-cabinet members. I think it is important for us to consider not necessarily the problems we see but how the public perceives that gap and, in the process of that public perception, a feeling that parliament and the legislative function itself are becoming increasingly impotent. We have to guard against that.

The proposal I have before the Assembly today is designed to allow the private member on both the government and opposition sides to take meaningful initiatives. But I want to underline, Mr. Speaker, that it does not rule out the government exercising its prerogatives. As a matter of fact the government, by having 20 members, can have the bill dropped to the bottom of the Order Paper. The same occurs by one-third of the members signing a petition. But it does force the government to be fully accountable if a bill does not come to a vote.

I think the argument for this was put rather well in the Ontario Commission on the Legislature, which contained some rather interesting people, including one Dalton K. Camp who I gather is not too popular with most of the members of this Assembly with the exception of the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands. Nevertheless Mr. Camp is well-acquainted with Tory politics, particularly red Tory politics or sort of pink Tory politics, or whatever the Joe Clark supporters in the federal Tory regime are these days. Anyway Mr. Camp makes a point that I think is rather valid. This is the whole argument against having private members' bills coming to a vote. He says:

The standard explanation given for the fact that a vote is not taken, is that the taking of votes might lead to situations in which legislation would be passed of which the government disapproved . . .

Wouldn't that be a disastrous thing?

. . . and that this would [somehow] weaken ministerial responsibility. Clearly, however, so long

as government commands a majority in the House, it can defeat any legislation it wishes. Although in certain circumstances it might be embarrassing to do so (when the bill is a popular one), this is hardly a sufficient reason for depriving members of a meaningful legislative initiative.

You might say that's coming from the horse's mouth, the man who knows both the front rooms and the backrooms of the Tory party. Mr. Camp, along with several other members of this commission, in my view makes a pretty strong argument for this change.

I want to raise one other point before inviting the debate of other members of the Assembly. There is a very widespread view among people that too many decisions are made on a party basis, that members come to the House of Commons or to a legislative assembly and vote the way the party whip says whether it deals with the time that we adjourn or with a major bill that will affect the future of the government. There is widespread scepticism. I'm sure that as hon. members travel through the province — I know that when I travel through the province, wherever you go people say, surely we should have some flexibility, some way, so we don't have this iron party discipline with people voting the way the whip says regardless of how they feel individually.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that members in the House of Commons like Stanley Knowles and others have suggested that we should get away from this business of the iron whip and that bills should be considered on their merits, and that the government would not fall unless there were two things: either a specific vote of non-confidence or, alternatively, defeat on a budgetary item.

This change in the rules would allow members from both sides of the House to, first of all, have their bills debated, with those bills frequently — not always, but frequently — coming to a vote. I think the other rather less obvious but equally important element is that many items could be debated on their merits quite apart from whether we are Tories, Liberals, Social Crediters, New Democrats, or what have you. I think that's an important thing to strive for, Mr. Speaker. I think we must be very proud of our system of responsible government. I support that. But I think that within that support for responsible government and the cabinet being accountable to the legislature, there is room for some flexibility. And this initiative would provide that kind of flexibility within the Alberta Assembly.

So I suggest to the members of the House that it's well worth trying and that it merits the support of individuals regardless of where they sit, not worrying about it coming from the opposition side. It merits support because it would improve the operation of the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

Thank you.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to say a few words on the resolution by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. First of all I would like to dwell on some of the remarks the member made and then look at the resolution itself.

The member talked about the decline of the legislative process. He was talking about this House and other houses. I can't see the decline in the legislative

process in this House. I remember sitting in the Speaker's gallery or the public gallery previous to 1971 when sessions lasted for six weeks and over. Now we're sitting three and a half months in the spring, a month in the fall: about four and a half to five months total work by the members of this government.

The member also talked about — I see he's left his place already — the members of the Executive Council of this government having all powers. Maybe the Member for Spirit River-Fairview should sit in on some of our caucus meetings and see how they run and the debate that goes into some of the decisions made by this government, and how each and every member of caucus has the opportunity to have his or her input into a particular policy that may be looked at.

The member also talked about the provincial budget back in 1935 and today's 1977 budget. I didn't hear him make any comments about looking at the 1977 budget for legislative interns and research assistance for the opposition, a total of about \$300,000, where they can go out and do their work. I look at the 1971 budget and the expenditure of no dollars.

The member also talked about the public outlook in the province. I do a considerable amount of travelling in the province, Mr. Speaker, and the feedback I get from the public is fairly good. I will go on to that later.

He also talked about the report tabled in the Ontario Legislature regarding the rules of the Legislature there. I haven't had an opportunity to look at that report. But one week he uses the view of Mr. Baldwin, the Conservative Member for Peace River, and this week the views of a Mr. Camp, whom I don't know. I've heard a bit about him, but that's about as far as it goes.

He also talked about the report they've adopted in Ontario and so on. I don't think this Legislature has to adopt everything Ontario does. If we had adopted what Ontario wanted in 1973, we wouldn't be sitting here with about a \$2 billion heritage savings trust fund. We'd probably have a deficit budget this year, Mr. Speaker, instead of the situation we are now into, with a pretty good outlook for Albertans.

There was also talk about votes in the Legislature and so on. At times we have had a free vote, and rightfully so. But I think most of the policies that come before this Legislature are government policies. They are brought in not only by the members of this Assembly, but they are brought in at a party base, either from our policy conventions which we hold once a year or from our annual conventions, which are very well attended.

In looking at the motion itself, I believe it probably should have gone to the Members' Services Committee, which is made up of government and opposition members. That should have been debated at that stage. The hon. Speaker is chairman, with four or five government members and one opposition member sitting on that committee. At that time they could have had an opportunity to look at the resolution and decide if it should be brought in as an amendment to our *Standing Orders*.

Mr. Speaker, right now there are 14 motions on the Order Paper, eight sponsored by members of the government and six by the opposition. I think they have more work to do there: they could have more motions on the Order Paper. Because of rule

changes, they are allowed to have two motions on at any time. They have complete control over Thursday, if they want it. We changed the rules in 1973 to allow a one-hour debate on public bills, such as we are looking at today. But they haven't chosen to go that route.

I look at the history and think back, as I say, sitting in the public gallery back in 1969. At that time I don't think there were any public bills at all on the Order Paper. Only at that time did members of the opposition start using that aspect of the rules and proceedings to bring in private bills on the Order Paper.

In 1972 we made a rule change to allow a one-hour debate on these bills. As the Member for Spirit River-Fairview indicated, there were about 191 from '72 to '77. One has been adopted, and a couple got into committee stage. I think the Member for Drumheller had one on last year that was put into committee stage and then accepted by the government this year as part of the amendments to The Highway Traffic Act.

Look at the history in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. We have now brought TV in so the public of Alberta can see what's going on. We have *Hansard*, which records the proceedings of this Legislature.

I also look at the Order Paper and some of these private bills before us. Pretty significant changes in government policy would have to be adopted if we accepted the resolution before this Assembly today. I think we would have to have more time to study the particular bills and see just what could go into it.

We look at the Order Paper: some of the motions and public bills and orders that are on it right now. At times I wonder just what's happening to the \$300,000 that's going for research on some of these items. Just to give the opposition four resolutions instead of a resolution such as we have today on the Order Paper, here are four they could probably put on the Order Paper and debate. Maybe I shouldn't be saying this, but today in the question period they asked about the Calgary General Hospital. Well, if they have concerns about that, that's a good designated motion for a Thursday. Many questions have been raised about the two capital city parks in Edmonton and Calgary; they could debate that. The hon. Member for Clover Bar has had some real hang-ups on the Alberta Game Farm; that could be put on. Or the Minister of Energy would probably be interested in getting the views of the members of the opposition on oil and natural gas prices, what kinds of views he should take to Ottawa. But I haven't seen any of these on the Order Paper.

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

So I would propose to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that this motion not be supported right now, but that it be taken back to the Members' Services Committee. Let them review it and come back to this Assembly in the fall sitting or the Fourth Session of the 18th Legislature to have a further look at this.

Thank you.

MR. KIDD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments on the resolution introduced today by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I might make a few comments on some of his comments. I'd like to

reassure him that our 69 members are participating in this government, and you'd be very envious.

DR. BUCK: Just tell Kushner that, eh.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Tell big John.

MR. KIDD: The second point, you know . . .

DR. BUCK: You'll get your 30 seconds.

MR. KIDD: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member's reasons for putting this resolution forth were sincere. I think he's a very intelligent gentleman in many ways. I believe that if he hadn't blindly copied a resolution introduced in Ontario, and had used his own perception, he might have come up with something worth while.

AN HON. MEMBER: He couldn't read.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A Toronto NDP.

MR. KIDD: But, Mr. Speaker, in looking at the resolution I have some very sincere objections to the manner in which it is presented and some of the terms involved. Let's just take a look at part (d):

At 5:30 p.m. the question shall be put on second reading of the bill under discussion unless objection to the bill being voted on is made either by one-third of the members submitting a written petition to Mr. Speaker at least 48 hours in advance of the debate, or by 20 members standing in their places when the question is about to be put.

In putting that forth, I know the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, and I think quite rightly, never contemplated that ever once could it happen that there would be one-third opposition members in this Assembly. You know the way things are going in the debate as I follow it, it seems very doubtful to me that that will ever happen. But it could happen.

Let's assume that there were one-third opposition members here. Then sir, in that case I think it could be a retrograde step to free democratic discussion of any bill that a third of the members could suppress another member's wish to speak. And I won't say it on that side alone. I sincerely object to a third of our 69 members — that would be 25 members — suppressing the opportunity of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview to get up and state his point of view.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. KIDD: Therefore I think that's a very bad aspect of the resolution.

Now sir, another bad aspect of the resolution: in many cases, when they look at a public bill people make up their minds and decide whether they're for it or against it. In many cases you can do that. But speaking for myself, where there is a really good bill put forth by any member, and certainly opposition members, I don't want to be in the position, first of all, of giving 48 hours notice that that bill will not be heard.

Secondly, if it's a really good motion I do not want to be put in the position of being asked to vote after

only three members have spoken. You see, under this bill only three members could speak. The mover of the motion could speak, two other members could speak, and then the mover could get up and spend the rest of his time on the bill. I think it would be totally unfair to anyone who has gone to a great deal of work to put forth a worth-while bill to have his bill voted down by 20 members of the Assembly without further discussion on the bill.

I think (d) is a very undemocratic part of this bill. I think it's so undemocratic that I just couldn't bring myself to vote for this resolution. I would urge every member here to consider carefully the points I've brought forth, and would urge them to defeat this motion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in my view (d) is really the most important part of the resolution. The (a), (b), and (c) parts — I think that from 1969 . . . The Member for Stony Plain alluded to this. I think I can concur and can assure him that before 1969 no public bills whatsoever were debated in this House. From 1969 to the present, a great deal of effort has been put forth to make sure that opposition members could have their say, could debate their motions, and bring them forth. Here's one today. Here's a designated motion by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, something that was never possible before 1969.

Now on the latter part of the motion, I think it follows from what I've said, that having had very little chance to hear a debate, the possibility that a private member's bill could be put under Government Bills and Orders — speaking as an individual, having had little chance to really make up my mind, I think it's a very bad part of this resolution.

So making those very pertinent points, [this] is my view, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge all members in this Assembly to vote against this resolution and defeat it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I want to make two or three comments on the motion.

First of all I have to say, with respect, that I don't agree that there were discussions from 1969. As a matter of fact, the policy of the government of which I was a part, which was set out by the Premier of that day, was that there would be no discussion of bills introduced by opposition members. No discussion. So all bills that were introduced previously got first reading and then died on the Order Paper. It was not until 1972, under the present government, that these bills became debatable and we were given an hour a week to debate them.

I believe Premier Lougheed made a good move when he permitted the bills of opposition members to be debated. I think it's based on the philosophy that no one has any monopoly on wisdom, on knowledge, or on good ideas. There may be some good ideas that come from opposition members or opposition parties. But whether they're good or bad, there should certainly be an opportunity for them to be debated.

I have commended the government outside the House, and I now do it inside the House, for giving some time to debating bills introduced by private members, whether on the opposition side or the government side. I think that's a democratic process, and I think it redounds to the freedom of thought and the freedom of expression which we like to see exemplified in our legislatures.

However, there are three reasons why I couldn't support this particular motion. In the first place, we now have one hour a week to debate Public Bills and Orders other than Government Orders. My first reason is that this resolution would take time out of that one hour, because there would be debates on procedure, and it's inconceivable that (d) could be carried out without probably a debate every time. I think we would be spending the time talking about procedure rather than discussing the bill before the House. It provides for no extra time, still only one hour. So there'd be a reduction of time for these debates if this motion was carried.

Secondly, if this motion was carried, it would curtail debate. It would curtail debate because it's limiting the number of people who can speak. You could have a minority of the House decide that there would be no more debate on the second reading of the bill. Twenty members is a minority of the House irrespective of what side they're on. So what you have is a debate being curtailed by 20 members of the House. That means that 20 are imposing their wishes on the other 55. I don't think we should be curtailing debate; we should be encouraging debate. Under the curtailing debate clause also, it's inconceivable that three or four members would outline all the points that should be debated thoroughly in the second reading of a bill, if they did find it can still be carried through and get second reading the day second reading comes up. But if it hasn't been covered, and other members feel they have a point of view they want to express, then certainly we shouldn't be denying them that right even though it may be some days later when the motion again comes before the Legislature.

Thirdly, I think the last clause is doing something with which I can't agree, imposing on the government bills the government does not necessarily wish to have. The government is elected by the people of the province. The government is responsible for the policies it espouses. And here we have a bill that's going to say an opposition member's bill, if it's supported by 20 people or carried in the Legislature, must go under Government Bills and Orders. In my view, that is an imposition and wouldn't be democratic at all.

If the members of the Legislature now like a bill and agree with the principles of the bill, it can receive second reading and go into Committee of the Whole. We haven't got past that stage yet. But as the hon. Member for Stony Plain mentioned, last year one of the bills I introduced did receive second reading and went into Committee of the Whole. The House finished before anything further could happen to it. This session the government has taken that point and placed it in government legislation. Of their own free will and volition they can support the principle that was enunciated in that particular bill.

We now have another bill — the one introduced by the hon. member Mr. Little — that has reached Committee of the Whole. It's now in Committee of the Whole. Again, as I expressed the other day, it is my hope that the government will adopt that principle involving seeing-eye dogs of blind people who must have dogs.

So really all the machinery is there now for the democratic process to be exercised. But there certainly should be complete right of the government to decide what its legislation is going to be. Surely the people outside expressed that. Those who were

elected and did not secure a majority of people may have espoused similar causes or different causes before the electorate. But when they're elected, the people know that if they're in the opposition they're not going to be setting out government policy. They can urge the government, make representations, plead, pray, and request, but they have no authority or no right to expect they're going to set out government policy. If that was not so, the whole function of democratic government — responsible government — would disappear. I don't like to see chiselling away at points of government that, if it continues, will eventually destroy our idea of democratic government as established in the mother parliament in Great Britain.

So for the three reasons I've outlined I cannot support the bill. It adds no time, but would take away from the time we already have. It would curtail debate, and it would impose on the government a bill that the government may not even wish to have.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, as a new member of this Legislature, I'd like to make a few comments with regard to this resolution. Frankly, I think some points are significant and worthy of consideration.

I find quite valid the fact that you should restrict the speaking time. Frequently points are made on particular bills or resolutions in the first five or 10 minutes, and then we as hon. members proceed to beat them to death for another 20. In view of the many serious problems facing our province and our nation, it is of concern to me that we would spend four hours a week on sometimes seemingly wasted hours of debate. The government is under great pressure, Mr. Speaker, to amend its existing legislation, to keep pace with current problems, and to introduce new legislation. And as one of the hon. members said, I don't think all wisdom necessarily rests with the government or with the government members.

I too have read the Camp report and I too share some concerns about the author. But I suppose if you're a supporter of John Diefenbaker you'd have one point of view, and if you're a supporter of those people who wanted a review of the leadership this fall you'd have another point of view. But if a careful reading of the Camp report was made, I think many of us would see therein many opportunities to improve our ability to serve our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps a select committee of the House should be set up to consider the revision of our rules. I find it disturbing that we would spend four hours of debate on designated motions or private members' bills, which quite frequently are put in more to gain publicity than to air a particular subject of concern. We see a repetition of bills. For example, right now there are 12 private members' bills on the Order Paper from one member, and six from another. I'm quite certain that in a House of 75 members, out of a total of 32 bills over half of them should be originated by just two members — I'm sure the other members of the House wouldn't feel they were so lacking in concern for their constituents or ability to generate ideas that should be debated in this House, that they weren't able to come up with them.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think this motion should be defeated. I think we should consider the appointment of a select committee of the Assembly to consider amendment of the rules so that time spent is of value. I question, as some members have suggested,

that it should be referred to the Members' Services Committee. I appreciate that it's chaired by the Speaker, but I feel that the responsibilities of that committee are more of a specific, ongoing concern of the members.

I think today we should all have concerns about the concentration of power in government, in the Executive Council, and the concentration of power in international unions and in multinational companies. I think we should all be concerned with the protection of individuals. This government has certainly opened this Legislature to the people through television and *Hansard*, and the hundreds of millions of dollars being set aside for the opposition. Frankly, I think they're doing a very miserable job of how they spend it. When I see the questions that come forward, I just shake my head in disbelief. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that . . .

DR. BUCK: We haven't seen [inaudible].

MR. MUSGREAVE: No, you're not likely to. Because when I ask some questions they're going to be valid and of concern to my constituents, not just aimed at getting my name in the paper regardless of how it gets there.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. R. SPEAKER: We hear [inaudible] big John has got his name in the paper.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Not really. I sat beside big John for six years, and I appreciate how he gets his name in the paper. And I was able to lead the polls, and he didn't.

DR. BUCK: That's to say something.

MR. MUSGREAVE: That's right. And he also got defeated in the last civic election, so that shows you what good it did him to get his name in the paper.

DR. BUCK: At least he's not a puppet.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member's information I would suggest I'm not a puppet either. I always hold up my head with pride. Because I wouldn't kow-tow to a particular mayor in the city of Calgary, I enjoyed the reputation of having \$90,000 of lawsuits against me. I would not kow-tow to any individual at any time anywhere.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few remarks with regard to this resolution; but first of all some response to the members who have talked against the resolution. Number one, I don't think the resolution or the principle of the resolution was given full consideration. The principle behind this resolution is that we want to restore decision-making power to this Legislature. That's what we want; that's what we're talking about. We have members standing up telling us about their Conservative caucus, that they get talking there. You tell me how many seconds you're going to get in your Conservative caucus with that many people sitting in that caucus.

DR. BUCK: Three seconds every second month.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Three seconds every couple of months? And a lot of talking? I don't care how much time it is. Mr. Speaker, the time is not relevant. They can each get an hour — that's fine. If they do, great. But the fact is that what they have to say as members is not in public. They can't come out in the public and commit themselves. They hide behind the shirttails of frontbenchers, the Premier, and say, we made a decision in caucus. But not one of these men will stand up and state that opinion here: this is where the decision-making is. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: How many of them took part in the forums in the election campaign?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Right. We talk about electioneering — my hon. colleague reminds me. How many Conservatives would even come to the forums? They were afraid to answer questions. [interjections]

DR. BUCK: Holding Peter's coattails. That's a fact.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Because the Premier, the ministers, and the big campaigners said, don't go to the forums because they might ask you an embarrassing question. And you've got to stand up for things that the hon. Member for Three Hills said.

MR. DIACHUK: What were the results, Ray?

MR. NOTLEY: The Premier wouldn't answer.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'd even be embarrassed to have to stand up for some of the comments of the hon. Member for Three Hills. I gained more votes from his comments than any other minister. He was my number one campaigner.

Mr. Speaker, back to the resolution as such. I think the principle is restoring the power in the Legislature. We're saying that individual members may have good ideas. I'd like to cite the idea brought forward by the hon. member from Calgary, Mr. Little. An excellent idea. I stood in my place and I hope I supported it. I support the idea very much. I hope that this Legislature can take that bill through to a conclusion and pass it. I think that's what we should be able to do. Through the mechanism we've set up in this Legislature, I don't know if it's possible. I don't know where it's at on the Order Paper, but it may not have the chance to get back up to the top of the Order Paper within the next two weeks.

Under the rules we're suggesting here, we could have voted on that particular bill, moved it ahead, got it through, got it onto the government orders, and made it law in this province. Under the present rules, it's got to follow this procedure of going . . . Hopefully it gets up to the top, and it may get into Committee of the Whole. I doubt it. I doubt it very much.

I think that's very unfortunate, because an excellent idea is lost in this province — an excellent idea. There were a few people in this province who needed that kind of legislation, and as legislators we hamstr-

ing ourselves by the rules we set up for ourselves. Very, very unfortunate. I think that the Conservative caucus has sent three or four of its members here to come and say no to the resolution without really studying the implications, how the thing could help us, without even attempting to adjust the rules that were here.

The hon. Member for Banff made some comments here and said: one third of the membership could suppress the thoughts; the bill would go to the bottom; it wouldn't get to discussion; and it would do all kinds of things. What the hon. member should have done in a positive sense was say: look, let's adjust the parts of the resolution that are wrong — whatever they are; 4, 5, 6 or 3, 4, 5 — so we can come up with an idea like this and get some private members' bills through this Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY: Agreed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's what I would have expected from the hon. Member for Banff. I know he has the capability to do that. I know he has that capability. I'm sorry that he was advised in caucus [interjections] to come here and think of some reasons to defeat it because the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview brought it in.

That's not good enough from the member, not good enough. He has much more credibility in thought, action, and procedure than that. I know he can do better. That's the kind of thing that should have happened, because the idea, the principle behind the resolution is good.

I'd just like to go to another point. In the early stages of this session, over and over again the Premier made comments to us on this side of the House that we should be more aware of the grassroots, listening to the people. After he made this cabinet tour, he'd found out things weren't quite the same as the responses he was getting from some cabinet ministers. People were thinking a little differently. All of a sudden he was going to publicize this thought and make people feel that boy, we're really listening to you. In the last two or three weeks that whole process is lost. It's back to the old process again. Individuals, people out in the grassroots, are not counting as much.

But that principle is very sound. It's very sound that ideas come from the grassroots. In this present debate on the motion, one of the hon. members has indicated that some of the ideas that come from the grassroots may not be acceptable to the government, or — I forget the exact words — may impose something on the government that they do not desire. I think that would be one of the healthiest situations that could ever happen. I would hope that if I were ever in cabinet again I would recognize that some grassroots idea coming from a private member, that passes this Assembly, may be a lot more important than the idea I get from some bureaucrat or some guy who's paid hundreds of thousands of dollars as a consultant; that the real grassroots feeling is the way this province is supposed to go. That's the thing that's important.

I think that the attitude of the Conservative caucus — that seems to be where the decision was made to defeat this, and the Premier is certainly the chairman of that caucus — to come in here just to defeat it,

really reflects on their attitude toward that basic principle of hearing and responding to the grassroots of this province. That's really not good enough.

There are lots of people, and members have already quoted people who have supported this principle we are discussing here today. I look at an article by Doug Roche, *The Human Side of Politics*, and he talks about the view from the back bench. I'd like to quote two paragraphs from his article:

All of this was one more reason to support Ged Baldwin's proposal that at each session of Parliament twenty bills or motions by private Members be selected by draw and brought forward for debate with the assurance that they would be voted on. Thus the Member's idea might still go down in a blaze of attention but not ignominiously. In the words of Conservative backbenchers who parody John Diefenbaker, "Parliament would live!"

I say with the passing of this resolution, implementing it in whatever adjusted form is necessary in the technical details, the Legislature would live. That's what I have to say about that.

He goes on to say:

Baldwin's idea had a lot of substance. "Most government bills are dredged up from the bowels of the civil service," he said. "The Members of Parliament are closer to the people and should be able to put in bills with the knowledge that they will at least be voted on. Private Members have a great deal more to offer than the public thinks and they should be given [a] chance. I say this after fifteen years here."

That's quoting Ged Baldwin. I think we can apply the same idea to us as members of this Legislature.

I look at another article in *The Globe and Mail*, written by a Mr. Webster. He is talking about this very proposal in the Ontario Legislature. He wrote his article just after the first private member was chosen to present his bill. He says:

Out it came and — presto, bingo — the first winner of the Queen's Park Private Members' Bill Sweepstakes was revealed as Lome Maeck (PC, Parry Sound). It won't win Mr. Maeck a million, but it does give him a shot at being the first non-Cabinet Minister in donkeys' years to write new law for the province of Ontario.

Mr. Maeck will be the first private member to benefit from the major new rules package passed by the Legislature just before Christmas. The new rules remove the Government's lock on legislation by providing an avenue for bills by ordinary MPPs to be passed by the House. Hereafter, their bills have not been allowed to come to a vote . . .

And that's our situation here.

. . . and [a] private member's hour has been a sterile gabfest.

Most likely that compares equally to the situation we have here in Alberta.

No more. In the coming spring session, one afternoon a week will be devoted to business from private members. Two bills will be debated each time, and at the end of [the] debate they may be voted on by the full House.

Mr. Speaker, those are just two instances of support for this particular idea, and there certainly are others. I'm sure if we could talk to the MPPs of the

Legislature of Ontario, they would find that this idea has been successful and has opened the Legislature not only to the backbenchers on the government side but to private members in the opposition.

I think that the government's debate to this point has not been adequate. I don't think they have covered the principle as such. That's what we're discussing, I think, maybe more than the details of that resolution. I think that's where the focus should be. I don't see how that can be turned down as easily as it is. It's nice to say, let's refer it to the members' committee, but we are the members of the Legislature. We should be giving direction to that committee. Up to this point, from the government side of the House, that direction certainly has not come.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I am not a designated speaker for this motion this afternoon. I don't think any government member was designated to get up and try to defeat the motion.

I cannot help but reflect how times change, especially listening to the Member for Little Bow trying to put forward the idea that an overwhelming majority should bring in changes in the constitutional laws for this Legislative Assembly so the opposition can run the Assembly. For years and years, he and the member sitting over there with him had the opportunity to bring in this sort of amendment, when they had overwhelming majorities . . .

DR. BUCK: We've heard this speech 20 times.

MR. APPLEBY: . . . in this Assembly as well. In those days they didn't feel it was significant, but today it is.

He also speaks about this government — and he mentioned the Premier — not listening to the grassroots any longer, not being concerned with what the people of this province have to say, and not asking them what they have to say. I would like to remind him that just a very short time ago this government and this Progressive Conservative party assembled over 1,500 people at a convention in this city exactly to listen to what the people of this province had to tell them in the way of what they thought should be done as far as government in Alberta is concerned. Many of the ideas and thoughts that came out of that convention are established as guidelines for this government and will no doubt be introduced in policy-making in the days to come.

When the Member for Spirit River-Fairview introduced this resolution, he said the track record for private members' bills is not so good. He went on to outline some of the things that have happened as far as private members' bills are concerned. Perhaps another thought could be given besides their track record: some of the bills introduced are not so good. [interjections] In fact some of the motions and resolutions introduced to this Legislature may not be so good either, Mr. Speaker, and this is one of them. I think it's a prime example of a resolution introduced to this Assembly with no substance, no thought of the responsibility of government, no thought of the fact the government itself has to be accountable to the people of the province of Alberta.

DR. BUCK: Tell that to Ged Baldwin.

MR. APPLEBY: The actions of the government itself are what count. That is what we have to be responsible for.

DR. BUCK: Tell that to Ged Baldwin.

MR. APPLEBY: As far as bills are concerned, I think the Member for Spirit River-Fairview really believes in quantity and not quality. I see he's got a dozen or so on the order sheet right now. As the Member for Banff said, if he had put his talents to work and done some real thinking, perhaps he could have come up with one effective piece of legislation that might have warranted further consideration.

AN HON. MEMBER: I doubt it.

MR. APPLEBY: It's very interesting that the prime authority he gives, whom we should consider in supporting this type of resolution, is Dalton Camp.

DR. BUCK: Who do you want, Jack Horner?

MR. APPLEBY: Now I'm not aware of achievements [interjections] that are so great and so many as far as Dalton Camp is concerned. In fact the Member for Spirit River-Fairview has said, that is straight from the horse's mouth. My own opinion would be the other end of the horse. I'm not so sure that is a very valid authority we should use in this Legislature today.

I think the key to the whole situation has to be what was outlined very well by the Member for Drumheller: the responsibility of government. The government of the day, which has the majority in the Assembly, has to be responsible to the people of the province or of the jurisdiction it represents. Those decisions have to be made.

The Member for Little Bow can very well say that government members have very little input. They say we make our decisions in caucus. This is true. We make them in other things too. We have committees. I think of a day like today. My first meeting started at 7:45 this morning, and we'll be sitting here tonight I suppose until 10 or 10:30 or so. I can't visualize that I have more than an hour or so in between to do some of the things I have to do in the matter of private members' responsibilities. The rest of the time is spent working on policies and things that have to come before the Assembly and decisions the government has to make.

As always, the key is responsible government. Responsibility rests with the elected party in power. Therefore there is no way I can see we could support a resolution such as this, which would try in every possible way to detract from the responsibility and newer they have by reason of the decision of the electorate. So I can see no other thing than that we defeat this resolution and go on to something much more worth while.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker declared the motion lost. Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Three minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Buck	Mandeville	R. Speaker
Clark	Notley	

Against the motion:

Adair	Hohol	Paproski
Appleby	Horner	Peacock
Ashton	Horsman	Planche
Backus	Hunley	Purdy
Batiuk	Hyland	Russell
Bogle	Hyndman	Schmidt
Butler	Jamison	Shaben
Chambers	Kidd	Stromberg
Chichak	Koziak	Taylor
Diachuk	Kroeger	Tesolin
Doan	Kushner	Thompson
Dowling	Little	Walker
Fluker	Lysons	Warrack
Foster	McCrae	Wolstenholme
Getty	Miller	Young
Gogo	Moore	Yurko
Hansen	Musgreave	Zander
Harle		

Totals:	Ayes - 5	Noes - 52
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**head: PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)**

**Bill 221
An Act Respecting
Smoking in Public Places**

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak on behalf of my constituents on this my first private member's bill, Bill 221, An Act Respecting Smoking in Public Places. I know there will be some legal members of the House who question the way this bill is put together. However, I don't claim the authorship of the legal niceties.

Mr. Speaker, after the debate on the motion we just defeated, I appreciate the history of the success of private bills. Some people say they are useful only to give the sponsor an opportunity to get some media coverage. Other people say it's an opportunity to test public reaction to an idea the government wishes to promote, but is afraid of unknown political reaction. I like to take the positive point of view, that it's a sincere attempt to air the views of my constituents on a subject of concern to them.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's regrettable that in a province as rich as ours, elected representatives should spend hours of valuable debate on issues that quite often — I should say most of the time — are not voted upon. In spite of our material wealth, we have some record of achievement . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Very consistent.

MR. MUSGREAVE: That's right. . . . that we as an Assembly should be concerned about. Mr. Speaker, we have high divorce rates, high suicide rates, and high alcoholism rates. These are just a few. I think all of us are becoming more conscious of the main concern we face as Canadians; and that is, will our

country stay together. I believe this subject alone should have taken all the time we will be spending on private bills this session. I'm glad to see that next week our Premier is meeting with the premiers of our western provinces. He indicated to us today that this vital issue probably will be a matter of concern.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing in the change of government in the province of Quebec is a desire by people everywhere to have some feeling that they have a chance to direct their own welfare to their elected representatives, be they government members, independent members, or members of the opposition. As elected representatives of the people — regardless of party, regardless of position in the House, regardless of whether you're a member of the Executive Council — I think it's important to remember we are here to do our constituents' business.

As chairman of a caucus committee on health services, I've always been concerned about our high citizen/hospital bed ratio, our escalating costs, and constant demands by doctors, nurses, administrators, and citizens for more money to be spent on health services. We know that hospitals in some areas are overbuilt, Mr. Speaker. Yet in our own cities, wards in our hospitals are closed possibly because of lack of operating money. But at the same time these beds are closed, for many reasons we have waiting lists: lack of nursing home beds, lack of convalescent beds, extended holidays and high tax levels experienced by doctors and other members of the medical fraternity.

Mr. Speaker, while this is going on we are building excellent hospital facilities throughout the province. I'm glad we're doing this. I appreciate that in many areas of the province the medical facilities are in a sad state of repair. It's good politics, and let's not be shy about this. We're politicians, and it's going to help some rural members get re-elected. But, Mr. Speaker, let's not forget the horrendous costs of running these facilities. Some estimates are as high as 30 per cent per year. So in a \$50 million hospital you're looking at a \$15 million per year budget probably escalating at the rate of 10 per cent per year. Will we have more wards closed, as we have in Calgary, because of lack of operating dollars?

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to my bill respecting smoking in public places. There is great interest in this matter. In particular I'd like to mention the Group Against Smokers' Pollution, helped by a very vibrant, charming, persistent worker on behalf of the majority of nonsmokers. Miss Pintus is program co-ordinator for GASP in Calgary. You have all received material from her. Her group is doing what I would hope the government of this province would do; that is, take a more positive stand against those factors in our way of living that affect our health. Let us emphasize preventive health measures. Let us restrict the advertising of booze. Let's take junk food out of our schools. Let's ban advertising for cigarettes and tobacco. Let's emphasize less eating and more exercising. Then, perhaps, we won't need such expensive hospital facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the passing of this act respecting smoking in public places would first of all give Albertans a strong indication of leadership in discouraging this costly habit; secondly, a place for smokers to gather without harassment; thirdly, an excellent example to our young people that we in the adult world are concerned enough about the hazards of

smoking that we are taking positive steps to restrict its use in public areas.

Smoking has been under attack almost continuously since tobacco was introduced to the civilized world over 400 years ago. In 1602 the then King of England, James I, wrote a lengthy treatise entitled *A Counterblaste to Tobacco*, in which he vigorously condemned smoking, describing it as "a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, and dangerous to the lungs." Despite his strong language, the king chose a mild approach compared to actions in other parts of the world to deter smokers. In China, for example, a decree issued in 1638 threatened anyone who trafficked in tobacco with decapitation. The Russian czars of the seventeenth century ordered smokers to have their noses cut off. This to me is a good example of a punishment fitting the crime.

In modern times, Mr. Speaker, people have opted for more moderate means of reducing the use of tobacco and the smoking habit: advertising, or nonadvertising in the case of radio and television promotion of cigarettes, an increasing number of publications and studies have attempted to educate the public on the dangers of tobacco.

There is certainly increased public interest in the hazards of smoking. Smokers and non-smokers alike point out the following, if you have observed the continuous and increased flow of letters to newspaper editors on the subject. A no-smoking ban has been tried by the Famous Players Corporation in all their theatres in the cities of Belleville and Hamilton in Ontario for a one-month period. The rate of death in the 35 to 54 age group has stabilized, but there has been a slight increase in cancer of people over 55 due to smoking, industrial hazards, and inadequate treatment. Before the city of Ottawa introduced a ban regarding smoking it ran advertisements in the city asking their citizens to respond and 306 letters were received, containing 574 signatures requesting control and only 11 signatures against control. A former stewardess of Trans World Airlines was recently awarded \$3,657 in a disability payment because of an allergy she developed while working in smoked-filled cabins of TWA jets. In Calgary an alderman recently introduced a motion regarding smoking and estimated that of 50 letters he received, 80 per cent were in favor of some control of smoking in certain areas.

Mr. Speaker, I think smoking should be conducted in private places between consenting adults.

AN HON. MEMBER: Two people smoking the same cigarette.

AN HON. MEMBER: It would be a lonely life, Eric.

MR. MUSGREAVE: As the hon. member from Edmonton says, two people smoking one cigarette.

Delegates at the 29th world assembly of the World Health Organization in 1976 asked the nations of the world to give serious consideration to legislative measures against smoking. Restrictions in advertising, smoking bans in public places, and the protection of non-smokers' rights, were strongly advocated. Mr. Speaker, many governments have taken these recommendations to heart and embodied them in legislation. More than 30 American states have enacted laws to restrict smoking in a variety of public places

since 1973. Legislation in Finland has made all public places non-smoking areas unless specifically designated as smoking areas. A bill on the order paper of the Canadian House of Commons will designate non-smoking areas on federal transportation systems. And as I mentioned earlier, there is an Ottawa by-law restricting smoking.

The city of Calgary has a by-law under consideration. However it is my understanding it will have no effect because The Municipal Government Act does not give the cities the right to legislate in this particular area.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the purpose of my bill, it is to make the restrictions of smoking in public places available province-wide to authorities responsible for those areas.

The passing of time has proven King James I right when he wrote that smoking was a habit dangerous to the lungs. In 1964, the United States Surgeon General released his now-famous report which links smoking with lung cancer. Often forgotten, Mr. Speaker, is that the Surgeon General's report also found out that smoking is associated with coronary artery disease, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

The general link between cigarette smoke and respiratory diseases is not restricted to smokers alone. Approximately 2,100,000 Canadians, or 10 per cent of our population, smokers and non-smokers, suffer from respiratory ailments which may be aggravated by cigarette smoke. While one non-smoker may suffer only minor irritation from tobacco, another may be very sensitive and in fact intolerant of it.

Since the 1964 Surgeon General's report, other health problems associated with smoking have been identified. To those of you who are concerned about the aging process, this is an interesting one. Fairly good medical studies have been completed that indicate you may experience premature wrinkling of the skin.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, no.

MR. MUSGREAVE: So if you are concerned about keeping your youthful look, take heed. That may be why the hon. member behind me has a beard.

In the conclusion of his report, the Surgeon General stated that cigarette smoking contributed substantially to mortality from certain specific diseases and to the overall death rate. In response to his research showing the detrimental effects, efforts to curb smoking have increased sharply throughout the western world. Cigarette smoking was banned from television and radio in the early '70s and a warning now appears on all cigarette packages, "Health and Welfare Canada advises that danger to health increases with amount smoked — avoid inhaling". As a Toronto doctor recently remarked, anyone who doubted the existence of a link between cigarettes and sickness was a likely candidate for membership in the Flat Earth Society.

In light of medical research and a growing public awareness of the effects of smoking, more and more people are quitting the habit. It is estimated that more than one million Canadians have stopped smoking in the last five years. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker,

statistics released early in 1976 by the federal Department of Health and Welfare show that the percentage of non-smokers has increased steadily in the 10-year period between 1965 and 1974.

Interestingly enough to those of you who are politicians — and I trust you all are — non-smokers in 1974 constituted a healthy majority: 60.4 per cent of all Canadians. In 1965, this figure was 54.7. I think politicians should appreciate the significance of this statistic because generally it is the older people who are more conscientious about exercising their franchise, and it's the younger person who is busily smoking and could care less whether or not he votes.

Probably most of those people who now smoke on a regular basis — and many members have mentioned to me that they would like to support this bill, but they don't think they should because it would be politically unwise — would far prefer to join the ranks of the non-smoker. Elaborate methods have been devised to assist people to become non-smokers, including cold turkey, cigarettes with lower tar and nicotine content, and even hypnosis and acupuncture treatment.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will aid smokers who aspire to be non-smokers by reducing their opportunities to smoke and their dependence on regular cigarette breaks whenever they happen to find themselves in want of a cigarette. Legislation such as this would hold other benefits for the smoker. He would have clearly-designated non-smoking areas and smoking areas where he could smoke and not feel harassed by anyone.

More than half the smokers interviewed in an American public health survey stated that they would like to see smoking allowed in fewer places than at present. One-third of these smokers agreed it was annoying to be near a smoking person. Perhaps this was because they had a brand that they didn't like; I don't know.

To limit people lighting up in many public places will furnish an example to our young people, the age group where unfortunately smoking is probably just as prevalent as it was 10 years ago.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the health costs related to smoking. Smoking has been identified as one of the potentially most serious and most costly health hazards in our country. The annual cost of smoking-related diseases in Canada is about \$800 million. Smokers have argued they contribute to these costs through tobacco taxes. And they'll argue we shouldn't penalize the farmers of southern Ontario who grow the tobacco. But, Mr. Speaker, with universal health care for which all of us pay, smokers and non-smokers alike, can we in all seriousness have individuals jeopardize their health by smoking cigarettes and call upon the facilities funded by the public purse to cure and care for them?

Very simply, Mr. Speaker, this bill restricts smoking in areas where all citizens must gather: lobbies of hospitals or theatres and elevators. Most important, if posted by the owners, areas of private enterprise such as shopping malls would come under this bill.

I urge adoption of this bill as it would show the people of Alberta that while we may be prepared to spend hundreds of millions on facilities and staff for cancer and heart research, we are also prepared to show leadership in the prevention of those activities

that lead to so much sickness and ill-health being suffered by the citizens of Alberta.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak in support of this bill. First of all, I would like to compliment the hon. minister — the hon. Member — for Calgary McKnight for the exceptional amount of research he has done.

MR. COOKSON: A small Freudian slip?

MR. LITTLE: I hope I do have credibility. It appears that most persons who speak on a particular subject have more credibility if they are converts; that is, the ex-drunk has much more credibility when he speaks against drinking, and I suppose the same applies to the smoker. In my own case, I never did smoke. I recall some of my earliest memories of my father smoking a particularly smelly, gurgling old pipe, and from that point onward smoking never did have any attraction for me.

I recall that just a few years ago after the Surgeon General's report came out, it was quite the thing for a good number of doctors to stop smoking. I observed my own doctor wasn't smoking, so I asked him, "Was it for cancer, heart attack, or just why did you stop smoking?" He said, "No, it wasn't. I'll tell you why I stopped smoking. I went to university on the veterans' plan and never had a dime to spare during all those years. After I went into practice, within a few months I bought my first \$200 suit. And the very first call I made, I dropped a cigarette on my lap and burned a big hole in my pants. That's the reason I gave up smoking."

I can almost sympathize with him, because I had a similar experience a year ago. My wife gave me a beautiful pair of golf slacks for Father's Day, and I wore them to the golf course the following weekend. Some fool had left a cigarette burning on one of the benches, and I sat on it with similar results — not only the pain, but the humiliation of it all. So, as I say, I don't know just how much credibility I have, but I have some pretty firm feelings on it. But there are some principles that . . .

MR. DIACHUK: What was your game of golf like?

MR. LITTLE: Great — my opinion, of course.

I think some principles are at issue here. During the '60s when the use of marijuana was so popular among young people, they were promoting the principle: I have the right to do what I wish with my own body. It's a principle I certainly challenged at the time, and I still feel that way. I feel that all our actions have impact on others.

The same type of principle is promoted in this publication, which I hope a good number of you will take a look at. It's called, *Crimes With No Victims*. It deals with how legislating morality defeats the cause of justice. Once again I would challenge this principle. I think controlling crimes and safeguarding morals are two totally different situations. However, a good number of alleged crimes, depending on your point of view, are covered in this treatise; for example, drug addiction, attempted suicide, prostitution, gambling . . .

MR. ZANDER: Smoking.

MR. LITTLE: We didn't come to smoking yet, but certain types of smoking are covered in the narcotic and drug control act, yes. It's this area that I would like to challenge. In the case of the drug addict, he said his habit had no impact on others. Well, it was estimated in the big days of heroin in New York City that each habit cost \$100,000 a year. Multiply this by their estimated crop of 100,000 users. We took attempted suicide out of the Criminal Code of Canada, because it's unenforceable, of course. The book, as I say, refers to similar situations in the cases of prostitution and gambling.

So our natural advance from the proposition, do we have the right to do what we wish with our own bodies, is: do I have the right to inflict others with my habit? Do I have the right to pollute the air of others? Well the Surgeon's report of 1974 cancelled any doubt about the implications of smoking on the health of the person actually doing the smoking. But I can tell you from actual experience — and it wasn't the most pleasant experience attending a good number of post-mortems through the year. In Calgary at that time, we had a little old lady by the name of Dr. McLatchie who was an avid anti-smoker. She took great delight in calling me down to see the lungs of the smokers. Incidentally, the lungs of non-smokers were also darkened if they lived in the unhealthy environment of an area such as Calgary. So the rural people have another advantage over us.

I was very interested in the statistics quoted by the Member for Calgary McKnight concerning the number of smokers in Canada. We've switched from 40:60 pro-smokers to 40:60 on the other side of the coin. But it is rather interesting that the highest consumption of tobacco ever recorded in Canada was in 1976. So if we have fewer smokers, those who are smokers are smoking a great deal more, or maybe butting them longer than they used to.

Having dealt lightly with those first two principles, we come to the principle: does the smoker interfere with the rights of others by polluting his air? I'm quite sure he interferes with the rights of others by burning his clothing. I'm quite certain of that. I am inclined to believe that he does. If the report of the Surgeon General of the United States is correct, of the tremendous unfavorable effects of smoke on the human body, I think we would do well to consider this bill.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to have the opportunity of participating in the debate. I think the Member for Calgary McKnight should certainly be commended. We all know that those who seem to be converted are the most zealous when it comes to stopping other people from doing certain things. It's very strange, indeed, to hear a man who comes out of a traditional, symbolic smoke-filled room, because that's supposedly where politics all takes place . . . I don't know whether he's fed up with the system of a political career or he's really that sincere about the public at large to want to do away with smoking in public places.

He almost sold me, particularly when he kept talking about cigarette smoking. But when I read his bill in earnest, I see he's pretty sincere about other forms of smoking too. So I am somewhat on the fence, and

perhaps before the debate is over I'll make up my mind.

AN HON. MEMBER: Give him your pipe.

MR. GOGO: I'll put it away just in case some hon. member is light-fingered.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of a few years ago when through some pretty strong advertising of the anti-smokers, organizations seemed to be catching on to the ban-smoking movement. One of them was modelled after Alcoholics Anonymous. People would join clubs and work on the theory that they would quit, one day at a time. When a fellow was getting near to falling off the so-called smoking wagon, perhaps at 3 a.m., he would phone another member who belonged to Smokers Anonymous. That person would come over to join him at 3 a.m., to sort of counsel him into not smoking. When they reached this situation, when one came over to counsel the other, they found the easiest way out would be for both to go out and get drunk. Then they wouldn't smoke. I really wonder whether that was any great deterrent, giving up one to start another.

Not many years ago, Mr. Speaker, a former member of this Assembly — I believe he was the Member for Calgary Mountain View — moved a resolution to ban smoking in the province of Alberta, not just in public places. I know two things haven't occurred. One, smoking is still going on in the province and two, he is no longer here. Whether that had anything to do with the resolution, I don't know.

MR. DIACHUK: Hear that, Eric?

MR. MUSGREAVE: Yes.

MR. GOGO: What concerns me, Mr. Speaker, is that we in Canada seem so prone to passing legislation without giving consideration to whether or not it can be enforced. I believe for many years there was a statute on the books of Canada that for people under 16 years of age smoking was a violation, in fact a crime. We all know that the finest police in the country couldn't enforce it, so it was finally removed. I wonder if legislation is really the way. When I look at some of the leaders of government who smoke four and five packs a day it makes me wonder what would happen in the province of Quebec, in certain parts of the national Assembly, if smoking were abolished. It would be very interesting.

We have other areas we have legislated against. But can we enforce? How many fathers of children leave them each year? And there are judgments made for non-support that are non-enforceable. Would this simply be adding another statute on the books, whereby we would give it lip service but indeed wouldn't enforce it.

The hon. Member for Calgary McKnight and the other member who spoke have pointed out the dangers of cigarette smoking. I think it's a very real danger, Mr. Speaker. Last year in Canada 30,000 people died of cancer. A significant number died of lung cancer. For women the rate of deaths from lung cancer has been going up about 8 to 12 per cent a year. Mainly because of World War II and assembly line work in factories, they found they should have the freedoms other people had and as a result started

to smoke. The net result is that now the greatest number of cigarette smokers in the country are indeed women. The highest death rate of lung cancer, which is a significant amount of the total deaths . . . this year in Alberta there will be 5,000 new cancer cases, a significant number connected with cigarette smoking. Mr. Speaker, I think we all know the dangers related to cigarette smoking. But will the bill alter that in a significant way?

In New York City last year a non-smoker inhaled the equivalent of 25 cigarettes a day from traffic pollution — just through pollution. I haven't seen anybody try to ban driving in New York City.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the alternative might be in education — education and co-operation. In some areas of municipal responsibility we've seen co-operative efforts through education that have taken hold. There was a recent case in Spokane, Washington where a similar type of legislation had been passed. The police were virtually run off their feet in apprehending and prosecuting people smoking in public buildings. Because as a result of passing a by-law in the city of Spokane, the No Smoking signs went up all over the place. That becomes somewhat of a challenge, because people continue to smoke. Lo and behold, they hired a consultant. I don't know whether he had anything to do with medicare — I think he was a psychologist. They found that by simply altering the signs the number of offences dropped by 70 per cent. All they did with the signs was insert a sign in front of them saying, Please, No Smoking. The offences dropped by over 70 per cent.

So I think that in the area of education and co-operation we would achieve far more than by legislating. Certainly the examples displayed by parts of our corporate sector, our department stores — just last year the major merchandiser in Canada, Sears, put up a sign saying, Please, No Smoking. It's interesting to read their latest annual report. Their stock has gone up on the stock market which I guess indicates there was a beneficial effect from requesting people to stop smoking.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that if we were to follow the terms of the proposed bill, we naturally would be caught up in the terms of the word "public". In the bars of Edmonton we would have to ban smoking of course. We might get away with that. Under the transportation sector I fail to see how we could ever make the CPR do anything. But obviously they would be included: as long as the train was in the confines of the province of Alberta you couldn't smoke, if it were considered a public vehicle. It would be rather interesting to think that we might even have to go to our high schools and eliminate smoking in the smoking rooms. Because many high schools — one, Matthew Halton high school in Pincher Creek, has a smoking room for grade 12 students. One could just imagine the challenge in trying to impose the terms of Bill 221. Not to mention the Greyhound buses.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the educational role of those who want to do away with smoking has had many beneficial effects. Time Air, one of the major air lines of this province that's not publicly owned . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Major?

MR. GOGO: A year ago the first seat in the aircraft was a non-smoking seat. Today it's six seats.

They've got 12 more to go. I fully anticipate that before I finish my term of office, the only place I'll be able to smoke on that aircraft is in the washroom.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Hear, hear.

AN HON. MEMBER: Go out on the wings.

MR. GOGO: I know there are hon. members who utilize those aircraft religiously, in fact get most of their sleep on them, who would appreciate having no smoking at all. But I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that one must be fair. Many smokers don't smoke through choice. They have become addicts. And some of us are humble enough to admit it.

The beneficial effects are probably pretty good. I could picture people in Jarry Park, where now they're moving over to the Olympic Stadium . . .

MR. CLARK: That's closed.

MR. GOGO: . . . in Montreal, where agitation is strong to drink beer. I can imagine them trying to ban smoking. It would be horrendous just to think of doing it. The only thing I can think of worse than that, Mr. Speaker, is if we went two or three weeks with no smoking in the smoking lounge adjacent to this Chamber. I don't know if I could bear the thought of the body odors, the hair sprays, and the liberal use of the foot powders I've noticed. I wonder how we would stand without the nullifying effect we get from nicotine and tobacco smoke. Some members obviously are willing to try.

On a more serious note, Mr. Speaker, in Canada we have as part of a world-wide organization the Canadian Cancer Society, which I think does a tremendous job. They have three major functions. They have the research function in Edmonton. Those people in Edmonton and those associated with the W. W. Cross hospital and the McEachern laboratory are well aware of the progress made by those areas funded by the Cancer Society in research. Alberta does not take a back seat to anyone in the world when it comes to cancer research. They recognize that smoking is a major factor in cancer deaths. They also play a major role in patient services, looking after people who've had the misfortune of being affected by cancer.

But more important, Mr. Speaker, the third arm of the Cancer Society is education. The education role of the society reaches out to many, many thousands of Albertans. It's one of the few organizations in this province that manages to get along without government funding. You know, we give the Red Cross about \$3 million a year to take blood out of people. We make rather substantial donations, I think, in different areas to the Heart Fund. But the government of Alberta does not donate to the Cancer Society. And one of the major objectives of the Cancer Society is to educate people to the dangers of cigarette smoking. I think they do a rather tremendous job.

So, Mr. Speaker, rather than legislate people not to smoke in public places I would rather see that we turn it around and become positive. One way we could become positive is that instead of pointing out the dangers of smoking we point out — as the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight indicated — the positive effects of not smoking. And there are some, not only financial but otherwise. I would think the gov-

ernment could play a major role, and the members of this Assembly could play a major role in encouraging this government to become involved with the Cancer Society as somewhat of a partner in encouraging the pleasant side of good health and the negative side of cigarette smoking. Surely, Mr. Speaker, education is the answer and not legislation.

Thank you very much.

MR. ASHTON: Mr. Speaker, I probably contribute more smoke to the public than any other member in the Assembly and I suppose it's incumbent on me to make a few comments. As my wife says with increasing frequency, I tend to be all smoke and no fire. [laughter]

I notice that the hon. members for Calgary McKnight and Calgary McCall spent almost all their time discussing the dangers of smoking. I doubt if there's any member in the Assembly or anybody anywhere who would disagree with the comments they made in that respect. But I think in view of the fact that the topic was raised under a bill that was introduced in the Assembly, we have some responsibility to have a look at the bill itself.

The title of the bill is An Act Respecting Smoking in Public Places. I'd like to say that that title is very well drafted and I'm prepared to vote for the title. But there's not much else in the bill itself that I can support.

I gather the proponents of the bill, although they didn't really explain that to us here today, would suggest that one of the reasons we need legislation of this type is that smoking is offensive to the senses, primarily the sense of smell. I respect their concern in this area and I hope that we'll use some discretion in that regard, but you can't justify passing a bill in this manner which at one stroke would just destroy a custom of smoking that has been built up over the centuries.

If offence to the senses is the criterion for passing legislation such as this, then we have to amend the bill to include other things. For example, some members may find it offensive to see another member chewing tobacco. I think back in my home town they call it snoose. Perfume may be offensive to some members. To some members' sense of sight wearing a beard may be offensive. Perhaps we should legislate against that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. ASHTON: For example, with six children, four of them being teenagers, I quite frankly find the sound of CHED radio offensive. Perhaps we should legislate against that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. ASHTON: What about chewing gum? There are people in our society who find it quite obnoxious to see people chewing gum. Then of course we can deal with the opposition members' speeches. [laughter] In fact on rare occasions I find some of the government members' speeches offensive to my ears.

However there is merit in the discussion today, and one area that I see should be taken seriously is where it can be shown that smoking is injurious to the health of non-smokers. There seems to be develop-

ing evidence in this area, and I think the government should continue to watch this and perhaps deal with the issue, not in the form of this bill but in some other manner. I'm sure there are ways of taking initiatives which can protect the health of non-smokers.

But of course if that is the criterion for passing legislation preventing smoking, then what about . . . you know it concerns me for example that I drive a small car with four cylinders. One of the reasons I do that — there are several reasons, that's all I can afford — but one reason is that the rate of pollution is very small. Now why should people be allowed to drive large cars that pollute my air?

MR. DIACHUCK: If you'd quit smoking you'd be able . . . [inaudible]

MR. ASHTON: I realize that second reading of the bill involves debate on the principle. But I have to bring the drafting of the bill to the attention of the Assembly because there are so many objections to it that I have to disagree in principle with some of the things in there.

Specifically, if one reads the bill, it goes so far as to prevent smoking in any public building, public transport vehicle, shopping area. I'm sure the hon. member didn't intend that they couldn't have smoking areas in these buildings. But the question one has when one reads the bill is: if that's what he meant, why didn't he say it?

It also excludes on a 24-hour basis. Now what about the janitor in the courthouse at 12 o'clock at night? I'm sure the hon. member didn't intend that that janitor couldn't smoke. Again the question arises: if that's what he meant, why didn't he say it?

The bill prevents smoking in public transport vehicles, presumably buses, airplanes, and so on. Again, why not leave that type of decision to the municipalities or the private airline — Time Air, for example. If they want to designate the first six seats or all the seats 'no smoking', that should be their decision, not the provincial government's to so legislate.

I suppose the one aspect of the bill that appalls me most is that it purports to intrude into the jurisdiction of the school districts in operating their schools. This bill would purport to prevent school boards from dealing with the issue of smoking in their schools or school buildings. So, in principle again, I object to that. That is contrary to a lot of the things I personally believe, and I believe my constituents believe.

The bill prevents smoking in shopping areas, period. The question is: why not leave that up to the shopping complex owners? There are many department stores in the city which have No Smoking signs, and they're always respected. Why should the provincial government make that decision? If it's true, in fact, that a growing majority of the public doesn't smoke and doesn't want to be where there is smoking, then certainly our free enterprise system is going to deal with that.

Just to summarize some of my concerns, I acknowledge the points that were very well and effectively made with respect to the dangers of smoking. The question is: is this the way to handle it? I would submit that it's not, although I think the government should continue to have a look at this issue. It may be that we need some permissive legislation. I'm not sure whether or not municipalities can enforce their

no-smoking by-laws — there's some question about that. What rights do the school boards have to enforce their smoking provisions? What right does a commercial institution, an airline, or a public transportation system have to enforce their no-smoking by-laws in certain areas? Similarly, what right do shopping centres and so on have to prevent smoking in certain areas?

So we should have a look at the issue in that context. And we should also have a look at the issue with respect to coming up with better ways of discouraging smoking and, in fact, protecting the rights of non-smokers. But this is not the way to do it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I have only three comments, and they will be very quick. First of all, I think that smoking as such — and I've looked at it this way, and I think my constituents and people I've talked to have looked at it this way, — is really a personal thing. But I think where people get concerned is when a person's smoke is imposed on another. This is where the question arises as to whether there should be non-smoking areas or not. I think that's what the bill is aiming at in principle.

I'm not convinced in my mind that we should have it as all-encompassing or directive as the bill has outlined. I think if we could probably have some flexibility, a little more permissiveness, for local determination, private business determination, the bill would be a little more fitting. But in principle, I think the idea of the bill is very supportive by people across the province.

I feel a very significant thing has happened in the last three or four years: in their relationships one to the other, non-smokers feel they have a greater freedom at present to say to the smoker, I don't appreciate your smoke; would you move over or go somewhere else, or would you mind putting your cigarette out. I think that has been a good development in itself.

I must say, on the part of smokers, that I haven't run into any smoker who has really taken offence at that type of approach. If I can give full credit to them and their understanding of their fellow man, I think that is very, very excellent. If we could have this type of independent approach to the problem, where one individual respects the rights of the other, most likely it could be solved. But there are situations such as public places, places where you have to gather together for a public meeting, that the smoke of others is imposed on you without any options. I think under those circumstances public law certainly could look after such cases.

So I would support it in principle. Mr. Speaker, I have other comments and I'll save them for later. I just wanted to [say] that at this time.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, we have about six minutes, and I would like to give the House the benefit of my wisdom on this most important topic.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. YURKO: I want to say that I started smoking when I was 8 and quit when I was 36. I started smoking Zig Zag tobacco. It used to be very easy to fold the package of tobacco my dad had, puff out the

sides, stick my small fingers in, and pull out tobacco in a most appropriate way. Indeed, the only time I ever got strapped was because the teacher put his finger in my little pocket, took it out, and smelled tobacco. I really got strapped for it.

I've gone through tobacco in all its forms: pipe, cigars, pipe again, cigars again, cigarettes, and tobacco.

AN HON. MEMBER: Snoose?

MR. YURKO: So I had an opportunity to understand what smoking is . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Have you ever chewed?

MR. YURKO: . . . and now I am a convert. Yes, I chewed too: snoose, chew tobacco, and so forth.

MR. GETTY: It stunted his growth.

MR. YURKO: As a matter of fact, it did. [laughter]

Mr. Speaker, as a result of my tremendous experience with this thing called tobacco — as the minister said, I think it stunted my growth — I would like to give you an idea of the results of smoking on the human anatomy as they have been listed to me. I forgot some, but I would just like to give the Legislature an example of what happens to a human being: he's subjected to ulcers, gout, emphysema, bad breath, shortness of breath, lung cancer, lack of sexuality — as the man with the beard said — [laughter] pimples, loss of hair . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Appleby!

MR. YURKO: . . . discolored fingers, a nervous twitch, indigestion, running at the nose and eyes, redness of skin . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't forget the wrinkles, Bill.

MR. YURKO: . . . and, Mr. Speaker, a receding hairline. These are some of the things that happen to you if you smoke. Nevertheless . . .

MR. APPLEBY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out to this Assembly that neither the Member for Edmonton Jasper Place nor myself smokes.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's from being in a smoke-filled room all the time.

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, my purpose in speaking is to help those who smoke — help them to smoke less, and indeed to restrict their association with this terrible habit to fewer places where they can carry it out.

There are many reasons people smoke. One of the reasons, of course, is that it's a mark of manliness. Particularly the young think it's a mark of manliness. I remember when I was small . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Smaller?

MR. YURKO: . . . fairly small [laughter] — big enough, though, to be able to realize the importance of world affairs, I was fascinated by that most manly of men, a

world figure indeed, Winston Churchill, with that stogie constantly in his mouth. I'm sure he used it very effectively. Every time he wanted to get rid of an obnoxious character in front of him, he just let out with a big puff, and the guy was gone. So there are many reasons why one should want to smoke.

However, I believe the bill is the beginning of a direction that will receive increasing attention. As a result, I'm all for letting municipalities post a few more No Smoking signs. Therefore I think they should be given the opportunity at some convenient point in the future to post more of these.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, coming from a household where the other, better half of my family smokes and I don't, I promised her I would speak on this bill. To keep the harmony we've had the last 25 years, I promised I'd speak against smoking and in favor of the bill.

In order not to prolong this and have some of the members have a nicotine fit — and I know the rules don't permit me to speak for half an hour — I just want to say that I support the concept of this bill. I wish I had heard the speech of the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works earlier. Possibly I wouldn't have lost some of this hair. Possibly it would have helped me. Nevertheless, the mover of the bill did very well. So I would urge the hon. members to support the bill.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Deputy Premier adjourn the debate?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: It appears to me the ayes have it.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: Effective at 8 o'clock this evening?

MR. HYNDMAN: It would have to be.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly stands adjourned until the Committee of Supply rises and reports.

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

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**
(Committee of Supply)

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

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

Department of Education

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you have any opening remarks?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, I'll just make some very brief comments. I think information on most of the items dealt with in the budget which are new has been provided to members of this Assembly during the sittings of the spring session in ministerial statements I have made, including the changes to the small school assistance grants, the location allowances, and the second language program.

Information was also provided to members, both in the Budget Address and in announcements I had previously made, in connection with the reduction of the minimum age from three and a half to two and a half for ECS children with hearing handicaps, also the matter of the increase in the number of special education teaching positions that would be recognized over the course of this budget year. The budget provides for an additional 100 special education teaching positions in the area of the mildly handicapped. Of course there's no limit in the area of the severely handicapped; however, we presume the growth in that area wouldn't extend beyond an additional 50 special education teaching positions.

With respect to private schools, hon. members are aware of the increase in the SFPF grants from 40 per cent to 50 per cent, and are also aware that the overall financial assistance to school boards provided for in this budget is 10.2 per cent higher than it was for the previous year. They are also aware that the recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Committee on School Finance, dealing with the weighting between elementary, junior high, and senior high students, have also been implemented so the weighting is now 1 for elementary, 1.1 for junior high, and 1.3 for senior high. It's our ultimate intention to reach the weighting factors of 1, 1.05, and 1.2 respectively for those three categories, either next year or maybe in stages over two years. Our present intention is to do it next year.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could respond to the comments and questions of hon. members.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, just one or two general observations, then two specific questions to the minister to start off the debate. Mr. Minister — and I say this with the greatest of respect, sir — I rather compare the announcements you've made during this session a little to the war now going on in Zaire. You will recall that in that particular area the government forces have involved some pygmies in the course of the war to help in the battle. The battle was going on very well until the grass in the area got so high that the pygmies couldn't see what was going on and had to be withdrawn from the struggle.

Now I'm not trying to be cynical as far as the minister's announcements during the session are concerned. Naturally I appreciated the announcements as far as the second language program, special education additional teaching positions, isolation bonuses, and assistance to rural schools were concerned. But, Mr. Minister, as good as they are, those announcements are a little bit like the pygmies lost in the grass, when we look at what has been the

government's rather general tone of things during the past several months which, I think it's fair to say, has been comments by the Premier and you, Mr. Minister, dealing with this idea of back to the basics. I think the announcements you've made have been welcomed by all concerned. In a rare moment I think I congratulated you in making the announcement on the foundation program some time or other last year. The announcement was very well taken.

But those are basically small items in comparison to quite a bit of anxiety in the educational community today about where we are going as far as, shall we say, the new-found interest by the Premier in the field of education, the considerable amount of talk there has been over recent months as far as back to the basics, and the formulation of the new curriculum advisory board. Mr. Minister, what's happening as far as examinations are concerned? In the House just a couple of days ago — I guess it was during the Premier's own estimates — the Premier made some comments with regard to education. I think it's fair for me to say he implied that perhaps the government was rethinking its decision to remove grade 12 examinations. Perhaps that decision hadn't been as well thought out as it might have been.

During your estimates this evening, Mr. Minister, I would hope you will give us some indication of your thinking — the department's or the government's thinking — on this question of back to the basics. I think it means different [things] to different people. If you're a teacher, I'm sure that back to the basics means one thing. If you're a parent, a student, or a taxpayer, you have many different perceptions of what the government is really talking about in this area.

When the session started, and in reading the comment in the Speech from the Throne, I had expected we'd have a discussion in the House on this question prior to your estimates. Not having done that, Mr. Minister, I think it's incumbent upon you to give us some indication not only of where the government is going in this area but some idea of a time frame, because I think we can leave this thing up in the air too long.

I don't object to the reassessment, but we should have some indication of where we're going and what kind of time frame is involved, Mr. Minister, not just for educators themselves but for parents, students, and interested people across the province. When we look at the estimates, moneywise this is one of the largest departments we have in the budget. Certainly I for one feel it's among the most important, if not the most important.

We now need from you, Mr. Minister, some indication of where you are taking the department. Where are you taking the educational system in this province?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister do you wish to have all the questions and then answer them, or do you want to answer them individually? This is your choice.

MR. KOZIAK: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, because that's a significant area, I could address my remarks to that. Thereafter, if questions become more specific, I could deal with them all together.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition touched primarily on the two areas that are very important in terms of

the next year or two in the Department of Education: the question of examinations or, really, the larger question of student achievement. The other is the goals and objectives of education and, flowing from that, the curriculum developed to implement or articulate those goals and objectives.

With respect to the matter of student achievement, during my contribution to the throne speech debate I gave a fairly complete report on examinations and the work of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement. The matter of compulsory grade 12 examinations is one of the subject areas this committee will be looking at.

As members will recall, last fall a resolution was passed by this Assembly asking the government to consider the effects of the elimination of the compulsory aspect of the grade 12 examinations; I don't have the exact words in front of me, but I believe this was the intent of the resolution. That resolution has been directed to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement. That committee is providing a study. Prior to or just about the beginning of the fall session, I expect I should have a report from that committee on their conclusions with respect to that very important matter.

Concurrently, of course, the high school achievement tests are in progress. One, the biology test, has been administered. The second, chemistry, will be administered on June 7. Work is progressing at an accelerated speed on the English examination. The mathematics and physics examinations are now ready. We expect to administer probably two or possibly three of these a year.

There are two types of these examinations, form A and form B. Form B examinations are kept under security within the department and will be used to provide the provincial bench marks. Form A examinations are available through school superintendents to teachers for use by students and to assist teachers in awarding students' marks at the completion of their course. A number of jurisdictions have in fact used the form A.

As a matter of fact, many students have come to me when I indicated the biology test was a departmental examination; the high school achievement test was administered by the department. Their reaction to that was, we also wrote additional departmental exams this year; that wasn't the only one. There was chemistry, math, and what have you. So these other form A examinations are being used by teachers throughout the province.

The minister's advisory committee will be examining the achievement of students not only at the grade 12 level but at the grades 3, 6, and 9 levels, and at the elementary level particularly in the core subject areas — mathematics, language arts. That is the very important area of student achievement the minister's advisory committee will be working on, and I look forward to receiving their reports as they are prepared.

The other area the hon. leader touched on in his comments under the title "back to the basics" is tied up with the resolution on the Order Paper. I don't want either to prejudge the debate that will take place when that resolution is debated in this Legislature commencing May 16, or to provide today the remarks I will provide on that occasion in connection with that resolution.

However, I should very briefly indicate that members are aware that the elementary curriculum committee and the secondary curriculum committee were originally working separately on goals and objectives for their respective areas of concern. A joint committee subsequently developed from these earlier committees and, as a result of their work, a document entitled *Goals of Basic Education Interim Edition* was produced and published in 1975, I believe. That document provides the goals, plus rationale for those goals, that the committee felt should be applicable to Alberta education. That document has never received official approval, and part of the debate to take place in this Assembly will be directed toward the ultimate approval of goals and objectives for our educational system.

At this point I think that would be the degree to which I'd like to deal with this item. As I have said earlier, I don't want to prejudge the debate in this Assembly. I think it will be extremely useful, because I'm sure members of the Assembly are taking pains to ensure they are properly informed in these areas and have the benefit of the counsel of their constituents and those who are particularly interested in education.

I also want to confirm at this time — as I had when I addressed The Alberta Teachers' Association at their annual representative assembly approximately a month ago — that we as a government do not have hidden in some drawer a master plan for the goals and objectives, or for back to the basics, that's going to be sprung on this Assembly, the profession, the students, or the school system. This whole discussion of the goals and objectives will develop over time as the Curriculum Policies Board meets, discusses, and recommends to me. As I indicated earlier in the course of questions from the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when those recommendations come from the Curriculum Policies Board they will be made known to the members of this Assembly. At this time I expect we will not conclude our debate on May 16. In all likelihood that debate will continue into the fall session. So we will have the benefit of those recommendations as we proceed with debate.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, in responding to the minister's comments — and I'll have some further comments, perhaps tomorrow when we continue the estimates in this area — it seems to me that after the government has talked about back to the basics for a period of four, five, or perhaps six months, you're coming to us tonight to say: now we've got a committee looking at the matter of student achievement; we've got another group looking at this question of development of goals and objectives; we've got another group looking at this matter of the whole curriculum area; and we're going to have a debate a little later in the House, but for the sake of discussing the estimates I really don't want to indicate where we're going as far as this year is concerned, or even give any kind of time line when some decisions will be given as far as student achievement is concerned.

I guess the point I think has to be made most directly to you, Mr. Minister, is the fact that education is somewhat in limbo now. It may very well need reassessment. I don't argue with that at all. But on someone's head, and I guess it's your head, Mr. Minister, lies the responsibility of giving some form to

that reassessment, some indication of when we will have these things pulled together. I don't think the system can continue to operate in a vacuum.

If you're telling us here tonight that we can expect some very definitive answers from you by the fall session, that at least is some indication to the Assembly. Perhaps more important it's some indication to parents, teachers, trustees, and so on, at the local level. But again I want to make the point that I really believe there is some need for you to pull this reassessment together publicly, Mr. Minister, to give the reassessment some form, to give some leadership to this whole discussion now going on in Alberta.

The school trustees can't because they represent a particular point of view. The teaching profession can't. The home & school association can't. Giving this reassessment a shape, a form, and a sense of direction, and some indication of when we can expect some concrete things to take place, rests with one person, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, what is your definition of back to the basics? What are you looking for in this particular area? For a variety of reasons, I wouldn't want to say I've read every word you've said in the last six months. But I have never seen comments from you as to your feeling on this idea of back to the basics. What do you as a minister feel are the basics of education?

When I talk to parents, I find a tremendous range of feeling or views as to what the basics are. I can appreciate your point that you don't want to become involved in that discussion until the debate is before the House. Mr. Minister, you're asking us to approve estimates of \$564 million. Before we give approval to that \$564 million, I think the least we can expect is some indication of what the minister feels the basics are. That may detract somewhat from your speech on May 16, if we're still here. But I think here is the place to give us at least some idea of your thinking and the government's thinking in this area.

MR. KOZIAK: First we were on the plains of Africa where the grass . . .

MR. CLARK: Tall grass.

MR. KOZIAK: . . . was a little too tall for some of the warriors. [interjections] Now we're on Lake Victoria, where the hon. Leader of the Opposition is fishing. He's throwing out the line, throwing out the bait, and he hopes I'll grab onto it before May 16.

To be honest, Mr. Chairman, I think it would waste the time of this House were I to make the same remarks today that I intend to make on May 16. I don't feel that in any way detracts from a discussion of the estimates of the Department of Education. It would seem to me the discussion and comments I would make in the areas on which the Leader of the Opposition would like me to comment would be exactly the areas on which I will be making comments on May 16.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think it's unfortunate we haven't some initial statement from the minister on the question of back to the basics before we proceed with a \$564 million budget. It seems to me that the idea of where we're going, our goals in education, is pretty fundamental. Mr. Chairman, the

reappraisal of those goals came largely as a result of statements by the minister, but even more important than the minister, by the Premier himself, who has spoken out a number of times about reassessing education in the province. I think it's fair to say that as a consequence of the Premier's remarks, particularly his year-end remarks, educators, school trustees, interested parents, and the public at large are looking for some rather definitive outlines as to the goals for education in the province of Alberta.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I really find it a little difficult to understand why this will be delayed. Surely, in terms of the timing of the estimates, if the government had wanted to have the debate on goals before the estimates — you people are in charge of the agenda of this House, Mr. Minister. We could easily have had that motion and, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, I think most people assumed — I know I certainly did when I read the Speech from the Throne almost two and a half months ago — we would have this debate on the so-called back to the basics question by now. I would argue pretty strongly, Mr. Chairman, that we need at least some indication of where the minister stands on this matter.

On this question, let me say briefly that in my judgment those who argue the simplistic back to the basics case overlook some of the very real accomplishments of the education system in Alberta. The fact of the matter is that we are educating much larger numbers of people than we did 20 years ago. In reading some of the information compiled by the ATA and supplied to members of the Legislature, I was interested that the studies which are available — unfortunately most of these studies are American — indicate that far from education declining in quality, if there's any evidence at all, it is that our education system is better today than it was some years ago.

We all have nostalgic memories of the little red schoolhouse, Mr. Chairman — or the little yellow schoolhouse, as it actually was — in the 4-mile by 4-mile district, where you had reading, writing, and arithmetic from grade 1 to grade 9. Unfortunately grade 9 was where it stopped for the vast majority at that time. While they learned how to start the school fire and sweep up afterwards and all sorts of odd jobs — and that was great — the fact of the matter is, our education system today is incomparably better than it was in years past.

It seems to me we have to make that point before we get carried away. We always like to look back at memories of the past. I remember the little schoolhouse I went to, a place called Westerdal, very nice.

MR. CLARK: It's a fine constituency.

MR. NOTLEY: Oh yes, a fine constituency, a very nice part of the province, very nice in the fall, very nice in the spring. But, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the process of education there are other parts to the little schoolhouse. We had twelve teachers in nine years; it wasn't possible to keep teachers. Unfortunately that was the case in most schools. The vast majority of students didn't go beyond grade 9. Today of course we have a very significant number who actually move on to university.

Mr. Chairman, I think we need a more definitive statement from the minister on where we're going. I think the air has to be cleared. Simply waiting until

the sixteenth for this productive debate seems to me a rather unreasonable delay. It would be much more useful if we had the debate in conjunction with the estimates, so we could begin to look at them from the vantage point of what we consider the goals and objectives of education.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say one additional thing about the back to the basics movement. When I read the Premier's year-end statement, there seemed to be a good deal of criticism of the so-called options. I'm not suggesting every option has been useful, but I am saying that one of the values of the options in our school systems has been frequently to contribute to an interest in learning. If there is anything an education system must achieve in a rapidly changing world, it is to stimulate that love of learning. When Alberta was formed 70 years ago, you had *The Book of Knowledge*. At that time the world was moving much more slowly. You could memorize things, learn things by rote — reading, writing, and arithmetic. We had a very limited dimension of necessary knowledge. But today, with the world changing and information bursting every day, every week, every month, changing so rapidly, what is much more fundamentally important is the process so a person who comes out of the education system is equipped to adapt and learn throughout his or her life. I'll get into this debate when the matter comes up on the sixteenth, but I think we have to be extremely cautious first of all in defining what we mean, and secondly, if we do proceed, making sure we don't throw the baby out with the bath water, as the old adage says, and find that the quality of education is seriously set back.

Mr. Chairman, I want to raise five or six separate issues that I want the minister to respond to. I also want the minister to respond to back to the basics, but I'm sure we'll have a number of other people urging him to do that as well, and we may just sit here fairly late in the process.

Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, the next question I'd like to raise is: where do you stand, and where does the government stand, on two types of private schools, the accredited private school and the non-accredited private school? The minister indicated we are now at 50 per cent of the school foundation plan grant for Alberta private schools. But all members of the Legislature are well aware that the accredited private schools in the province want, I believe, at least 85 or 90 per cent. What is the intention of the government in this respect?

Is it the policy of the minister and the government to move in the area of private schools on a regular escalation basis from 50 per cent funding? Are we going to see 60 per cent next year and 70 per cent the year after, until we reach the goal of 85? Or are we at a figure which in the minister's mind is fair to those who choose to send their children to private schools but, on the other hand, want the necessary independence which comes from picking up a fair amount of the cost of education? I think we need to know that.

The second part of the question, Mr. Chairman, probably relates to several hundred students in Alberta. A number of them are in one of the school divisions in my constituency, where you have non-accredited private schools set up by religious groups. They have very well-meaning teachers who are prob-

ably very good with the children, but unfortunately are not qualified, in most cases have not even gone on to university and certainly are not certified teachers. Where do we stand?

I was talking just the other day to the . . .

MR CLARK: We're waiting for the debate.

MR. NOTLEY: That's right, we're waiting for the debate. I was talking just the other day to the superintendent of one of the school divisions in northern Alberta, who frankly would like to know if he is to take legal action if that sort of situation arises in his division. It hasn't yet. But is he to take legal action? What are the areas of responsibility for the superintendents? What is the government policy going to be with respect to those schools? There's no doubt in my mind, Mr. Chairman, that even with 50 per cent of the school foundation plan we run the risk of seeing many groups contract out of the public school system and set up private schools. Those will be accredited private schools. But there is the question of schools which, quite frankly, however well-meaning the people are, one really has to ask oneself whether a teacher with a grade 10 or grade 11 education is going to be able to properly instruct young people in our school system.

Mr. Chairman, before moving on from the question of private schools, I might just say I received an excellent brief on private schools from the principals representing St. Paul county in the constituency of the hon. Member for St. Paul. They were unanimous in their view that any move toward extra funding, even for accredited private schools, would seriously jeopardize the public school system. Those were the views they presented to me and, I'm sure, to others as well. I leave them for your response.

Mr. Chairman, moving from private schools to rural schools. I've raised the issue of rural school funding so often in the Legislature that I find it easy to put together the basic arguments quickly. Notwithstanding the changes that were announced, and while the small schools grant program that was announced a few weeks ago will be of some assistance, Mr. Minister, in checking with a number of divisions, I still find the argument by both secretary-treasurers and superintendents that we have a long way to go to really deal with the problems of rural school funding. While they welcome the extra money that was announced, at the same time they make the point that it still has not resolved the fundamental disparity between rural and urban, and the problems of substantially higher costs in the rural areas.

One of those higher costs, Mr. Minister, is school busing. I don't suppose there's an area where I find as many people complaining. In the instance of Fairview School Division, for example, in 1977 the increase in the school busing grant over 1976 is approximately one-half per cent.

Mr. Minister, the argument is that by encouraging smaller buses, what you do on rural bus runs is significantly reduce the flexibility of a school division. What happens, for example, if you have a bus run with a 36-passenger bus [at] 85 per cent capacity, but a new family with eight children moves into the district? All of a sudden you have to bring in a new bus. That's a very real problem, Mr. Minister. With a 48-passenger bus you have far more flexibility. What

do you do with surplus buses? You can't phase out all your 48-passenger buses at once. So what happens? You can't use a 36-passenger bus as a surplus bus, as an extra bus. If a 48-passenger bus breaks down, you have to have a 48-passenger bus to replace it.

The argument made by the secretary-treasurers particularly, and by the superintendents to a lesser extent, is that the new busing formula, which is designed to replace larger buses with smaller buses, is in fact reducing the flexibility. Moreover the point they make to me is that when you look at the cost of maintenance and the cost of operation, Mr. Minister, there is very little difference between the operation of a 48-passenger bus and a 36-passenger bus.

While I'm on the question of school busing, I would ask the minister something that has been brought to my attention. Why aren't ECS passengers counted as students the same way as grades 1 to 12 students? It's still a space on the bus. While there is a payment for ECS passengers, it is not adequate in the view of the divisions.

Moving beyond there, another area of concern is insurance costs. Insurance costs have skyrocketed all over the province and are now a sizable part of school division budgets. A further area is the question of construction costs. I notice that on January 5, changes were made in support for construction. But the problem is, Mr. Chairman, we are still using centres like Grande Prairie as urban centres. When you take your radius and use Grande Prairie as a base, as opposed to Calgary or Edmonton, you're still caught in the same position school divisions have complained about for 20 years; that is, in the far-flung areas of the province, you don't have the same number of contractors. You have less competition on bids, therefore the costs are going to be higher. At the very least, if we could make the two metro centres, Edmonton and Calgary, the bases to have our rings, if you like, as opposed to smaller places like Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, it would be fairer in working out the building branch support program.

The only other point I want to raise is a specific one to the minister. That deals with one particular division in the Spirit River-Fairview constituency. As the minister knows, we had transfer of the Menno-Simons school from Northland to the Fairview School Division. I might say [there was] some initial objection. However, that has apparently been worked out and there seems to be general support in the area. But, Mr. Minister, one important thing. When the transfer was made the Fairview division had to pick up the salaries and all the costs as of August 1. So they've got August, September, October, November, and December salaries and expenses. Unfortunately Northland has hung on to the supplementary requisition for the entire year, and they're not about to part with it. Now some members may think this a rather small thing to bring up in the Legislature, but it's not a small thing to the ratepayers and more particularly the school board in Fairview, which has to justify to the ratepayers of that division what has happened because this supplementary requisition has not been transferred. Specifically I'd like to ask the minister whether he can assure us the supplementary requisition money will be transferred from Northlands to the Fairview School Division for the period of time the transfer has been in effect.

One final comment, Mr. Chairman. All these questions, important though they may be, are really not quite as important as knowing where we're going in terms of the overall approach to education. I would add my voice to those of the Leader of the Opposition and, I'm sure, of other members: let's have that debate on where we're going and at least have an initial statement from the minister of what back to the basics means to him.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Chairman, may I begin by complimenting the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview for his insight into education. I think the comments he made show an awareness of the real value that can be found in today's educational system. No one denies that value. Perhaps to assist both the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview and the Leader of the Opposition, I should point out here and now that back to the basics is a phrase one sees and hears out there, but I don't think hon. members in this Assembly will find I have made that type of comment or commitment. What I have said is that granted we have an excellent educational system in this province, and I'm pleased the members of the opposition recognize that. However, notwithstanding that is the case, what is incumbent upon us now in view of some of the concerns expressed — in view of the resolution passed by the Alberta School Trustees' Association at their annual convention, requesting that the provincial government provide greater leadership in the core curriculum; in light of expressions of concerns by university professors, by people within the profession and without, and by parents — is that an assessment is necessary. One area in which an assessment is necessary is student achievement. You've all seen the reports in the newspaper. You've all heard the comments that students aren't doing as well. I'm not satisfied there's any evidence to indicate that. As a matter of fact in some cases there is evidence to indicate they are doing better.

During the course of the throne speech debate the hon. Member for Lethbridge West pointed out the results of certain examinations administered in his area of the province. They showed that by and large, students were probably a grade ahead of their counterparts in British Columbia in the same area of work. But there is conflicting evidence in this area. There is some suggestion that the removal of the compulsory departmental examinations has contributed to this. Last fall the members of this Assembly passed a resolution asking the government to study this. As a result this particular decision is being taken seriously and is in fact being considered by the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement.

We hope this committee, over the course of its work in the two-year period of its existence, will be able to establish for us definitive evidence which will indicate that either the students are doing better, as well as, or not as well as their counterparts did years ago. That information is very important.

The matter of the goals and objectives of education transcends a discussion on back to the basics. I don't know the meaning of back to the basics. I'm sure each and every one of us here would have a little degree of difference in our conclusions as to what the basics in education should be. Some of us would say physical education is basic. Some might even say driver education is basic. [interjections] Many areas

in the curriculum are now provided to students on a core basis and on an option basis. The value of these is treated and assessed differently by students, teachers, and parents.

We are in fact a pluralistic society in this province. We are not all cut from the same cloth, and I think an educational system that would attempt to regiment all to the same cut from the same cloth is not our goal in this province, not our goal in a pluralistic society. A good educational system should be able to accommodate the differences because it's the differences and their development that add to our society rather than suppress it.

I am reluctant to get into a debate on the goals and objectives of education today, because that is on the Order Paper for discussion by this Assembly. However, in the event it wasn't clear from my opening remarks, on May 16 it's our intention to commence debate on the goals and objectives of education — what priorities should be attributed to those goals and objectives — without reaching a decision in the spring session. I'm sure members are all aware that the throne speech is a plan of action for the entire sitting of this Legislature during the course of the 1977 calendar year, which includes the fall session. That debate will continue into the fall session, at which time the recommendations of the Curriculum Policies Board with respect to goals and objectives will be known to members of this Assembly, and members can continue in the debate with those recommendations at their fingertips. At the conclusion of that debate, it is my hope this Assembly will conclude and decide what the goals and objectives for our elementary and secondary school system should be, and what priorities should be attributed to those goals and objectives. I don't want to prejudge that debate. I think the public, the profession, and the school trustees are all aware of what in fact is going on and that they have the opportunity to provide input on these very important issues over this period of time.

Were we to prejudge those feelings, make conclusions today, and impose a plan, even though it might subsequently be modified, I think we would create an unhealthy atmosphere that might more adversely affect our educational system than the method being used today. I think the approach we are using is sound, preferable to the one that has been used in British Columbia, where a statement issued by the minister caused a flurry of excitement and debate, and a polarization of opinion.

The method and approach we're using in this very important discussion will result hopefully in a large segment of those involved directly in the educational system — whether as students, as teachers, as trustees, or as consumers of the final product at the postsecondary level or the business level — being satisfied with the conclusions we reach. Although there might have to be some fine tuning in the system we have today, I don't see us approaching our educational system with a sledge hammer — perhaps as a sculptor, perhaps with a surgeon's scalpel; but not with a sledge hammer, not with an axe. I feel that what we find in the course of this assessment will confirm the statements the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview has made this evening: that in fact we have a good system, but there may be areas we have to look at.

Another consideration tied in with this is: can we continue to be all things to all people with our system? Is there an area we are now covering in our educational system that perhaps should be covered at home or somewhere else because of the time involved? The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview brought us back nostalgically to school days. There was a lot less to learn then. There really was. And the pressures of society on students and on the educational system were considerably different. As a matter of fact, many of the people who sent children to school had an inferior education to their children — couldn't gauge, couldn't measure. The education level of parents today is considerably higher than it was when we attended those small schools. The level of knowledge, what's to be learned, is considerably higher; the pressures, considerably greater. And the reactions of the educational system to those pressures — be it sputnik and the demands for greater emphasis on scientific knowledge; be it the events of the campus riots in the United States, the Vietnam war, and the pressures for development of attitudes, or be it the pressures today with respect to skills in the areas of computation, spelling, and what have you. The system, large as it is, involving many people, does in fact react to those types of pressures.

I think I can leave this area now. I hope the comments I have made have cleared up in the minds of the members of this Assembly exactly what the plans are over the course of the coming year.

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview posed a question with respect to private schools. With respect to those that are approved — in other words, those private schools that have qualified teachers and follow the Alberta curriculum — grants equivalent to 50 per cent of the per pupil SFPP grants will be provided in this budget. No additional funding is provided for capital, and no additional funding is provided under all the other grants listed in your estimates, with the exception, I believe, of a \$2 per elementary pupil reading grant that the private school students receive. Over time I see that that will be increased. That's a function of future budgets, and I can't indicate this evening what percentage that might ultimately reach or when an ultimate percentage might be reached.

With respect to the other type of private school, which basically is a school which isn't recognized — one that does not use qualified teachers and/or does not follow the Alberta curriculum — The School Act does not provide an exemption to parents of children who attend these schools from prosecution for the truancy provisions of the act.

If children attend such a school, the parents and children are subject to the provisions of The School Act dealing with compulsory attendance. Attendance at such a school is not a defence to such an action. That would more than likely be brought at the behest of the school board in whose jurisdiction the student is resident. I believe that's the degree to which I can deal with that question at this particular point.

With respect to the transfer of the supplementary requisition with the transfer of the Menno-Simons area from Northland to Fairview, I'm surprised the problem hasn't been raised directly with me by the school division. If it exists I would hope they would raise it with me. I think that in the course of the transfer that would be an element of fairness unless

there has been a *quid pro quo* somewhere else that takes care of it. In any event, whether it's a dollar transfer or an accounting transfer, I'm sure that will be worked out. I would hope the school division would either bring that to my attention or that of the department.

Rural schools: the hon. member has rightly recognized the additional support provided by virtue of substantial increases in the small school assistance grant, which predominantly assists rural schools because it's limited to jurisdictions of fewer than 6,000 pupils. There are also the location allowances provided to rural jurisdictions, with the exception of Fort McMurray, and many other areas of assistance: SREG, the school busing grants, and what have you.

Perhaps I should point out that when we're dealing with rural jurisdictions — and both in and outside this House the hon. member decried the disparity that exists between urban and rural jurisdictions in the area of the supplementary requisition. When he did so, I believe he raised the situation of a home in Fort Vermilion. If I recall correctly, the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview indicated that in 1975 the Edmonton Public School Board had a mill rate of 19.57 and that of Fort Vermilion was 32.68, resulting in a tax difference of \$130 on a \$10,000 assessment — \$130 greater in the Fort Vermilion area than in the city of Edmonton. At first blush that would seem to be a concern. But as one digs deeper into the facts, the first thing one realizes is that a comparable house in Fort Vermilion is assessed at \$4,440, while the house in Edmonton is assessed at \$10,480. That makes a substantial difference and results in the disparity going the other way. But what's even more significant is that the 32.68 mills is not an accurate figure. [interjections] It's not accurate because that's not what's assessed against the home. That's the mill rate that's imposed all right, but after the electric power and pipeline assessments are brought into consideration, the mill rate in Fort Vermilion drops from the 32.68 mills the hon. member quoted to 18.92 mills. So we have the situation where in 1975 in Fort Vermilion the same house paid half a mill less than in Edmonton, on 40 per cent of the assessment. So the situation is not as the hon. member suggested in his comments.

With respect to construction costs, we're experiencing a happy situation that I'm sure all hon. members will be pleased in hearing. The information I'm getting is that school construction costs have in fact levelled off and may even be declining somewhat. On the basis of this information hon. members are aware we have been adjusting the support price every six months for new school construction. On the basis of this information there will be no increase in the support price during the current six-month period — that is, January 1 to June 30 — with the exception of the core school portable where there will be an increase of \$1 in the support price. That is the one area where, after study, it was felt an additional \$1 support would be equitable. The most interesting example of the downturn was a recent one from a constituency neighboring that of the Leader of the Opposition. Calgary 41, now known as Rockyview School Division, tendered an 8 by 8 core school at Cochrane and I believe they received bids from somewhere in the vicinity of 9 to 11 companies. The two lowest tenders were below the support price . . .

MR. CLARK: They deserve a break.

MR. KOZIAK: . . . which is excellent because that same jurisdiction had recently met with me, expressing some concern about the level of the support price. I'm very pleased they were successful in tendering a school below support price in Cochrane.

The matter of busing ECS children: a *per diem* grant is provided for ECS children. That is the reason they're not counted in the loading factor in the rural busing plan. In addition the ECS program is not funded out of the school foundation program fund, whereas transportation provided to children who are of age under The School Act is provided out of the school foundation program fund. That is another reason for the separation. Then, some of the children are not bused to school-operated early childhood programs. Sometimes arrangements are made whereby these children are bused to community-operated early childhood programs. I think that covers the concerns raised by the hon. member.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, to follow that up for a moment. If I can go back very briefly to the comparison of supplementary requisitions — I suppose that's one of the problems of looking at 1975 report of the Department of Education, but unfortunately that's the most recent thing we have. Two things on that, however, Mr. Minister. Number one, I don't have the report with me right now, but as I read it I would assume the supplementary requisition would apply on all properties, whether in Edmonton or Fort Vermilion. The second thing — let's set aside, for example, the case of a house in Edmonton, versus the town of High Level. There may well be a difference in the assessment. Certainly assessment has recently taken place there and the assessments are quite high. The people are screaming about that. At least they were in January, and rightly so I might add. But let's take the case of farmland; there's some very good land in the High Level/Fort Vermilion area. Some of it would be assessed at the maximum \$40 an acre. On the other hand, if you compare that with land in some of the school divisions or school jurisdictions adjacent to an urban area, you're also looking at \$40 an acre, and you find there is a disparity that can be pretty substantial. So I think the point I made is still valid: costs are higher in the rural areas. I simply underline that while divisions in the rural areas welcome the announcement of the small school grants, they're under no illusion that that has solved the problem of financing, that we now have that problem licked. We're going to have to continue to press on with changes in order to remedy that particular question.

As far as ECS busing goes: that's right, there is a grant for each ECS rider on a school bus. But the complaint made to me is that the grant is not high enough, and that it doesn't make any difference. In a rural area you can't not pick up the ECS students on the school bus. You can't very well expect somebody to drive 30 miles to bring students to school when the school bus goes right by every day. The facts of life dictate that the school divisions are going to have to make the buses available for ECS students, and their argument is that the grant simply isn't high enough.

There are several other questions I'd put to the minister. Mr. Minister, I'm not sure I understood

your answer on the non-approved private schools. If I recollect, you indicated that would be up to the local school division. Is that what you said? Now that leaves many of the jurisdictions in somewhat of a quandary. What they are saying to us is: what is the policy of the department going to be? If we get into this sort of situation, it's very, very tricky for a school jurisdiction to begin prosecution, particularly in view of the fact that most of these schools are set up because you have religious groups who feel very strongly that basically they have, from the standpoint of freedom of religion, the right to do so.

As I see it, Mr. Minister, what you're doing is passing the buck to the local jurisdiction and saying, you enforce The School Act. What they're saying in return is, we want some guidance. If we get into this situation where we do prosecute, is the department going to be heading for the hills or is it going to be right behind us? It's a very tricky situation. I don't think any of us would want to be a superintendent having to make that decision. I can see the arguments of the people who, because of their religion, believe very deeply that sending their children to a public school system will take them away from the church and lead them into a life they consider sinful and corrupt. That is part of their religion. You can respect that.

But the question is: who has to do the administration here? I take it from your comments that what you're saying is, Mr. Superintendent — or Ms. Superintendent, whatever the case may be — the ball is in your court. They simply say, all right, if it's in our court, where does the minister stand? Something like this invariably becomes a bit of a football.

The only other comment I'd like to make is I'm really delighted to learn we have this moderation in school construction costs. I really can't say how pleased I am to learn that. The Minister of Housing and Public Works tells us the cost of building public buildings in Alberta has moderated. Today the Minister of Education tells us the cost of building schools has moderated. It makes me wonder why the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care tells us the cost of building hospitals is continuing to spiral.

MR. CLARK: Doubled in two years.

MR. NOTLEY: Doubled in two years. Now I've never been overly 'sticklish' about the government being consistent. I don't think we could ever push that too much. But, Mr. Minister, there does seem to be more inconsistency than usual between the positions. On one hand the ministers of Public Works and Education are saying we now have this situation under control, it's moderating, everything is hunky-dory, and on the other the Minister of Hospitals is crying doom and gloom and says the costs are going sky-high. I hope the Minister of Education and the Minister of Public Works are right in this case and the Minister of Hospitals, even with his high-priced consultants, is wrong.

MR. KOZIAK: I can't speak for hospital construction, but I would assume that certain factors separate the information available with respect to schools and public buildings and with respect to hospital construction. Of course, as you are aware, schools are being built on an smaller individual scale than most hospitals.

The trades are aware of the costs of construction. They're more knowledgeable of possible expenditures they would meet in the course of school construction. More often they're built with the same or a similar style and plan. We have information that develops more rapidly with respect to school construction costs than might be available for hospital construction costs. With every school built, trends develop and information comes in. So we're probably able to provide this type of information more rapidly than is the case with hospitals.

In addition, as you're aware, over the last three or four years there has been a great increase in the cost of school construction. Only in this last period of approximately two or three months have we been able to discover a turnaround, a levelling off and, in some cases, a decline. Perhaps that will happen in the hospital situation, but that may take a little longer to show up.

I just made a quick calculation for the hon. member of the increased support for transportation of ECS children in rural areas. Last year the per *diem* grant was \$1.20, the same as in urban areas. The increase in urban areas is up 5 cents to \$1.25 under the grants announcements I've made. In rural areas, it's up 15 cents or 12.5 per cent for ECS children. Hopefully that will recognize some of the concerns that have been expressed to the hon. member.

With respect to private schools and the matter of central involvement relative to those private schools that might operate not following the curriculum or using qualified teachers, the hon. member is probably well aware this is a concern presently on the table, one that all people involved in education are concerned with. The Alberta School Trustees' Association in fact has been meeting with the boards involved, with departmental representation at those meetings. I look forward to seeing the recommendations that flow from those meetings. Until such time I think I'll not prejudge the situation.

Of course in many cases the schools are nothing more than at the discussion period. They're not in existence. Whether they come into existence may in fact flow from these discussions. Hopefully the people involved will find, by sitting down and discussing with members of the Department of Education, that in fact the curriculum can accommodate their concerns. They shouldn't be concerned that what is provided in the curriculum would in any way affect the morals of their children. Nor should they be concerned that qualified people be the ones who lead their children through this educational experience.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I would like to deal with four or five items. In connection with the private schools that may operate with non-qualified teachers and without following the curriculum, I would certainly think this should be nipped in the bud. The longer that type of thing goes on, the more difficult it's going to become. If a group is permitted not to follow the curriculum and not have qualified teachers, it will break down the whole system, in my view. It will also break down the system that other people must send their children to our public schools and high schools. A problem like that will become worse and worse the longer it grows and the longer it's permitted to go on. So I would certainly recommend to the minister that The School Act, which I feel doesn't authorize that at

all, should be followed stringently. This thing should be nipped in the bud. Otherwise, in my view there's certainly going to be a lot of trouble down the road.

The next item I'd like to mention is the grants for small schools. I dealt with this briefly one day in question period. I don't know how many school divisions or school authorities are taking the grant earmarked for small schools and simply putting it into the general revenue of that school division. But I know some are. In my view, if this is so it defeats the whole purpose of the government making a special grant earmarked to help the small school. If it's simply going to become part of the grant, it could be combined with the other grant. There's no need to have a special name. Certainly the small schools will benefit by that grant being larger, but so will all the large schools.

I understand this grant to be particularly earmarked to help the sparsely populated areas where there isn't the large number of students available elsewhere. I would like to see the department put a string to that grant: that it must be used for the smaller schools unless the minister gives his consent for a particular or a very different circumstance. I think that might solve some of the problems I see arising from this.

The next item I want to mention is centralization. There's a great deal of feeling about centralization in the rural areas I've been in. The people generally and I personally feel that centralization has gone far enough. As a matter of fact, in my view it has gone too far. Originally we centralized our schools and were able to carry the judgment of the majority of the people on the basis that it would provide more equal education for the rural boy and girl. It wasn't based on money at all in the early days. It was based on equality of education.

Now the table has turned completely and the centralizations I have seen are all based on money, saving dollars; not based on giving the boy or girl a better education. That is basically wrong in my view. Surely the educational system is to give the boys and girls the best possible education.

I hope we can do something to get away from the idea that the local boards are going to continue to have full authority as to whether they centralize, because many boards are not listening to the people. I know they have a chance to vote for the trustee and change him, but by that time it's too late, the damage is done. In my view, with the province providing large sums of money there should be some definite guidelines in regard to any further centralization. I feel that basically one of those guidelines should be that the board be able to carry out the judgment of the majority of the parents or ratepayers of that particular district which is going to be centralized. That would be democracy.

I know a district which has been advised that it is going to lose its school one year from now. Now what kind of administration is that? They don't know any more than we do how much money is going to be voted by the government next year. Yet they decide one whole year ahead of time that that small but excellent high school is going to be closed, and have given an ultimatum that it will be there just one more year in spite of the fact, I think, that 100 per cent of the people want that small high school in their area. They don't want their children to have to be bused to other high schools.

I also question whether the quality of education will improve. As a matter of fact I don't think it would improve. I'm not going to say it would be worse, but I'm very, very doubtful it would be as good, and certainly not better than what the boys and girls are getting today.

I'm dealing with centralization to some degree. It may come up in the debate we're going to have. If so, I'm sorry. I don't want to repeat myself but it's so important to the people in the areas who do want some very definite thinking done about further centralization of their schools.

The next item I'd like to speak about briefly is the supplementary requisition. During the period when school boards could place the supplementary requisition in accordance with their own needs, it meant some school boards operated very stringently. They kept the costs down. They didn't want to tax one mill more than they had to. Other school boards took the stand: we have the right, we'll raise it as far as the market will bear. Then when the freeze came, those who had been most stringent found themselves in a very, very unfavorable position. Now they must go out and secure the approval of all the ratepayers, the same as those who had spent somewhat more — not extravagantly, but they were larger spenders and weren't operating as stringently.

I would like to suggest to the minister that where there is an average supplementary requisition, say 21, and a school board's requisition prior to the freeze was 14, it should be able to come at least half way to the average of the province before being required to take a vote. I think this would be only fair to the boards that have tried to operate as carefully as possible with the people's money. That's just one way. There may be better ways of doing it. Possibly people in your department could find better ways, but [this is] at least a suggestion that would help to solve some of the bitter feeling already generated because of this freeze on supplementary requisitions.

The last item I want to deal with is the matter of the school bus. A number of items on the school bus should be given very careful consideration. I'm not going to deal with these in order of relative importance. I'm going to deal with them the way they come to my mind. The first one is the size of the seat. Somebody some place, I think down in the United States, decided that 13 inches was a big enough seat for any youngster in grade 1 to grade 12. I don't know whether the hon. members have measured or not, but I took the trouble to measure our seats. We've got at least 18 inches, and possibly more than 20 at the front. Just to sit still. We're not moving. The building isn't moving, it's not shaking, it's not hitting the odd bump in a municipal road or any other road. So if we need 20 to 22 inches, how do we expect boys and girls, particularly in the wintertime, to sit safely on 13 inches?

I tried this and I just don't see how it could be done. You have all types of youngsters: you have 'skinny' who could probably sit on 7 inches, but you also have 'tubby' who needs about 25 inches. Then you get some of the girls, they need at least 19, with all respect to the hon. members of the Legislature, and some need 27. Worse than that, when they get all bundled up in the wintertime, how in the world can three youngsters, even in the intermediate or elementary school, sit on 13 inches? It just can't be done.

What happens is one youngster is sitting at the edge of the seat hanging on, trying to make sure he doesn't fall off.

You know I think we've been pretty lucky in this province that we haven't had a serious accident. I think maybe we should put it down to the excellent school bus drivers we have, that there haven't been serious accidents in regard to this 13 inches.

I've tried to find out where this thing came from and it seems to me it came from some place in the United States. Maybe they're thinner down there, or maybe they only have two to a seat, which makes it quite safe. I know one area where the school board has decided to put [on] two buses, instead of three, and the parents are most concerned about the safety because with the three buses, the youngsters were two to a seat. This was excellent in the wintertime. With two buses, they're going to be three to a seat, and it's going to be quite unsafe. I would like the minister and the department to take another look at this 13-inch business and to get some realism into the size of the seat.

The other thing I'd like to speak about in connection with buses is the frame of the bus. As I understand it, the chassis, the frame, is built very much the same for commercial vehicles and school buses, and the CSA standard is based on the gross vehicle weight and the axle loading. So when you say a school bus must have so many seats, and so many seats only — 24, 36, 48, or whatever number — with double that, you wouldn't come up to the gross loading of that frame and the axle loading. This doesn't become a question. If the chassis is the same, the gross weight is right, and the vehicle axle weight is okay, why can't we permit school boards to rearrange seats so we have 36 seats put into the bus instead of just 24?

Safety is the big thing in these school buses, and I think that's the thing we want to emphasize. But we could get flexibility if we weren't so rigid on the number of seats. In my view, a 36-seat bus is far safer than a 24-seat bus and, as the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview said, it costs very, very little more to operate. I would like the department to take another look at the number of passengers on a bus and to make it a little more flexible so school boards will have some flexibility in operating their school buses in that regard.

The other point I wanted to mention is the 85 per cent load factor. I understand we want the school boards to operate with the best possible use of every dollar. We want them to spend their money wisely. You don't want three or four buses following each other on a route. But I would suggest that the topography of the country should have something to do with that 85 per cent load factor. With the extra weight for the high school and intermediate school, I would like to see some factor put in there that would at least make the present formula more palatable where you have a sparse population, where you have the topography separated by coulees or rivers, where there are long runs.

The final thing on school buses I'd like to mention is the time [spent] on school buses. I would like to ask the hon. members of this Legislature how you would like to ride on a bus for three hours in the morning before you came to this House, and three hours to go home after you left. I don't think one member will raise his hand and say he'd be prepared

to do that, yet that's what we're asking some of our boys and girls to do. Unions wouldn't do it; they'll negotiate a contract that they get paid from the time they leave the house till the time they get back, or back to a central point, and properly so. But we ask some of our boys and girls to sit on those buses one hour, two hours, up to three hours a day which just doesn't make sense to me. I think we can do better than that in this province. Surely we should have it arranged so no boy or girl is going to have to sit on the bus more than one hour in the morning and one hour at night. That's two hours of the day.

These youngsters have something else to do besides riding buses. They have their home, their parents, they have homework, and they have chores to do. Social life is necessary for them too. Sitting on a bus for two or four hours a day is just not sensible in my view. I know it may take a few more dollars, but I'm wondering how many of our boys and girls are not doing well in school because they're spending two hours on the bus in the morning, then two hours, an hour and a half, or an hour to go home at night. What is it doing to our boys and girls? That's what I've been asked by parents.

That's why I ask the hon. minister and the hon. members of the Legislature to put ourselves in the position. I would not ride a bus for three hours in the morning and three hours at night. I'd move closer to my work or something. I couldn't do my job properly if I were spending two, three, four, or five hours on a bus every day. In my view this is one of the most serious aspects of our school busing program today.

I'd like to mention other points, but I'm going to leave it at that for now. I know we're going to have another chance in the major debate on the targets and the objectives of education, which I think is an excellent idea. But I mention these points because these are things that have come to me out of the homes of the people, out of the mouths of the people whose children are experiencing them. I think we should listen very carefully and try to remedy some of these points.

MR. KOZIAK: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, I could begin with the comments made by the hon. Member for Drumheller with respect to busing. I agree with him that a child spending three hours a day on the bus is not a goal we should be striving for. The reduction of time on the bus is an admirable goal, and our efforts should be directed to whatever we can do to achieve that goal.

To some degree the emphasis we're placing this year in the budget on the small school assistance grant will do that. It will provide the incentive to move away from centralization, which is another point the hon. member made. Centralization after all is what requires the long bus rides. So I think these are all tied in together. The fact that the plan does encourage smaller buses to a certain degree should result in shorter runs. Hopefully that will happen over time, although I'm not sure those results will be achieved as quickly as we would like to see them.

If I were to think back and collect all the comments made to me about the rural transportation plan, the comment I've heard most often is that in the recognition of our support, the size of the seats grates the most with respect to those people who receive support. In fact for this reason one of the adjustments

made to the rural transportation plan was in the weighting factor of junior high and senior high students. When the plan was initially implemented last year, the weighting factor was 1.15. In other words, you would count an elementary student as 1, but you would count all junior high students as 1.15. This is to determine your load factor. To attempt to meet some of the concerns expressed in this area, we've increased that to 1.2. So in determining whether their bus is full, that is has reached the 85 per cent occupancy level, school jurisdictions will now count junior high and senior high students as 1.2 students, and that should alleviate some of the concerns in that area.

The supplementary requisition comments the hon. Member for Drumheller raised: basically we accomplished what he has suggested last year. As I mentioned to the Alberta School Trustees' Association at their annual convention in Calgary last year, inasmuch as we are embarking on a new three-year finance plan in education, jurisdictions that had a supplementary requisition rate lower than the provincial average could have their base adjusted upwards by making a submission to the department. A great number of jurisdictions in fact applied and had their base raised on which the percentage is then calculated. I think that complies with the comments the hon. Member for Drumheller raised.

In regard to the matter of grants for small schools and the suggestion that strings be attached, this grant was developed as a recognition that school jurisdictions that kept small schools open were spending more money on that school, on the average, than they would if they centralized and closed it. So it already recognizes an extra expenditure by school boards on the small school and reimburses them for it. This string is attached: if the school board closes that small school, it doesn't get the grant. I think that's a pretty significant string and one that is useful ammunition for the parents of those students attending a small school with the threat of a closure above them. The extra support under this grant that that board would lose is a useful piece of ammunition in the arms of those who would ask that the school remain open.

As for the whole aspect of centralization, the fact we are encouraging small schools to remain open by this grant — the grant was in existence previous to this budget, but has been substantially increased — is an indication that as a department, we are not imposing a centralization type of philosophy on school boards. I think the school boards can take it from there with the assistance of their electorate.

I hope I have responded to the concerns the hon. member raised.

MR. ZANDER: Gee, Mr. Chairman, I thought I'd never make it tonight. In the opening remarks the Leader of the Opposition made relating to the grass in Zaire so tall the warriors were unable to see the daylight to fight any further, I hoped he was commenting that the education taxes are getting fairly tall in the province of Alberta, as elsewhere in Canada. Most of the taxpayers are asking, why the greater increase? The supplementary requisition is now exceeding the foundation mill rate. In most cases, or at least in some cases to my knowledge, the combined foundation and supplementary taxes are now nearing or

passing the 60 mill mark. On top of this is the fact of the new reassessment that is going on throughout the province. I understand — and I'm a landowner also — the assessment of some of the farmland has increased by 300 per cent; \$40 an acre straight across the board, no matter where you live. Then of course if you've got a well-site there's an additional attachment. I'm saying, Mr. Minister, that the quality of education has increased. As the Member for Spirit River-Fairview has stated, 30 years ago the little red schoolhouse — the \$6 or \$10 tax per quarter section was really not that great, but it was a lot of money in those days.

Mr. Chairman, looking at the budget of some of the jurisdictions I'm familiar with, I find in the last five years the budgets of those school districts have increased by 100-plus per cent and some nearly 200 per cent. The taxpayer is asking the question: we know of inflationary costs, it can't only be the salary of the school teacher, it can't be the quality of education. Is it maybe that we're offering too much in the way of curriculum? Are we looking at the legislative or the basic administration costs? All are partly included.

Transportation costs have been mentioned by the hon. Member for Drumheller. Quite frankly I have to agree. When I came into this Legislature we had children riding on the bus for four hours — two hours one way, two hours coming back. Six- and 7-year-old children were getting on the bus at 10 minutes to 7. I'd ask the same question the hon. Member for Drumheller asked: how would you like to? Many a time parents said their children ate their lunch before they got to school and had no lunch for noon.

Why did this happen? The question we've asked ourselves is, why did we let this happen? We have school jurisdictions sitting side by side. But each jurisdiction is not willing to give up the per-pupil grant. So they're warring with each other as to whose the children are going to be. It's not the fact they're closer to one jurisdiction. The fact is we want them because they're in ours. That's what it boils down to.

The question of school busing: first of all, I'd like to ask if the minister would supply me with a photograph of the person or persons who prepare the school bus formula. It's not workable in the rural area, just plain and simple, because there isn't a school division or county that has buses available. I can give you cases where they operated a 42-passenger school bus and all of a sudden over the weekend there were 11 more children. You can't immediately pull a bus out of the pocket and say, here's a 42-passenger. It doesn't work. So the school jurisdiction has to turn around, sell this bus, and pull in another one. In the meantime, two buses are running.

I think there has to be flexibility, not in the 85 per cent. But in a rural area there has to be a mixture of both small and large school buses, because it doesn't lend itself simply to say that 85 per cent is the loading factor. I think we have to realize that in a rural area it doesn't work. Maybe it works in a city where the people are not as mobile. But I know in my constituency there are trailer courts that are loaded. People move back and forth. I think we have to make the school bus formula flexible so it can cope with the mobility of the people.

We were talking about the goals and objectives, that is we're looking backward to the basic principles of education. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I'd say let's look forward to the basics. Let's not look back, because if we do we're going to be in trouble. I think we have to look forward to the basics so we can continue with the good educational system we have now. It needs some improvement, and I think improvements have come really fast. We can no longer have some of these smaller items that are a hardship on the people in our communities. If we can get the flexibility of the school buses in the rural areas, if we can change the loading factor to, say, 80 per cent, I think we're agreeable to accept that.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Chairman, I also would like to make a few comments. Mine may be a little different. I would like to give a bouquet to the minister.

When I think back to some 20 years ago when I was first elected to the school board, things were improving gradually. I thought the day's going to come when there will be nothing to do. However, it turned around. Every year there would be more and more. A couple of years ago, when I received a plaque from the school committee for my 20 years of service, there was a lot more to be done. I can agree with previous speakers — the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Spirit River-Fairview — mentioning there has been progress. That's one thing I have noticed: progress in education over the 20 years. There was progress even when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister of Education. Even though it may have been at a snail's pace, there was progress. [laughter]

Mr. Minister, I would like to give you credit for your staff in the department. Quite often we hear the Department of Education criticized for one thing or another. It really perturbed me when I'd occasionally hear officials of the teacher's association condemn the Department of Education. Many times I would think, who is the Department of Education? If they are doing such a poor job, the teaching profession has failed very badly; because all those in the Department of Education are professional educators. Very many of those I had contact with over the 20 years have done a very good job, I think. How did they get into the department? They were professional educators. No doubt because of their effectiveness they were appointed principal, then superintendent and, finally, to the Department of Education. As I said, I've had contact with many of them over the years. A few in the Department of Education grew up in my area. I was really amazed they had done exceptionally well. [laughter] It is because of persons such as them that the department is working so effectively.

However, if in fact we had farmers, truckers, bus operators, or transients in the Department of Education, and the teaching association was condemning them, then I would say something. But when you have professional educators in there and somebody from the teaching profession is going to condemn them, it makes me wonder.

However, Mr. Minister, I would like to express a couple of concerns. One of them was a concern when I was a school trustee five, 10 years ago, and nowadays the present school trustees are bringing it to my attention. It's the financing of education.

School boards have to borrow money to operate before they get their quarterly grants. When I look throughout the province, particularly in Zone 3, to which I was very closely attached for a good many years, the smaller jurisdictions now budget up to as much as \$30,000 for interest they have to pay on moneys they borrow for their operating expenses. The larger jurisdictions borrow much more. In the county of Strathcona, they have budgeted close to \$.25 million for interest alone. In the province it may average to \$3 million, \$4 million, or \$5 million annually. I would hope the minister could see some way or another that school boards could be advanced a grant rather than having to borrow money. We'd go a far way.

Another area mentioned by the previous speaker and by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview was bus transportation. They had mentioned it in some way, but I don't think the minister answered it the way I would have expected. That is the 85 per cent formula. If 37 children are riding on a 42-passenger bus, they qualify for the 100 per cent of the size of that bus because it comes out to 85 per cent. But if there are 37 children riding on a 48-passenger bus, they should still get 100 per cent of a 42-passenger, but they are cut down still more. This is causing school boards to change their buses because they are losing money on them. As someone mentioned, with the mobility of people from the cities into the rural area overnight, a particular route can gain 10 or 12 children very easily.

So as I say, these are two areas the school trustees are expressing to me. I hope something can be done.

As I have mentioned, a lot of hard work is done by the department — the teaching staff also, and I many times take my hat off to them. I even recall that one of the young teachers was having problems with one of the students and wrote to the mother and said, you know your little Joey is giving me a lot of trouble. He's always bothering the girls. So the mother writes back and says, you know I sympathize with you. I know how bad it is. I have the same problem with his father. [laughter]

MR. KIDD: Mr. Chairman, I think we were all pleased to see the brown pamphlet that showed the unique and innovative development at Airdrie. Perhaps while I'm on my feet I might clarify any misconceptions anyone might have about Airdrie. It's actually in the Banff constituency and not the constituency of Calgary Mountain View.

MR. CLARK: It's Olds-Didsbury you're worried about.

MR. KIDD: However, it is unique because in the pamphlet we have 413 residential lots that will be ready in the fall of 1977. I expect those modular and mobile homes will go up overnight.

All I would like to say here is, it creates a problem for School Division No. 41. It is their problem, but I think it's one they haven't been faced with. I don't think any school board in Alberta has ever been faced with a situation quite like it: really an instant town. I'd expect it's not outside reason to suggest that that town, with 413 homes — and I don't know what the number would be, maybe 500, 600, 700 children — may be there by February 1, 1978. That's quite possible; it might even be sooner.

In the past, I believe — and I'd like to commend the Minister of Education — we've had some problems with School Division No. 41. We've sat down and talked to them about those problems and co-operated with them. Most of them were financial, and it seemed to be quite a problem. But I think you will note, if anyone has seen the budget of School Division No. 41, they ended the year with a \$38,000 surplus. I think that reflected the advice and co-operation between the Department of Education and that school board.

What I would like to say now is that in this unique situation I think School Division No. 41 would welcome any suggestions the Department of Education might have in order to have school facilities in place when this instant town is in place, or at least within a reasonable time after.

It's the initiative of School Division 41, of course, and I have great faith in the trustees. I think they're doing an excellent job. But because of this rapid situation, perhaps consideration should be given to looking at whether the statement of need and the procedure that has to be gone through now in order to get a school approved might not be made just a little more flexible. Some innovation and thought may be made with regard to the procedure they have to go through. I have every confidence this can happen. I know School Division 41 would welcome it. I would request that the good Minister of Education give full consideration to it.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, I really only intend to talk about one point this evening, very briefly at that. I'm glad you appreciate it. It's something that the Minister of Transportation will appreciate too, because I want to talk about the concept of a stock advance and a variation thereof as a solution to the problem of interest that school boards have to pay on money they have to borrow because the fiscal years of the school systems do not coincide with the fiscal year of the province.

I spent some time with the Alberta School Trustees' Association and saw the problem from their side. At that time I couldn't see any solution to it. I've been in this House five years, have I've looked at the problem, and couldn't see any solution to it. But it occurs to me we could usefully adapt the concept of the stock advance fund, as used in a number of departments, from whence the Minister of Education could pay grants to school boards. By doing that, when the budget is approved he can replenish the stock advance fund, and he only has to do it for about three months of the year. If that mechanism could be put in place we could make grants monthly to school boards, or every two months, or every three months. It would be automatic. There would be no earthly reason, except computer breakdown, we couldn't provide school boards with the exact amount of money at a predetermined date quite regularly.

Mr. Chairman, I should say to hon. members that I have been toying with this idea for about six months, and have been interrupted in my working on it. I tried to draft a private bill — and somewhere in my files there is a half-drafted private bill — but I think I was going to run into problems in that it may have been construed to be a money bill. But it seems to me that inasmuch as the regulations for financing of school boards or school systems are predetermined on the

basis of the academic year the school boards operate under — and that's announced and the commitment is made — I don't really see any great difference between that concept and a stock advance fund, except that one deals with the ability of the hon. Minister of Transportation to buy gravel and salt and put it under a tarp beside a road ready to go. In this case, all we're doing is getting some IOUs which can be repaid through the minister's estimates as soon as they are put through the House.

I'd like to advance that to the Minister of Education as something he might consider over the next year, to see if we couldn't resolve this debate about the cost of interest to individual school boards and at least clear the air by having one little item like that, which comes back to us for annual discussion year after year, off the plate.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Chairman, as I sat here tonight and heard all the talk of 13-inch bus seats and the number of students on the bus, I thought I had to get up and say something. Probably most of the people talking have never ridden on a bus a great deal, or driven one. I spent a number of years driving a school bus.

The trick we always used was to get the big kid the hon. Member for Drumheller was talking about, or a couple of them, and put them in a seat. Then you find a little fellow and sit him between them. If you did that in both seats, by the time you got them together they couldn't fall out. They were kind of balanced. Everybody had to stay in his place when they went down the rutty road.

Many years ago, our bus association wrote a letter — I can't remember if it was to the Department of Education or the Department of Transportation — asking where the idea came from that 13 inches on a bus seat was adequate for a student; also the safety equipment in a bus, the construction, and everything; who made all these regulations and why the particular regulations were there. The answer we got back — as I say, this was a few years ago — was that it's being studied. We weren't told by whom or where, but we were given the idea that it was a major study by departments, partially in Alberta and partially elsewhere in Canada, to come up with a better combination of seats, arrangement of seats, bus sizes — taking into account the outside dimensions of a bus, if it could be wider than eight feet — and so on.

I wonder if the minister has ever heard if there is a study, and if there isn't would there be any reason one couldn't be started? They were also supposed to study the safety factors and a great many other things associated with it.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I'll make my remarks very brief.

There are a couple of areas that haven't been touched upon. I won't be here tomorrow, and there are a couple of areas I would like the minister to respond to.

DR. HOHOL: We'll miss you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh no we won't.

MR. CLARK: I will be charitable and say I'll miss you. Mr. Chairman, to the minister. The suggestion by

the Member for Edmonton Jasper Place intrigues me very much. I know previous ministers have wrestled with the same problem. If the suggestion by the Member for Edmonton Jasper Place can be worked out at all, it does seem to me to have some merit. If we can do it for roads, salt, and gravel, we should be able to do it for school boards and kids. I may be oversimplifying somewhat, but I would really commend the minister to look in that direction. If we can't do it that way, perhaps the minister can look at some ingenious use of some of the money in the heritage savings trust fund so school boards wouldn't have to borrow that money.

Some districts which made representation to me are saying they are taking two, three, four, five, six rural district teachers out of the classrooms and paying interest to the banks, treasury branch, or wherever. That seems to me to be, perhaps, not the greatest use of resources.

Secondly, Mr. Minister, is the question of power tests. The Alberta school trustees, especially some of the large urban boards have been at the minister's heels since about 1973 to move on power tests and get them in place. My assessment of the situation is there's been a great deal of reluctance by the department to move in this area. I raise this because I've had the opportunity to read the report by Professor Baldwin of the University of Alberta. Being one of those who was not in favor of the removal of grade 12 examinations when I was minister, and in 1972 when the government moved in this direction, I find Dr. Baldwin's information interesting. Now it may well be that I find it especially interesting because it agrees with some of the biases I have perhaps lined up myself.

But my question to the minister is simply this: have you had the officials in your department look at the comments by Dr. Baldwin in his assessment? He goes on to point out that if you compare the number of students who were getting A's and B's, or high marks, during the examination period of time, once the grade 12 examinations were removed all of a sudden we had — I suppose it's commonly referred to as academic inflation — a 10 or 15 per cent increase in the number of students who were ending up at the top end of the ladder as it is. As I understand it, the information Dr. Baldwin uses was acquired from the Department of Education two or three years prior to and after the removal of grade 12 examinations. [He] simply looked at the percentage of students who were in the two highest categories with regard to marks. Now if the minister and the officials in his department have some holes to poke in the argument put forward by Dr. Baldwin, I'd be very interested in hearing them, because the initial argument seems to bear some sense as far as I'm concerned.

The third area is: Mr. Minister, when you first met with the Curriculum Policies Board, you indicated that they would be meeting with the Premier quickly. From the questioning in the House I understand that hasn't taken place yet. The reason I think it's important that this meeting of the Curriculum Policies Board and the Premier take place is that tonight, after a bit of coaxing — out on the lake — you at least acknowledged to us that you're not going to use a sledge hammer or an axe as far as the education system in the province is concerned. I think that was good.

Mr. Minister, it seems to me that what needs to be done by you, the Premier, or someone is to develop some sort of rationalization for the reassessment the government is now going through. In many areas of the continent, we're going through this trend of, shall I say, back to the basics. Now we in this province have been somewhat notorious in the past for following trends that start south of the border. That happened to a very great extent when the former government was there too, not always to the benefit of the system either.

But, Mr. Minister, I think we're falling into the same situation here of going along with the tide. The only real rationalization that I've heard from the government to date is that there has to be some sort of curtailment from a money point of view. That's been the legitimizing reason for looking at this back to the basics thing. Mr. Minister, I don't think that argument will really carry the judgment of many people when we look at the heritage savings trust fund and the other kinds of things we're able to do.

I suppose if I had my own biases I would say that hopefully we might forget about the term "back to the basics" and talk in terms of some consolidation education today. I think that's worth while and needed. I guess consolidation can mean all sorts of things to all sorts of people too, but I think that's really where we have to move. Hopefully we can get away from some of the breast-beating that's taken place.

Your comments this evening, as reluctant as you were to make them, have at least been what I consider a small step in the right direction. Mr. Minister, I compare what you were saying, and what the Premier was saying, around the end of the year to the Premier's comments two nights ago during the estimates and your comments tonight. I think both of you have come a long way in four months.

MR. KOZIAK: Who's not going to be here tomorrow? John, you're not going to be here tomorrow? I'll start with comments for those people who posed questions or comments who indicated they might not be here tomorrow.

Perhaps I can start with the matter of interest and deal with that, as it seems to be a concern that is repeatedly expressed. To put the matter in perspective, I think I should begin by indicating — and the information I have is for the end of 1975, because I don't have all the information for 1976. These are financial documents and information provided to us by school boards throughout the province. They indicate to us where they earn interest, and where they pay out interest. I think members of the Assembly should be interested in these figures.

In 1975, 11 of 30 school divisions reported interest earnings in excess of interest expenditures. They earned more interest than they paid out. Six of 30 counties earned more interest than they paid out. Twelve of 38 districts earned more interest than they paid out. Twenty-nine of 87 Roman Catholic separate school districts earned more interest than they paid out. Two of three consolidated school districts earned more interest than they paid out. The only Catholic public district earned more interest than it paid out. Two of three Protestant separate school districts earned more interest than they paid out. And one of three regional high school districts earned more interest than it paid out. When you take all the jurisdic-

tions, all the interest they paid out, all the interest they earned; one jurisdiction was responsible for 41 per cent of the net interest paid out.

So there are factors other than the flow of grants to be taken into account in determining why jurisdictions pay out interest. These include the financial position of various boards in terms of surplus, deficit. They include such capital expenditures that the board might incur at any given time. Many factors go into the interest expenditure question.

However, I indicated to the Alberta School Trustees' Association in an annual convention last fall that I would be looking at some method of accelerating the payments to school boards this coming fiscal year to see if the impact of the interest paid out by boards with respect to SFPF grants, and the way they flow into school boards, could be reduced.

We are planning to accelerate the funds to school boards in this way. Last year, school boards received 25 per cent of their entitlement on April 15, based on the previous year's calculations. This year they have received the same 25 per cent on April 15. However tomorrow — April 29 — they will receive an additional 12 per cent of their year's entitlement, based on last year's calculations. This is something they hadn't received the previous year. We're reducing the number of payments, I believe, from nine to seven throughout the year. But in doing so, over all boards will have money in their possession sooner when all the calculations are taken into account. Our calculations indicate that as a result of this acceleration, the net saving to boards should be in the vicinity of \$.25 million.

The \$.25 million is significant because relative to the SFPF payments, our calculations would be that if we take all school boards — this doesn't take into account their other interest expenditures because of when they received the supplementary requisition from municipalities, or such things as surplus deficits or capital purchases at one period that other boards might not have in the same period — and assume their expenditures appear consecutively at the end of each month at a twelfth of what their total expenditures would be, and the flow of SFPF funds would be the same way; and if we also assume the interest they pay when they borrow is 9 per cent and the interest they earn when they deposit money is 7.6 per cent, then according to the new plan the interest expenditure for school boards during '77-78 would be in the vicinity of \$550,000 because of the fact the fiscal years don't coincide. That's a significant improvement over the case last year.

Hopefully it will reduce the concerns expressed by school boards in this regard, although I must admit the stock advance theory put forward by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place is worthy of consideration. I'll ask the people in the Department of Education to give consideration to it. However, I think the need for it in terms of interest expenditures will be reduced somewhat by the acceleration of payments we're going to be providing this year.

The matter of inflation of marks raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is quite accurate. I've looked at the marks supplied to us by the principals for grade 12 students in the various subject areas, particularly the A and B marks awarded and how the percentage of students receiving A and B marks compares with the same percentages during the time

of departmental examinations. I don't know the A and B marks awarded for the present year, but as late as 1975 there was a higher percentage of grade 12 students receiving A and B marks in some of the subject areas than in 1969 or 1970. That's a matter I'm sure the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement will be looking at very carefully.

There's a concurrent situation at the universities. The exam situation hasn't changed at the universities. It's the same now as it was in '69 or '70. The same reports flow from the universities: the percentage of students receiving high marks has increased substantially over the last seven or eight years. The percentage of those receiving failures has decreased. It's not a phenomenon that relates strictly to our grade 12 student population. It also exists in the postsecondary institutions. Does this mean that students are in fact worthy of those marks? This of course is one of the considerations the advisory committee will be taking into account.

The matter of the Curriculum Policies Board: when I met with the Curriculum Policies Board at their first meeting, I indicated the Premier's desire to meet with them sometime during the course of their existence because of the particular interest in education the Premier shares with me, particularly in the area of curriculum. The fact the Premier has not met [with them] to date is no indication that that interest does not exist. Hopefully an opportunity will afford itself so that meeting can take place in the future.

I believe that covers the remarks of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Member for Banff quite properly raises the matter of the Airdrie school needs in light of the park that will be developed by Alberta Housing Corporation. I'm sure the school buildings branch will provide every assistance to the Rockyview School Division in providing the facilities that will ultimately be necessary to house the students this park will provide.

The matter of buses was raised by a number of members, including the Member for Drayton Valley, the Member for Vegreville, and the Member for Cypress. I should point out — and I'm sure the Member for Cypress is well aware of this — I had the opportunity last year to meet with the Medicine Hat School Division No. 4. I was pleased with the remarks contained in a brief they submitted to me in regard to the new rural transportation plan. If I recall correctly, they referred to it as poetic justice, that their situation was finally recognized under the new rural transportation plan. They were very happy with it.

No doubt when a plan is developed to apply throughout the whole province, there will be situations where the plan just doesn't necessarily fit, at least to the degree the local jurisdiction would like it to. The alternative is to fund on the basis of costs. We are all aware where that took us. Our previous rural transportation plan moved toward providing financing on the basis of expenditures. Regardless of what the expenditures were, we approached 90 per cent of reimbursement to school boards. We found such a plan encouraged inefficiency and unnecessary expenditures. These unnecessary expenditures reflected on what funds were then available for the instruction of pupils.

It was our conclusion that it would be better to provide perhaps a more structured plan that would

encourage efficiencies and the reduction of expenditures in this area, and provide greater funds in the area of instruction of pupils. I think by and large that direction has been accepted throughout this province.

The 85 per cent loading factor that exists in the plan: hon. members must of course recall that in order for a jurisdiction to receive full grants for a particular bus route, the 85 per cent loading factor need only be attained at one point along the route. It's not that the bus must have 85 per cent occupancy the moment it starts. The bus starts with perhaps one or two passengers. As the trip progresses additional students arrive on the bus. The loading factor is probably reached half a mile before the school in many cases. So it's not as if it has to be reached at the beginning of the route. It has to be reached at some point along the route for the qualification for the entire grant.

The grant structure in fact recognizes the greater expenditures necessary with respect to large buses as opposed to small buses. There are varying degrees of funding which relate directly to the capacity of the bus.

I think the matter of the safety of school buses and the form of construction would probably best be raised with the Deputy Premier and the Department of Transportation. Construction safety requirements of buses comes within the purview of that department.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley mentioned the fact that expenditures by school boards have increased substantially. I'm sure many members caught the piece in the *Edmonton Journal* last night where the retiring deputy superintendent pointed out the difference in budgets of the Edmonton Public School Board in the 27 years of his tenure. If I recall correctly, there were [19,000] students in 1950 and the budget was \$3.4 million. Twenty-seven years later, the student population was 70,000 and it was well over \$120 million. So on that basis, the increase in expenditures on education in 27 years has been substantial.

At the same time I presume the electors are in agreement with the financial decisions school boards are making, because in 1975, 52 jurisdictions attempted to exceed the allowable supplementary requisition rate. In 38 cases, they weren't even challenged. There wasn't a plebiscite or a petition. In one case where it was challenged, it was passed.

Eight were defeated and two were refused or withdrawn. Out of a total of 52, we have 10 that didn't proceed. In 1976, 22 school boards attempted to exceed the allowable rate. Fourteen were not challenged. In two cases there was a vote and the by-law was defeated. In one case it was withdrawn, and in five the by-law was passed with amendments. So by and large it would seem that the electorate the school trustees are responsible to are accepting the fiscal decisions school trustees are making in respect to education.

I believe that covers the comments made by hon. members in the last while.

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 a certain resolution, 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.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Assembly will continue in Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of Education, followed by the the estimates of the Department of Utilities and Telephones.

I move the Assembly do now adjourn until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

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 morning at 10 o'clock.

[The House adjourned at 10:33 p.m.]