

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

MR. NOTLEY: They're here to listen to Bill 39.

Title: **Thursday, May 12, 1977 2:30 p.m.**head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

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

Energy Discussions**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table Motion for a Return No. 111.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the general report of the Alberta School Discipline Study. Copies are being made available for all members of the Assembly. Members will notice that inside the cover is a summary and overview of the report itself. Additional copies of this summary and overview can be made available to members, should they wish.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, I should like to table the annual report of the Alberta Students Finance Board, 1976.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, it's my very great pleasure today to make two introductions. First of all, in both galleries a very large high school class from Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, some 90 in number, is here with five teachers: Mr. Ken Penner, Mr. Ken Knight, Miss Cheryl Holden, Mr. Howard Tromsness, and Mr. Kline Capps, along with parents Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain. I invite all members to join me in welcoming them to this Legislature today.

While I'm at it, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce a couple of people from the town of Three Hills who, I notice, are sitting with some of my friends from Coronation: Mayor Dan Shea from the town of Three Hills, and on council and chairman of the new police commission of Three Hills Mr. Ken Wright, who will be meeting with my colleague on my left later. I ask them to rise and be welcomed as well.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 31 students from grade 6 in the Mill Creek school. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Ulmer and Mr. Tobert. I would like them to rise in the public gallery and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I have a group of visitors from the Sedgewick-Coronation constituency. I can't name them all because I'm not sure they're all here, but in the group I know we do have, number one, my wife and, number two, the president of the PC constituency association. Would they please rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question about the recent conference to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and ask if the government has made an agreement with the federal government which would result in higher oil and gas prices, in return for which Alberta must provide incentives to the energy industry to bring more petroleum resources on stream.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, to answer that question specifically, no. The Alberta government, the federal government, and actually seven of the governments that were meeting agreed on a price for energy — and I assume they will all live up to the arrangements we agreed on in Ottawa — that would result in a \$2 increase over the next year. There was no counter-condition — the way the hon. member put it I think — that Alberta would do some special thing in return for getting fair prices.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. With regard to our oil sands development policy at this time, will the government continue on a plant-by-plant basis or will there be a longer term development program for the oil sands?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, with all the variables that exist in such massive developments, it would still be our intention to deal with them on a plant-by-plant basis. I might say, though, that the government of Alberta recognizes the extreme concern Canadians share for future supplies of oil and natural gas. We certainly feel we will do everything possible in the Alberta and Canadian public interest to meet that supply need in the future.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In light of the minister's remarks, what discussions took place at the conference relative to enhancing recovery techniques for heavy oils? Did the minister or the federal government make any kind of commitment with regard to more financing in that area?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker. However, it wouldn't take that conference to convince me we must do everything possible to enhance the recovery of heavy oil from our province. We certainly intend to try to develop the technology, the necessary incentives, or the upgrading facilities — everything we possibly can — to increase the recovery of heavy oil from the reservoirs in our province, where presently something like 92 per cent is left in the ground.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. This relates to any types of contractual agreements that arose from the conference. Has the federal government committed itself to further any matching dollar contract or any further investment in oil sands in Alberta?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't discussed in terms of the oil pricing. There have been discussions with the federal government. As I've mentioned before in the House, a federal/provincial committee is now formed which is looking into the possibility of fiscal arrangements for a third oil sands plant. But it wasn't dealt with in the pricing context.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. The minister indicated there were no conditions with respect to the increase in the price of oil as far as incentives were concerned. Were there any discussions regarding tax breaks that might be provided to encourage additional development, particularly in the oil sands?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there weren't in the general meeting of all the energy ministers. I did have a discussion with the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources the day before the conference. At that time he expressed his interest in encouraging additional supplies of oil from Alberta, and mentioned that that was one of the considerations the federal government was looking at.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Was there any suggestion during the discussions that the Alberta government should make any additional incentives available if the federal government proceeds to make the tax concessions available? Was there any suggestion that Alberta should move in a complementary manner?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, sometimes the federal government's positions aren't so clear that I can read them exactly. But I think it's implied in the negotiations that if they make any particular moves, they would also like the Alberta government to do so in some complementary way. However, as I pointed out earlier, this matter is part of the federal/provincial committee's examination. Recommendations may come from that which we will have to consider before the Executive Council and other committees of cabinet.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to give the Assembly any information as to a possible time frame with respect to this committee report, as to when Executive Council may be in a position to examine possible complementary concessions?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, no I can't. In any event, I wouldn't be looking at it in terms of looking for concessions. It would be from a view of seeing if there are incentives that might be developed. In any event, I can't give any time frame.

MR. NOTLEY: A further supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the oil price discussion, can the minister advise the Assembly whether there were any specific proposals at the energy ministers' conference concerning a national program of assisted home insulation?

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there were. Many of the provinces have noted the federal government's

initiatives with the provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and wondered whether it was just a coincidence of the similar governments or whether there was going to be a national program along those lines for them to participate in. Therefore they pressed the federal government very strongly to declare whether this is going to be a national program.

The federal minister discussed it as something he and his colleagues were giving serious consideration to. I don't feel he went as far as to make a commitment. But he described it in terms of a potential national energy conservation program of some type of federal government financing to individuals for insulating homes. This would be done over a period of five to seven years. However, I'd be moving into an area of his responsibility if I tried to read any more than that into it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Was there any suggestion of provincial cost sharing in the federal government's — I shouldn't say proposal — consideration of the option of assisting in home insulation? Would the government of Alberta look favorably upon such a national program?

MR. GETTY: No to the first, and maybe to the second.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the minister on this topic. Relative to a possible delay in bringing oil or a resource from the northern areas of this continent, was this matter discussed in the meeting? If so, would it have any effect on the rate at which our known reserves would be put on stream at the present time?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Berger commission report was discussed. The federal government certainly feel they have a problem on their hands. I agree with them in that assessment. They are concerned that one of the options which they laid out in their energy strategies for Canada may well be being closed off. I think it would therefore put further emphasis on supplies from our province. Other than that, I don't believe I could add to the discussion with regard to the Berger commission.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary to the hon. minister. Did the federal government indicate they would provide additional help to the Atlantic provinces to help absorb the increased cost?

MR. GETTY: Not specifically. Only within the context of that national program they are considering, which two of the Atlantic provinces already have. The others are certainly looking for the same type of assistance.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary. Is the Alberta government considering any additional shelter to help the people of Alberta absorb the increased costs in this province?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, a matter like that would be something for ongoing evaluation by the government of Alberta, to determine whether present programs are sufficient and whether additional ones would be

needed in the future. I'm sure that would be the subject of a continuing evaluation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pose one last supplementary question for clarification. It arises from a question put to the minister by the hon. Member for Little Bow with respect to the pressures on Alberta to develop, in light of possible developments as far as a northern pipeline is concerned. Was there any suggestion that we should quicken the pace of oil sands development? I realize the minister answered that it would still be a plant-by-plant process, but was there any suggestion from federal authorities that we should move more quickly to develop the oil sands?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, yes there was, not just from the federal government but from other provinces which would like to see a quickening of the pace. The Alberta position is that we certainly want to assist in future Canadian energy supplies in every way possible. But it's trying to meld the Alberta interest and the Canadian interest: how fast can the province absorb the pressures involved in the type of massive energy supply development that may be necessary.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one post-supplementary last supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: It will really have to be even the final post-supplementary, since we have had about 13 supplementaries on this question so far, most of them by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise the Assembly whether the government of Alberta is now looking at speeding up the timetable for development of the oil sands, in light of the views on quickening the development expressed by other provinces?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, actually there isn't a timetable. I've made the statement that we would do everything possible in the Alberta public interest and the Canadian public interest to provide energy supplies from our province to meet anticipated shortages in the rest of Canada.

Edmonton Power Costs

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my second question of the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, relative to the concern of the Edmonton city council. Is the government giving consideration to the request by council that the city be sheltered from recent increases in natural gas prices?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, I handle those matters for the province of Alberta, and met with the mayor and three members of city council on Monday, reviewed all the matters, including what the hon. member heard on the radio this morning, and gave them a final decision.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, seeing that the minister is so vocal and willing today, possibly he could elaborate on what that decision was, if anything.

DR. WARRACK: That decision, Mr. Speaker, is that the use of natural gas for generating electricity by Edmonton Power in this city could not reasonably be expected to be at a lower price than for other users of natural gas, including city of Calgary citizens and members of rural gas co-operatives.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and I'd appreciate the answer from that particular minister. I don't want to see infringement on responsibility, or intrusion as there possibly is in Canada at times.

The question relates to a letter sent to the mayor of Edmonton in 1973. The Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs at that time advised the city to use natural gas, referred to an agreement about assessing how Edmontonians could be sheltered, and indicated there was a possibility of a shelter of natural gas prices. I wonder if the minister could indicate what has happened since that letter. Is there any follow-up, and is this the result?

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, I did review that letter with the city council when we met . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd appreciate . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

The hon. Member for Little Bow, the Acting Opposition Leader, on a point of order.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I certainly feel the minister would like to be the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and sit here. But at the moment he isn't, and there is a minister responsible for this letter.

MR. HYNDMAN: As to it being referred to me, Mr. Speaker, I'll take the question as notice, without accepting any of the imputations or allegations present in the question. But in the meantime it may be that the Minister of Utilities and Telephones has some useful information in respect of an answer.

DR. WARRACK: As I was saying, the matter of the letter the hon. member just referred to was discussed as part of the meeting I had with Edmonton city council on Monday. There are no surprises contained there. All hon. members who were in the House last term will remember that there was discussion on the question of how best to utilize natural gas, considering its characteristics and qualities. A position paper was tabled in this House in November 1972 referring to the use of natural gas in the generating of electricity. The follow-up meetings that took place with respect to Clover Bar 3 and 4 in the city of Edmonton were pursuant to that. As a result of the discussions, despite the reservations the province had, they agreed according to the arguments put forward by the city of Edmonton to allow Clover Bar units 3 and 4 to proceed based on natural gas. That has now occurred.

Unemployment Insurance

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and

Manpower. It flows from a question I put to the hon. minister several weeks ago concerning changes in the federal Unemployment Insurance Act. The minister indicated he would review the changes. I would ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, whether he can advise the Assembly, in his review of the proposed changes, whether that will have a significant effect on the people of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. On reflection, I think the hon. member will realize it's an outright request for an opinion.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, let me rephrase the question and ask the hon. minister whether or not he's had an opportunity to review the proposed changes in the Unemployment Insurance Act.

DR. HOHOL: Yes, I have had that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In his review, has the minister been able to obtain any information as to the impact of the proposed changes on the pockets of unemployment, particularly in areas such as Lesser Slave Lake?

DR. HOHOL: I haven't the detailed information with me this afternoon. But my recollection is clear that there are what we call pockets of chronic unemployment which will be negatively affected by the UIC changes proposed by the federal government.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the minister's answer, is it the government's intention to make any representation to the federal government with respect to the proposed changes, bringing to the federal government's attention the concern that these changes may adversely affect some residents of the province?

DR. HOHOL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have had discussions, as have the 10 provincial ministers responsible for manpower, with the Hon. Mr. Cullen, Minister of Manpower and Immigration. He is aware, and has some difficulty overcoming the nature of the problem because while we assign employment programs and money based on census divisions, the federal government assigns them to federal political constituencies. That poses a peculiar kind of problem. So long as the federal government persists in that approach, we will have that difficulty.

In addition, I should say that on the average the Alberta situation will be that transfer payments will continue to assist other provinces in worse circumstances than ours, with respect to unemployment. I have details in the actual study.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Will any specific representation be made with respect to changes so that the problems we have in these pockets of unemployment . . . that these people will not in fact be adversely affected by changes which might be reasonable for the province as a whole, but discriminatory to these distinct areas?

DR. HOHOL: Yes, we have this ongoing kind of dialogue, discussion, and exchange of information with the federal government.

I might use this opportunity — and I think fairly, Mr. Speaker — to provide the Assembly with the significant information that our unemployment rate dropped by .2 per cent. It is significant in the context of this question, because for two previous months in succession we had a slight increase. As government and the officials in my department, it was our reading that, should that occur a third month in a row, it would appear to be a trend. I said last month at the time I reported that if the figures came out favorably — that is, no greater than last month, or less — it would not be a trend but simply an indicator we would have to watch. But the statistics are favorable.

I should assure the Assembly that the province on its own is doing everything possible, with programs like Hire-A-Student, STEP, winter works, and PEP, to address the matter of unemployment in the chronic pockets of unemployment.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one supplementary question to the hon. minister. Will the provincial programs be specifically oriented to the pockets of unemployment, as opposed to being available there but [also] available elsewhere? Will a specific directive be sent out to focus a higher percentage of our public spending in provincial programs on the pockets of unemployment than would be the case otherwise?

DR. HOHOL: Yes, I would say generally that is case. The funds from the provincial support for students and other unemployed follow the people. There are two kinds of unemployed: in the chronic areas — and certainly we attend to those in the best way we can — and in the other, wherever the people happen to be. These are not necessarily the chronic areas but places where unemployment is caused because of seasonal dislocations or other kinds of reasons for unemployment in a particular place that had not had unemployment before.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could just supplement the hon. minister's [answer] to state that on the whole matter of employment the government has been reviewing with deep concern the fact that we're having such a migration of people from the rest of the country. We are clearly forecasting that we're not going to be able to maintain low unemployment rates if the rest of the Canadian economy continues to be depressed. If the rest of the Canadian economy maintains that position, Mr. Speaker, and we get the migration, this province is going to face a difficult problem. I think all members should be aware of it.

Drought Contingency Plan

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier. It follows the discussions at the recent premiers' conference. What duties will the officials' committee in charge of drought assume?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member could elaborate somewhat on that. We discussed the subject of drought at the western premiers' conference in Brandon. We discussed it first on the basis of explaining what the Alberta program

would be, as already outlined in this Legislative Assembly. We heard the plans of the other provinces. Really it's not too significant within British Columbia, but in Saskatchewan and Manitoba there was an agreement for co-operation. There was an understanding that there would be a federal program and co-ordination involved there.

If the hon. member could be more specific, perhaps my colleagues the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs or the Minister of Agriculture could elaborate.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. They set up the officials' committee down there, and I was wondering if they were going to be in charge. Is the officials' committee going to represent the three prairie provinces or will it represent the four provinces that were involved in the conference? Will they have programs that will affect the western provinces?

MR. MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason for the establishment of a committee between the four western provinces was mainly to have a good overview of the equipment and that type of thing that was available in the event water needs to be moved and with respect to the possibility of serious forest fires. In establishing a committee between the four western governments it was not our intention to place in the hands of that committee all the plans that we in Alberta might have for drought assistance.

I should say in addition that we will be meeting from time to time throughout the course of the next few weeks with the government of Canada as well. Yesterday I had informal discussions with two federal ministers relative to the plans they have and how those plans in fact might be co-ordinated with the initiative taken by the Deputy Premier's announcement of over a week ago.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question. Will the federal actions for drought assistance be co-ordinated through this officials' committee?

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker. I think we're really talking about two different things. The committee established by way of the western premiers' conference will be ongoing for some period of time and will have at its fingertips an inventory of all equipment that might be available in western Canada for the suppression of forest fires, for the moving of water for domestic water supplies and livestock supplies.

It may be, Mr. Speaker, that one part of western Canada is not suffering in terms of drought to the extent that other parts are. In fact, since the western premiers' conference there have been considerable amounts of rain in some areas of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. That kind of committee, with a good inventory of all the equipment available, could be effective in ensuring that we do the best possible job in those areas that have not received rain. Of course, the area that has received the least over the course of the last 10 days is the southern part of our own province.

Consultant's Contract

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the

Provincial Treasurer and is a follow-up question from yesterday. Has the Provincial Treasurer had the opportunity to check the contract between the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care and Rune Associates relative to the clause on payment?

MR. LEITCH: No, Mr. Speaker, I haven't.

Government Hiring Practices

MR. LEITCH: I might take this opportunity to respond to a question that was asked of me earlier, and advise the members of the Legislative Assembly that it is not our policy to ask questions about the level of political activity of people applying for positions in what is now the division of public affairs in Government Services.

Consultant's Contract (continued)

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, would the Provincial Treasurer have a review done by the Auditor relative to this contract by the first of next week?

MR. LEITCH: I'm sure it would be done by that time, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Would the minister in his review also check the area relative to the termination of the contract? I would ask the minister to examine the definition of "mutual consent", whether that means it can be terminated if one party disagrees to the contract.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Would the minister check that also?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I interpret the question as meaning, would I interpret the contract and give the hon. member an interpretation of it. I think that's clearly out of order.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to supplement the answer of my colleague the Provincial Treasurer because of the manner in which the hon. Member for Little Bow raises the question.

I said yesterday that the contract had been filed with the Provincial Auditor's office and that under The Financial Administration Act if the Provincial Auditor has any concern with respect to the contract, he would communicate it either to me or to my colleague the Provincial Treasurer. I have received no such communication. The hon. Member for Little Bow knows very well that in our system in Alberta, the Provincial Auditor examines these contracts before payments are made to ensure that that is consistent before cheques are actually issued.

Tourism

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the Minister of Business Development and Tourism. I wonder if the minister could advise how staff is chosen for information centres at high-

way border points, and what training, if any, they are given before they commence work.

MR. DOWLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can. We have some 18 information centres in Alberta. Some are merely trailers; others are permanent sites and are represented by a teepee. We recruit approximately 85 people, most of them university students, at about this time of year. The recruitment really takes place during January and February. There is a return every year of about 50 per cent of staff, so we are actually hiring approximately half of those 85 each year.

They receive a four-day course. We usually take them some place. It's to Hinton this year. The course is pretty widely recognized by the provincial governments, the Canadian government office of tourism, and the private sector, as one of the most effective training courses. They are also participating. It's under way this next week.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister inform this Assembly how many new offices have been opened in 1977?

MR. DOWLING: How many will be opened? As I said, we have 18 information centres. In addition we have six trailers which are utilized as temporary information centres to determine whether there should in fact be a permanent site located at that test site. We are planning on making a permanent site, out of Wainwright. That was a test site for two years; and that's the normal period. We are looking at some all the time. We are looking not only at opening new ones but closing some that exist.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I have another supplementary that I wasn't able to get in before the other hon. member. I'd like to know if the minister could advise if Travel Alberta is producing any more promotional tourist films.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, we have two promotional films, Ski Alberta and Alberta Sunshine, which were produced over the last two years. They've won a great number of awards and have been widely circulated throughout the world. This year we are introducing them on the Vancouver-Montreal via Edmonton-Calgary flights on the 1011s. They will be used over the next six months to advertise and promote Alberta. We believe there is no necessity for producing new ones at this time.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Could the minister advise if Alberta is receiving the same number of tourist inquiries this year as last year, or is there a significant change he'd like to comment on?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, in past years we have advertised by coupons. We've put ads in various news media, trade magazines, and so on. The return has been substantial. However, we've stopped doing that type of promotion. We simply advertise, and are looking for the quality inquiry. We believe the return on these quality inquiries is greater than it is by just a coupon, because so many people who fill out coupons are just asking for very expensive material and don't

intend to come in any case.

We have had a slight reduction in the number of inquiries. But very slight, which is very significant. We also have an indication through the hotel/motel association that the bookings for this coming year are substantially above last year. So we're looking for a very good tourist year.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. With reference to the films he mentioned, and in keeping with the debate last week, would the films fall under the category of family entertainment?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In view of the recent United States federal bill which limits the amount Americans can spend outside the United States and still have it classified as a business expense, I wonder if the department is doing anything to maintain and increase conventions coming to Alberta, in view of this bill or in spite of this bill.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, on December 31 last year the bill the hon. member refers to — a tax bill in the United States — was introduced and passed, limiting to two the conventions that any businessmen might attend outside United States boundaries. It has a devastating effect on such provinces as B.C., Ontario, and Quebec and could in the long term have very bad effects on Alberta. It's minimal at the moment.

We took it upon ourselves to send a letter to Mr. Chretien, the federal Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and asked him to intervene on our behalf through the Prime Minister. We sent a copy of that letter to the Hon. Grace McCarthy, Minister of Travel Industry in British Columbia. On the February 16 she wired Mr. Chretien. As a result of that intervention by the two provinces at least — and there may have been others — Mr. Chretien convinced the Prime Minister to make our representation to the President of the United States, which was done on the visit of our Prime Minister to the United States.

He made the presentation, the amendment went forward, and the Senate voted the amendment out. The amendment would have excluded Canada, Mexico, and some parts of the Caribbean from the terms of that bill.

However, we do not consider it to be lost. I don't think any politician wins anything the first time, and we're going to continue to try.

Telephone Service — Medicine Hat

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones. In view of a very serious disruption of telephone services to a large number of subscribers in Medicine Hat and district, I wonder if the minister could advise the Assembly of the nature of the disruption and what steps are being taken to cure the problem.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, early yesterday evening there was indeed a very serious disruption of telephone services in Medicine Hat and area, including the airport. Some 1,200 subscribers' telephone services were interfered with. To report to the House on

what happened, a contractor putting in a sprinkler system thought he came across an old sidewalk and jack-hammered through it, but in fact it was the concrete casing containing the AGT cable.[laughter] If that wasn't enough, it finally rained in Medicine Hat. A very heavy rainfall poured into the hole. Once the cables are wet and so forth they have to be taken out and replaced. There is around the clock replacement and splicing going on, and my information is that they expect service to be restored tomorrow afternoon.

I would just like to add one other thing. I am informed that the Medicine Hat radio people have been extremely helpful and co-operative in providing information on this matter to citizens of that area.

Energy Discussions (continued)

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this may be a very long sentence, but it won't be as long as Lord Macaulay's. My question is to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Since all the provinces are apparently in favor of a quickening of production of our oil sands, and since Syncrude has shown that government and industry can work together in a free-enterprise way for the good of the people, did the ministers consider an all-government consortium, or a consortium of all governments with industry, for the purpose of quickening the production of our oil sands in a project that would give the benefits and profits to the people of Canada?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

Federal/Provincial Jurisdiction

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. It is relative to the intrusion report tabled in the Legislature. I wonder if the Premier could indicate what specific actions the western premiers expected from the federal government, and has any preliminary response occurred at this time?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think two days ago the hon. Premier indicated the proposed manner of transmittal of the report to the federal government. As far as Alberta is concerned, we hope that one of the first things the federal government would manifest would be an understanding of the seriousness of the problem and an appreciation of the necessity for a significant change in attitude by an Ottawa bureaucracy that seems to be continuing to increase these intrusions. That would be the first step. I think to accomplish that would be very significant.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I could certainly agree with that comment.

A supplementary to the minister. In the number of items listed as areas of potential intrusion, were the areas considered on the basis of a constitutional judgment, or maybe a value judgment? I was going to say a political judgment, but let's say a value judgment.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, they weren't necessarily considered on the basis of a constitutional judgment, because these intrusions have taken place

under the existing British North America Act. As to whether it's a value judgment, I would doubt that. Because I think on the basis of over 50 intrusions documented it's not a value judgment. These are facts documented by the four western provinces as to intrusions. So I don't think they are value judgments. They are facts which we present to the federal government in that vein.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. In light of the hon. minister's answer, could the minister indicate how the decision relative to the Supreme Court intrusion — as intrusion into some of our affairs — how it relates and how it happened to be listed as one of the items in the report under the terms?

MR. HYNDMAN: I think that was answered yesterday by the hon. Premier, Mr. Speaker. But I'll look into the specific mentioned — that one of the 53, which is an important one — and respond tomorrow or Monday.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A final supplementary to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether the questionnaire used as part of the basis of the report could be made available to the Assembly?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, the report stands by itself. That's the result of work done, the result of accumulated research by the provinces. I think it is important that the result of that research be made available, but the compilation of it was done under the initiative of British Columbia. So if the hon. member wants that aspect of it, I would suggest he contact British Columbia. I don't think it's appropriate insofar as the final report is contained in the document.

Eastern Slopes Development

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Is the minister in a position to advise whether a proposal by Lockton Developments Ltd. to develop some 2,000 acres along the James River in Improvement District No. 10 has been approved by the Department of Municipal Affairs?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I believe any consideration of that application for development would require a policy statement on the eastern slopes, and that has not been made available at this point.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. In light of the minister's answer, is the application pending, or where does this particular proposal sit?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it is my information that there is no application.

Restricted Development Area

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Could the minister indicate whether it's the government's intention to

buy all the land within the Edmonton restricted development area?

MR. RUSSELL: No it isn't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Could the minister indicate what methods are used to determine the amount of money offered to landowners in the RDA?

MR. RUSSELL: It's generally done through the fee appraisal system. If the original offer is disputed by the owner, we sometimes get two appraisals by outside consultants, and often the owner will get his own third appraisal. An agreement is then reached on that basis.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate what forms of appeal are open to landowners who feel they are not being compensated fairly for their land?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I suppose we could always advise people to go the route of expropriation. That hasn't been necessary yet.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. minister supplement an answer arising out of a question asked yesterday?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Film Industry

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond briefly to questions asked about the film industry. As I indicated yesterday, six major films were produced in Alberta: two by Albertans, *Why Shoot the Teacher* and *Wolf Boy*; one Toronto production, *Goldenrod*; three U.S. productions, *Silver Streak*, *Mountain Maverick*, and *Days of Heaven*. In addition 30-plus documentaries — not including commercials, educational films, and films produced by TV stations — were produced by Alberta filmmakers. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, Fawcett-Majors just recently produced a major film that dropped half a million dollars in Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: We have passed the time limit for the question period. May the hon. minister have leave to supplement some information given previously?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Design Specification Fees

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, it's not my intention to supplement information. The Leader of the Opposition asked me a question in regard to the specifications for purchase of furniture. Because I had some difficulty with the phraseology and terminology used, I delayed answering the question. If the House is prepared, I wish to supply the answer today.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YURKO: The answer is fairly lengthy, Mr. Speaker. I will answer it by indicating what procedure is

followed in regard to the government. I can table this answer just as easily as respond verbally . . .

MR. SPEAKER: It would be preferable, in view of the fact that we've run past the time allowed in *Standing Orders*.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, it's my honor and privilege to introduce to you, and through you to this Legislative Assembly, the executives of the Victoria [Park] Pioneers: president Olaf Hanson; vice-president Alec Bestianick; secretary Bathie Prosser; directors Martin Berke, Kay Rudolf, E. Behnke, and George Kushniruk; co-ordinator Iris Penlington, and Mr. Penlington — long-time friends; president of Victoria community Rick Penlington, and his lovely lady Linda; and Harold Gunderson, well-known to Calgary MLAs. At this time I ask them to stand and be recognized by this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I have additional members; 94 came with the Victoria Pioneers executive. Some of them are here for the first time. I have a very, very special guest today: Mrs. Spicer, who is 87 years old today and actually was born 20 miles north of Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, introducing my friends of the Victoria Pioneers, I want to say that there are also members of the Calgary Millican constituency, my friend and colleague of the caucus, Mr. Donnelly. Many of them come from my constituency and other parts of Calgary as well.

I want to say that it gives me joy to know these people and see them work on behalf of others, and to see them in their golden years giving unselfishly of their time and efforts to the province, our city of Calgary, and indeed our country, as they have done since the days of their birth.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, these people truly remind me of the lines of the poet Robert Service:

For I have come to sixty-five,
Content to feel so much alive;
I have come to know that storing health,
is better far than storing wealth;
That smug success is little worth,
Beside the simple joy of earth;
The time is but a bubble brief,
And glory a vain beyond belief;
That it is good to eat and drink,
That it is bad to over-think;
That laughter is the world's best gift . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Without wanting to display any lack of appreciation for the hon. member's

selection of poetry, could I ask him how many stanzas are left.[laughter]

MR. KUSHNER: At this time I would ask the 94 members of the Victoria Pioneers to stand and be recognized by this Assembly. I also want to emphasize if I may, Mr. Speaker, that these people have worked hard at raising funds through bingos, drives, and so forth.

MR. SPEAKER: There is perhaps no specific provision for this kind of announcement in *Standing Orders*, but it may be appropriate, since it comes from a distinguished officer of the Assembly, that the information should be made available to the Assembly as soon as it is made available otherwise.

A report was received from Paris this morning from the Ombudsman of this Legislature, stating that the International Ombudsman Steering Committee had accepted and endorsed a proposal for an Ombudsman institute at the University of Alberta. This institute will institutionalize in a co-ordinated manner the research and documentation of ombudsman functions and activities in their various forms on a world-wide basis.

It's another first for Alberta in this field. [applause]

head: **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Question No. 154 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns 147 and 153 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

155. On behalf of Mr. Clark, Mr. R. Speaker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

- (1) a copy of the correspondence between Mr. E. H. Knight, Executive Director of the Calgary General Hospital, and Dr. J. E. Bradley, Chairman of the Alberta Hospital Services Commission, dated July 27, 1976;
- (2) a copy of correspondence between officials of the Calgary General Hospital and Dr. J. E. Bradley, dated September 2, 1976.

[Motion carried]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, at this time I would ask unanimous leave of the Assembly to proceed to government business until 5:30, notwithstanding *Standing Orders*.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Government House Leader have the required unanimous consent?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS** (Second Reading)

Bill 39 The Legislative Assembly Statutes Amendment Act, 1977

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 39, The Legislative Assembly Statutes Amendment Act, 1977. This bill amends three other statutes: The Election Act, The Legislative Assembly Act, and The M.L.A. Pension Act. The bulk of it contains schedules, being legal descriptions of the boundaries of 79 proposed new constituencies.

Before dealing with that part, I'd like to deal with those parts of the bill which are unrelated to the matter of redistribution. First, with regard to the Section 12 amendments, they are essentially two in number. The first allows an MLA, at his or her option, to enter into a group life insurance plan, the one which I understand is presently available through the public service. Insofar as tens of thousands of Albertans today have access to group insurance plans, the proposal is that an MLA should not be disqualified if he or she opts to do so.

The second aspect of the Section 12 amendment relates to the Alberta Racing Commission. It allows an MLA to receive such grants or bonuses as may be paid by the Alberta Racing Commission to a person who is the owner or breeder of horses, provided there is no special preference to that person. This simply gives to MLAs, who are presently denied that right which is available to all other Albertans, an opportunity to proceed if they wish to do so.

The Section 55 amendment authorizes payment of reasonable moving expenses to MLAs who, either when appointed to Executive Council or when they cease to be members of Executive Council, move from a location to Edmonton and, upon ceasing to have that position, move from Edmonton back to another location. That move, I am sure members will agree, reflects the policies of governments and companies in Canada for many years.

The Section 59 amendments, Mr. Speaker, provide the opportunity for MLAs to enter a long-term disability plan at their option and upon contribution of moneys by them. That relates to regulations which must be substantially the same as those presently under The Public Service Act, which allow for and provide for a long-term disability plan. This situation would arise where an MLA ceased to hold office by reason of some serious mental or physical disability, a very severe accident, or where an MLA was struck down by illness or disease such that he or she couldn't function. They would be provided with basic subsistence until they were eligible for their pension.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments to The Legislative Assembly Act provided in this bill implement precisely the recommendations of the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I think it's important and timely to recap very briefly how and why this commission came into being. The act which provided for the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission was introduced in the Assembly in 1969 by the hon. Fred Colborne, who a few months before had chaired

an independent, all-party committee which recommended this kind of commission. The act was unanimously passed by the Assembly at that time on the basis that such an independent commission would take the matter out of the partisan arena and that it would have as its hallmarks independence, objectivity, and credibility. The membership was to be comprised of a judge, a nominee of the Speaker, two members of the opposition, two of the government, and the Clerk of the Assembly. Its mandate was to recommend boundaries and names of electoral divisions. The commission met in 1970, made recommendations as to boundaries, and the subsequent bill was implemented at that time to put into effect exactly the recommendations of the first Boundaries Commission with respect to boundaries. There were some minor changes with regard to names but none on boundaries.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, the commission and the procedure was at that time established with considerable credibility. I suggest the principle was then established that it would be unwise for the Legislative Assembly, following the work done by a commission, to second guess the work, preparation, and public hearings of an independent commission.

In 1975 this Assembly amended the act to increase from 75 to 79 the number of seats for two future elections. This Assembly in effect added three seats for Calgary, two seats for Edmonton, and reduced the number of rural seats by one. Members will recall that act was proposed. It was debated and, my investigation indicates, unanimously passed by the Assembly at this time. Therefore its terms of reference were known and consciously agreed to at that time.

The second Electoral Boundaries Commission was appointed in July 1975. The chairman was hon. Mr. Justice Lieberman — succeeded by Mr. Justice Miller — Mr. Ivor Strong, the Hon. Dallas Schmidt, the Members of the Legislative Assembly for Edmonton Highlands, Little Bow, and Spirit River-Fairview, and the Clerk of the Assembly at that time, Mr. MacDonald, succeeded by Mr. Stefaniuk.

Using the Assembly's formula on voter-population calculations, which this Legislature approved, they came up with an average voter population for urban ridings of some 17,600 and for rural ridings a lesser figure, 8,700. This resulted in a ratio of 7:4 favoring the rural areas.

The interim report of the second commission was made available on April 13, 1976 and, pursuant to the guidelines set by the Assembly, resulted in three new Calgary ridings, two new Edmonton ridings, and the elimination of one rural constituency and realignment of surrounding boundaries.

The final report took place on November 12, 1976. In reviewing the report, members will note that public hearings were held. Advertisement and notification of the public hearings occurred in some 124 daily and weekly papers at an advertising cost of some \$5,300, and at that time the commission properly invited submissions from all who were interested. Hearings were held, and reference was made in the commission report to:

special attention being given to the east-central area and the fact that three public hearings were held in that area and were well attended.

The final report of the commission resulted in no changes of substance from the interim report,

although there were a number of minor adjustments. As to redistribution down the line in subsequent years and after subsequent elections, an addendum was presented by the Boundaries Commission in which they suggested it might be wise down the road to consider reassessment of the mechanics of operation of the act in future years and decades. They also endorsed and suggested a submission which said that the future number of ridings in Alberta should be determined on the basis of using the federal boundaries and having three provincial constituencies in each. That is not being endorsed or proposed by the government, because that leaves the decision-making power within the hands of Parliament, not in this Assembly. The other suggestion alluded to by the commission was a permanent registry of eligible voters and, as members will note in the amendments to The Election Act, to a degree that is being implemented and suggested in that bill.

I think it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta has fewer voters per MLA than most provinces in Canada. For example, there are approximately 2.2 million people in British Columbia with a legislature of 55 MLAs, about one per 40,000 individuals. With this act, we have in Alberta 79 MLAs and a population of approximately 1.7 million, resulting in roughly one MLA for each 22,000 voters. Of course the ratios in other provinces are much higher, much closer to British Columbia.

It's always difficult to find or assume there will be total support for any proposed redistribution, be it in a commission report or a bill. I am certainly sensitive to those who have indicated concern about some of the changes. But I think we as an Assembly should remember there are fewer voters per MLA in Alberta than in almost any other jurisdiction in Canada; that there have been very extensive hearings by the Boundaries Commission; that the Assembly gave the guidelines and provided the parameters and the seats number of 79 to the Electoral Boundaries Commission when it began its mandate; that the method of redistribution in this province dates back to 1969 and, I suggest, is widely accepted and has formed a precedent in the sense that the boundaries of the first commission report were not changed when it was introduced and reflected in bill form.

Also I think it should be noted that the commission which proposed the boundaries had as its membership four members of this Assembly — two members of the government, two members of the opposition — and all four signed both the interim report and the final report.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would seriously and sincerely suggest that it would be inappropriate and undesirable for this Legislature to second guess an independent, credible, and objective commission. I think it would not be right for this Assembly to commence or carry out a process of cutting up, mangling, or slicing away at what is a thorough report of an independent commission, headed by a judge, which carried out the Assembly's mandate and held wide public hearings.

I therefore urge members of the Assembly to support the bill and move second reading of The Legislative Assembly Statutes Amendment Act, 1977.

MR. BUTLER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to amend the motion and therefore move that the bill not now be

read a second time but read a second time in six months.

Mr. Speaker, I am one who opposed the report and the boundary changes. For my reason for opposing them, I think it would be well if the members of the Assembly were to know something about the district I represent. It is a sparsely settled area, with no concentrations of population. There are people all over the area, and less than adequate roads. It is expensive and time-consuming to serve the area now in Hanna-Oyen. In the last two years that I have had the privilege of serving the Hanna-Oyen constituency, I have driven an average of 32,000 miles a year on constituency work.

With this new proposed constituency of Chinook extending to the north and to the south, with all lanes of traffic leading east and west, it will be a very difficult and expensive constituency to serve. I am sure it will take an extra 10,000 miles a year, and I consider that conservative.

Mr. Speaker, maybe I should enlarge somewhat on the lines of communication so that the Legislative Assembly can better understand. All the major highways in the area run east and west. All bus lines run east and west. All railroads run east and west. We have no paved highways running north and south. We have two oiled highways — one is oiled and the other is not oiled all the way. But they're right at the east and west sides of the constituency. So if the weather is bad or the roads are bad, you will have a long way around to get to the north part of the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one more point on behalf of the voters in east-central Alberta. The voters feel they have had their share of constituency boundary problems. At one time there were three representatives in the Assembly from that area. In 1961 it was reduced to two. Now it has been proposed to further reduce their representation to one.

Mr. Speaker, to say that the people of east-central Alberta are unhappy is an understatement. With the uniqueness of the area, the lines of communication, and the potential for growth within the next few years, the residents feel that one MLA will spread himself too thin to really represent the area. I can assure the Assembly that the people of east-central Alberta have no qualms about the cities getting extra representation if it is required.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of east-central Alberta, I would like to encourage and urge all members of this Assembly to support this amendment.

Thank you.

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the amendment proposed by the Member for Hanna-Oyen. But I don't want to talk about redistribution; I want to talk about representation. I think the issue here, in its simplest form, is representation.

When the concept of representation was originally developed, I guess people at that time were probably looking at a 90 per cent rural concept — when the west was developed, probably totally rural. So there was no great concern about inequities. Since that time, of course, with the development of transportation and mechanization, our society has gone on an escalator away from the original concept of living in this kind of country or, for that matter perhaps, any

kind of country. I think we sometimes get carried away with all the wonderful things that are supposed to have happened to us while this was going on.

I recall the Minister of Labour saying to us in a discussion one day, isn't it great that at one time we had 30 fellows with shovels digging a ditch; but now one man with a backhoe does it. In its simplest form, that sounds pretty good, except that I asked him the question: what were the other 29 people doing, or were they unemployed? It seems the other 29 fellows were building backhoes, digging for gas and oil to fuel them, making tires, running banks to lend the money to buy them, perhaps even paying their share for repossessing them if things didn't go well. But certainly it didn't put people out of work. This is something I want to think about.

Mr. Speaker, in order to support some of these concepts a little later, I would like permission to read a very short paragraph to get some more authenticity into this thing. For just a minute, I would like to go the route the Member for Hanna-Oyen went. I don't know that the political history of the area I represent is of any particular importance to this Assembly. But I think it's worth a comment, in that from 1921 to 1935 our member was the hon. Mr. G.N. Johnson, who sat in the chair you occupy, Mr. Speaker. He was the Speaker of this Assembly for 14 years. He presently lives in the city of Edmonton. At about 92, his mind is considerably better than mine.

Following that we had the turnover, and we had a representative by the name of G.L. MacLachlan. From south of Consort we then had Mr. C.E. Gerhart, who was a minister of the former government. Following that, it came a little closer to the family: my wife's uncle Mr. Marion Kelts was the member. But I have missed one, and I did that deliberately; then Mr. Hillman, and finally Mr. Sorenson, who sat in the opposition until 1975. I hardly got in here until I found out there was going to be redistribution. But I didn't know what that meant. Today it becomes very apparent what we're talking about.

The reason I left out one member of the group who came out of that east country is that it illustrates the hard-nosed attitude that those short-grass people out there have on some things. In the middle '30s, a former minister of municipal affairs — and I see we're missing ours right now — made a very quiet comment that maybe we should think about a county system in that east country. The word got out on that. And while they had been staunch government supporters through all those years, they hustled around, got a former member of the RCMP who was then farming there, hung a Liberal tag on him, and elected him. He spent four years in here. That was at a time when that was almost unheard of. So the reactions out in our country can be fairly volatile. I can assure you that since redistribution first came out, and the indicators where the axe was going to fall, not everybody has been nice to me. But I'm going to leave that for a minute.

I want to develop the idea of what the problem really seems to be. The problem we seem to have is that more and more people are living in the cities and the count in the country isn't going up. It may be holding about the same, but they are gradually being outnumbered. In the outnumbering process it seems that the count going off key comes into this thing and the people in the cities, whether they come from

other provinces or migrate from our own rural areas or other countries — nevertheless the building-up process is going on. If we are satisfied with the representation-by-population concept, we then have this imbalance developing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be mixing up this thing a little, and if you think I'm not talking about representation I'll try to come back to it periodically. But I want to back up to my own early time before we had all this difficulty with people wanting to live in the city. I can remember when Calgary was not a very big town, probably 100,000. What happened then in our part of the area, and all over the province I assume, was that the work that had to be done was essentially being done as the Minister of Labour described it. A lot of it was being done by hand or with horses. That was the power. The energy for the power was grass, if it would grow. Sometimes a bit of grain would get mixed with that. In those simple times, when we concerned ourselves with a 90 per cent rural economy, people could do all these things by themselves. They generated their own fuel, their own energy. They went out and ploughed the fields and grew the grain, and they fed the country. It was very simple.

To go the opposite route now . . . The major part of the question period this afternoon was devoted to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and what he was doing about Syncrude, pipelines, financing, and so on — many very technical and complicated things that I'm sure the fellows farming back in 1920 and 1930 didn't even dream about. Nevertheless they have happened. We've gone through this evolution of taking a man from driving a horse or using a shovel and sent him up to McMurray, or we've got him in a tower in Calgary doing very technical calculations. All that is necessary, except for one thing. You could shut down all those things if things went to pot in the area that is most important. As the hon. House leader said yesterday, our most important resource is still the land. Therefore I assume that if that is our most important resource, the custodians of that land also have to have some importance.

We began to get a bit of a feel about the importance of this a very short time ago, perhaps two weeks ago in this House when I heard members of the opposition questioning the Minister of Agriculture if he had any contingency plans that had to do with the drought. The Deputy Premier was asked questions about disaster services of all kinds that related to no rain. We were seeing pictures, not only in magazines and newspapers but on television, about the ground cracking all over the western hemisphere. It was coming through that a lot of the exercises we were going through here were losing their importance relative to what was liable to happen to us there. It came through to me very clearly how important the asset was that the hon. House Leader mentioned, as I said, as recently as yesterday. We're reminded of that importance about every five hours, if you think about it.

The President of the United States came along and was going to work a real hardship on the American people. He was going to raise the price of gasoline and tax the bigger cars to get some sort of reduction in the saving of energy. There is a reaction to that kind of thing.

But that isn't a very serious thing when you really

think about the seriousness of the basic thing and what I mean about the five-hour reminder. If you interfere with the food production concept, you get hungry every five hours. That will remind you of what is important. If they tie up your 98, Mr. Minister, and you walk across from Whitemud, that may put you in better shape. It won't hurt you. But if they cut off your groceries, it will hurt you tremendously. I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that boiling it down to the simplest essential forum, your department is replacing the thing we used to do with the horse. So let's get our priorities straight on this kind of thing.

MR. GHITTER: We're still in horses.

MR. KROEGER: You're still in horses, but they go in circles like we sometimes do, and they don't produce very much.

MR. GHITTER: That's another part of the bill.

MR. KROEGER: Yes it is, Mr. Ghitter.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask your permission to read a very short paragraph. To make it easier for you — do you believe, it's in blue? Is that too long? It isn't poetry. [laughter] I think it relates to what we're dealing with here today.

First, as an extension to what I'm talking about, I can remember when teachers coming into our area wanted isolation pay. I find that when the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources can get away from here they like to come out to our country to do a bit of hunting or relaxing. They don't need any isolation pay. That's a privilege. I notice now in an article in *Maclean's* that the isolation pay factor is being reversed. The city of Detroit has had people leaving the city centre until it's becoming a bit of a ghost town, to a degree that some 50 major corporations have gone together and raised some \$330 million to try to regenerate downtown Detroit. To get people to go there and work, they're going to have to pay them the equivalent of isolation pay. So let's think about that, relative to the importance of the rural area. We're now starting to have to pay people to go into the city to do the things that have to be done there.

Incidentally I'd like to make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that there shouldn't be, and I don't want there to be, a competition between rural and city voters. As a matter of fact I don't think you'd have to scratch any city voter very deep till you get a little farm dust. Most of them have been there, and certainly their forefathers were there. So I would not like to see this become a competition, that city people feel they have to justify that they want better representation in this House. I think it's a real credit to this House that people anywhere in the province feel this is a useful place for them to be represented. I think it's very, very important that we have proper representation here.

The performance in this House gets pretty dull at times. At times it gets quite interesting. But it is always useful. By that I mean all parts of this House, starting with your office, Mr. Speaker. I watch you control this to get the best out of the things we do. I watch the members in the opposition. I recognize they have a difficult role to play, and a very useful one. I certainly appreciate the role the Member for

Drumheller plays in this House. Apparently he has been here longer than any of us. He gives us his fatherly and always useful comments at times. Then of course the government members, who sometimes don't appear to be doing very much; but the representation is here, Mr. Speaker.

I see it something like this. Every rural area has a little fire engine sitting there. It doesn't do very much most of the time, but it's always there in case there is a fire to put out. The members in this House, who at times look a little bored, and at times talk about things that have nothing to do with legislation, are always there ready to defend the rights of their constituents and do their job. So I have no quarrel; in fact, as I have already said, it's a credit to this place that people want to be represented here.

But I do have a little difficulty with the numbers game. Now finally, I'm going to read the blue section, Mr. Speaker. If you want to get complicated in your political thing, if you think ours is a little hard to understand, try the Electoral College in the U.S. I don't understand all aspects of it. This article actually relates to a discussion on the Electoral College, and the heading is, "Don't Fool With the Electoral College". It's written by an analyst I read regularly, Mr. George Will. It's *Newsweek* — and I've learnt a lot from Milt Friedman in here by the way, Mr. Speaker. He has some pretty good economic theories.

In discussing the Electoral College, a comment is made that struck me as related to what we are talking about. The House Leader was making statements that we were pretty well represented, that the imbalance was pretty workable. But there are some precedents. For instance, Alaska is four to one compared to California. I don't hear too much going on about redistribution there. Maybe they don't know about it yet. But here's one that really hit me — and I'm not sure I can say this, because it's a word I've never seen before. It starts out being "arithmetic". Then they put a "cal" on it: "arithmetical majoritarianism". It goes on to quote fellows by the name of Irving Kristol and Paul Weaver, who have written:

In recent decades, the democratic idea had been vulgarized and trivialized. From being a complex idea, implying a complex mode of government, appropriate to a large and complex society, the idea of democracy has been debased into a simple-minded arithmetical majoritarianism [that's a tough word] — government by adding machine.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not suggesting that's happening here. I am only saying that apparently the concept of representation by population is losing its validity, in my mind and in the minds of people in this province but, much more than that, in the minds of people all over the North American continent and perhaps broader. So I think we should think very carefully about what we are proposing here.

I think we should realize the value of living with reality. The comment I sometimes make to my wife on a Friday at 1 o'clock is, well, let's get back out into the real world. By that I don't mean what's going on here isn't real. But when I find myself agreeing with one of the ministers or someone proposing something that is going to be \$2 million and is just snapped off like that, then I go home and argue with a fellow for half a day over \$100 as it relates to the business — I don't mean argue, but discuss and justify — an air of

'unrealism' creeps into this. I can imagine if you stayed here long enough — and I wonder about the hon. Member for Drumheller, whether staying here all these years, he has managed to keep his realism. I watch the Deputy Premier work, and I think he does an amazing job. He does his job at the level of Deputy Premier and, I think, as a medical doctor — he still takes part in a bit of that. But I think he keeps his sanity by going back to the farm at Barrhead.

So I would not like to see, through a simple process of a numbers game, looking down the road tomorrow or in five or ten years, winding up with the numbers and saying, yes Calgary and Edmonton have the people, therefore they have all the intelligence and ability that ought to form the government, and Calgary and Edmonton are sitting in here. I would be worried that some of those people, having lived in those kind of places and those kind of circumstances for a lifetime, might lose some of the realism we need. I think a real contribution can come from people who live and work with the elements day by day. There is no substitute for facing a snowstorm at 40 below and moving a herd of cattle into some shelter. You have a real competition on. The real life thing comes through to you. I think we need some of those kinds of people in here.

So I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we should be very serious about considering the amendment that has been moved by the Member for Hanna-Oyen. The reason I feel very strongly [about], and have the confidence in, having those kinds of people coming in here and adding another dimension to what happens here, is that when you talk about realism — it doesn't happen much any more, but if I were to be caught in an alley in the dark and was in real trouble, there is no one I can think of who I would rather have at my back than the Member for Hanna-Oyen.

Thank you very much.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly going to speak in support of the amendment the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen just presented to this House, because I have some of the same problems the hon. member has. My constituency neighbors his, and I really appreciate the problems one has in trying to service a rural constituency.

I would say that the population in my constituency has increased with new industries coming in there, and as a result of the government policy of decentralizing. I certainly think it's increased the population in my constituency, and I'm not faced with that particular problem right now as far as population is concerned. I think industry is now looking at the rural areas much more than in past years for the simple reason that if they get out in the rural areas they can control the environment much more easily than when they're in the metropolitan areas. We have more availability of water in some of the rural areas than they do in the bigger areas. As far as housing our laborers is concerned, we can house them much cheaper in our rural areas on account of our land prices being so much lower.

In speaking of this, with the high price of our natural gas and with our gas going up, I'm sure they're going to start to develop coal in the constituency of Hanna-Oyen. I think we can look forward to development of the coal in the Sheerness mine. I think this is going to be a big development, and I hope

the Legislature will take a good look at the expansion we're going to have in this area as far as coal is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, when you're representing our rural areas there are many problems, as I can appreciate because I represent a rural area. I know the hon. Member for Sedgewick-Coronation and the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen have the same problems, also all the rural MLAs here. We have the towns and villages, improvement districts, counties, municipalities, and special areas. We're faced with so many types of problems, and we have to be on top of many programs to help our constituents in these particular areas.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I find there are so many people — and I don't find it only in the rural areas — who are not this concerned about government help or big government. A lot of constituents are concerned about the service we as members of the Legislature can provide for them, and get them a different channel into our big government.

I'm certain the rural people are concerned. I go home on some Saturdays — and I've kept track of the issues I've had. One Saturday alone I had 17 who came to my office and had some little problem or big problem, or whatever problems they were. However, to all my constituents they were important problems.

As I say, I'm certainly going to support this amendment. If we put these two constituencies together — Hanna-Oyen and Sedgewick-Coronation — I think it's going to be impossible to serve the people of these constituencies. I don't think it's going to be fair representation if we amalgamate these two constituencies.

I certainly appreciate the recognition the members from the cities give to agriculture. The MLAs from the big cities certainly give agriculture a fair hearing, which really pleases me and I know it pleases the people involved in agriculture.

I could make one suggestion, Mr. Speaker. My constituency is long and has a large area. We have one area right at the east end of my constituency. If there was any way we could put part of the constituency of Bow Valley into the Hanna-Oyen constituency and increase the population, I would certainly go along with such an amendment. I certainly don't want to give up the Empress area, because I've had strong support from the Empress people. They're terrific individuals and constituents in that area. But I feel strong enough that I don't want to see Hanna-Oyen and Sedgewick-Coronation amalgamated. If we can redistribute some of the population, I would certainly want us to take a good serious look at this before we put these two constituencies together.

The Empress people are tremendous people. However, they are a long way from the centre I live in. It's a long drive down there. Possibly they could be represented better from Hanna-Oyen, and tie into that constituency. I just want to say that as far as Empress is concerned, I make my regular trips down there. They feed me well, and when they get me fed they certainly tear me apart and put me in line.

I do want to support the amendment the Member for Hanna-Oyen presented to this House.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm rather reluctant to enter the debate for the simple reason that as one of the MLA members of the commission, in a sense I

feel a certain — not exactly a conflict of interest, but I sometimes wonder whether we should participate in the debate. Nevertheless I think the issue that has been raised is sufficiently important that it should be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, there is really no question that the commission was very impressed with the presentation we received in eastern Alberta, particularly at the hearings held in the towns of Hanna and Coronation. A lot of work had gone into the representation made to the commission, Mr. Speaker. I was impressed, particularly in Coronation, at how universal the support was for the position that the seat should be retained. We had representation from the local Progressive Conservative Association. We then very quickly had representation from the local New Democratic Party association and, shortly thereafter, representation from the local Social Credit association: all making the identical presentation to the commission that the . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: The same people?

MR. NOTLEY: Not quite the same people but the same point of view. That's a strange situation, indeed. But when it comes to something like this, one can certainly appreciate that people would share the same proposition, regardless of their political views.

Mr. Speaker, I would have to say there were three questions the commission looked at and put in the addendum, because we felt that three problems merited at least some discussion in the addendum. One is the suggestion we are debating now, the proposal put forward by the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen. The second related to the particular problems of the city of St. Albert, which has grown very rapidly and where, with the projected growth, there's some pretty reasonable evidence to indicate it will be somewhat beyond the limits of urban population. Of course the third area we had to examine was the peculiar situation of Fort McMurray/Lac La Biche, with the enormous growth that is likely to occur in the new town of Fort McMurray.

The commission grappled with these problems, and felt — and perhaps other members of the commission might want to comment — we really had no choice in terms of the legislation. We had to work within the constraints of the bill as passed by the Legislature and, as a consequence, all that could be done was to submit to the Assembly the concerns of those people in the three constituencies who, in our view, had made some pretty persuasive points. It wasn't possible for us to change. We had to work within the rules set out very clearly in the act passed by the Legislature in 1975.

If we are to accommodate the proposal made by the Member for Hanna-Oyen — one which, quite frankly, I'm very sympathetic to — it would be necessary for the Legislature in fact to change and make the decision to change. I say that because I do not want to leave in the Assembly the impression that the members of the commission looked at these proposals, then rejected them out of hand because we disagreed with them. We looked at the proposals and there was some difference of opinion. But within the constraint of the legislation, we did not feel it was possible to make the changes suggested. That's why the addendum is contained in the report.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment directly on the proposed six-month hoist. If one had come to me seven or eight years ago and said we should provide some sort of special consideration for rural constituencies, I wouldn't have been very sympathetic. As a matter of fact in 1970, I recall making some rather harsh statements outside the House about the recommendations of the Electoral Boundaries Commission at the time and the fact that there was not rigid representation by population. But in the last six years there is no doubt in my mind that there are some very real problems in representing rural Alberta, which must lead us to the conclusion that rigid application of representation by population is not fair. It may be fair in an abstract, philosophical sense, but in my judgment it is not fair in terms of providing access by the electorate to their member of the Legislature.

How can we possibly compare the access of an elector in an urban riding, where it may be a case of just two or three miles at most, to the access of somebody in the proposed Chinook constituency, where we may be looking at 200 miles of gravel road in order to reach their MLA? The accessibility of the electorate to their member is just a totally different world in rural Alberta.

I think the point the Member for Bow Valley made is also extremely important. In the rural areas, there is just a fantastically different climate in terms of interest and knowledge of who the MLA is. Mr. Speaker, I recall looking at a public opinion poll taken in the riding of Edmonton Beverly, where there'd been a sitting member for 20 years, and only 4 per cent of the people knew who the individual was. Only 4 per cent of the people could identify their member of the Legislature. But if you were to apply the same poll to any rural riding — whether the member's on the government or opposition side, whether that member's been quiet or active in the House — the rural member is known by the constituents, because the constituents see the MLA in a rather different sense.

Somebody has a problem in the city of Edmonton; they phone up a government department. But if they have a problem in Oyen, they're going to go to Jack Butler. In other ridings, they're going to go to whoever the member of the Legislature may be.

I think it just happens to be a fact that rural MLAs have a higher volume of constituency business, because there's a greater interest, a perception of the MLA as a representative of people which is more clearly understood and, somehow, defined in the rural area than in the average urban constituency.

I don't raise that to try to create any false rural/urban conflict here, but simply to say it has been a rather important factor in changing my mind about the old, traditional argument that we should have exact representation by population, regardless of whether it's urban or rural. Now I realize that has never been a position of the government. We realize as well, as the minister quite properly pointed out in introducing the subject, that we do not have rep. by pop. We have a 7:4 equation that favors the rural area. But we are still left with some very serious problems in certain rural constituencies. The most obvious case is the new Chinook riding.

We look at the map of the province of Alberta and you know, one really has to ask, gee whiz . . . As I think the Member for Hanna-Oyen pointed out, in

1961 there were three members: the Member for Sedgewick, the Member for Hand Hills, and the Member for Acadia-Coronation; three representatives in the Legislative Assembly. That was changed to two, and now we're going to consolidate those two seats essentially into one riding. So an area of the province that had three constituencies will now have one riding. They feel pretty strongly about it, and make their arguments persuasively.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, if you were going to use the rules contained in the act we passed in 1975, there was really no other place where there could be a reduction in the number of seats. It just happens to be the way the population trends have occurred. The problem, then, is that the commission, struggling with an attempt to be fair, working within the rules, had to reduce the number of rural ridings by one seat. With all the benefit of hindsight — and you know we're all extremely wise with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight — perhaps we made a mistake: maybe we shouldn't have reduced the number of rural ridings. Maybe we should have had 80 instead of 79. You know, there's no law of the Medes and the Persians in 79 members as opposed to 80. But once that decision of the Legislature was made, the commission had to work within it.

So that brings us to the question of the six-month hoist. Under most circumstances, I would normally be very, very reluctant to vote for this sort of thing. I think nothing could be worse than to have a group of 79 politicians trying to carve up the ridings. On the other hand, if we as a Legislature decided we were going to increase the number of seats, then ask the commission to undertake the job again, I suggest it could be done within the terms of the independent commission. The choice is whether or not we are going to make that decision to increase the size of the House.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned when I rose to speak, ordinarily . . . If I had some colleagues here I wouldn't do it. I think it's rather inappropriate for a member of the commission to get into the debate, but I did have some remarks that I felt needed to be said.

So I would just have to conclude by saying reluctantly — because I realize what this means — reluctantly, though, I will support the motion to hoist the bill, presented by the Member for Hanna-Oyen. I believe we do have a problem here, a problem of elementary fairness which can only be resolved if we increase the size and ask the commission to grapple with the rules accordingly.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, as was stated by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, maybe it's inappropriate for a member of the commission to speak. Inappropriate or not, however, I shall speak.

As a member of the independent commission operating under the rules established by The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, I think it's only fair to review to a point that we can bring to all hon. members, and refresh in their minds exactly what redistribution attempts to do.

First, the redistribution rules and regulations set out the number of seats, whether they be rural or urban; those cities that fall within proposed urban electoral divisions; the numbers of those that form the electoral divisions in the city of Lethbridge. What I'm saying really is that you have the degree of flexi-

bility to meet all those aspects of growth, sparsity, transportation — whether it be east and west or north and south — communities, the movement of communities, shopping patterns, traffic patterns, shape, size, just about everything, as long as you follow the rules and arrive at X number of electoral divisions. Mr. Speaker, the bill before you, as presented by the members of that independent commission, met those requirements and arrived at the correct number of seats as set out under the boundaries, and to the best of its ability met all the criteria mentioned.

I certainly have no quarrel with either of my two colleagues, nor with any other statement being made in regard to constituencies, representation rural or urban, the problems of distance, sparsity, and density. If you look across the province, we have many constituencies that are as large, many much larger, some where concentrations are minimal, and three areas of concentrations that are very large in square miles.

Mr. Speaker, not being able to bring forth a personal argument [against] those statements by my colleagues from both Hanna-Oyen and . . . We [are in] a difficult position that each and every one of us could not defend in our constituencies. I'm sure we can all stand up and make a plea.

The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview has stated that perhaps we, the Legislature, should look at 80 seats. I realize that my honorable colleagues are talking about the loss of one rural constituency. I might point out to all hon. members that in fact if this Legislature stated we had 80 seats; in other words, [if] we were to rewrite the legislation, the bill before you now, if we went to 80 or perhaps 81 or 82 seats, if we earmarked those that were to be urban and those that were to be rural, we'd have absolutely no guarantee, Mr. Speaker, that we could meet the problem my colleagues are speaking of: in other words, one particular rural constituency. The 80-seat move would not guarantee the saving of that constituency.

As has been stated in this House by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, who was a member of that commission, we do have problems of population concentrations in the province. They were before the board. We have areas of St. Albert, both on the urban and rural side. We have areas of Lac La Biche. We have areas of McMurray. And we have the area west of Edmonton, the Stony Plain area. So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all hon. members that we may be fooling ourselves if we think the change in the number of seats or the earmarking of whether they be urban or rural is going to save this particular rural riding we're discussing. If that is not the achievement, Mr. Speaker, I can see us in this House a year from now, speaking about one or two other constituencies with the same basic, firm conviction.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the amendment. I think it does not achieve what my two colleagues are trying to achieve: the saving of the rural seat of Sedgewick-Coronation. I can see no change nor any guarantee of meeting that challenge of saving it, by changes in the legislation. No guarantee.

Mr. Speaker, although I recognize all the points raised by my colleagues on the loss of that rural seat, I cannot support the amendment because I believe the amendment will not achieve what hon. members are trying to achieve.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in debate, a person who is an elected member of this Assembly many times has a conflict within himself. Should he be playing politics or trying to express the wishes that will serve the best interests of all the people of this province? I would just like to remind hon. members that when we are elected to this Assembly we are elected to represent a constituency, but we are elected to represent the best interests of all the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I support the arguments used by the hon. Member for Hanna-Oyen. I support the other representations made, about the difficulty of serving rural constituencies. But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the statement made by the hon. associate minister. If we say, let's support the amendment and give the bill a six-month hoist and then maybe we will go to 80, 81, or 82 constituencies, where are we going to draw the upper limits of how large this Assembly should become?

I think that is basically the question we have to ask ourselves, because it would be very easy — and I think we could justify — raising it to 80 and retaining the constituency we have under discussion. That would solve the problem temporarily. But it would be very, very difficult to convince the people of St. Albert, and much more difficult to convince the people of Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche that Fort McMurray should not have a seat. That is a unique situation. It's an area of rapidly developing, rapidly escalating population with a unique problem. In all conscience, politics aside, I could not say that we should retain number 80 and not give Fort McMurray a seat.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the representation, the number of seats, and the population right across Canada, as the hon. house leader mentioned, in Alberta we have 75 seats and a population of 1,800,000, which gives us approximately 23,000 or 24,000 people per representative; British Columbia, it's double that; Manitoba, it's one member for 17,000; Quebec, one for 56,000 people; Ontario, one for 66,000 people.

I think we have to go back just a little bit further than this bill, Mr. Speaker, and see how we as politicians are always trying to take the easy road out. I can remember when the seats in this Legislature went from 55 to 65 because it was easier to do it that way. Fewer politicians were going to be hurt, fewer boundaries were going to have to be redistributed. The hon. Premier remembers that, because we were in this House at that time. It was the easy route to take. So we went from 55 to 65, from 65 to 69, from 69 to 75; now we're looking at 75 to 79, or will it be 80, 81, or 82? That is the problem we have to wrestle with, Mr. Speaker.

So it boils down to how large is this Assembly going to be. Also are the people of this province under-represented or over-represented? At the same time we have to wrestle with the problem of being able to serve the areas we represent. Then we get into the argument: are we civil servants, or are we responsible for making legislation? I've had a private argument with my colleague, Mr. Mandeville. I appreciate the problems he has, and I appreciate the problems Mr. Butler and Mr. Kroeger have — forgetting, with apologies, their constituencies — just that rapidly.

But the thing is we are here to make laws in this

Assembly. I know the way you stay in this Assembly is by serving your people, by going to different functions, by going to council meetings, by being their sounding board and expressing their views. But maybe a lot of this could be done on the telephone. So we have to have a balance of representation by population and by area.

So, Mr. Speaker, in trying to summarize what I should be doing on this issue, never mind the political ramifications to the government. In all conscience, I realize there is a problem when you have to serve a large rural constituency. But at the same time there is a problem in that we have to give the people who are in the major centres a fair representation by population.

Speaking with my conscience, I cannot support the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak on behalf of the amendment. I will make my talk very brief. I don't want to thresh a lot of old straw. But I think something that has been missed this afternoon is the family, and the family life of the rural member. Now I can just picture where the member in the Chinook constituency will be driving — well I know that I have driven 70,000 miles in the last two years, and of course most of it's at night. But can you imagine travelling those distances in that country, in blizzards and in storms? It's a frightening thing. I know my wife and family certainly worry about me when I come in at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning — not just where I've been but what I've been ... [laughter] Yes, I asked for that all right.

But I certainly agree that the commission have done their very, very best. They have done it fairly with the mandate they had. But the motion to hoist — I would have liked to have seen it a little stronger, where we would retain the seats we have now as much as possible, and until we get some of the things done here in Alberta that we're looking at.

The mover of the bill said we had fewer voters for each MLA than any other province in Canada. I think if you look at the economy of this province and the things that are happening, maybe that's not a bad idea. Maybe that's why Alberta is where it's at, and going the way it is.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising to take part in the debate on this amendment. Representing a constituency adjoining the area that has been under discussion and is losing its representation by this bill, I have to express the feeling that the people in my area have expressed to me.

At the time the committee was struck to study the redistribution, the people in that area, like the rest of rural Alberta, said, we're losing one rural seat. That's not good but it won't likely be us. But when the realization comes of which particular constituency is going to disappear, it's only natural that those people are going to react. I think that the time it became most noticeable in my constituency was after the hearings in Sedgewick-Coronation, and they realized that the terms of reference left the committee no alternative, that one rural constituency had to go.

I think the people in my area honestly thought, not being familiar with the terms of reference, that if the people in Sedgewick-Coronation could produce really good, valid reasons why there should not be an elimi-

nation of that constituency, the committee would have in its power the ability to change their recommendations. After the hearings were held, the people in my area came back and started saying to me, the hearings were really of no value. Those people weren't listened to because the rules of the game had already been set and they couldn't be changed.

As rural Albertans — and my area is not as thinly populated as Sedgewick-Coronation or Hanna-Oyen, but there is a similarity in the fact that if you go back in history, the population in my constituency was greater 20 or 25 years ago than it is today as far as rural members are concerned. A couple of the towns have grown. But where there used to be a farmer on every half section or three quarters, when it was originally opened up, there is now a farmer on roughly every two-and-a-half sections. I think we've probably reached a levelling-off point as far as this is concerned, and possibly our towns will grow. Possibly the constituency will increase slightly in population as time goes on. But it will never become a densely populated area because of its geographic situation.

The people in rural Alberta constituencies become accustomed to representation as a common area. When you change boundary lines, if they have been feasible and acceptable in the past, the people in rural Alberta do not accept the change of boundaries. They resent it. I think this is what the people in my area were expressing.

They see that somewhere down the road, as the urban and metropolitan centres increased, there will be another redistribution and another constituency will go. They see that possibly what they consider "their" constituency will be absorbed and they will lose their identity. I think this is what is causing the resentment. I think it's only fair that we recognize that you can only divide the pie so often until somebody gets cut out.

As our population increases in the core part of our province between the two metropolitan areas, it's inevitable — if we go to representation by population — that the fringe areas of the province farthest from government, the hardest to have access to government, are going to have to be represented by fewer people if this philosophy is carried out. I think this is what the people in rural Alberta who live on the fringe of the province — regardless of whether it's the south, east, or north — are feeling. This is what I am trying to express, what the people of my area have been expressing to me. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will support the amendment.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I've listened with great interest to the debates of members and have jotted down points as each of them has spoken. That will affect the flow of what I had hoped to say. Nevertheless a number of important points have been raised. As someone who was on the commission I'd like not necessarily to respond to them but to deal with them from the perspective I gained as a member of the commission.

Unlike my honorable friend from Spirit River-Fairview, I do believe it is appropriate for those of us who were members of the commission to speak in this debate, because I think my membership on that committee gave me an insight and an appreciation of the complexity of this problem which I had not pre-

viously had, which some of my colleagues in the Assembly may not have had an opportunity to develop, and which I think — as it is important — should be shared with the members of the Assembly.

Like the other members who have spoken, the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, I appreciated the number, the variety, and the very careful thoughtfulness of the submissions presented to the commission in Hanna and in Coronation. They raised a number of issues that deserve very, very careful consideration. The easiest to respond to were the ones respecting the transportation and communication system in east-central Alberta, and I've already expressed some feelings in that regard to the Minister of Transportation, and I think to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones as well.

The first point I would like to make — or rather to reiterate, since it was made earlier by the hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc — is that given the formula contained in The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, simply to increase the number of seats from 79 to 80 would not assure the retention of the Sedgewick-Coronation seat. In my view, given the present formula, you would have to increase the number of seats at least to 82 before you would be assured that Sedgewick-Coronation, in the form in which it now exists, would continue to exist.

One of the reasons for this, Mr. Speaker, is something I do not think we should lose sight of in this Assembly. I've said it on prior occasions and I'll repeat it here this afternoon. This government's policy of decentralization of the economy has taken hold and in some considerable measure has been successful in rural Alberta. And I see the rate of that success increasing. If you compare the two metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary on the one hand with all the rest of the province on the other, the non-metropolitan area of the province is growing in population more rapidly than are Edmonton and Calgary. That, in simple terms, is one of the goals we had hoped to accomplish. The statistics demonstrate we are accomplishing it.

Beyond that, what we wanted to accomplish was the growth of smaller centres — not only the other cities such as Red Deer, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat, but the towns of 3,000, 4,000, and 5,000 people, and in fact the towns of 1,000 people. And again, forgetting Edmonton and Calgary, if you look at the population figures, industrial growth, and commercial activity around the province, what we have been attempting appears to be coming to fulfilment.

But the people of rural Alberta have to appreciate that that causes dislocations even within rural Alberta. Even if you consider only rural Alberta, the fact of the matter is that the population of the province is growing more quickly toward Highway 2, as a north/south axis, and toward Highway 16, as an east/west axis, and away from the borders of the province. That continues to be a problem, not only in terms of redistribution but in terms of many of the other goals of this government.

We come then to some important questions: as the hon. Member for Clover Bar mentioned, the appropriate size of this Assembly, and a whole range of questions that flow from that; the question of the nature of representation, as he referred to earlier; the proper balance between our roles as lawmakers and

our roles, if I may say, as constituency ombudsmen, and ombudsmen to the constituents individually within the boundaries of our own electoral district; and the question of the problems of representations in different kinds of constituencies and the appropriate compensation we should make once we have identified the problems. I'd like to speak to that for just a moment, if I may.

It seems to me, from discussion with my colleagues in government and indeed in the Assembly generally, that if there is a problem of distance in rural constituencies, there is a very great advantage of familiarity. If an urban MLA enjoys the advantage of compact geography, he suffers the very serious disadvantage of the feeling of alienation of his constituents. What the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview had to say in this respect is right on. I go door to door in my constituency, and 95 per cent of the people, when I knock on their door, don't know who David King is. Fifty per cent of them don't know what the letters "MLA" stand for, what the appropriate role of a Member of the Legislative Assembly is. And that, Mr. Speaker, is an equally serious problem all of us, as members of the Assembly, have to consider.

Good government depends on an informed electorate. It depends, further, on an electorate willing to participate at appropriate times in their own self-governance, in the decision-making process. That does not occur in urban ridings. It is a serious problem, not only for the incumbent MLA but for the entire process of government which we claim to espouse in this Assembly. If that is a serious problem of representation in the urban constituencies, that — as much as the problem of geography — has to be dealt with by all the members of this Assembly.

If I could cite what I think is a very appropriate example, we have people in the galleries this afternoon who have travelled here from east-central Alberta. I recognize people who made submissions to the commission when we were meeting in Hanna and in Coronation. They have an interest in something that affects them, that brings them to hear this debate this afternoon. That is an advantage, in terms of the relationship which the hon. member enjoys with his constituents that I do not feel in terms of my relationship with my constituents, notwithstanding the fact that I try to create that relationship. And I think most other members would in fairness have to say the same about their own situation.

Mr. Speaker, related to this was a comment I think should be made, that inherent in the legislation is a recognition of the need for leverage for the people of rural Alberta. That already exists. In the formula the legislation institutionalizes a voter advantage for the people of rural Alberta. At the time of redistribution it takes seven votes in an urban constituency to equal four votes in a rural constituency. By the time eight years have elapsed, which is just about the maximum under our present system, the ratio between rural and urban voters commonly extends to the order of 16:4 and 18:4. That is, an urban constituency has 26,000 or 27,000 voters as opposed to a rural constituency which may have 6,500.

So I don't think there is any question that the Legislature has already acknowledged to some degree its willingness to extend a preference to rural constituencies. What is obviously at issue is whether an appropriate degree of leverage has been extended

to them. That is a complex question which I think cannot be adequately debated and certainly cannot be resolved in this House this afternoon, however well-intentioned all of us may be.

I think that as legislators we are caught on the horns of a dilemma. It seems to me a serious problem to establish or modify a principle as important as the principle of representation in terms of a specific case, in terms of the fact that we have among our number a colleague whose constituency is going to be eliminated. The principle seems to me to be sufficiently important that it should be considered extensively and intensively, in isolation from the particular case that we have before us at this time.

The second problem which I think we face as a government — and by that I mean all of us in this Assembly — is the public perception of government involvement in the process of redistribution after the fact, as it were. I don't think I need go into detail except to remind all members that the public, if they are jealous of one thing, are jealous of the question of representation and have historically given short shrift to any political party or assembly which they believe has manipulated the electoral process for particular reasons — again, a reason I think the question of redistribution should be considered independently of the particular bill that we have before us now.

That leads me to conclude that as a member of the commission and as a member of this House, I acknowledge the need for a thoroughgoing review of the question of representation and the process by which we redistribute. I hope that such a thoroughgoing review may occur in some form or another prior to the next redistribution. And as the members of the commission expressed in their addendum, I would like to reiterate at this time that I hope such a thing will occur prior to the next redistribution.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, that the comments in debate this afternoon, the obvious conviction with which they are expressed by different members of the House demonstrates adequately the complexity of the problem and the present inability of the Legislature to deal with a complex, wide-ranging problem on the basis of this present redistribution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Amendment lost]

[Motion carried; Bill 39 read a second time]

Bill 37
The Child Welfare
Amendment Act, 1977

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 37, The Child Welfare Amendment Act.

As I said on introduction of this bill, the principle is to prescribe the power of a judge, or of the director of child welfare to confine a child, when it is considered in the best interests of the child. I think the important word for us to concentrate on is "prescribe".

Mr. Speaker, this looks like a rather lengthy and legalistic document, but indeed it is not. Principally it outlines in detail the protection that exists in law for the protection of the child. It is clearly spelled out.

Perhaps we should deal historically with why this particular amendment is felt appropriate today. In 1970 The Child Welfare Act was amended. It is as a

result of that particular amendment that we have had submissions in particular from the judiciary, and many other citizens, because the judges were curtailed in what they might do when they were dealing with a juvenile under the Juvenile Delinquents Act.

Under the Juvenile Delinquents Act, the judge can order a fine up to \$25, place a child on probation, commit a child to a private home for foster care, order restitution such as community service, or he could commit to industrial school or to the superintendent of juvenile delinquency. But where there is an order of the Provincial Secretary in place, wherever a judge does commit to an industrial school or to the superintendent of juvenile delinquency, the child is then deemed to have been dealt with under The Child Welfare Act as though never dealt with under the Juvenile Delinquents Act. It is on that particular basis that we have had the problem which has been brought to our attention by the judges on many occasions.

Mr. Speaker, I might say in developing this legislation we had considerable consultation with the family court judges in this province. I am under the impression they approve of the structuring of the legislation as it has been designed by the department and the Legislative Counsel.

There is presently much talk in the federal House about young offenders and amendments to that particular piece of legislation called the Juvenile Delinquents Act. We have now had two attempts — at least we now have the second attempt — by the federal government to amend their legislation. We were considering theirs at some length prior to bringing forward our own amendments. But it seems to rise and fall in the federal House; interest languishes, and we could not count on the fact . . . we felt strongly that we needed to place the judiciary, and indeed the director of child welfare, in a more secure position when they were confining children under law. It is for this reason that we have decided to bring forward this particular amendment.

I think it would be appropriate for me at this time to pay tribute to some of the people working with troubled children. One in particular has been recommended to me most highly by the officials in my department: Stampede Boys Ranch School and a giant of a man named Mr. Edey, who is deeply committed to working with troubled children and has been known to take some of the most troublesome and difficult to manage. My department feels he has had more success than perhaps any of the other institutions, whether operated by the department or by agencies interested in this field. It is not the environment that affects the children who go to Mr. Edey's care; it is the character of the man himself. I want to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to his dedication and to the success I believe he has had.

A voluntary organization in Calgary called Enviro has recently started a project, working with my department through the Calgary boys and girls clubs. It is just now getting nicely under way. They are dealing with troubled youngsters in a rural and wilderness atmosphere. It is too soon to tell, but I have great confidence that this particular project will be useful. Not for all. They will have trouble with some. They will win some, and without a doubt they will lose some.

I want to pay tribute to those two rather unique

situations we have. Aside from those, in the province we have many dedicated organizations and foster parents who deal with children in conflict with the law or children who are deemed to be neglected and, as a result, are assigned to the director of child welfare for treatment and whatever to the best of our ability. There are many of those organizations, and they do try. Some have one theory and some have others. Some work and some do not.

Legislation; rules, regulations, and institutions are not necessarily going to be successful. All we can do is try to reach children — or perhaps juveniles would be more appropriate, since some of them are 16 or nearly 16 years of age. Many of them have already had a rather long history of conflict with the law. Many of them are troubled and will need to be confined for some other reason. Not that they are continually acting out and not that they are always in trouble with the law, but for some particular reason in the minds of the judiciary, and perhaps on the recommendation of the director of child welfare or those who are responsible, it is felt that that particular child needs to be confined for his or her best interests.

When we are considering this entire subject, the misfortune of the child legitimately in need of genuine care and attention should not be confused with the problems and activities of the hard-core delinquent, who is more in need of discipline, stability, a change in attitude toward authority and the sanctity of private property, and training in a controlled setting generally, to prepare him or her to become a productive and law-abiding citizen.

This legislation isn't going to accomplish any miracles, Mr. Speaker. It would be nice if it did. I think what we need more than anything else is a change in attitude. I espouse the change in attitude, which I attempt to convey to all the officials within my department and those who work with me and my officials as we try to deal with juveniles in need of care and protection or in conflict with the law . . . I have a philosophy that I would like to place before the members of the Legislature. It comes from the Ventura School for Girls, a residential treatment centre for seriously delinquent girls in southern California. It's a philosophy I think will help all of us in dealing with this problem:

We accept no excuses for irresponsible acts. Students are held responsible for their behavior and cannot escape responsibility on the plea of being emotionally upset, mistreated by mother, neglected by father, or discriminated against by society.

Most girls soon learn that the Ventura School is different from any place they have been before. The difference is our caring enough to keep them until they are responsible enough to leave. When they tell us how unfortunate they have been, we accept this uncritically; but from the beginning, in a warm and firm manner, we tell them that while they are here they are responsible for what they do, regardless of how miserable, inconsistent, or unloving the past may have been.

I think that philosophy needs to prevail in the institutions we have, or may have in the future. I think that would help our young people as they attempt to turn their lives around.

It's perhaps inappropriate when we're dealing with a more or less technical document which puts in place legislation we feel is essential at this time so those adjudged to be in need of extended care and protection . . . we are by law able to do so. It is for this reason that I ask support of this Assembly on second reading of Bill 37.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in making a few very brief comments on Bill 37, I am first of all reassured in part by one statement the minister made. She indicated that the family court justices in the province had an opportunity to peruse the bill, and that they were in agreement with at least the major provisions.

Certainly there are some concerns, and I recognize that any time you're dealing with legislation that concerns troubled children, juveniles in conflict with the law, it's not an easy subject to handle. Within the legislation, the fact that decisions on confinement should normally rest with a judge rather than the director of child welfare is a laudable change. But as I read the act, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the director can still order confinement for 30 days subject to review by a judge.

The judge can then order confinement for 90 days, followed by a second 90-day period, without a hearing. In other words, as much as six months between hearings. I would ask the minister in closing debate, whether in that particular instance the government does not consider six months between hearings too long a time.

The suggestion has been made that under the terms of this legislation, it is hypothetically possible that confinement could carry on from age 12 to the age of majority. That's not likely to be the case, but we see in this act — even though the legislation is well-motivated — a situation where one almost has an example of an indeterminate sentence. That troubles me because adults are protected, inasmuch as confinement is based on specific periods for specified offences.

If one goes beyond that and looks at indeterminate sentences, it seems to me one gets into the most difficult area from the standpoint of the rights of the individual. That's the section of this act, Mr. Speaker, that troubles me. While I doubt it's going to be used, nevertheless there is that opportunity for possible abuse within the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the only other point I would raise during this second reading debate: I understand the government is now looking at the question of a vocational training centre. I would just ask the minister, in concluding debate perhaps, to bring us up to date on where that stands; perhaps also why the government felt it was necessary to move legislatively before placing a program in operation such as the one envisaged. It would seem to me that the legislation might follow the program rather than precede it.

So those are the concerns I express, Mr. Speaker. Again, in general conclusion, I was pleased to learn that this matter has been discussed with the family court justices and that they generally seem to be in favor of it. If that's the case, it certainly goes some steps toward reassuring [me about] some of my concerns.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to say a few words on this bill. First of all, I want to commend

the hon. minister on her very excellent grasp of the present situation and her interest in protecting the child.

In my view, police officers and family court judges have become frustrated and frustrated and frustrated in trying to deal with this problem. It's high time we had legislation of this nature before the Legislature. As a matter of fact, we're late.

When I look back at the legislation set in 1970, I have to ask myself what damage we have done to the lives of hundreds and hundreds of boys and girls in this province through that legislation; and how terrible it has been in the homes of many, many families; and what a terrible position we have put excellent juvenile judges and family court judges in, trying to help these boys and girls.

I have had the privilege of sitting in juvenile court, and I've seen some of the problems. With the attitude that has been established through the 1970 amendment, the juveniles actually laugh at the courts. They come in laughing and they go out laughing, because they know the family court judge has no authority to confine them, no authority to deal effectively with them. As a result, how many times do you think some of these young people have appeared before the family court judges? Would you say 10, or 15? Well, as many as 30 and 50 times.

What position have we put our family court judges in when they don't have the authority to deal with people? As a result, young people are growing up with the idea that they don't have to be responsible for the damage they do to the property of others. We do no boy or girl any good by giving him the idea he can destroy other people's property or commit crimes against society and simply walk out with no punishment. We do that boy or girl no good at all. As a matter of fact, we're training him to become an inmate of our prisons for the rest of his life.

I have seen this happening time and time again. It breaks your heart when you see fine young people growing up with the idea that they have no responsibility for the acts they commit. Our juvenile judges must have gone home with bleeding hearts night after night because they were unable to deal effectively with boys and girls of this nature.

The other night in my own constituency a group of boys — 10, 11, and 12; in that age group — broke into a store again. Not the first or second time, but again. The police are helpless. They can catch them within minutes. But what do they do with them? They're under 12. They're 9 and 10. Every time a child does that and gets away with it, we're simply encouraging him to do it again and again. Eventually, as the hon. minister said, he becomes a hard-core criminal.

At one time in Bowden, before this government came to power, we had adults placed with juveniles. I remember the Attorney General having a plea from one of the adults. He said, get me out of here, I can't stand these hard-core juveniles. They're too much for me. In that case it wasn't the adults contaminating the juveniles. The juveniles were contaminating the adult. You can get that way before the age of 18 if you have the proper training school and the encouragement.

I'm sorry our laws have encouraged irresponsibility

on the part of some of our young people, and that we've made it that way in the name of kindness. We haven't been kind to them at all. I'm glad to see legislation coming in that says, we're going to endeavor to make every person, irrespective of age, responsible for the things he does. If a child makes up his mind to destroy somebody's property, let him take the responsibility.

I'm hopeful we can do it in a number of ways. One way we can do it is in a program where they make restitution by going back and undoing what they have done, if that is possible; not so much by paying cash, but by making amends for what they've done so they'll never want to do that again. Even confinement. I believe that if these 10-, 11-, and 12-year-olds who are out in the middle of the night, breaking and entering stores, could just be confined for one or two days until their parents came to pick them up, that would be a wonderful lesson. They'd think twice before they did it the next time. But when they're simply let off with a little tap on the finger and told, please don't do it again; it's bad, don't do it again, they go out laughing. This is the worst possible thing we can do for that boy or girl.

So I'm glad to see this coming in. It won't hurt any boy or girl. Anybody who comes under the clauses of this bill will be helped. The whole function behind this bill is to change their attitudes so they can become responsible citizens of this country, to discourage them from doing things that are against society, and to tell them definitely that if they're going to break the laws of society — if they're going to break and enter somebody else's property and steal; if they're going to destroy somebody else's property — they are going to be responsible and are going to pay in one way or the other.

Mr. Speaker, I think we are now on the threshold. With this bill and the bill proposed in Ottawa, that came out of the book on conflict with the law, I think we're on the way to doing a real kindness to the young people of this province and this country who have been in conflict with the law. I commend the minister for bringing this in. I think it's going to be a new day for hundreds of boys and girls who up to this time thought it was smart and clever to break the law.

[Motion carried; Bill 37 read a second time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow morning we will continue with second reading of the following bills, among others: Bill No. 1, Bill No. 24, The Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, bill nos. 30, 43, 47, 48, and 49. If time allows, we will do some committee study of bills.

I move the Assembly adjourn until tomorrow at 10:00 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 5:37 p.m.]

