

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Tuesday, April 4, 1978 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 25****The Utilities and Telephones
Statutes Amendment Act, 1978**

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 25, The Utilities and Telephones Statutes Amendment Act, 1978. This being a money bill, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of the bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, The Utilities and Telephones Statutes Amendment Act, 1978, amends four bills: The Co-operative Associations Act, The Co-operative Marketing Associations Guarantee Act, The Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Act, and The Rural Gas Act. The most important of these is in The Co-operative Marketing Associations Guarantee Act. There are provisions in Bill 25 that clarify that act's provisions for lien note enforcement in loan guarantees for rural gas co-ops. In addition, there is an amendment which inserts rural utilities in the bill to make it more workable for the people who use that act.

With respect to The Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Act, Mr. Speaker, the statutory limit for the fund's loans will be raised from \$25 million to \$35 million in this proposal to the Legislature. Our advice is that otherwise we would reach the limit during the course of this summer or fall. In addition, the amendment to that act provides that the minister can approve loans under \$15,000 in order to reduce paperwork and delays in getting money out to the REAs. Loans over \$15,000 would continue to be handled by order in council.

The Rural Gas Act is amended in Bill 25 by way of reflecting the reorganization that took place, bringing rural utility finance from the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to Utilities and Telephones. In addition, a substantive amendment provides that easements are not required when the gas installation involved is for the owner of that land. Easements in these circumstances are not necessary.

In addition, there are certain other provisions in Bill 25, in the acts amended, which are administrative in nature.

[Leave granted; Bill 25 read a first time]

Bill 27**The Education Statutes
Amendment Act, 1978**

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to intro-

duce Bill 27, The Education Statutes Amendment Act, 1978. The bill will amend three statutes of this Legislature: The Department of Education Act, The School Act, and The Teachers' Retirement Fund Act.

With respect to the amendments to The Department of Education Act, among other things the bill will authorize the minister to award prizes for scholastic achievement.

Amendments to The School Act will provide for distribution of provincial grants paid to municipalities in lieu of taxes for supplementary requisitions, to be distributed between public and separate school boards on the basis of resident pupils, rather than on the basis of assessment, as is now the case. The same formula, Mr. Speaker, would apply to municipal properties that would be subject to taxation under the relevant statutes. It also clarifies provisions as to part-time teachers and sick leave for teachers.

The investment powers of the board under The Teachers' Retirement Fund Act are extended. There is recognition for certain private school service. The bill also provides that a subsequent marriage acts as a revocation of a previous designation of beneficiary.

[Leave granted; Bill 27 read a first time]

Bill 7**The Surface Rights
Amendment Act, 1978**

MR. BUTLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 7, The Surface Rights Amendment Act, 1978.

[Leave granted; Bill 7 read a first time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 7, The Surface Rights Amendment Act, 1978, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill 209**The Beef Labelling Act**

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 209, The Beef Labelling Act. The purpose of this bill is to make the consumer more aware of the origin of the product he or she buys, and that by buying Alberta-grown products the consumer will be assured of a constant supply at competitive prices, at the same time providing a better return to our beef producers.

DR. BUCK: Put Horner's stamp on the lamb. And the white elephants.

DR. HORNER: And the ARR.

[Leave granted; Bill 209 read a first time]

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 45 grade 7 students from Colonel Walker School in the constituency of Calgary McCall. They

are accompanied by their teacher Miss Hezmalhalch; the vice-principal, Mr. Thomas; the principal, Mr. Frank Yeomans; and parents Mrs. Waller, Mrs. Archer, and Mrs. Burdon. They are seated in the members gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. STEWART: On your behalf, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce a group of students from Rio Terrace Elementary School in the Meadowlark constituency. They are grade 6 students, 55 in number, accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Milligan. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 25 grade 5 students from the Satoo school in my constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. George Dwernychuk, and are seated in the members gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Department of Social Services and Community Health

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide additional information to the comments made by the Provincial Treasurer in his speech to the Assembly on March 17. In his Budget Address the Provincial Treasurer stated that several important new and expanded social programs would be provided with funds in the current year. Particular areas which I would like to elaborate on today relate to preventive social services programs and to the provision of sheltered accommodation for persons with mental problems who are discharged from hospital.

Preventive social services, known as PSS, needs little introduction to most members of the Legislature. It is a well-established provincial/municipal partnership, designed to prevent social breakdown through assisting people to do things for themselves. While the province provides the major proportion of the funds on a cost-sharing basis, the planning, implementation, and administration of these programs take place at the municipal level.

Because people problems develop anywhere along life's path — within individuals, families, and communities — it is important they be identified and acted upon early. For this reason, the preventive social services program operates on the basis that decision-making begins in the community. Social needs, priorities, resources, and responses can most logically be addressed at the local level. This practice of placing responsibility on the local community stems from the belief that communities, like individuals, are unique and have the desire, energy, and resources for self-improvement. The aim of preventive social services, therefore, is to encourage and help communities establish needed programs and, in the process, facilitate healthy community growth. To this end, additional funding in the amount of \$890,000 will be distributed to municipalities during

the current fiscal year.

An investment in prevention is sound from several points of view. First, the province, municipalities, agencies, and concerned citizens share and apply skills, talents, funds, and commitments in dealing with people problems at an early stage. An encouragement and co-ordination of existing systems and resources is used rather than building a new bureaucracy.

Secondly, self-help, interdependence, volunteerism, and the creation of caring neighborhoods are prime objectives of the preventive social services program. The preventive philosophy asks and proves that people shouldn't make undue demands on government; that often the answer to their well-being lies within themselves and those around them.

Thirdly, in the long run, applied prevention will reduce the need for government intervention in the very expensive treatment of rehabilitative programs such as public assistance, mental health, child welfare, and corrections. Social breakdown in its various forms hurts, costs, and demands too much state involvement, usually too late.

Lastly, the returns on the time and money spent on preventive social services far exceed the cost of the original investment. To update the old adage, a gram of prevention is worth a hectogram of cure. Quite apart from the people who are deflected from expensive treatment programs, the existence of a preventive social services framework in a community facilitates linkages and activities that serve people's needs, yet cost nothing. For example, for every funded project, at least two are established that require no government subsidy.

It is expected that \$200,000 will go to new areas that wish to enter the preventive social services program. Approximately 85 per cent of the province's population is currently covered by preventive social services, and this allocation is a significant development for those municipalities wishing to join in partnership with the province. The remaining \$700,000 will be allocated to municipalities covered by preventive social services for programs for senior citizens, community and family services, youth services, home support services of a preventive nature, and research and planning. Each municipality will determine its priorities for program development before forwarding projects to the province for cost sharing.

Through my estimates, we will be requesting \$722,000 for the development of private sheltered accommodation for patients discharged from mental hospitals and the psychiatric units of general hospitals. It is intended to apply the money to group residences established under the auspices of community agencies, which will operate the homes through a contract with the division of mental health services.

The *per diem* rate will vary according to the amount of supervision given, but will average \$15 per day. At least six spaces will be established for forensic patients, as recommended in the Earp report. In the knowledge that accommodation alone does not provide sufficient care for the needs of these patients, some of the money will be devoted to the expansion of existing sheltered workshops and to the establishment of new ones where necessary. These also will be operated under contract by community agencies.

Recognizing that some patients will not benefit

from sheltered workshop facilities, some of the money will be devoted to centres of a drop-in social nature. This project is necessary to sustain a steady flow of patients through both general and mental hospitals. The length of stay of psychiatric patients has been increasing in both types of hospitals because of lack of suitable accommodation for patients.

It is estimated that 100 spaces of accommodation and 100 day-activity spaces can be provided. The division of mental health services has sought guidance from the Provincial Mental Health Advisory Council with respect to the distribution of these spaces across the province.

The division of mental health services will solicit proposals from existing agencies willing to operate these facilities. Mental health support will be provided to the operators, either via the normal outpatient services of general hospitals or via the division's community services. The units will take referrals from mental hospitals, general hospitals, and private practitioners.

It is anticipated that at least 40 units of accommodation and day-activity spaces will be placed in Calgary, in recognition of the developing service at the Calgary General Hospital and the demonstrated need in that city. Thirty will be placed in Edmonton, and the remainder will be distributed to other regions throughout the province.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate, as I have done so often in the past, that Alberta continues to maintain its commitment to working closely with local municipalities and the voluntary sector in the development of social programs. We are proud of our record, and the content of this ministerial statement reaffirms our continuing commitment to, and encouragement of, local involvement in the delivery of human services.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hospital Construction

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I understand that construction of the Lynnwood Extended Care Centre in Edmonton is to begin shortly, and is expected to be finished in the fall of next year. I commend the government for that decision, but it does provoke a question. Would the minister outline as briefly as possible his department's system of assigning priorities in the many pressing requests for hospital construction throughout the province?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. leader — first of all, for his learning and education, which he seems to require in this entire area of health care priorities. I'm happy to answer that question.

At the time the holding pattern was announced, we indicated that in terms of broad priorities in health care facilities, it was clear that longer term care or extended care facilities should receive the priority now and in the future, consistent with the several reports and studies undertaken throughout Canada on the kinds of health care problems and priorities we'll be facing in the next decade and in decades beyond. With respect to general priorities, that is the

area: the area of auxiliary hospital, the Lynnwood kind of extended care project throughout the province which would receive priority over active treatment beds.

That's not to say, Mr. Speaker, that where we have more than normal population growth — and in Alberta, as I mentioned yesterday, because of the economic buoyancy of this province which is unique in the country, certainly where we have large population growth we will have to meet the desirable standards in terms of active treatment bed additions. But those standards are much less than they have been historically, and much less than in fact we have in the province now.

With respect to individual projects that come within those broad priorities, they are 'prioritized'. Historically I would say that in connection with the development of the new policy which I referred to yesterday, we are trying to develop updated criteria to 'prioritize' individual projects in the different categories of health care facilities on an improved basis from what they have been historically, so that each project in a community would be looked at related to priority needs as they relate to other communities, growth factors, percentage of senior citizens, et cetera.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, the first supplementary to the minister: on March 7, 1975, the Premier announced budgetary provisions had been made for a new 300-bed hospital to be constructed in Grande Prairie, and that it would be pushed ahead as quickly as possible. What happened to that money?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader may not be aware that historically with capital construction that money has not been in the provincial budget. Hospital construction funds for many years have been provided on a loan/debenture basis through the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation. So in fact the provision of funds is not a matter which historically and currently has been voted upon by the Assembly, except those projects which have been funded through the heritage savings trust fund.

Nevertheless, an important factor: the Provincial Treasurer, other cabinet colleagues, and I felt it was important to communicate what was going on in hospital construction and the plans for hospital construction. When the Premier made his statement in 1975, he made a commitment by this government to build a hospital in Grande Prairie, working with the local board — and we have worked extensively on that hospital.

It is a very large project, Mr. Speaker. We're not talking about a small project. Because of the dynamic growth in Grande Prairie, the definition of needs for Grande Prairie and the surrounding community, which I referred to yesterday, is made much more complex. In fact, more time has had to be taken between the board and the former Hospital Services Commission, and now the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, because of these factors which have been uncertain in the planning process.

Shortly now I think the deputy minister is meeting with the Grande Prairie hospital board on April 7 again, and the final . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. My recollection is that the question simply was: what happened to the money.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could put the question again to the minister. What happened to the money that was allocated in 1975, according to the Premier, for construction of the hospital in Grande Prairie? I'm sure at that time the Premier knew Grande Prairie was going to grow.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I answered that in my earlier answer. I said the money was not in the provincial budget and historically has not been, and the money remains there as soon as all the issues are resolved.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then I pose another supplementary question to the minister. In the Speech from the Throne in 1977, we were informed that new facilities are planned for Grande Prairie. My question to the minister again: certainly after making the commitment in '75, in '77 we should have had all the planning done. What happened that we didn't go ahead in 1977 in Grande Prairie?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, yesterday and again today, I would say that planning is not a matter which is solely with the province. Planning is a co-operative matter between the local boards throughout the province and the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. When can the people in Grande Prairie now expect to get approval to go ahead for tender, having regard that they were first promised this hospital in March of 1975?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. CLARK: When will the tender be called?

DR. BUCK: Just before the next election.

MR. MINIELY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure that the matter will be resolved very soon . . .

MR. CLARK: That's what you've been telling them for four years.

MR. MINIELY: . . . between the local board and the community and the government of the province of Alberta, and will not be aided at all by the remarks and comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

DR. BUCK: Before the next election.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Better do it right away.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, the minister might just as well get prepared for the estimates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. CLARK: Could I go on, Mr. Speaker, and ask the minister what suggestions he is making to the Grande Prairie board as to cutting back services in

the Grande Prairie hospital, in light of the fact that the minister has refused to pick up the \$142,000 operating deficit in Grande Prairie last year?

MR. MINIELY: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, that will be reviewed in connection with the resolution of the outstanding issues related to the construction of the new hospital, which now are down to very minor issues from what they were originally. The operating budget will be a component of the approval of the new capital facility.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, let me repeat the question to the minister. I raise the question in light of a letter that's just gone from the minister to the Grande Prairie hospital board with regard to a \$142,000 operating deficit last year. What services is the minister indicating to the Grande Prairie hospital board that they're going to have to cut back to pick up this deficit out of next year? At the same time we have a \$6 billion surplus in this province.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to show his lack of knowledge of the issues in health care and the operation of hospitals in this province.

DR. BUCK: Answer the question.

MR. MINIELY: For three years I have said in answer to questions in this House that priorities for programs in hospitals are decisions of the local board and administration. Every hospital in the province operates on that basis.

MR. CLARK: Malarkey.

MR. MINIELY: Every hospital in the province has operated on that basis for many years. I just repeat: the Leader of the Opposition continues to show his lack of knowledge of health care in this province.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister may feel it's a lack of knowledge on my part. It's a lack of compassion as far as he is concerned, as far as the Grande Prairie situation is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, could I put one more question to the hon. minister. What steps is the minister taking toward helping the Grande Prairie hospital board improve its unacceptable sanitary facilities in response to the recent inspection made by the Grande Prairie health unit?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. leader has some inspection which has not been provided to me, I'll certainly examine it with the department, if they have something which has not been brought to my attention. But I have no such knowledge.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the fact that the minister has indicated that agreement is almost ready to take place, has the government a target date when they will be in a position to proceed to tender?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, again I can only say to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview that he is raising the same kinds of questions which I answered

yesterday with respect to target dates. The hon. member and the hon. Leader of the Opposition know very well that target dates are based upon the co-operation between local communities in the province of Alberta in resolving the definitions of needs, not just demands or requests in a community, but needs for new facilities. A target date based on those variable factors is one which we cannot make.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to confirm whether or not the \$142,000 deficit from last year is in fact one of the determining factors at this stage, or is an impediment to the final resolution of those things necessary to get the Grande Prairie hospital on the road?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the \$142,000 operating deficit is at all an impediment. In an earlier response, I indicated that would be something which would be considered in resolving the final programs and the functional program for the construction of the new Grande Prairie hospital. That would be one of the items which I'm sure will not be very difficult to resolve in a meeting on April 7 between the department and the hospital.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. What assessment of the projected construction costs has the department undertaken, bearing in mind the Alcan pipeline proposal and the impact that project would have on construction costs in northwestern Alberta? Has there been any assessment of the impact such a gigantic proposal could cause if this hospital is delayed?

MR. MINIELY: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the impact on the northern part of Alberta has been judged more in this province than probably any other province in Canada. We have the experience of Fort McMurray, the dynamic growth of that community, and the impact on additional construction costs that that caused. Those kinds of experiences are factors which are taken into account when we look at a hospital of the magnitude and complexity — both of the city and the growth in that city and the community which the new facility is intended to service. That was the import of my earlier answer, Mr. Speaker, in saying that these matters all have to be taken into account to ensure we meet the longer term needs for growth in that area.

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

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister to clarify this question. Specifically, has there been an assessment of the impact of the pipeline on the construction costs? Is it the view of the government of Alberta that the hospital must in fact [precede] the construction of the pipeline?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is referring to a formal cost study done by the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, the answer is no. The question would have to be addressed to others of my colleagues as to the

impact on population growth or other cost factors generally.

Single Parents on Assistance

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It really flows from the discussion in the Assembly last Friday with respect to social assistance recipients who are single mothers, with children older than four months but below school age. Does the new policy require that these mothers be forced to find work or take job training, or be removed from social assistance?

MISS HUNLEY: No, that's not our intention at all. I thought I made that clear on Friday, but I'm happy to reiterate. We are attempting a shift, in that it should be part of the consultative process with single parents who are healthy and who have a healthy child or children. They should be considering their long-range goals and plans, and whether or not they need to seek training or retraining or are eligible for the labor market. That will be dealt with in each individual case as the workers are working with the clients.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Is it the position of the government that single mothers of 4-month-old children should be out working rather than at home with their children?

MISS HUNLEY: That's a very sweeping statement. In some cases, probably; the same as many make that choice of their own initiative. Many of them who have nothing to do with social assistance, the government, or anybody else, do decide to go out and work. If they wish to do that, that should be their privilege. With social assistance I believe the same criteria should apply. In some instances, yes, they should be encouraged to go out to work. In some instances, for whatever reason, perhaps they should be encouraged to stay at home. There are no absolute, strong guidelines in any specific case.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to the minister's comments just now and on Friday last. Has the minister established a set of objectives whereby a specific number of single-parent families will be seeking employment or job training over the next six months?

MISS HUNLEY: No, Mr. Speaker, we have not. We're indicating a shift in policy and direction, and encouragement for those who we believe would be anxious to get out and work, or take training and retraining. I think they should be encouraged to do so.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to the minister. Has the minister an indication of how many spots in day care centres are available in Edmonton and Calgary that single parents would be able to place their children in, either to become involved in job training, as the minister has indicated, or to seek jobs?

AN HON. MEMBER: Order Paper.

MISS HUNLEY: No, I don't have that specific information, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member knows, additional funding is made available for the provision of day care services. We expect all these programs to move forward in a gradual way as they can be implemented. I don't know whether we know specifically how many private day care spaces there are. I believe that information is in the department. If the hon. member would like to put it on the Order Paper, I'd be pleased to provide the answer.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. As a result of her consultation with the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, is the minister in a position to indicate the number of positions in institutions of higher learning, or in programs of retraining, that would be available to single parents? How many positions has the minister at her department's disposal in those areas?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, it would appear that the last two questions are directed out-and-out towards getting statistics. Of course there are better means of doing that than in the question period.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then we can put it this way. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly the results of her discussions with her colleague the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, and can she assure the House that places are available for single parents who decide to follow the minister's advice?

MISS HUNLEY: I'll refer that question to my colleague the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister regarding this very . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. It remains to be seen whether the hon. minister wishes to deal further with the question.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, as in the case of any prospective student or applicant for a place in a postsecondary institution, the people under discussion would have the capacity to move into those institutions based on the preparedness and capacity of the institution to take people in. These particular ones would be of a high priority.

I want to make it clear that the question seems to be in the context of the notion of how Canada Manpower works. That is to say, Canada Manpower buys a specific number of places at certain institutions in each province across the nation. The province doesn't work that way. It tries to respond to a particular individual in his or her circumstance. There would be very, very high priority for entrance and acceptance of people who are the subject of discussion this afternoon.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has the minister allocated a certain number of places in the various job training programs the government has, for mothers who would fit into this situation?

DR. HOHOL: No. I would try to restate this by saying that we try to respond to the total circumstance in Alberta, whether it has to do with training on the job for apprentices, pre-apprenticeship training program, training in industry, or pretraining or actual training of single parents at whatever institution they may aspire to enter and qualify for.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would not wish at all, and never would be caught in the notion or the fact of allocating a certain number of places in an institution for a particular kind of applicant or candidate. It would go against the whole notion of trying to respond to those people who are so different, one from another, in terms of their particular needs, and trying to respond and develop the programs and the competence of staff and the whole community.

So that's the approach we're using, in contrast to, say, Canada Manpower. By referring to Canada Manpower, I simply make a comparison. I'm not saying it's a bad thing; I'm simply saying it's different. So we try to respond. We would respond to the group under discussion with every capacity we have to do so.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary on this topic. There are a number of members who haven't asked their first question and, of course, if there is time left we can come back to it.

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health regarding this very positive shift in policy. I wonder if the minister would indicate whether the field social workers and counsellors agree with this direction. Have they been consulted?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes, they have, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, my chief deputy minister and deputy minister of social services travelled quite extensively throughout the province last year, and they met with many regional administrators and regional directors. On March 2 and 3 they had a workshop to discuss the new policy handbook and the changes they'd see implementing. From there the directors and the administrators were expected to go back to their various locations and discuss it with the workers.

Day Care Program

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. The question relates to the establishment of the level of family subsidy for day care services. Could the minister advise whether the level of family subsidy will cover the total cost to the centre providing the day care service, or will there be a maximum level of subsidy paid by the province?

MISS HUNLEY: There will be a maximum level of subsidy paid by the province.

DR. BUCK: Is the minister in a position to indicate what that maximum will be?

MISS HUNLEY: No, I don't have that with me. It runs in my mind that it's \$100 per month, but I wouldn't like to be held to that. I'd need to check and advise the hon. member.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Could the minister advise whether the city, the day care centre, or the parents will be required to bear the cost of the day care service above the provincial subsidy?

MISS HUNLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. That's part of the design. We did quite a massive study, as the hon. member should be well aware, and tried to arrive at what appeared to be a reasonable range of subsidy. Mind you, it's based on a sliding scale. So there is a maximum, as I said, and individuals will be required to pay according to their net income. Those who are high earners will of course be expected to pay whatever the fee is at that particular day care centre.

The philosophy behind that is that any day care centre can offer the type of service it wishes to offer for children, and I think that's highly commendable. On the other hand, I don't think we should just have an open-ended cheque book whereby no matter how high the price goes, the subsidy will also rise. We needed to have some method of assessing the total impact and containing costs. That's the method we've devised.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Since the announcement of this very exciting and innovative day care program, has the minister had response from municipalities throughout Alberta?

MISS HUNLEY: No, not directly, Mr. Speaker. Officials of my department have been meeting with the various PSS agencies and interested groups across the province, but to my knowledge I have not had any direct correspondence from any municipalities.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker, on this same topic of day care. I wonder if the minister has gathered information to indicate how much saving there is provincially for every dollar of subsidized day care costs for those on social assistance.

MISS HUNLEY: No. That was taken into consideration as part of our overall study, which has been a very massive sort of assessment of the need, the value of it, and how it can best work to the benefit of all people. We do know there are some break-even points, but that still shouldn't deter having children in day care spaces if the need warrants it.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary on this topic.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. What consultation did the minister or her department have with the private sector corporations, et cetera, which have employees who could use day care centres? Was this avenue followed, and is there going to be any move in that direction?

MISS HUNLEY: Personally, in speaking to groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and other groups in the business community, I've indicated that could be a fringe benefit they might well consider. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that that didn't meet with a great deal of enthusiasm. But I still think it has some merit as a fringe benefit and will continue to speak in favor

of it.

On the other hand, we've now found a way of subsidizing children in private day care centres, which I think will help considerably to meet the need.

Metis Settlements — Legal Cases

MR. TESOLIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Attorney General. In view of legal proceedings by the Metis settlements against the government, could the hon. minister advise if the government has suspended all dealings with the settlements out of concern that these agreements might be prejudicial to the proceedings?

MR. FOSTER: No, Mr. Speaker, we definitely have not. From time to time legal proceedings do perhaps encumber the program activity of a government. We have to be careful that no such program activity compromises any proceedings that may be in the court, or the position of the Crown with respect thereto.

But in this case we have endeavored to put into place a consultative mechanism, if you will, through a representative of my office, Mr. John Cote. The Metis settlement association was advised in writing, I believe, by the Premier sometime last fall that only those major requests, negotiations, or projects which may have a bearing on litigation should be referred to Mr. Cote. Once he's had a chance to review the matters, he will pass them on to the appropriate program department.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. We have not and would not shut down the normal process of dealing with Metis groups. However, it's important that we be aware of what's going on, to ensure there is no conflict.

Hog Marketing

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. It flows from reports that there appears to be some problem with respect to the acceptance by packers of the advance bidding system. My question deals with the possibility of an outbreak of a so-called hog war. Has the minister had an opportunity to ascertain where things now sit with respect to discussion between the Alberta hog marketing board on one hand, and the packers on the other, concerning this particular innovation?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I met early last week with some members and the chairman of the Hog Producers' Marketing Board, and discussed the matter with them by telephone. I also met with the president of Burns, the president of Canada Packers, and a number of others involved in purchasing hogs from the hog marketing board. That resulted in a meeting late last week between the Alberta Hog Producers' Marketing Board and a number of packers under the auspices of the Alberta branch of the Meat Packers Council of Canada.

Since that time, Mr. Speaker, I have not been in direct contact with either the Meat Packers Council or the Hog Producers' Marketing Board. But my understanding is that they are working toward resolving

any differences that may exist between the packers and the marketing board.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. During his discussions with the presidents of the major packing firms which he alluded to a moment ago, was the minister given assurance that the packers would not resort, in effect, to the kind of buyers' strike that occurred last August, in the event that they find the innovation is not to their liking?

MR. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker, I was not in any way given that assurance, and I certainly did not ask for it. The discussions centred around not only the principle but the mechanics of the new selling system. I advised all those I talked to with respect to the meat packers that it was my view that the principles outlined in the new selling system were sound, in that they gave an individual producer an opportunity to know beforehand what price was being offered for his hogs. Then that individual would have the ability to determine whether in fact he wanted to make a sale.

On the other hand, I indicated to the packers that I too was concerned about the mechanics of putting the program into place. I passed on to the chairman of the Hog Producers' Marketing Board my views that the board had to be extremely careful to ensure that the mechanics were workable and that in fact the staff of the Hog Producers' Marketing Board were in no way involved in trying to manipulate the system. As well, I passed on to the various firms involved in purchasing hogs my view that they as well had a responsibility to ensure that they did not try to manipulate the system and that it was workable if all parties to the agreement approached the matter in a very positive way.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the government had an opportunity to assess the difficulties that the packing plants claim the new system is causing? Is it the view that there are in fact some problems with the volume of hogs coming in? Or is there at least some concern on the farm that this may be an effort by the packing companies to force everybody back to the old system? My question really relates to whether any effort has been made to ascertain whether there are legitimate difficulties with the new system on the part of the packing plants.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity to review whether there are some difficulties. In meeting with the packers and the Hog Producers' Marketing Board, I indicated initially that we expected the first two or three weeks would indeed see some difficulties with the new system, and it would take some time to get the mechanics of operation in such a position that everyone involved would be satisfied.

Some of the packing plants have indeed had some difficulties, as I understand it, in securing the number of hogs they wanted for a given day's kill. All I can say is that it's the responsibility of the packers working with the marketing board to try to work those matters out. I'm hopeful they will still work them out, without either of the parties having to enter a dispute that would result in a disruption of flow of hogs to the plants.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. During the minister's discussions with the presidents of the major plants, was there an acceptance on their part of the principles contained in the new advance bidding or modified marketing system, or was there some serious concern about the principle itself in addition to the concerns the minister has discussed about the flow of hogs to the plants?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the discussions I've had with the various packing plant presidents or managers are of a confidential nature. I don't think it would be fair to relate the totality of those discussions here in the Legislature, except to say there were different points of view. Some of course took the point of view that the new system was workable; others felt perhaps it would not be. For my part, I urged all of them to consider the new selling system as a principle that could work and should be followed. I advised them that I felt the major difficulties to overcome were the mechanics of operation, and that from my point of view the board was open to considering refinements of the system put into place which would better accommodate the provision of an adequate number of hogs to their plants.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question for clarification. It is then, Mr. Minister, a fair statement to say the position of the Alberta government at the moment is that while there may be some modification of the mechanics, there is a complete commitment by the government to the principle of the new marketing procedure, which would mean advance bidding so that farmers would know the day before, or before they market their hogs, what in fact the price is going to be; and that in fact the government stands behind that principle regardless of what the position of the parties may be.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it would be better to suggest that the position is: after having discussed the principle of the new system at length with the Hog Producers' Marketing Board, I agreed it would be worth while to implement the procedure; that we had to be very careful with the implementation and the mechanics, as I've explained. To this point in time, some three weeks after the new system was implemented, I have no reason to believe that the principle involved is one that should be discarded. I think it is sound.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, other matters that would indicate otherwise may be brought to focus in the weeks and months to come. At the present time, I believe the principle is sound. If we can make the mechanics work, I think it can lead to a new system of selling hogs in western Canada that will be beneficial not only to producers but to packing plants as well.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the minister deals with an apparent deadline which is fast approaching: Friday, April 7. Has the minister discussed what action will be taken by both the hog marketing board and the packers following what I understand is a deadline this Friday, some sort of D-day either to make the system work or not? Is the minister in a position to indicate that he can

assure producers in the province that there's not going to be a major disruption following this Friday as far as the hog marketing board is concerned?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position at any time to suggest there won't be any kind of disruption in marketing. With respect to deadlines on this matter and a variety of others, I'm faced with deadlines imposed by various groups and individuals from time to time, as are other members of the Executive Council. Quite frankly, I think reasonable people — and I believe the Hog Producers' Marketing Board and the packers are reasonable — will not resort to some kind of deadline, but will continue to discuss the ways problems can be resolved; and hogs will continue to flow to market.

Amateur Boxing Week.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. First of all, as honorary president of the Alberta Amateur Boxing Association, I'd like to commend the minister and the government for setting this week as Amateur Boxing Week in this province. I think it will be very helpful, in view of the important part amateur boxing will take in the Commonwealth Games. Are there any special events marking this Amateur Boxing Week in Alberta?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, in working with the Alberta Amateur Boxing Association to recognize Alberta Amateur Boxing Week, the fact that boxing is one of the 10 sports in the Commonwealth Games was one of the significant factors behind that decision.

In answer to the question: yes, there are boxathons throughout the province of Alberta that will see the boxers displaying their various skills. Certainly they relate to skipping, shadow-boxing, and various training techniques. Also, the kick-off of Boxing Week saw the selection of the boxers who will represent Alberta. They'll be working very hard from this point on to make the Canadian team, as part of that contingent at the Commonwealth Games on August 3 to 12.

Referendum Legislation

MR. KING: My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Having regard to recent musings by the federal government respecting national referenda, I wonder if this province has developed or is in the process of developing a policy with respect to national referenda, particularly those which may touch on areas of concurrent power under the BNA Act, or indeed on areas of exclusively provincial responsibility?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, insofar as the federal bill was introduced only a matter of hours ago, we haven't yet had a chance to finalize our position with respect to all those matters. I just received the federal bill a few hours ago, and haven't reviewed it in detail.

On the one hand, Mr. Speaker, I would think it would not be inappropriate, perhaps as a tactical lever on one particular issue, perhaps if one province had a referendum, for the federal government to

have, through Parliament, some power to hold one of its own referenda in association with that provincial referendum.

However, I think we should be very careful and very cautious in this area, because the whole concept of referenda as a mechanism is of course completely foreign to responsible parliamentary democracy in Canada. I think it would be wrong if the concept were used indiscriminately or in a very general way. I think Parliament, not the executive, should have basic control over the elements of a referendum. There is to be borne in mind, I think, the very real danger that if it's not used properly, there could be an impairing of the rights of those provinces with low populations.

So I would concede that perhaps in a short, specific, limited way, the legislation for a federal referendum might be appropriate. But I would not endorse it in a broader, comprehensive way across the country or on more than one occasion.

MR. KING: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It is perhaps in the nature of the way I ask questions that my colleagues chuckle, but I think we're dealing here with a question which is potentially critical to all provinces. I would like to ask the hon. minister if he has had an opportunity to consider whether or not there would be areas in which the provincial government would insist on participation in the conduct of referenda. Again, I think particularly of areas of concurrent jurisdiction.

MR. HYNDMAN: That might well be a caveat which we would wish to consider, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, I haven't yet had an opportunity to look at the proposed federal legislation in detail. But that idea may be one which we would look upon very favorably.

MR. KING: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Was there any consultation by any representative of the federal government with the provincial government prior to the introduction of this bill in the House of Commons?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, last fall when I met with Mr. Lalonde, in November I believe, there was very general indication that there was a possibility of such federal legislation being introduced. But the specifics of it were not indicated to us. Certainly there has been no consultation over the course of the last 12 weeks.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. minister. In view of the fact that everybody else is trying to get their hands into the Alberta heritage trust fund cookie jar, has Premier Levesque asked for some money to help pay for the referendum in Quebec?

Lord's Day Act

MR. PLANCHE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Attorney General. Some of the merchants in Calgary are complaining that their competitors are remaining open for business on Sunday. I wonder if the Attorney General could advise whether or not he is going to be a little firmer in his prosecutions of offenders under The Lord's Day Act.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, the general policy is that if there are complaints either to our office or to any police department concerning possible violations of The Lord's Day Act, those complaints are usually investigated and acted upon. I think you will find that recently in Calgary there have been a couple of charges with respect to The Lord's Day Act. Certainly that has been the case in Edmonton, and I think there have been one or two convictions.

MR. PLANCHE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, if I may. Rather than responding to the initiatives of the merchants, I wonder if the Attorney General is going to review that legislation with the object of making it more contemporary and consistent.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, that is an extremely worth-while and useful idea.

MR. GHITTER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. When the hon. Attorney General is considering his legislation, I wonder whether he would consider bringing the Lord's day back to Saturday, where it would be widely respected. [laughter]

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, of course we're conscious of the rights of minorities and will be happy to consider it.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the minister. I wonder if the minister could inform this Assembly if upping the fines a little is being considered, so maybe a business will pay more attention if charged.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, fortunately neither my office nor my agents have the final decision when it comes to assessing fines in the court.

MR. SPEAKER: We might have time for a short question by the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff, and a short answer.

Senior Citizens' Housing

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Housing and Public Works. I wonder if he can advise the Assembly when we might expect to learn of the allocation for senior citizens' self-contained housing under his departmental program?

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, this year the government has approved sufficient funding for the construction of some 1,548 senior citizens' self-contained apartments throughout the province and for some 229 beds in the form of lodges. It is my intent to bring forth to the House by way of ministerial statement on Thursday of this week the allocation of these units throughout the province.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motion for a

Return 123 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

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

- (1) the names of all executive assistants employed by the Minister Without Portfolio responsible for Native Affairs since he assumed that responsibility;
- (2) the present position, if any, and salary of each such executive assistant named in (1), either on the staff of Executive Council or in the Alberta public service, or in any contractual relationship to the provincial government.

To which Mr. R. Speaker moved the following amendment:

In section (1), that the words "executive assistants" be replaced by the words "contract employees";
In section (2), that the words "executive assistant" be replaced by the words "contract employee".

[Adjourned debate March 30: Mr. Hyndman]

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might be permitted to withdraw Motion for a Return No. 120 and resubmit it.

[Motion and amendment withdrawn]

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

- (1) the maximum capacity of each of the following:
 - (a) the Youth Development Centre,
 - (b) Westfield Diagnostic and Treatment Centre,
 - (c) Maple Ridge Residential Treatment Centre,
 - (d) the William Roper Hull Home;
- (2) the number, on February 28, 1978, of juvenile delinquents being treated in each of the centres listed above;
- (3) the number, on February 28, 1978, of juvenile delinquents on waiting lists for treatment or placement in each of the centres listed in No. (1);
- (4) the contract *per diem* rate to detain and treat a juvenile in the institutions in Part 1(c) and (d), and the *per diem* cost to detain and treat a juvenile in Part 1(a) and (b).

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

206. Moved by Mr. Shaben:

Be it resolved that the government of Alberta give immediate consideration to the policy recommendations contained in the economic development position paper proposed to the government by the Northern Alberta Development Council.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 1975 the Premier of this province, when making opening remarks to the Opportunity North Conference in Peace River, posed a number of questions to northerners who were in attendance. He asked: how fast should the north develop; what kinds of services

should be put in place, in what communities, and in what order of priority; how can northern Alberta best co-operate with the Northwest Territories; how can the economic and cultural interests of native people best be protected; and what is the appropriate role for the provincial government?

The members of the Northern Alberta Development Council, who are private citizens, with the exception of the hon. Mr. Dowling, Minister of Business Development and Tourism, and me, spend a great many hours travelling and visiting communities in northern Alberta, discussing and listening to the views expressed by northern citizens, and making policy recommendations to the government of Alberta through the Minister of Business Development and Tourism.

The Northern Alberta Development Council accepted the challenge of the Premier and decided to go to work on preparing a position paper related to the economic development of northern Alberta. For the past 16 months the members of the council have met regularly, discussed, rewritten, and worked over and over the difficulties and problems faced by northern Albertans.

I'd first like to summarize some major points contained in the paper. The role and mandate of the Northern Alberta Development Council is to investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan, and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta and to advise the government.

To look at the economic situation in northern Alberta, I would list the resource strengths in the following manner. First of all, land, in that the area the Northern Alberta Development Council is involved in is roughly two-thirds of the land area of the province, and a great deal of that land has enormous potential for agricultural development. So the first resource is land. Naturally I'm not including people, because it goes without saying that the first resource of any nation, province, or region is the people.

The second resource is oil and natural gas, whether it's the tar sands or the Rainbow or Swan Hills oil fields. There's tremendous potential in the oil and gas area. I'm sure all of you have read with interest the recent findings of huge potential reserves of natural gas south of Grande Prairie.

Another resource is the forest resource. There has been recent development in the timber industry in Whitecourt and a number of other areas. Water is a tremendously important resource, and growing in importance as the years go by. We're beginning to realize that it may be the single most important resource. The north is also a transportation corridor to the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory.

I'd like to balance these resources with some of the weaknesses of the north, some of the difficulties we must recognize. The size of the population; the extent of northern markets — there's difficulty in accessing those southern markets; the distance between communities and from the centres of population within the province and indeed the rest of Canada, North America, and the world; the very expensive transportation systems; some difficulties in climate in northern areas. I've mentioned the sparsity of population. There's the difficulty of high utility and construction costs. Briefly these are some of the difficulties we must balance with the assets and the pluses of northern Alberta.

The Northern Alberta Development Council ex-

pressed a number of views as to the role of government in the economic development of northern Alberta. In the position paper the council felt that the government has a role to play in the management of lands, the manner in which lands are handled. As members are aware, over 50 per cent of the land area in Alberta is owned by the Crown. A great deal of that of course is in northern Alberta. So the government must exercise a management role in how this land is handled, keeping in mind of course the environmental difficulties in certain northern areas, where the environment is more sensitive than in other parts of the province.

The council also views that the government has a role in supporting economic development by creating a sound investment climate, by developing infrastructure, providing quality education, and health and social services in order that the climate is there for business, for risk-takers to develop jobs and businesses. This provision of services must be stable and predictable to allow the business community and the risk-takers to know in what direction this sort of development is going. Any development plan should take into account that in the north the dollar buys a little less than in the south, whether in terms of construction or many other matters.

The council also believes the government has a role in stimulating the economy in the north: to act as a gap-filler, to aid in developing areas where private developers, private businessmen cannot locate, to speed up through government incentives the establishment of enterprises; that is, private enterprises that could manage profitably, for example, agriculture and resource processing plants. Efforts of the government should be directed toward promoting balanced economic growth. That's the key to sound development in northern Alberta.

All of us are aware of the tremendous developments taking place in Fort McMurray; Grande Prairie, the pulp and paper; the proposed developments in Cold Lake, Grand Centre. But there is a huge area between and around. This is why the council felt that attention has to be given to balanced growth throughout the north.

There should be encouragement to research and development. We recognize a great deal of research is going on, whether funded through AOSTRA or a number of other areas. This should retain a high priority; for example, the potential of the Clear Hills iron ore deposits. Aspen poplar trees grow like grass in the north, and there has to be research on maximum utilization of available aspen. Agriculture: the Minister of Agriculture recently announced a \$10 million program of agricultural research through the heritage savings trust fund. This is just tremendously important, and I look forward to it moving forward. The potential for agriculture in the north is practically unlimited.

Earlier I mentioned the importance of infrastructure, to stimulate industries to locate in northern regions. This draws me to the recent signing of the Alberta North Agreement between the government of Alberta and the government of Canada, which assists in providing those regions of northern Alberta with far better infrastructure than they would normally have, by providing assistance in those areas where costs are high and distances great.

The Northern Alberta Development Council rec-

ommends financial incentives. This is a very important and difficult area. Members of the council spent many hours on the matter of grants. Many in the Assembly are familiar with cases where massive federal grants have been provided to different industries, not only in Alberta but in other places, and there have been difficulties with these industries, a number have failed and so on. The council wanted to be cautious in the use of this sort of tool, that grants be used with utmost care only in special circumstances where there should be a high probability of commercial viability and enterprise, and the business venture can be of social benefit to the surrounding region. So that was very important. The emphasis in the discussions was that grants be used with utmost care.

Loans and guarantees is an area where the council feels the Alberta Opportunity Company and the Ag. Development Corporation could improve their service to northern Alberta by allowing a little more flexibility in the interest rate, repayment plan, and that sort of method allowing risk-takers and businessmen to get started. The council will continue to press the Minister of Business Development and Tourism, who is responsible for AOC, to implement these sorts of measures with more flexibility in AOC and ADC funds.

I think the government should provide technical and consultative assistance to those areas, particularly those regions of very high unemployment. There are certain areas in northern Alberta where there are high levels of unemployment. The educational process is vitally important, and the continued assistance and consultation with businesses taking part in government-assisted programs, whether through AOC or ADC. This is a role where I think the government — I don't necessarily mean the government; it can be retired businessmen. Small businessmen who have decided to retire could be retained on a contract basis to work with northerners, to help them, give them advice and continuing advice, not only until a loan is granted but afterwards, because that's when a lot of the difficulties arise.

Another proposal contained in the economic development paper is the proposal for tax incentives. This economic development paper is not a complete answer. It's a framework, a discussion paper to direct our thoughts and the thoughts of the Assembly toward the different tools that can be used to achieve a high level of development in northern Alberta. One of the tools suggested is tax incentives. These could take the form of property tax incentives where there is a delay in assessment on new businesses, or other methods. The use of incentives could encourage industries to locate and foster a cordial and co-operative relationship between government and private industry, a prerequisite to successful northern development.

But I would caution that any sort of incentive must be handled with care, and I've said that before. There are always examples: say a plumber is in business in a certain community, and another plumber approaches a government lending agency for some sort of assistance in a community 50 miles away. We must be cautious as to how the government operates in its assistance and incentives, so it doesn't interfere with businesses that are already in business and have been for a number of years.

I wish to make a few final comments, Mr. Speaker.

They may not necessarily express the views of the Northern Alberta Development Council, but I think they are vitally important. Northern development should not be a line department. There are those who advocate there should be a department of northern development. There is in Saskatchewan; there was in Manitoba, and they're dismantling it. In Quebec they're in the process of reviewing and reducing the impact of their department of northern development. Ontario has recently established a department of northern development. I think there is a danger of alienating northerners by establishing a separate department of northern development. Also it provides the ministers of the line departments a cop-out on their responsibilities in serving all Albertans.

So I think the approach being used here in Alberta, with a Northern Alberta Development Council making recommendations to all the line departments, is the correct route to follow. It is also important that all the ministers of the provincial government have as much understanding and familiarity of the pluses, the difficulties, the people, the geography of the north. If we had a department, they would have less interest in the north.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I think public servants should have a good knowledge of the north. One of the things northerners resent is public servants — not just public servants, but politicians — flying out from Edmonton, landing in a community, advising the people in the community of a great program, and then getting on the plane and flying back. The people of the north would like to feel that those public servants working for them have an understanding of their needs, their feelings, their desires, and their difficulties. It's really important that the government's program of decentralization continue, that the offices of various government services be located in northern Alberta.

When discussing this paper or any program for the north, we must take time, care, thought, consultation, and planning before programs are implemented. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe instant success and instant change in the north is possible. It's going to be a long process, and it has to be handled with care, good planning, and consultation with the people of the north.

I think it's important that the members of this Assembly make every effort to enable the people of the north to take a full part in the growth and the exciting future of our province. As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, this policy is only a preliminary framework. Let's heed the advice of the Northern Alberta Development Council and move forward with sound economic development proposals for all Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CLARK: In taking part in the debate very briefly this afternoon, I want to commend the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake for putting this motion on the Order Paper. I would not want him to take the remarks I am going to make as a reflection on him personally. I would like to take a very few minutes, Mr. Speaker, to make some broad, general comments with regard more to the attitude and the feeling I get from people in the northern part of the province when it's my opportunity to be there. I should say to members that, despite what the Member for Grande

Prairie says, I try to spend at least one day in every four weeks in the northern part of the province, in the northeast or the northwest.

I think it would do good for all members of the Assembly to remind themselves every morning that Athabasca is the middle of Alberta. It would do those of us from the south rather good to keep that in mind. I may say that at political peril as far as people in some parts of the province are concerned. Nevertheless I think it's important for us to recognize that.

In my perception, the way many people in northern Alberta look at Edmonton and the provincial capital is very similar to the way many Albertans look at Ottawa. Several times during various trips in the north, I've had expressed to me that there's a feeling that a large pipeline comes down from northern Alberta to Edmonton, and that pipeline doesn't take only our oil and gas, it takes our best young people, it takes the products that people in the northern part of Alberta produce. I think that feeling can be compared to the feeling many Albertans have toward the federal government in Ottawa. They really feel they don't get the kind of response that they get. Likely that could be said as far as the former government is concerned too.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. CLARK: One of the members over here says, "agreed", and quite likely that's the case. But what we're really trying to do here this afternoon, as I understand it, is look at these Northern Alberta Development Council recommendations, and where Alberta goes from there. I make the point again that I think northern Albertans feel a large pipeline comes down from the north to Edmonton and a rather small garden hose goes back, and part of the time that garden hose is plugged. That, I think, summarizes rather well the feeling I get.

I recall an experience I had in High Level recently, when the point was raised very forcefully with me there: think of the amount of money that goes into the Provincial Treasury every day from the Rainbow Lake fields, and we in High Level still can't get natural gas. That's one example of the kind of feeling I think is pretty prevalent among many people in northern Alberta. Now we can argue whether that feeling of alienation is legitimate. My own view is that in many areas it is legitimate, and that the comments made by the Member for Lesser Slave Lake this afternoon are the same kind of comments I've heard in the Assembly for a number of years by present members and by former members too.

One part of the hon. member's comments struck home very much. He said we have politicians and public servants who fly in for a day, make grandiose announcements, and then leave. I'd like to refer to March 18, 1975, when the Premier was in northern Alberta during the last provincial election. On that particular occasion, his major announcement for the Grande Prairie constituency was confirmation that provision had been made in the February 1976 budget for a 300-bed regional hospital located in Grande Prairie.

DR. BUCK: He can do that again in six months.

MR. CLARK: He gave no cost estimates or completion dates, but MLA Dr. Backus indicated that plans were moving along very well. Now if there's ever an example of the kind of thing the Member for Lesser Slave Lake is talking about, this is it. We even included the announcement of this hospital in the Speech from the Throne in 1977, and again in 1978. You know, the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake is right on. People in northern Alberta are just fed up with this kind of thing being done by politicians of all stripes.

MR. NOTLEY: It's a promising hospital.

MR. CLARK: The hospital promised for Grande Prairie exemplifies that best of any example I can think of on this particular occasion.

In his comments the hon. member talked about balanced economic growth for the north. That's true, but you know, all of us as MLAs talk about balanced growth across this province. We talk about the need for research development and agricultural research. Then there's the Alberta North Agreement, which was signed. While I hope what the hon. member says is going to be accurate, when he indicated this was going to supply us with much of the infrastructure needed in the north, I suspect his political colleague, the Member of Parliament for Peace River, was likely more accurate when he indicated something like, I'm not so enthused that this Alberta North Agreement is really going to solve all the problems of the north. That's another example of rising expectations and then just not being able to deliver things.

Mr. Speaker, I think the real point I'd like to make is this: as for broad, general outlines, the work done by the Northern Alberta Development Council — I'm sure many people in the north would say, agreed. It seems to me, though, that we now have to get past the agreed stage and get on with some concrete things that are going to be done.

When the chairman of the Northern Development Council — the hon. Member for Edson, the Minister of Business Development and Tourism — used to be on this side of the House, there was a specific allocation of funds for the council. That wasn't a perfect answer, but it did enable the council to have some muscle. It did enable it to go in and do some things. Right now the council may have the best intentions in the world, but it simply doesn't have muscle when it comes to the various government departments. If there ever was a case, I'm sure the Grande Prairie hospital would be an example. I'm sure the Northern Development Council has been involved in trying to get this hospital, promised in '75, moved along. If it wasn't, it should have been.

It would seem to me that we're now past the stage of needing promises and nice statements. What we need now is some concrete action. Frankly what I had hoped would happen in the course of debate this afternoon, or in the budget, would be a number of specific proposals we could look to as far as the north is concerned. I'm sure that members from the north share the same kind of feeling I've received, a feeling of pretty frank, shall I call it, frustration, a feeling of, well you politicians promise this and that, but how much have you been able to deliver over a period of many years? It's not just the last seven or eight years; I think it's an accumulation of frustration that's

developed in the north for a number of years, and that has to be recognized. At the same time, I say to northern members that we have to look at the problems of other rural portions of the province too. It isn't a one-way street.

It seems to me that one of the areas we should look at is the recommendations of the ECA on the question of erosion in the north. I think there was an expectation by people in the north that following the work done by the ECA, there would be some pretty major moves in that direction. Once again I think that is the kind of thing the council should be able to bring forward as far as specific projects are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, what I suspect is going to happen is that in the fall session this year — at least what I hope would happen — a sizable portion of the heritage savings trust fund is going to be allocated for northern development, specific projects in the north. Now I hope we don't have to wait until then for that hospital in Grande Prairie. But there is a wide range of other projects that could fit within the heritage savings trust fund. I suppose the next opportunity the government is going to have to include those things budgetwise is going to be in the fall when we have the heritage savings trust fund capital portion. To the members of the government: don't be surprised if these announcements are greeted with a certain amount of scepticism, in light of what's happened not only in the hospital in Grande Prairie but other kinds of announcements.

Mr. Speaker, let me just conclude very, very quickly by simply saying this: I'm convinced the comment that it costs more to build and operate things, and that utility costs are higher in the north, is accurate. I know that's a difficult thing to get through the heads of some members of the provincial bureaucracy. But just look at the utility costs. Not long ago I recall the Grande Prairie hospital board showing figures of their utility costs compared to utility costs in Calgary or Lethbridge-Medicine Hat. That's an area that could be moved on long before we get to the fall session and the heritage savings trust fund. Another area is the suggestion made on several occasions by my colleague from Clover Bar, the idea of saying to graduates of professions at the universities in Alberta, look, if you're prepared to go not only to the north but to rural parts of the province where your professional services are available, then in fact we should be prepared to write a off pretty sizable portion of student assistance. I know that's been tried in a very small area for young native people, but that's another way we can get some professional people into areas that certainly need them.

Mr. Speaker, the only reason I wanted to rise and speak today was to say to hon. members that I think there's a feeling in the northern part of the province that they're being neglected as much as we as Albertans feel we're being neglected by the federal government in Ottawa. All members, regardless of where they sit in the House, have to shoulder some of the blame for that particular attitude that's developed. In conclusion, I simply say that if the debate we're having this afternoon and the paper by the council don't quickly spur some specific action, some specific programs, then it will be seen as just another venture by some politicians to placate the people of the north a bit longer. All of us do that really at our own peril, because I think people in the northern part of the

province definitely have some legitimate grievances. We'd be wise to deal with those, but at the same time keep in mind legitimate grievances from other parts of the province. Three or four years from now, let's not be in a situation where we have — we hope we'll have the Grande Prairie hospital in place by then, but other examples which we can point to; the Grande Prairie example being likely the worst I can think of at this particular time.

MR. PEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, in rising to support in principle Motion 206 raised by the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, I would like to make a few comments. I find it very difficult, after reading this report, and understanding that this report is the result of some hundreds of meetings of people who live in the area of this discussion today — so-called northern Alberta — that in this House I can specifically identify some magic formula of what the problems are, other than to state that this government and previous governments have recognized the importance of northern Alberta in many ways, with the ARA, the Slave Lake railroad, the purchase of PWA, the paving of the Mackenzie, the development of Fort McMurray, and on and on we go.

The problem that arises from the development of a specific area has been contended with, with federal governments, provincial governments, and municipal governments since I became aware of the need for so-called economic assistance in the development of an area. I say that because in the DREE programs that have been sponsored and developed, certain projects in northern Alberta that have been most unsuccessful created many, many problems, in many instances have done more harm than good. Therefore it is with a great reassurance, a great understanding of maturity of what northern Albertans are beginning to recognize as how to come to grips with the problem of growth — economic responsibility, if you like, or economic opportunity — has been identified in the conclusions in this position paper that was presented in December 1977.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote this important passage, which I think sums up how we should start to look at the problems facing northern Alberta:

It comes about through an emphasis on building with people in mind, and on the establishment of enterprises compatible with the needs of the population.

Then I quote another part:

The message is that not only must government be more sensitive to the needs of Northern Alberta, northerners must be more aggressive in articulating those needs. Not by making uncoordinated and unending demands on the public purse, but by helping government design reasonable and effective programs for the North

An effective and progressive economic development program of Northern Alberta requires the dynamism of citizen participation, expert study, courage for risk taking and innovation, and finances.

Mr. Speaker, I don't find any reference to government in their conclusions in that passage. So I would like to suggest to this Assembly — and, for what it's worth, to the economic council of northern Alberta — that possibly in review of the conclusions they have drawn, they might consider a committee that would

be established to look at two areas that identify economic growth: one is the part the government would apply, and the second is the part they would apply.

I think governments should do what they're best and most able to do. They should react to the needs and wishes of the people of that area. They are prepared to look at roads, airports, sewage and water, schools, and hospitals in the communities. But they should do it in the context of a total northern Alberta program, set up their priorities based on one, two or three projects, and then pass it to the government. Then possibly in this Legislature there could be some concrete discussion as to how those priorities might be funded or acted upon, and in what time frame.

The second recommendation or suggestion I would make to the northern council is with regard to finances, which they have identified in their conclusions as one of the problems that face people who are innovative or who are developing these programs for northern Alberta. Possibly they should set up another committee that encompasses the northern Alberta community.

Let's look at the private sector. When I was minister, it was a favorite comment of mine that one of the problems facing Alberta was the central banking system. It didn't identify and wasn't sensitive enough to the community in which it operated. The decision was made in Toronto or Montreal, therefore it couldn't be transmitted back to the people who were responsible or desirous of having the funds in order to apply them in the particular application that was needed. I suggested, vis-a-vis, that in general terms one of the reasons for the great success of the free-enterprise system in the United States was that it used the unit banking system, in which the entrepreneur, the innovative person within the community in which he needed those funds in order to progress, providing he had the capabilities of management, found he had the necessary funds developed from people who were sensitive to that requirement, that need, and that particular area.

It is interesting to note that through the efforts of this government over some seven years, the central banking institution has reacted to some of these considered problems of so-called remote Alberta and Saskatchewan, and has devised programs. I happened to be in the Royal Bank this morning on some private business, and here are some 14 publications by the Royal Bank in relation to private businesses: How to Finance Your Business, Pointers to Profit, Good Management, Exporting/Importing, Financial Reporting, Assistance Controls, Inventory Recommendations, et cetera, et cetera.

If we have in place six central banking institutions in Alberta, doesn't it seem possible that the committee in northern Alberta should call them together, sit down, and say: look, we have a problem here in northern Alberta. Part of the problem we're facing is an understanding of what we want to do in proper management and proper terms. Because of your experience in the private sector and because we believe in this system, we want you to react to our needs here, and here are our priorities. From that we want to determine the shortfall as to our requirements in order to make this work, and from that we can identify whether we have to go to last-resort operations such as AOC or otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the same committee that handles finance, that, brings in the private sector and sits them down — not some local branch manager, but demands that the head of each of these respective banking institutions in the province of Alberta sit down with this committee to come up with some answers in response to their problem. I would suggest that same committee might do the same in relation to agricultural products, whether it be the Wheat Board, because it is involved in marketing; and not some civil servant of the Wheat Board, but some decision-maker — sit down with the implement manufacturers, the transportation people, the market people, which in this case would be the Wheat Board, possibly the handlers, and the grain people, and once again say, this is what we want to do in northern Alberta. From that recommendation, I think we would move into the twenty-first century in relation to the ability of government and the private sector to work out the necessary requirements to fulfil the needs and opportunities of the people in their respective areas.

MR. TESOLIN: I am pleased to speak on the motion introduced by the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake. While I may not agree with the member and some of the ideas of the council, and [with] the role of government in the overall philosophy of northern development, I would like to begin my comments on the paper by dealing with the goal expressed by the council. Mr. Speaker, the goal of the council, to encourage balanced economic growth in the north, is commendable. No one can deny that balanced social, industrial, and environmental programs are and always have been essential to any regional development, but no more essential or urgent than the achievement of balanced growth elsewhere in the province.

In the sense that it requires intelligent management of human and natural resources, the north is no different from any other area of Alberta, and as such should not be set aside for special treatment; just equitable treatment, equitable to that which has happened throughout the history of Alberta. We feel we haven't yet achieved this. We know the present cost of living and expenses for construction of infrastructure are higher in northern communities than in the rest of Alberta. Regional disparities in economic growth in Alberta can be remedied only by implementing sound, practical, and equitable policies under the guidance of knowledgeable people.

The one big concern I have about the report of the Northern Development Council is that there still is a danger in the suggestion that the technical support component of the strategy be carried out by experts from outside. When it comes to northern needs and wishes, the people of northern Alberta are as competent as and certainly more knowledgeable than any other person in this great province of ours. Mr. Speaker, I honestly hope we don't fall into the trap of creating jobs to fit the talents of the applicant. We need to define the task to be done and then carry out that task by competent local people.

There is a strong and immediate danger that we may do more to compound rather than solve the problems of the north. It is inconceivable that a resident from my constituency in Fort Chipewyan, skilled in the ways of northern living, should be sent

to solve the urban problems of Edmonton or the transportation problems of Calgary. Why then appoint outsiders to the strategies and developments of the north? Who knows better the problems of the urban milieu than those raised and trained in the urban setting? And who knows better what avenues of growth to follow than those whose hearts belong in the north? We hope and ask for only the same as any other area of Alberta: that we be allowed the opportunity to control our own destiny.

I find myself in a slight paradox this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, when I speak in appeal about reports such as this one. I find myself asking that northern Alberta be allowed the same consideration as any other part of the province, yet at the same time request that we be sensitive to the special circumstances of the north.

Mr. Speaker, this report has zeroed in on the difficulties encountered in northern development and has proposed a number of government policies for assisting in the solution of these problems. I agree with many of these. For instance it has shown that the chief concern in present economic programs is to maintain balance in terms of geographic and social distribution of wealth. At the same time, the report recommends that northern development not be done in a haphazard fashion that has no respect for the delicate ecological factors of the region.

Mr. Speaker, the north needs development that is in harmony with the local landscape and with local needs and wishes. We do not need grandiose schemes imposed or transported from elsewhere. Local development must be sensitive to the unique ecological factors of that special region.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the council's recommendations that research and development be directed to such areas as the discovery of new extraction methods and new uses for existing resources. The key point here is the use of existing natural resources. To be effective, regional development must be suited to the conditions and resources which are native to that particular area. It is irrational to implant in northern Alberta an artificial economic structure which can only be maintained by importing materials, labor, money, and more money — mainly government money.

The history of the north has been developed in accordance with the needs and desires of established areas of the world, in early history through the fur trade and lately by the established areas of Canada. The fur trade, for instance, was the first long continuum of exploitation of our resources. Many northerners resent this situation and have come to believe the north is not, as the books usually say, the land of great potential or the land of the future, but really the land of the exploited.

Rapid and effective measures must be taken, Mr. Speaker, to erase these feelings of disillusionment among northerners about their economy. A good first step toward the goal of balanced prosperity in the north has been mentioned in the council report. I refer to the proposal to establish an inventory of what is there. It is extremely important to undertake a projection of an infrastructure required to harvest the available resources of the north while still maintaining respect for its environment, as I said before, and the way of life to which northern people have become accustomed and attached.

Mr. Speaker, the council recommends construction

of a public infrastructure to stimulate economic growth. I totally agree with this prudent suggestion, and all I would like to add is, let's go and do it.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency did not have an inch of pavement until the late '60s. It is not difficult to see that this government has had to play catch-up ball all the way. We were forgotten by the then government, and transportation is only one example. Many of our areas never had telephones until the coming of the now government in '71. With great thanks to the present hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones, who's not here, many of the isolated areas in my constituency will now have continuous communication with the outside. This is a tremendous asset to our development.

Mr. Speaker, when a solid base of roads, other transportation and communication facilities, and other human services are developed, then private capital will easily be encouraged to locate in northern Alberta. Surely we cannot expect investors to locate in totally unserved wilderness, and it is ridiculous to expect northern development to occur without first of all the development of a basic public infrastructure. The development of roads and other aspects of public infrastructure makes good sense, Mr. Speaker. I heartily agree with this recommendation of the report. When it comes to these sorts of services and amenities, the people of the region deserve no less than any other citizen of Alberta.

But let me re-emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that the time for pretty talk about things to happen, about the potential of the north, has passed. The time for action has arrived. The time to lay the foundation for northern economic development is now, Mr. Speaker.

The last but not the least important policy recommendation of the council is the establishment of an effective system of financial incentives for northern Alberta. I do not intend to delve deeply into the implications of these incentives; suffice to say I agree with the recommendations with one exception and that concerns special projects. Special projects in the north have generally been ineffective. They have simply served as band-aid solutions for more fundamental problems by hiding the underlying source of the infection. They only serve to create false hope and cause the development of related economic and social ills.

Social projects should be flexible and dovetailed to the specific needs of a region. Too often in the past these programs have been "gimme" programs, almost an insult to any Albertan. They have been drafted — we have a program and they say, where do we plug it in? Mr. Speaker, I say, let's be flexible. Let us say that in regions of northern Alberta we need such and such, then develop the program; not develop the program and then plug it in. Mr. Speaker, this has been happening in the north for too long, and sometimes we feel we've been made fools of.

I sincerely hope this paper prepared by the Northern Alberta Development Council does not end up being one of those documents filed in the circular file and forgotten. I hope this document will not be viewed as an accumulation of frilly, fatuous phrases that offer no hope for immediate action.

The council believes in a balanced and flexible approach toward northern development, and so do I, Mr. Speaker. I believe in balancing development around the resources that already exist in the north,

like trapping and fishing, with the resources that have great potential for the future. Mineral extraction and agriculture should be added. I too want to see flexibility in the development of the north. I sincerely hope the suggested goals of the Northern Alberta Development Council are not just the fables of an overly fertile mind. I hope we will see a flexible approach toward development, Mr. Speaker, an approach that does not lock the north into dependence on, let's say, petroleum extraction or other mineral deposits, or on big government. Let's keep it flexible and not commit all our eggs to one basket.

Mr. Speaker, increased attention should be devoted to a comprehensive agricultural research program in the north. We must not neglect the potential production capacity of agriculture in my area. The cattle industry, for instance, plays a vital role in northern Alberta agriculture. Improvements in techniques of production and of equipment for use in farming, through a co-ordinated research program, would contribute significantly to our economic status.

While there has been much talk about initiating major agricultural research projects in the north, I have yet to see one worth-while one set up in my constituency. And, to the Minister of Agriculture, I'd love to see it happen. Hypothetical, theoretical solutions to northern development must be transformed into practical, concrete action now, if the north and the province as a whole are to benefit.

Another avenue of economic development which should be fully investigated in connection with northern Alberta is the recreational potential. Vast tracts of virgin recreational land exist in northern Alberta. Development of this important resource would greatly bolster the economic base of northern communities and provide stable and possibly increasing sources of revenue.

Agricultural research and recreational development are not the only avenues we should be investigating. We should also be giving our best effort to discovering ways to support and increase the commercial fishing and sport fishing industry of the region. Commercial and sport fisheries in northeastern Alberta have an unrealized potential for expansion. During the past few years technical staff and research funds to evaluate, manage, and improve this important fishery have not been adequate. The fish and wildlife division within the Department of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife must be provided with the staff and funding necessary to aid northern communities in the development of commercial and sport fishing. This renewable resource will become increasingly important as the tourist industry grows and blossoms, and as the problems of marketing local fish products are solved.

The region's pristine lakes, rivers, and streams offer an angling experience the quality of which may not be excelled in western North America. I believe I have support in this from the hon. members for Camrose and Edmonton Calder.

Alberta consumers presently purchase most of their fish products from the maritime provinces and international processing centres. The consumer in Calgary or Edmonton can purchase cod from Nova Scotia, salmon from British Columbia, and rainbow trout from the United States and Japan. Surely locally produced fish products, particularly whitefish, walleye, and pike, can be processed and marketed at a competitive advantage within Alberta. So, Mr.

Speaker, innovative programs are needed now, to ensure that the economic and social values associated with fish resources are realized.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to belabor this point, but I see the report of the Northern Development Council as a start in the right direction. Although some of the statements in the philosophy section of their position paper seem a little airy-fairy, or perhaps a little too theoretical, for the most part I support the recommendations in the paper, and I'm going to support the motion. I'm supporting the motion in the hope that this will be a real concrete step for concrete action for a really golden future for northern Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in the resolution before us this afternoon, I'd like to begin by saying I agree with some of the comments made by the hon. Member for Calgary Currie, particularly his suggestion that one step the Northern Development Council might consider would be to sit down with the major people in the chartered banks in Alberta and assess the respective policies of the chartered banks in their lending program as far as northern Alberta is concerned. I think that's a very positive suggestion, and I would hope the minister would take it under advisement.

Mr. Speaker, dealing with the report itself, obviously I would share a number of the concerns identified. After all, a number of the public meetings held by the Northern Development Council have brought people from all over the Peace River country and other parts of northern Alberta to make their representations and their concerns. I would say that when we get to the economic strategy, several omissions trouble me, and when we come to the mechanism, I would like to make several observations with respect to that matter as well.

But first of all, Mr. Speaker, turning to the question of some of the concerns in northern Alberta, there's no question at all that there is a sense of alienation in large parts of northern Alberta. That has been in existence, I'm sure, as long as Alberta has been a province, and is not something new. In the years past, I've seen that alienation when the former government was in office. I see it today with the present administration as well. There is also a certain stoic acceptance on the part of many people that problems of living in the north may take a long time to overcome. I shouldn't really use the term, an acceptance of the "next year" philosophy, but at least if we're looking at hospital construction, I suppose that's probably the best way to identify the government's approach in any event.

Mr. Speaker, let me move to looking at some of the obstacles to growth in northwestern Alberta. I'm deliberately going to confine most of my remarks to northwestern Alberta as opposed to attempting to deal with the Fort McMurray region, Fort Chip, and some of these districts in northern Alberta, although some of the comments I am making with respect to the Peace River country certainly have even more application in the more remote communities of the province.

First of all, there is no question that there is a widespread perception that much more money is coming out of northern Alberta than is being put back in. Recently the Peace River Planning Commission

had compiled statistics on the amount of oil and natural gas, for example, that was produced in the Peace River region, taking into account the new prices. The figures, Mr. Speaker, are really quite interesting. The total royalties the government of Alberta will collect this year from oil and gas produced just in the Peace River region — we're not talking about Fort McMurray, the oil sands project, but just the area generally known as the Peace River country, taking in the confines of the Peace River Regional Planning Commission — the total amount of royalties collected from that region will be approximately \$600 million.

Now I raise that, Mr. Speaker, because when the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake introduced the subject he made some reference to the Alberta North Agreement. A great deal of fanfare took place with the signing of that agreement. I recognize, as most members do, that the \$55 million over five years will be of some considerable assistance in northern Alberta, but I would point out that the provincial share of that program is \$27.5 million over five years. So we're looking at about \$5.5 million a year through the Alberta North Agreement. That's what the province is putting into that agreement.

On the other hand, from the oil and gas picture alone, the government is collecting \$605 million. Obviously there is far more commitment by the government in other fields: transportation, health, education, and what have you. But the fact of the matter is that when you look at this one item by itself, Mr. Speaker, I would be able to say in my judgment, without fear of contradiction, that for the last several years at least — since the price of oil and natural gas has increased substantially — the Peace River region of Alberta has been a net supplier, if you like, of funds to this province, that more money has been collected by the provincial Treasury than goes back to the area.

I'm not rising in my place, Mr. Speaker, to say it is necessary to take money collected from all over the province and plough it back into the region it comes from. But I do think it is not unreasonable, when you go into a place like Rainbow Lake, for example . . . People have lived in that community now for — what are we looking at — 15 years, I suppose, and for those 15 years at least part of the road has been barely passable. I understand that is being changed. But when one considers all the money that has come out of the Rainbow Lake field, it is not unreasonable that we could not have had faster progress in dealing with some of these infrastructure necessities, if northern Alberta is to prosper and grow.

Other members have already mentioned the question of higher costs, the higher cost of living: no question about that. If one looks at the report of the Department of Education 1975 school finance study, the figures are really quite clear, not only in northern Alberta, Mr. Speaker, but when one looks at rural Alberta. Some hon. members have mentioned the problem of balanced growth throughout the province. The difference between the sparse divisions and the dense divisions, between the large urban divisions on one hand and the rural divisions on the other hand, works out to about 25 per cent. In other words, the costs of providing the same service are about 25 per cent higher. This is in the area of school jurisdictions alone. Those are the figures contained in the government's own report. So there is little doubt that the

cost of living is higher in northern Alberta.

Yesterday in the Assembly the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs rose during question period and indicated that if you shopped around in the city of Edmonton, you could get No. 2 gas for 69.9 cents a gallon. Quite frankly, I haven't discovered that service station yet, but I believe him if he says you can get gas for 69.9 cents.

MR. DIACHUK: It's in the west end.

MR. NOTLEY: The hon. member tells me it's in the west end. Fair enough. The latest figures, as of 2 o'clock today, in High Level: Imperial Esso is 98.9 cents and Texaco 98 cents, a difference of almost 30 cents a gallon — 29 cents a gallon — between the cheapest price in the city of Edmonton as of the minister's statement yesterday and the going price in the town of High Level today. And that's after the 10 cents a gallon has been reduced. I'm not suggesting here that those operators haven't taken off the 10 cents a gallon.

I realize there will be a variation in markup by the service station operators. But I think northerners are concerned that we have some basic, consistent, wholesale price. I mentioned this several days ago when we debated the resolution of the hon. Member for Clover Bar. But I want to reinforce it, because that's certainly one of the very pervasive concerns you encounter as you travel throughout northern Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the question of roads: roads in much of northern Alberta are still inadequate. While it's fair to say that as a consequence of the discussion over the Alcan pipeline there has been some added commitment to road construction in northwestern Alberta this year, we still have much more to do. I just can't underscore the importance of getting on with the road construction program.

One thing the report does point out — and I think it's a very accurate assessment — is that there are disparities within the region. We've looked at the question of disparities between northern Alberta and the rest of the province; for example, the higher cost of living in the north, higher gasoline prices, higher utility rates. But there are also very significant differences within the region. For example, one examines some of the established communities. A community like Beaverlodge, west of Grande Prairie, has been established many years and has all the assets of a well-established community that one might see in central or southern Alberta. On the other hand, you've got new homesteading areas where we still have just a tremendous amount to do in order to give people reasonable access to services.

Something that always amazes southern and central Albertans when they travel to the north is the whole question of distance, Mr. Speaker. Distance is a totally different situation for northerners than it is for central or southern Albertans.

I remember as a kid at home west of Olds, and that's only about 45 miles from Calgary, the whole proposition of going to Calgary was a major thing you only did once in a while. That was true of most of the people in our district. The idea of simply getting in your car and driving 45 or 50 miles was just out of the question. If you were going to go to Calgary you would actually get the car checked out. You'd get the tires checked. You'd probably even take it to the local

service station, because that's a major trip. But in the Peace River country, Mr. Speaker, you have people travelling hundreds of miles as a matter of course. You have communities — my own constituency, for example — where their major market town is 50 miles away. You have a 100-mile trip once a week just to go into the major town of business. You have a situation like Rainbow Lake, 90 miles from High Level or 300 miles from Peace River. So there is a tremendous factor of distance in the north, Mr. Speaker, which of course quite frankly is a costly proposition these days with the price of energy going up, notwithstanding all the talk we'll hear about the gasoline tax coming off. The fact of the matter is that for people in a region who have to travel extensively, distance is a major factor. I think that this was noted in the report.

Now let me turn from an outline of some common concerns in the region to a review of the economic strategy as I see it in the paper. I was surprised in reading the paper, Mr. Speaker, that there really wasn't as much emphasis as I thought there should be on the question of rail transportation. We have heard a great deal from this government about the need for a northern rail authority. Proposals were made by the government of Alberta to the Hall commission in which the government sought an authority which would be able to control the operation of the rail lines in the Peace River region.

While I'm not wont to quickly rush to the defence of the Alberta government, I thought that was a very reasonable proposal. Unfortunately Mr. Justice Hall didn't agree with that proposal as such. The modification is that we should now try to establish the same thing under the aegis of the CNR.

But the position taken by this government on the need to have an overall authority controlling rail lines in the north is as valid today as it was two or three years ago, or in 1975 during the Hall commission report. If we're going to be looking at any kind of development in northern Alberta, be it agricultural development, forestry development — the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray has raised a number of suggestions, and I'm sure other members will as well — a key to the success of any northern development strategy will be our overall transportation policy. I was surprised that we touch upon it in the report but we don't emphasize it, nor do we even mention the government's proposal of an integrated authority. I found that a rather strange omission, and I would be interested in either the hon. minister, if he participates in this debate, or the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, when he concludes the debate, discussing the reasons for that omission.

Mr. Speaker, I was also rather disappointed in reading the report that while some lip-service was paid to agriculture, there didn't seem to be any underlying philosophy on how we propose to develop public land in northern Alberta. I suppose we can argue over the number of acres. The estimate we received last night in subcommittee was 7 million acres of arable land. One can argue how much of that can be brought under cultivation at this stage, but there is no doubt that there are additional acres of public land in this province. I would say that if we're concerned about promoting agriculture, one of our strategies should be a very deliberate plan to increase the availability of public land in northern Alberta. Most of the 7 million

acres we're talking about is in the northern region of the province.

Yesterday in the subcommittee, if I recall the statement of the deputy minister correctly, I was advised that we're opening up about 30,000 acres a year. Mr. Speaker, if we have a 7 million acre potential, it is going to take us 200 years to reach that potential. We are going to have lots of time to do research in that 200-year period. I'm not suggesting you open up all 7 million acres, because we know there are certain barriers to opening up the entire acreage. I also note that it would create total chaos if you want to open up the whole shebang in a matter of five or even 10 years. But it seems to me there is a middle ground between the rate at which we are now crawling, 30,000 acres a year, and a rate that would upset the apple cart.

Mr. Speaker, it struck me as rather puzzling that there really wasn't any emphasis on that particular problem contained in the document. I say puzzling, because I know the minister and the Northern Development Council would have received submissions. Certainly throughout my years as an MLA in north-western Alberta, I've received submissions from various people about public lands policy. In the La Crete, Fort Vermilion, and High Level areas very strong views were made and brought to my attention that we have to move a little faster and change the policy on the cost of land, feeling that the price being charged was unreasonably high. Yet, Mr. Speaker, there is no specific reference to that within this document.

The Leader of the Opposition has already mentioned that the proposals of the Environment Conservation Authority on erosion control have not been mentioned either. It seems to me that if we are talking about infrastructure, pushing ahead on the proposals of the ECA, especially in light of the recommendation the heritage committee made last fall, would be in order. Mr. Speaker, I would hope we can get the show on the road during the spring session of the Legislature, so that during the summer we will have a number of these water resource projects which are now backlogged because we don't have sufficient funds available, that we can get them going and we don't wait until just a few weeks before the next election to make changes in the water resource policy. I wouldn't suggest that hon. members across the way would even think in those terms. But just in case they are tempted to do so, I'd like to see them move now.

Mr. Speaker, another area — and I think it would be fair to the Northern Development Council; more emphasis was contained on this area than on agriculture — the whole question of the forestry industry. You know, 150,000 square miles of Alberta is covered by forest, and if we are talking about any long-term development of northern Alberta, the development of that forestry industry is crucial.

What strikes me, though, is that we have to ask ourselves what is the role, first of all, of the large international company. We have P & G in Grande Prairie, North Western Pulp & Power in Hinton. What is the role of the smaller Canadian company, such as Canfor in Grande Prairie, and of the small individual entrepreneur, the individual farmer or small businessman, but in most cases farmers who work on the farm during the spring, summer, and fall, but have a

small skidder operation which gives them added income during the winter? How are we going to develop a policy that encourages these people?

Mr. Speaker, I raise this because at least in my constituency last year we found a major debate developed as a consequence of the fact that there doesn't seem to be a clearly defined policy here. I know the minister will be able to respond by saying the ECA is holding hearings on the forestry industry. Fair enough. But, Mr. Speaker, this government has now been in office for seven years, and the forestry industry is one of those areas, in my view anyway, where we should have had a more clearly defined policy in the past — clearly defined in a number of ways.

One looks at the map of northern Alberta and you find that Procter & Gamble have a lease which is approximately 12,000 square miles, half the size of New Brunswick. I really wonder whether that's not something I can lay at the doorstep of this government, because I realize it was the former government that made the agreement on the P & G lease. But you know, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that I look at the operation of P & G in Grande Prairie and I see there is probably about 4,000 square miles that makes a good deal of sense for their operation, but across the Peace River and into the Clear Hills — the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake is talking about the Clear Hills and the iron ore deposits there — we have 8,000 square miles of land set aside for P & G. They aren't using it at this stage of the game. I really wonder whether that kind of land commitment to a major company reflects a sensible forestry policy. Again, that's the sort of thing it seems to me we have to look at if we're going to face the challenge of the future.

There are a number of other proposals in the report that I think are excellent. I'm pleased to see a recognition of the public sector as a gap-filler here, the suggestion that there really isn't much point in having people on welfare and that it is a far more productive use of public money as well as the human factors involved to move into areas where, quite frankly, it may be difficult to attract private investment. Without naming some of the communities, because that's probably unfair, most of us in northern Alberta could probably rattle off half a dozen communities where this sort of initiative by the public sector will be necessary if we're going to provide opportunities for the people who, by choice, would prefer to continue living in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks by saying that one point in the council's paper I thought was rather striking was the remark that restraints can work in some areas but can cause very serious problems in others. This harkens back to one of the points the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray made. I thought it was a valid point, that there has to be some flexibility in the approach we take toward economic development.

Similarly, I think there has to be some flexibility, as this paper suggests, in the way in which we provide services. You can have an across-the-board restraint program that may work very well in the city of Edmonton, may be tailored beautifully to fit a large urban centre like Calgary, but when you begin applying that restraint program to the Grande Prairie health unit, to the Peace River health unit, to the

preventive social services programs in northern Alberta you find that what you are doing is seriously, if I can use the term, cutting back the services available to people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the document talks about crippling. I'm not sure whether one would use the term "crippling" accurately, but I think it is probably fair to say that restraints in public sector spending will make it very difficult for us to attract in those areas that we need — whether in our colleges or in some cases our professions, teachers — and keep the kind of people who will be necessary if the north is to develop its full potential.

In general conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I think it's worth while that this report has been tabled in the Legislature today. It gives us all as members of the House an opportunity to assess what has been done to date and to consider what should be done in the years ahead, to take a moment to examine and evaluate the grievances of people in northwestern Alberta and northern Alberta in general, and to try to assess frankly what methods we can devise to overcome not only those grievances in a personal sense but, more important, to develop policies that will strengthen the northern region of our province.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few short remarks about Resolution No. 206. First of all I'd like to congratulate the Member for Lesser Slave Lake for bringing this to the attention of the House. I think it's an opportunity to air in this Assembly something that probably needs airing. I think it's delightful that a great many members spent so much time and earnest consideration of the problem, and have brought forth the quality of contribution and remarks. Particularly I was pleased with the ones I've heard from this side of the House.

That side of the House surprised me a little bit, however, in that this whole question revolves around the economic development position paper. We had contributions over there about the delay in the Grande Prairie hospital, and it was illuminated that it costs more to live in the north than it does in the south. We found out that because they produce oil and gas in a certain sector, perhaps that should have some serious consequence on how much revenue that sector should receive. I imagine the people in Edmonton will be fascinated to find out they don't produce anything within their city limits and, on that basis, could be restrictive.

In any event, the concern I have about this particular brochure — and before I start, I'd like to commend the people for the amount of time they've put into this. It's an extremely difficult question, and I think they have grappled with it and tended to itemize it well, and perhaps isolated some areas that can be assisted. But I do have some concerns about this Legislature, or ones to come, responding with quick solutions to pockets of high unemployment. In the north perhaps we should encourage only things that are indigenous to the area, like fresh-water fishing or recreation. Maybe we should be very sure that the only kind of support that goes into the north is the kind where raw material arrives there, is processed, and then moves on, giving you a net freight advantage over someone who's having to pay double freight to the market place.

But the one thing I'm very sure of, Mr. Speaker, is

that if we decide to get involved in a government support way, we'd better be very sure the small town or community that any particular project gets involved in — all the people who are in place now when that new proposed venture is contemplated will probably expand their services to participate in it; the people who arrive with the new, government-supported facility will be familiar with the business therein. At the whim of a later government, if that support should be withdrawn the people involved in the specific enterprise may be able to move on to other places, but the merchants and service support people left in the town will be destroyed.

I get very concerned about the kind of support given, the overlay mentioned by many of the members that comes from other than the community, and perhaps the lack of understanding about the fibre of the community and the mentality of the merchants in the community to respond. So I would caution all members in this House to be very careful that when we respond to pockets of high unemployment, we respond with something that has merit on its own.

I intend to support this resolution. Again, I'd like to congratulate the member for bringing it forward and all those who had something to do with this fine outline of the problem and thoughtful comment.

Thank you.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend a moment or two on the motion, and commend the mover, the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, who is also a member of the Northern Alberta Development Council and a resident of northern Alberta; also to commend the members of the council and the northern development group for the work they have done putting together the strategy document on economic development of northern Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, as a resident of northern Alberta I think two things have to be said: the need to ensure that what we're talking about is a co-operative type of program where the concerns in northern Alberta are recognized by the government and the private sector, and the need to tie together, in a team concept, the work of the private sector and government. The communities of northern Alberta ask only for equal opportunity. In northern Alberta equal opportunity means recognition of the transportation differentials, the utility rates, the construction costs — and that includes materials as well as the other costs involved. It also means recognition of funding methods other than possibly on a per capita method. I say that because we have not as many people living in that vast area of northern Alberta as are living in central Alberta or the south. As a result, if you try to put together a program on a per capita basis, you then indirectly or inadvertently draw a line or almost discriminate, in some fashion, against those of that sparsely populated area.

When the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake was talking about the paper and relating in part to the term grants, he used the term "we must use with care". I think that is most important indeed: that when we're getting into any area that involves grants of any type to any organization, we use extreme care. For example, when we're talking about the Alberta North Agreement, a joint agreement between the federal and provincial government, the proper and maximum use and utilization of that agreement is

most important to all of us; the use of that agreement to assist us in infrastructure. The types of projects like the Fort Vermilion water and sewer projects are most important to the people of the area.

When we talk about the non-renewable resources we have in northern Alberta — the iron ore, the *in situ* oil sands, the glass sands, the gypsum deposits, the granite — many of these are there to be developed in the future, and I think will be, with the type of document we have here if taken literally and if worked from that particular point, taking that document to set in motion the plan that will see that development takes place in the north.

On the renewable resource side, obviously agriculture plays a very important part. Yes, there are many, many millions of acres of land yet to be developed in northern Alberta. But before some of that will be developed we've obviously got some work to do in the areas of transportation, the north and south routes, the types of rates involved in those north and south routes, as well as the east and west routes; the research projects, of course, developed along the way for new varieties of grain with shorter maturity; the Shell Oil *in situ* process; the iron ore work done by the Research Council; and yes, even the transportation areas that cover the hoverlift ferry and the new transportations that will see us crossing rivers without the kinds of costs involved in major bridges. All these can be a part of this particular document.

I commend the hon. member for putting forth this resolution, Mr. Speaker, and I plan to support it.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to participate briefly in the resolution presented by the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake. I'd like to do a few things before I take to task some of the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Mr. Clark, and the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to recognize that we have in the members gallery one of the newer members of the Northern Development Council, Mr. John Drobot from St. Paul. I would like him to stand and be recognized.

We should also know we have in the gallery the now executive director of the northern development group; a group of eight people in the Department of Business Development and Tourism, with three other support staff; and the former executive director, who maintains a continuing interest in northern Alberta. I don't ask them to stand, but I want all hon. members to know just what kind of allegiance the people of that northern development group, and the council, have to their task of developing northern Alberta. I'm delighted to be a part of that very small and effective organization.

Mr. Speaker, I should mention some of the members of the council, who they are and where they come from. First of all, Ike Lawrence, who is now the vice-chairman and hails from High Prairie; Mr. Borsstad, a former mayor of Grande Prairie, living in Grande Prairie; Josephine Langevin, vice-mayor of the town of Lac La Biche; Stan Smith from Fort Vermilion, a very great contributor; Mariella Sneddon, a new addition to the board, who comes from Fort McMurray; Larry Chorney from Fairview; Harry Sinclair from Slave Lake; John Drobot, who I have introduced, from St. Paul; and of course my compatriot Larry Shaben, MLA for Lesser Slave Lake, and myself

as chairman.

In addition to those people I've mentioned, we have had four terminations in their time on the council; people who had other things to do, who have become involved in other pursuits. One is Bob Duncan, the former vice-chairman of the organization, who was on it since its inception, from Fort McMurray; Len Pelland Jr. from McLennan; Chief Joe Dion from the Kehewin Reserve, who is now the chief of the Indian Association; and Jim Fletcher from Grande Prairie. Those people and some of the members who are now on the council played a significant role in developing this paper.

I would like to remind the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview — he keeps criticizing the paper because it didn't mention agriculture. He criticizes it because we didn't have any major contribution about the Hall commission, and criticizes it for a whole bunch of things it lacks. I think the people of the council would be happy to know you criticize their paper. It's theirs, not government's.

I think it's really interesting too, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition should suggest that the executive director of the northern development group should not be a member of the Northern Development Council. Obviously he doesn't spend much time in northern Alberta, nor does he have any idea or any conception of what the council is about. Our executive director has never been on the council and never will be.

The Leader of the Opposition also mentions that the people in northern Alberta are fed up with the attitude of this government — of government, I think is more appropriate phraseology, Mr. Speaker. I can appreciate that those might be the facts, because the foundation for that procedure was laid long ago in the former Social Credit era. I can recall in 1969-70 when the budget was \$2,662,000. One million dollars plus was used for projects, \$1 million in a then \$1 billion budget — one awful great contribution to northern Alberta, Mr. Speaker. I can recall the former minister responsible for that branch of government sitting at that end of this House, in the front row, and trying for weeks to get up and say his little story about what he was going to do for northern Alberta. Not once was he able to get up. They wouldn't let him get up. [interjections] So he took his little map and his pointer and left the room. That was the end of the session and the end of that member.

AN HON. MEMBER: And they're still leaving the room.

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out that in the last year of the Social Credit regime, they had a \$909,000 budget for all the projects they were going to undertake in northern Alberta to do such wondrous things. Well, the budget coming up now, if we approve it, is some \$800,000. That's administrative dollars, to bring the government of Alberta to the people of northern Alberta. So I think it's a fair contribution. And we are not a delivery system. We rely on every single member on the front bench and our total caucus to approve the projects we as a council recommend, and we've been substantially successful.

The hon. member mentions that we've done nothing with regard to the heritage savings trust fund.

He's obviously not read that document either. He doesn't know about the contributions of the reforestation program; he doesn't know about the grazing leases. I think he should do his homework.

I'm delighted when the Member for Calgary Currie suggests we meet with various senior officials of the private sector in Canada and in Alberta. I appreciate his mentioning the Royal Bank documents. We are aware of them. You should know that, I think it was at our last meeting we held at the Edmonton Inn three or four days ago, we met with the principals involved in the Foothills pipeline project and had him brief the council on what we might undertake by way of supporting the Foothills project and involving the people of northern Alberta. So we are undertaking it all the time.

I'd like to mention two or three other things, Mr. Speaker — time is fleeting. I'm pleased the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview agrees with my right-handed compatriot from Calgary Currie. That's really an oddball kind of event for this House. He should also know the self-service station in Edmonton does sell for 69.9, but I'd suggest those in High Level, which are regular service, should be about 13 or 14 cents higher than self-service. Both stations in High Level are regular stations and not self-serve. So he's playing little games with numbers, which I think the members should all be aware of. It's not unusual, but it's there.

I've mentioned the strange admission by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I should also mention we're planning a major undertaking in the fall this year. I would suggest we've had a number with the Northern Development Council. First of all we had the Alberta Opportunity North Conference, designed by my compatriot the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife when he had responsibility for the Northern Development Council, and it was extremely successful. The second one was a transportation seminar, and we asked the government to come to the north to let the people know they weren't just a bunch of bureaucrats — they were in fact civil and they were servants. And that's exactly what we felt we gained from that transportation conference led by the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, and me. For this fall we are planning a major conference on agriculture, and I would suspect some northern MLAs will have an invitation to attend that. I would hope they'd come and stay for the full length of time, not just part of it, because I'm sure it would be quite entertaining and educational.

You should know also, Mr. Speaker, that this paper is a framework document. It's not something you can criticize because they didn't mention Alberta Aspen Board, or they didn't mention a specific entrepreneurial endeavor in it. It's not intended to be that. We spend our entire time addressing those individual problems in council meetings, so it's not meant to be that. It's a framework document as a guide for policy development by this government, and I think it's substantially great. It's a great document, one of the best I've had an opportunity to have anything to do with. It was done by private sector people, with the exception of my friend Larry Shaben, whom I assume to be a private sector personage anyway. It's done by private sector people as an injection of their views into government.

Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, we are doing some considerable work on public lands. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview did mention that. Other than that, I would simply like to say again that this organization I'm so proud to be a part of is a volunteer organization. These people receive nothing for their time. They are paid a stipend; they're paid transportation and something for the fact they took the time to be there.

Mr. Speaker, I should give you some idea of what kind of presentations we receive in the council meetings, and what degree of success we've realized over the course of time since the council was first developed in 1974 by the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. At some 31 public meetings held in various locations of northern Alberta, beginning with the first meeting in High Prairie in January 1974 and up to our most recent meeting in Grimshaw, we have received some 450 briefs from various individuals and organizations. They can be received in writing or they can be oral, and we try very hard to have the meeting progress fairly quickly so at the end we have a question period, and we consider that an additional treat for us. Of those 450 briefs, 25 per cent were received in 1974, 21 per cent in 1975, 26 per cent in '76, and 28 per cent in '77. So that indicates to me that we are having some degree of success. These people are still coming to the meetings. They feel they are substantially helpful to them, and we think 1978 will show a further increase, bearing in mind that because of other time commitments we held half as many meetings in 1977 as we did in 1976; in other words, 12 in '76 and six in 1975.

Of the 450 briefs received, the present status shows that 31 per cent are still under consideration, 45 per cent resulted in positive action being taken by government, and only 24 per cent were refused outright, probably because the organization or the person submitting the brief was doing it to receive additional funding that wasn't available because the policy wasn't in place, or they wanted an additional grant to pay for operating costs of their recreation complex, something like this. Therefore, of course we didn't agree to take the brief forward.

On a regional breakdown, Mr. Speaker, 63 per cent of the briefs came from the Fort Chip-Fort McMurray area, where the earlier speaker comes from; 48 per cent from Manning-High Level; 41 per cent from Grande Prairie-Peace River; 47 per cent from Lesser Slave Lake; 55 per cent from the Grande Prairie-Whitecourt area; and 38 per cent from Athabasca-Bonnyville.

It is interesting to note that of the briefs that came,

25 per cent were on transportation problems. You should know that 50 per cent of those problems have been solved; something like 30 are still being considered. In the order of the way the briefs came in, the next largest number dealt with recreation, parks, and tourism, then social services and health and hospitals, environment, economic development, municipal affairs, utilities and telephones, and so on.

I have mentioned we have been substantially successful, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I need to go into the details of the successes. They're there for anybody who wants to view them.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, there is much to commend in this position paper. It's an honest statement of northern conditions and provides valuable insights and advice in respect to the role of government in northern Alberta. In particular there is a keen awareness, on behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council, of the differences between equality and equitability and with regard to the need for gap-filling and greater social conscience. I think, in particular, the stress on the dual responsibility of both the residents of northern Alberta and the provincial government to facilitate economic development is extremely important.

In the paper's conclusion it says the message is that not only must government be more sensitive to the needs of the north, but northerners must be more aggressive and articulate in voicing their needs, not by making unco-ordinated, unending demands on the public purse, but by helping government design reasonable and effective programs in the north. Mr. Speaker, this paper of the Northern Development Council is a reasoned and well-thought-out general approach to economic development and to the needs of northern Alberta, and I would recommend that all hon. members support it.

Thank you very much.

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:23 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]

