

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Tuesday, April 11, 1978 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Private Bills Committee on the petition of the Royal Trust Company and the Royal Trust Corporation of Canada be concurred in, and that Standing Order 77(1) be waived to permit the bill to be introduced.

[Motion carried]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's a special pleasure today for me to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly some 80 grade 9 students from Laurier Heights school in the constituency of Edmonton Glenora. There are 60 in the public gallery and 20 in the members gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Gibson. I would ask at this time that they stand and receive a welcome from the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 40 ladies and gentlemen, pioneers of this province of ours, who are members of the Around '60' Club of the Avonmore United Church. I am sure all hon. members will join me in welcoming them and expressing our appreciation for their lifetime contribution to this province, as well as for being interested in our Legislature. They are in the members gallery, and I would like them to rise and be recognized by this Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Calgary Civic Workers' Strike**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd planned to direct the first question to the Minister of Labour, but perhaps I could direct it to the Provincial Treasurer. My question flows from the negotiations going on in Calgary with regard to the outside workers' strike.

What kinds of discussions were there between the Provincial Treasurer or the Minister of Labour and the mediation staff from the Department of Labour with regard to the government's 6 to 7 per cent guidelines?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I've had no such discussions.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister aware whether any discussions were held with the Minister of Labour and his mediation staff in the implementation of the 6 to 7 per cent spending guidelines?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I notice that my colleague the Minister of Labour is not in the House at the moment. I anticipate he will be here later, and would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition direct his question to him when he arrives.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then I'd like to go on to the second question, with the opportunity to come back when the Minister of Labour comes into the Assembly.

School Discipline

MR. CLARK: My second question deals with the Department of Education and the regrettable situation at the Rosedale Christian School — a grade 3 student, and the disciplinary action taken by the teacher in this school. Have charges been laid, and is an investigation under way by the Department of Education?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I imagine the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to the school at Debolt.

The hon. leader is probably aware, as are some members of the Assembly, that this is not a school recognized by the Department of Education. The recently announced regulations dealing with private schools have listed four categories of private schools, and to my knowledge this particular institution at Debolt has neither applied nor inquired about application for approval under any of those four categories. Secondly, I understand from discussing with department officials, who are of course taking an interest in what has taken place there, that the parent involved is considering bringing appropriate charges. But I can't report any further than that.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister instructed officials of his department to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the action which was taken?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, no formal inquiry has been launched because of the circumstances involved. Had the school been one approved under the regulations, that would have taken place. Inasmuch as for all intents and purposes there's really no relationship between the department and the institution, we are keeping a watching brief on it, but no formal investigation has been launched on that matter.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister requested the Attorney General to have, in this case, the RCMP investigate the circumstances surrounding this particular situation?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it's necessary for the police to receive requests from more than one source. My understanding is that this request

has already been made by the parent, and that should take care of the matter.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Attorney General. Has the Attorney General instructed officials in his department to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the grade 3 student who, for disciplinary reasons, was dealt with last week at the Rosedale Christian School?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge of the subject whatsoever.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then will the Attorney General undertake to check the matter and report to the Assembly with regard to whether the department will in fact be taking action itself? Or will the department be relying completely on the parent to lay charges?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition feels that this is a matter which should be brought to my attention, and that's his judgment, then I will endeavor to inform myself on the subject. However, as I've said on many occasions before in this House, I am not prepared to indicate which matters are and are not being reviewed by the department.

Federal Budget

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to pose my question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer and ask if he can advise the Assembly what consultation took place with the government of Alberta on the proposed changes in the petroleum taxation announced yesterday in Mr. Chretien's budget speech, and whether during that consultation any discussion took place about the proposed change in the sales tax.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, there was no discussion or consultation between me and representatives of the federal government with respect to the proposed changes in the taxation field announced last night by the federal Minister of Finance. There were some discussions with respect to the sales tax, but no discussions involving the changes in the petroleum taxation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Were any conditions attached to Alberta's — perhaps I shouldn't say acceptance of the new program — but its unwillingness to oppose the new sales tax program as it applies to other provinces? Were there any conditions that the hon. Provincial Treasurer conveyed to the federal Finance Minister on this matter?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, it would be inappropriate to refer to our discussions in the way the hon. member has in his question. In telephone conversations over the past couple of weeks, I was made aware what the federal proposal would be. As I indicated in commenting on that proposal last night, we have no strong objections to the proposal, because of the currently very buoyant state of the Alberta economy, the fact that we have no sales tax

here, and the very deep difficulty that the rest of the Canadian economy is in.

We're particularly concerned, though, if this proposal marked a new trend or indeed were going to be extended for any lengthy period of time. In that connection I draw the attention of the members of the Assembly to the commitment in the budget that it's a six months' proposal and would end at the conclusion of that six months. Mr. Speaker, if this marked a new trend or something that were to be continued, we'd certainly have very deep and strong concerns, because it puts an entirely new complexion on the matter of federal taxation within the nation. In effect, it is a new form of equalization; and were it to be continued, or were it to be the beginning of a trend with additions of a similar nature coming forward from the federal government in the future, we would have very great concern.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Will it be the intention of the Alberta government to make representation to Ottawa concerning methods that would inject consumer purchasing power into the Canadian economy without posing some of the problems of the sales tax that the Provincial Treasurer alluded to, as well as the concern expressed in the House of Commons that the proposal will terminate when unemployment begins to build in the fall? Are we making representation as to an alternative method of injecting purchasing power through a tax cut or tax credit as opposed to the sales tax proposal?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, at the finance ministers' conferences a number of proposals are often discussed with respect to what might be done by federal and provincial governments, both on the expenditure and taxation sides, to assist the performance of the Canadian economy. These points are debated extensively there.

And of course there were extensive discussions at the recent first ministers' conference about things that ought to be done to improve the Canadian economy. They are referred to in appreciable detail in the communiqué arising from that conference.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier or the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Can either hon. gentleman advise whether there was any consultation with the Premier's office or the minister's office concerning the changes in the petroleum taxation measures? And do we have any preliminary assessment, at this point, of the financial impact those changes will bring?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there have been general discussions on two of the three energy matters that were discussed. Not specifically in what the federal government finally decided to do — because I gather they treat their budget as most governments do, in that they may discuss things but have to make a decision in which they must respect the normal budget secrecy.

In any event there have been general discussions. Since receiving the final decisions they've made on their budget, we have not had an opportunity to assess them fully. I would think they seem to be a

step in the right direction, but the real judgment is whether it's a big enough step.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Has there been any study of the constitutionality of the federal government reducing sales taxes in some provinces and not in others? I raise the point in this regard: the federal government has all kinds of hidden taxes and gas taxes it could have reduced on its own without injecting itself into the provincial governments. The part that concerns me in regard to the constitutionality is that the people of Alberta will be paying for the reduction of taxes in other provinces and getting no benefit themselves.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, that's a very useful observation by the hon. Member for Drumheller. I simply want to call to his attention that this is true not only of Alberta, because a distinction is made throughout the whole of the nation. For example, in the proposal the federal government will be reimbursing in its entirety the reduction in sales tax in the Atlantic provinces, whereas the reduction in the remaining provinces would be reimbursed only in part by the federal Treasury. Of course Alberta, not having a sales tax, is not reimbursed at all.

As to the constitutionality, Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any opinions that have been obtained on that question.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. I was very disappointed that there was no reduction of income tax in the budget. I wonder if the minister can inform this Assembly if he had any discussion with the federal government in regard to cutting personal income tax?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, the question of income tax reductions or indeed tax reductions generally, as well as expenditures, was discussed by the finance ministers at their recent meeting, but in a general as opposed to a specific sense.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. It flows from the Treasurer's answer to an earlier question when he indicated a number of these things were discussed at the last meeting of federal and provincial finance ministers. My question again relates to the view of the government of Alberta with respect to the efficiency of a consumer move that is in place for only six months.

Is it the view of the government of Alberta that a temporary six-month program will in fact be adequate to deal with the increase in consumer purchasing power that is required to get the economy rolling again?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is again trying to get a comment from the government or a minister with regard to a matter of federal government policy or federal politics. That is neither within the official duties of the minister nor within the scope of the question period.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can phrase the question in a different way and ask the hon. Provin-

cial Treasurer whether or not that specific proposal was discussed at the recent federal/provincial meeting of finance ministers.

MR. SPEAKER: My recollection is that the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View just asked whether a reduction in income tax had been discussed, and the question was answered.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. My question wasn't with respect to the reduction of income tax, but whether there was any general discussion by the federal and provincial finance ministers of what in fact is a short-term, six-month proposal.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm going on my memory. I don't believe that was discussed at the most recent finance ministers' conference. The question was raised, again in just a general way, at a finance ministers' meeting, but I believe it was the one before that. As I recall, it was raised in a very general way, a very brief discussion, and then the matter disappeared from the agenda.

I'd want to check, but I don't recall it being discussed at our most recent finance ministers' meeting.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer with regard to the research and development announcement and income tax relief in that particular area. The government of Alberta was supportive of that concept during the first ministers' conference, and I was wondering if the minister could indicate what effect that announcement will have on Alberta job opportunities at the present time.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is clearly asking for the hon. minister to express an opinion, and perhaps even to make a prophecy.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to rephrase my question to the minister, I wonder if the minister could give us any type of statistic or figure that was used by the government on which they based Alberta's position in their presentation to the first ministers' conference.

MR. LEITCH: I'll look into that, Mr. Speaker, and see if we have that information.

Labor Force

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Premier. Do the most recently released figures on unemployment in Canada reinforce the Premier's concern over the in-migration of unskilled workers to this province?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, yes they do, in the sense that even though our unemployment position has been strengthened there is clearly a very rapid increase in the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I believe there is some objection being taken to the question, and I must say the objection is well founded. The hon. member is trying, although

admittedly very skilfully, to elicit another opinion from the government.

CCIL Finances

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Could the minister advise whether the Alberta government has agreed to the refinancing proposal of Canadian Co-op Implements?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today we did agree to a proposal that has been agreed to by three other governments — Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ottawa — and a number of other participants referred to as the CCCS group, which is a number of co-operatives in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and one in Ontario.

MR. BATIUK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise why the Alberta government declined the proposal of several months ago?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, members will recall a debate on the amendment to the Speech from the Throne with regard to this matter. I said then quite clearly that Alberta was not going to be involved in a financial proposal that we didn't feel in any way would be helpful to the company. As a result of the position we took then, and the negotiations that have been carried on for several months now, my review of the situation today indicates that farmers who own CCIL equipment and others who are involved in the company's operations in Alberta are in a much better position today in terms of the financial package that's been arranged, largely at our insistence, than they might have been had we agreed to something earlier.

MR. APPLEBY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister of Agriculture could inform the Assembly what the economic impact of CCIL in the province of Alberta might be if it maintains its operations.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, we're again trying to elicit an opinion from a minister, or the result of an economic survey. It's not something which comes within the proper scope of the question period.

Disaster Services

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Deputy Premier responsible for Alberta Disaster Services. In light of the revelation by the Solicitor General last night in subcommittee that the federal Department of National Defence was unable to assure Alberta of the capacity to respond to requests for assistance in the event of civil emergencies, and that this, I believe, is a shocking indictment on the ineptitude of the federal administration to assure Alberta of preparedness to intervene in civil or national emergencies, will the government of Alberta undertake an immediate review of our capacity to respond to civil emergencies or natural disasters in this province?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member has documented did take place some time ago. Since that time, my colleague the Solicitor General and I have been reviewing additional plans in which we might meet emergency situations with additional manpower, perhaps being trained as an auxiliary. Those plans are ongoing at the moment.

Rapeseed Freight Assistance

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Deputy Premier in charge of Transportation. Has the minister had any discussion or met with federal officials with regard to freight assistance for rapeseed processors?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, that matter has been on the agenda of the western transportation ministers on a number of occasions, and I'm sure will again be dealt with in Yorkton at the coming premiers' meeting.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister had any requests from processors in Alberta for freight assistance from the province?

DR. HORNER: Indirectly, Mr. Speaker. We've had a number of meetings with the processors in western Canada, who have an association that includes not only the processors in Alberta but the two in Saskatchewan and the one in Manitoba. We meet on a relatively regular basis with my colleague the Minister of Agriculture relative to the processors' problems, only one of which is the question of transportation.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce has suggested they pay \$3 million toward freight assistance. Could the minister indicate what portion of this would come to rapeseed processors in Alberta?

DR. HORNER: The federal government now has a program in which \$3 million goes to the crushers. My understanding is that that is paid to them on a pro rata basis, relative to the amount crushed in each plant.

Senior Citizens' Property Taxes

MR. KUSHNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Would the minister inform this Assembly in what area senior citizens who live in mobile homes and pay taxes as well as rent really qualify as far as getting relief — the announcement that was made very recently?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that's perhaps a very important clarification under the Alberta property tax reduction program. It should be noted that a senior citizen who resides in a mobile home on rented land — that is an eligible residence — is eligible to receive benefits under the Alberta property tax reduction program, which removes from the residence the majority of the tax and all the education tax. If the municipality elects to levy a licence fee, the mill rate to

determine that licence fee must reflect the property tax reduction as well.

So in both situations they receive the residence fee in the Alberta property tax reduction program.

Workers' Compensation

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question to the hon. Minister of Labour involves the matter of universal compensation in regard to workers' compensation. Could the hon. minister outline the criteria involved in removing the names of certain industries from the list required to have mandatory workers' compensation under the universal plan?

MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Primarily it's based on the view of the danger to the worker in the particular industry. I might add that traditionally, under the workers' compensation legislation, industries were selected and added to the list of those required to be covered, presumably based — and I believe it did work out this way — from the most dangerous to the less dangerous.

The 1973 amendments to legislation introduced a new principle which the hon. member refers to in his question; that is, the principle of universal coverage. At that point it became an administrative matter for the Workers' Compensation Board to expand coverage in a different way than previously; that is, by making the assumption that all industries are covered except those that are excluded.

The exclusions are done by passing regulations. Last year a number of industries were excluded, by type of industry rather than by individual industry — and I think that's important; although the hon. member well knows that, there may be misunderstanding on the part of others. In all cases it was based on the assumption, after consideration, that the industries were not of a dangerous type.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. minister. Where both the employers and employees in an industry are satisfied that they have broader coverage through the private sector than they would get under Workers' Compensation, would an application for exclusion or exemption be considered?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is any basis, pursuant to the legislation or the regulations, upon which an application of that type by an individual employer, as opposed to a whole class of employers, could be done.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification to the Legislative Assembly. I wonder if the minister would indicate whether the policy of universal voluntary compensation coverage still applies, in that any one who is not covered could be covered by choice.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the legislation provides that people who want to apply to the board for voluntary coverage can do so. Certain criteria are involved in getting coverage under those circumstances, but the practice of the board is to grant all such applications.

Local Authorities Board

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'd like to know if the minister can inform the Legislature whether an amendment to The Municipal Government Act will be introduced at the spring session, dealing specifically with cabinet action on annexation recommendations by the Local Authorities Board.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with a range of issues in Municipal Affairs. I'm sure a substantial number of amendments will be coming into The Municipal Government Act for the next two or three years, and we may well be considering the Local Authorities Board as one of them.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister indicate if it's government policy that the Local Authorities Board act strictly as an advisory board?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I could outline the process for the hon. member, touching on three pieces of legislation which set out the way the Local Authorities Board operates. But I'm sure other hon. members in the House have other business they would like to consider today.

DR. BUCK: A further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can the minister indicate if the government is considering doing away with the Local Authorities Board entirely?

MR. JOHNSTON: It's a question of time, Mr. Speaker. You know, the interval is open-ended.

DR. BUCK: Then, Mr. Speaker, maybe we can find out from the hon. minister if he can indicate to the Legislature if some of the bodies can receive an answer before a year is up as far as some of the annexation proposals that are before him now are concerned.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is assuming that I have the annexation orders in front of me, and I don't know if there has been any case where we've held up the orders. I know that in the hon. member's constituency the mayor commended us on the way in which we performed, particularly in the area of Lamont. I think that's been indicative across the province.

DR. BUCK: Maybe you can tell the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo that.

Senior Citizens' Property Taxes (continued)

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, since this seems to be his day, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs as well. It's related to the recent announcement of the benefits under the Alberta property tax reduction program. I've had a number of inquiries from senior citizen constituents about eligibility and how they go about receiving the benefits if they are eligible. For example, there are some who think that only those on the supplement can receive

the minimum education tax refund, rather than all seniors.

My question to the minister is: what means of communication is he using to make the public aware of these programs?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to discuss this program, which is very important to senior citizens and to owners of property in this province. Perhaps I was remiss in not being clearer in my ministerial statement of March 22.

However, the hon. Member for Calgary Bow does draw an important distinction in the program as it is now delivered, subject to approval by this House in 1978 and the way in which it was delivered in 1977. In particular, all senior citizens who live in their own homes will be able to benefit from the minimum property tax reduction to the extent of \$400, and they will not have to qualify under any supplementary income program.

The program is administered through the municipalities. They will not only deduct the Alberta property tax reduction or the contributions to the school foundation program, but they will also assist the senior citizens in maintaining the minimum benefits under the program.

DR. WEBBER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister's department has undertaken any studies to show whether or not the minimum education refund would be sufficient to cover increases in property taxes for senior citizens.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is in fact one of the reasons we brought in the program. As other colleagues have indicated, one of the objectives of our government is to ensure that senior citizens have ways to stay in their own accommodation, either owned or rented accommodation. Through a combination of programs, this one being a particularly important one, we have adjusted for the inflationary factors that have been experienced by senior citizens through utility increases; and in my personal belief have covered to a great extent the supplementary education tax levied on senior citizens' owner-occupied homes.

DR. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. I'm having a little difficulty understanding what he means by minimums. To me it would sound more like maximums. Could he explain: if a property owner paid taxes of, say, \$190 and there was an education tax of \$80, would the senior citizen then get back a full \$200?

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm attempting to pick up the statistics, Mr. Speaker. But if you just put aside the example the hon. member outlined, what it does indicate is: if the school foundation program is deducted at source by the municipality to the extent, say, of \$150, a senior citizen is then eligible to claim another \$250 to a maximum of \$400 under the program, or the amount of the property tax. Obviously the program will not give more back to the senior citizen than the total amount of the property tax, but the minimum benefit does kick in. So not only will the Alberta property tax reduction reduce the school foundation program or the \$150 amount I referred to,

but the \$250 would also be deducted, which would compensate for other tax costs including the supplementary school requisition.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. As I understand it — the minister can clarify — there is no means test. It doesn't matter if it's the rich or the poor, they all qualify. Am I correct?

MR. JOHNSTON: That is correct, Mr. Speaker. The real direction of the program is to the older urban home. But of course if you live in a very large urban home, the maximum benefit in that case would be the \$400 or the amount of the property tax reduction paid.

Labor Force (continued)

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Premier. I wonder if the Premier would indicate to the House whether the policy regarding in-migration of unskilled labor to Alberta has changed.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, "policy" is perhaps not the appropriate way for us to respond to it. As the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower has pointed out, what we have tried to do is communicate to citizens throughout the country that although there are job vacancies in this province far in excess of the rest of Canada — I believe it's double the average — there are not job vacancies for unskilled Canadians. As a result of that we are trying in whatever way we can to discourage people from other parts of the country from travelling all the way across this country in the hope that they can find an unskilled job here in Alberta.

Our economy is strong, our employment position is strong, but we are not in a position to be able to meet the needs, particularly with the serious unemployment problems in the rest of Canada, of people who are unskilled and seeking employment.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Premier. I wonder if the Premier has additional information that underlines and reinforces the wisdom of that decision he has indicated.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, only to the extent that the data we keep getting is showing a very large increase in the working age population for Alberta. Subject to checking, I think the information is that the working age population between March 1977 and March 1978 increased a dramatic 4.4 per cent, which is a very, very large increase in one year. That does trouble us, and we're trying to look into a little more definition of what's happening and why that's occurring.

At the same time, although ours is probably the only province where unemployment went down in the recent data, we're still concerned. We don't think we can maintain that position if we continue to get a flood of unskilled people into this province.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. In addition to the unskilled labor, I wonder if

the minister would indicate whether there is any change in policy to deal with the high target area of concern; namely the younger group, up to the age of 24, which I understand is also a concern in Alberta as it is across Canada.

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, in addition to the response by the hon. Premier, the other half of that significant information of our growth in the age group 15 to 24 is that while it grew 4.4 per cent, only 1.7 per cent entered the actual labor force. The rest are here. The significant notion that we're involved with and practise has to be that of updating, upgrading, because for the most part these people are unskilled.

Let me inform the House, Mr. Speaker, that in the last 12 months 35,000 people entered the Alberta labor force. Now a fair number of those are Albertans, but a great number are Canadians. In the last month alone, the labor force grew by 11,000. Again, some are local people who have been in the labor force, have been out, and are back in again. Others are new to Alberta, from the rest of the nation. It's this that makes the employment situation difficult.

So in response to the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, our emphasis has to be in two parts. First, in an objective way to say to other Canadians outside Alberta: make certain you have a job. For the most part, Mr. Speaker, this would be in one of only several skilled occupations: not skilled across the board, and not at all in the unskilled area.

Secondly, if someone does make the move, because it's his choice in this country, for the most part we find that we have to respond with training programs. This is a positive approach, in contrast to things like unemployment insurance or welfare. Both are much a part of the scene of the movement of unskilled people across the nation to Alberta.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In the area of highly skilled people, can the minister indicate if we've had people coming from outside Canada to fill some of these positions?

DR. HOHOL: The information is not as precise on those because for the most part, nearly without exception, these are people sought for, or coming in response to executive positions, managerial positions, certain trades — not all the trades, but certain construction trades.

It is important to emphasize again what the hon. Premier mentioned a while ago: in this area of jobs for the skilled, our vacancy rate — and this is extremely significant . . . While our unemployment rate is the lowest in Canada — it's now 4.5, down from 4.7 last month — at the same time the labor force grew by 11,000. These are significant figures. The vacancy rate is also the highest in Canada, well over 7 per cent, and the federal average is about 3.2.

So the meaning of this, Mr. Speaker, is that there are job openings for select occupations, mostly management and certain skilled trades.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to clarify the question to the hon. minister. Does the minister have any information to indicate if there are significant numbers of highly skilled jobs that have to be filled by people from the United States or outside Canada? That was my question.

DR. HOHOL: Yes, I appreciated the question, and I was trying to respond that we have a different kind of person in the labor force statistics. This does not include the management or executive people who are working and respond only to another job, presumably better. They simply move from one job to another. The labor force is defined as someone in a job or actively seeking a job, but the executive people move from job to job.

So it's nearly impossible for Statistics Canada and their own manpower people to collect data. We have some impressions, and I can try to be more precise in the estimates or in some future question period. That is very difficult to assess, but we are able to do this merely by examining what happens in the want ads, by talking to executive counselling agencies that work with the companies. By and large this kind of information is the property of the personnel department of the company — not that easily available, but not impossible either. We'll try to make those a little more precise.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. In view of the 18 per cent unemployment rate in the 14- to 24-year-old age group, which motivated this government to bring in the very successful STEP, could the minister advise this House whether to his knowledge other jurisdictions in Canada have programs similar to STEP which may in some way prevent these young people travelling to Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, the hon. minister should not be expected, as part of his official duties, to collect statistics from other provinces for hon. members.

Calgary Civic Workers' Strike (continued)

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour. It's with regard to a situation resulting from the outside workers' strike in Calgary. I understand that at the present time there are from 75 to 80 caskets in public arenas in Calgary. I wonder if concerns have been registered with the minister with regard to this matter. Number two, has the minister taken any action or done anything with regard to the matter?

MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, certainly concerns have been expressed, not only to me but to other members of the Assembly.

As to taking specific action: within the scope of the role played by the department in trying to assist the parties to make an agreement in the difficult situation at present in the Calgary outside workers' strike, the matter has been put forward that perhaps some special consideration could be given to priority for that particular work to be done. Although there has been no success to the present time in working that out, I understand that some consideration is being given whereby — although I can't predict a special arrangement in regard to that — they might be hopeful about one.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Because of basic compassion for family

members of the deceased, would the minister consider intervening from his own office with regard to this matter, or bringing forward some type of pressure to solve this particular situation?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the word "pressure" in collective bargaining situations emanating from government is always a very difficult one to react to and respond to the hon. member about. I think I understand fully the compassion involved in the hon. member's question, and in the minds of all who have expressed this concern.

Beyond that, I think all I could say is that the matter has been discussed by the parties as a separate issue, precisely for the reasons implied in the hon. member's question. I do entertain some hope that if the strike continues for a notably longer period, some special consideration will be possible.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the hon. minister. Has any consideration been given to permitting service clubs to bury these bodies as a civic and public duty?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is in fact asking me what consideration either the city or the CUPE local involved might have given to the matter. By implication, he is probably also asking whether or not we have urged that course upon the parties.

Apparently the real difficulty is the very technical, practical one of locating the burial sites. The cemetery involved is large, and there are only so many open spaces, which can only be found by someone who is very, very familiar with the survey of the lot. It's not something that could be turned over to volunteers, although I know some people are willing to undertake it.

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

MR. R. SPEAKER: Supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. I'd certainly urge the minister to do something to intervene.

But is the government considering any type of amendments to present legislation that would prevent this type of thing occurring in other labor disputes or situations in future years?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, again it's difficult to react because of the fact that the very dispute is still going on. It might seem unfair to indicate a direction of policy while that's the case. But I think I can add that it's something we would consider; however, outside the context of this specific dispute.

MR. SPEAKER: We've run past the allotted time. I have recognized the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View. If the Assembly agrees, perhaps we might have a short question and a short answer.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Vocational School Construction

MR. KUSHNER: It's not going to be my last question. Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the

hon. Minister responsible for Calgary Affairs. Would the minister bring this Assembly up to date in regard to construction of a vocational junior high school in Calgary east that was proposed about five years ago, then shelved, and now it's up again?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, that's a very interesting question. At the request of the chairman of the board of education for the Calgary public school system, I and other members of the Legislature for the Calgary area met with him, some of his elected board members, and some of his supervisory staff on Monday morning this week, at which time they made a presentation to us on what they believed to be the need for a vocational school in the east end of Calgary. The presentation was made on the basis of the very rapid growth in that area and the distance that the students have to go to other vocational schools in the west and southwest areas of the city, and indicated to us there may be room for 600 to 800 in the vocational school.

We simply took their advice as information and urged them to make the usual application to the school buildings board for consideration in the usual manner.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Would the Assembly agree to revert for a moment to Tabling Returns and Reports?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

DR. WARRACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear the item Tabling Returns and Reports earlier, so I appreciate the opportunity provided me by the members to do this now.

I have the honor to submit and table the annual report of Alberta Government Telephones for the year 1977. Sufficient copies have been made available to the Clerk's office for immediate distribution to all members.

MR. SPEAKER: Would the Assembly agree to revert to Introduction of Special Guests by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. GHITTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honor and privilege this afternoon to introduce to the members of the Legislature some 80 senior citizens from all parts of the city of Calgary. They have come here today, I know, to express not only their appreciation to the government for our senior citizens' programs but also to encourage the government in a few other programs.

These senior citizens are from all constituencies in Calgary. I'm happy to see them all here, looking so well. I want to ask them kindly to rise in the public gallery and receive the recognition of the members of the House.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you today some guests in your gallery who are responsible for staging, I believe, the second largest amateur sports event in the world. They carry a very large responsibility on behalf of Albertans, Canadians, and Edmontonians this year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like them to stand as I give their names so that hon. members may identify them. First, Dr. Maury Van Vliet, president of the XI Commonwealth Games Foundation. I believe there are three vice-presidents of the foundation: Mr. Justice Tevie Miller, Mr. Hal Spelliscy, and Mr. Thibau-deau. Also in the gallery are treasurer, Mr. Robert Losie, and secretary, Dean Frank Jones. From my vantage point I am unable to be sure whether I have missed anyone. I hope not.

Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Assembly I should like the opportunity to explain the presence of the flags and to move a motion in connection with those flags.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place have unanimous leave to introduce the motion he has in mind?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, my motion is:

Be it resolved that when the Assembly adjourns on Monday, April 24, it shall stand adjourned until Tuesday, April 25, at 8 p.m., Standing Order 3(1) notwithstanding.

Mr. Speaker, this motion provides the opportunity to members of the Legislature to participate as members of the Alberta branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in the raising of the official flag of the Commonwealth Games. The program for the afternoon of April 25, which members will receive in a few days, will include visits to several Games facilities and an updating by Games officials on all aspects of this major event.

At this moment, I am pleased to advise that a similar motion is being entertained by councillors at City Hall, which would enable members of city council to participate with us in these ceremonies and on this tour. At this time I should also like to express my personal appreciation to the Foundation and to the city for their co-operation in arranging the tour.

Mr. Speaker, the flag-raising ceremony will mark a momentous and symbolic preliminary event in connection with the 1978 Commonwealth Games. The Commonwealth Games Foundation flag itself carries a special significance in its design and function. If one looks carefully at the flag, it will be noted that the shape of the 1978 Commonwealth Games symbol is reminiscent of the Canadian maple leaf, and therefore of the good will of Canadian people toward the aims of the Games. The arrows, which converge on a central point, represent the many and diverse peoples who will arrive for the events this summer. The V-shapes which make up the logo serve as reminders of the outstanding whole-hearted efforts of the volun-

teers toward the planning and presentation of the 1978 Games. Mr. Speaker, a special committee of the Commonwealth Games Foundation will be promoting the use of these flags in and about the Edmonton area this summer.

Mr. Speaker, benefits accruing from the attendance of provincial and civic elected officials at the flag-raising ceremony will be great. I believe the participation of hon. members will demonstrate recognition and appreciation for the tremendous efforts by Games officials and volunteers toward making this upcoming sporting festival a triumphant success in promoting both athletic achievement and international harmony and good will.

Mr. Speaker, through participation in the program planned for April 25, we as members of the Legislative Assembly will be able to pay a well-deserved tribute to all those who have given so much to make this a success. Also, Mr. Speaker, I believe our participation will support the objectives of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, of which we are all members. May I urge all members to support this motion and thereby the XI Commonwealth Games.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition I would like to support the remarks of the hon. Member for Edmonton Jasper Place and encourage members of the Assembly to attend the ceremonies.

I would like to pay my tribute to a personal friend, Dr. Van Vliet, who taught me how to shoot ducks, but not too well, when I was a student at the university. I would also like to remember a former mayor of the city of Edmonton, Dr. Dent, who did so much to bring the Games to Edmonton; but most important, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, the many hundreds of volunteers who will really make the Games go. So I would like to ask Edmonton and district to open their hearts and their homes to the visitors and to make this one of the most successful Commonwealth Games of all time.

Thank you.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

125. On behalf of Mr. Clark, Mr. R. Speaker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
 - (1) the names and positions of all employees in the public service of Alberta with passes to allow free air travel,
 - (2) the guidelines for the use of these passes.

[Motion carried]

126. On behalf of Mr. Clark, Mr. R. Speaker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing, for the following dates, the names of all employees (contract and public service) of Native Affairs:
 - April 3, 1975,
 - April 3, 1976,
 - April 3, 1977,
 - April 3, 1978;
 this information is to include employees of the office of the Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Native Affairs and the Native Secretariat, and is to

indicate names, positions classifications, titles, and salary ranges.

[Motion carried]

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

201. Moved by Dr. McCrimmon:

Be it resolved that the report of the select committee established to review The Ombudsman Act be received.

[Adjourned debate March 7: Dr. Buck]

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on the Ombudsman, Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to ask a question of the hon. Deputy Speaker. In *Hansard* of March 7 it says:

Control of the office of the Ombudsman by the Legislative Assembly. It was pointed out to the committee that under existing legislation the Ombudsman was appointed by, or could be removed by, the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Mr. Speaker, can the hon. member indicate if that is what he meant?

DR. MCCRIMMON: Yes, that is the situation under the existing act, and it was the recommendation in the report that that be changed to the Legislative Assembly.

DR. BUCK: Thank you for that clarification. As a member of the select legislative committee that sat to select the present Ombudsman, I was always under the presumably false assumption that the Ombudsman was a servant of the Legislature and only the Legislature. So I would certainly like to enforce the recommendation that the Ombudsman be answerable only to the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, we must not be cynical when we're politicians, but we must make sure the Ombudsman has complete power and authority to investigate whatever he may wish to investigate without any fear that the axe may fall. I guess I was always under the false assumption that the Ombudsman did have that power.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak briefly, as I've promised my good friend the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo. There are one or two areas that concern me. I would like to say that the former member of this Assembly for Calgary Mountain View didn't receive the recognition he should have when the office of the Ombudsman was first set up. The hon. Albert Ludwig really was the member who rather forcefully encouraged the government to bring in The Ombudsman Act. I guess we politicians never think we receive the recognition we should when we have a good idea. But I would just like the record to indicate that the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, Mr. Ludwig, was very, very instrumental in instituting the office of the Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to see the office of the Ombudsman enlarged. I do not wish to be harsh on some of the municipal bodies, because they do an excellent job in this province. But representations made to me as a private member by citizens in some of our municipalities say that in many instances

it's very, very difficult to get even simple minutes of the last council meeting. I guess the quickest way to get yourself in trouble when you're a public official is to try to do things that aren't in public. I think that's probably the quickest way to get yourself in trouble as a politician.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, and I want this to be very clear: I'm not saying this is a common practice, but this has been a representation made to me. People who have this feeling have brought the concern to me that sometimes it is difficult to get information from officials, usually civil servants and not elected people. Elected people seem to understand it is their responsibility as duly elected people to give out that type of information. This is why I would like to make the representation that if the municipality wishes, they could come under the umbrella of The Ombudsman Act.

Now I know there are many arguments that this would build up a bureaucracy and that there are areas we couldn't possibly cover. But I believe there certainly should be a real effort to see if the municipalities would reconsider this area. I know we could extend it to universities, hospitals, and what have you. But if we look at it just at the elected level, provincially and municipally, I think this is really where people feel they get stonewalled, because these are the two elected levels. Mr. Speaker, I would like to see that type of information made available to the Ombudsman, so he can act.

Another thing I would like to say: when the office of the Ombudsman was new, people were vitally interested in what the Ombudsman could do and what he couldn't do. I'm sure the caseload of the present Ombudsman is probably increasing. But I think the Ombudsman must carry on an advertising campaign, to say that if you have a concern bring it to me. Because as all governments get larger and larger, the man on the street seems to rely more and more on someone who can help him cut the red tape, as it were.

When members first came to this Assembly, I'm sure they thought, well, this is going to be quite a nice little job. The longer you're in it, the less you have to do. I'm sure all hon. members will be back me in this one hundred per cent: it seems the longer you're in this business, the more you've got to do. I guess that's because of the way things develop. They seem to get larger. And as society gets larger and more complicated, the man on the street needs someone to turn to besides his member of the Legislature. I think that person is the Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, I saw an article in one of the Calgary papers that sort of caused me some concern. Rightly or wrongly, the argument half accused the government of wanting the same thing to happen to the Ombudsman as happened to the Environment Conservation Authority: get rid of it. I hope, and I'm anxiously waiting to hear members of the government reassure this Assembly, that there's absolutely no intention on the part of this government to have that happen. I think that would probably be an even more regressive step than getting rid of the Environment Conservation Authority. So I hope the government can allay the fears of the writer who penned this article, that this would happen to the Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's an area where the man on

the street, the ordinary citizen, or the civil servant who feels he's been unjustly treated, has someone to turn to, someone who can go into offices of government and of the civil service, and get answers. Mr. Speaker, twice a year in the Assembly we have the opportunity to ask for motions for returns. But we can't get the concerns of many, many individuals. As private or opposition members we do get some of the concerns. Sometimes we can help get information back to the person. But in many instances the ordinary citizen is perhaps a little cynical. Possibly he feels that if he brings it to a government member, it may not get the attention it should. If he brings it to an opposition member, he feels the government may attempt to stonewall him. The Ombudsman being autonomous and independent, the citizen feels freer to bring that information to him and to have the Ombudsman investigate his concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I have promised my good friend the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo that I'm not going to be very long today, so I would like to summarize very briefly. I hope the Ombudsman will be a servant of the Legislature and only the Legislature, and not be under the thumb of the Executive Council through the Lieutenant Governor in Council; that the Ombudsman will have the freedom to investigate what he feels should be investigated. I would also like to say at this time, Mr. Speaker, that I hope the Legislature in its wisdom will consider that if the present Ombudsman was offered the position, he would take up that offer. At times we as MLAs possibly feel the Ombudsman has gone a little beyond some areas than he should have. But I think the Ombudsman has to have that type of latitude. We don't want constraints on him. Sometimes it may embarrass us as a government or as an opposition, but so be it. That's what the office of Ombudsman is all about. Mr. Speaker, the last point I want to make is, let's make sure the office of Ombudsman stays in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. McCRIMMON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank all members who participated in this debate, and put to rest some of the fears expressed by the hon. member who just spoke. This municipal ombudsman is a most difficult question. I think the committee, in its extensive research and deliberations, probably spent more time on this question than on any other. Quite a number wished and asked for extension to the municipal area for the Ombudsman. However, the representatives from the rural municipalities were firm, and I might say almost adamant, that they did not want extension of the Ombudsman's office into their jurisdictions. One reason they gave: they felt it was another intrusion of government into municipal affairs. The committee left the door open. If in the future the municipalities' representatives change their minds, they may do so by passing recommendations at their annual meeting.

As far as the cities are concerned, the recommendation is that the door is open. I believe it would only be practical to have an ombudsman in the major urban centres if they so wish. In the report, the door

is open for this recommendation.

As for the suggestion that the Ombudsman be removed, this is not intimated in any way, shape, or form in the report. In fact the Ombudsman's jurisdiction has been firmed up. Gray areas where he didn't know whether or not he had power have been cleared up. As mentioned by the hon. member, the fact that the committee recommended the Ombudsman be appointed by and be responsible to the Legislature, rather than to the legislative council, firms up his position in the province, as far as I can see. This was the act passed, I believe, back in 1966. That is the way the act has been and still is. The recommendation is that that be changed. And I think this is just the opposite of the report that the Ombudsman is on his way out, as the intimation was. I have read that report in the paper.

Mr. Speaker, many have wanted the Ombudsman's office extended. If you do extend it, where do you stop? By extending his powers way beyond what they are at present, do you build up another bureaucracy, a separate unit with a large office?

I think we've been very fortunate in Alberta. We've had two outstanding Ombudsmen. In fact, Alberta was the first province to have an ombudsman. We've had a pretty good act for the last 10 or 11 years, and other provinces have used this as the basis for their ombudsman acts. I think we in this province can be very proud of the Ombudsman's office and the way it has been handled. When something is working well, perhaps it is just as well not to disturb it too much. Certainly nothing has been taken away from the office or the powers of the Ombudsman. In fact, under the recommendations of this report some points have been added, and I feel his freedom has been extended. Certainly nothing has been removed in any way, shape, or form.

I would suggest and recommend that all members of the Assembly vote for this resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly wish to accept Motion 201, for the receiving of the report of the select committee on the Ombudsman?

[Motion carried]

209. Moved by Mr. Ghitter:

Be it resolved that the government, with input from senior citizens' groups, consider embarking upon a comprehensive home care program for Alberta senior citizens with the priority goal of achieving an available home chore support service.

MR. GHITTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the outset I would like to thank the hon. Member for Clover Bar for keeping his comments brief today for a change, in order to allow us to proceed with Resolution 209, in deference to so many of our senior people who came all the way from the city of Calgary to listen to this debate this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, in moving this resolution relating to the care of our senior citizens before the hon. members this afternoon, I do so with a certain degree of temerity in that, strange as it may seem, the development of programs relating to our senior citizens is somewhat new to this province and, for that matter, to Canada. Hardcore, factual data is difficult to locate and often difficult to substantiate in dealing

with what programs would deliver the very best service to our senior citizens and are needed by them, and what programs and expenditures of taxpayers' money would be best utilized from the point of view of their needs, and not so much as we who aren't quite there yet. I'd remind all hon. members that, Lord willing, some of us will be there; some sooner than others, but it will happen.

From that point of view, Mr. Speaker, I think the resolution today is very important. Because there are three very significant factors in our province and throughout the world, all of which I'm sure we're aware of. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, it's almost trite to suggest that our citizens are living longer, more meaningful, healthier lives, and a larger percentage of our population is in the over-65 category. I suppose it is also trite to say that more attention is being placed upon the welfare of our senior citizens throughout this country than at any time in the history of our country and our province. And I'm sure all hon. members will agree it should definitely be so.

Mr. Speaker, probably no topic should direct the attention of the hon. members more to this particular segment of our population. On many occasions, all members of this House have debated many programs, attitudes, feelings, and aspirations of our senior people in our endeavor to create programs which will be important and meaningful. From the point of view of our senior citizens, there are many economic benefits which the government in this province and the government of Canada are involved in. The federal government with old age security and guaranteed income supplements, and the provincial government with Alberta assured income plans and social allowances, provide meaningful benefits to our senior citizens, albeit they may be benefits which need to be continually re-examined to ensure they keep pace with inflation and are adequate in order that our senior people will be able to live meaningful, quality lives.

From the point of view of housing services available to senior citizens in the province, we now have renters' assistance grants, property tax rebates for senior citizens, and senior citizens' home improvement plans, all of which have been important and well received by our senior citizens and have afforded an ability to at least some of our senior people to stay within the individual accommodation they desire.

From the point of view of health benefits, the government has introduced and expanded basic and optional health services and extended health benefits that I believe are the envy of jurisdictions throughout North America. From the point of view of income tax benefits, the federal and provincial programs relating to age allowance, pension income exemptions further signify the endeavor of governments to respond to the needs of our many senior people.

Provincially, we have created other benefits for senior citizens: in housing, through senior citizens' self-contained housing and senior citizen lodges; in health, through various forms of institutional care, including geriatric centres, preventive social services; in banking, treasury branches offer certain services free to senior citizens and pay them a slightly higher rate of interest on their savings. We also have programs in education which allow fees for regular credit courses to be waived for senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud all these programs, and I

know that the group in our province most appreciative of these programs is probably the senior citizens themselves. In political life I've found there's probably no group of Alberta citizens more appreciative of what is done for them than those in our older age groups and those who may be going slightly gray around the temples but certainly not gray in their thought processes and attitudes towards life, and that covers a lot of us. A few may not have the hair to go gray, but that's another matter.

Mr. Speaker, today is probably one of the first periods in the history of the House since I have been here that we have seen an example of what I refer to as gray power. That's the political power of individuals in a different age group who are often not so much forgotten as not considered from the point of view not only of the political power they have when they go to the election booth, but also of the importance of their ability to change public opinion, our attitudes, our approaches; for example, from the point of view of the resolution before the Legislature this afternoon. I think it is in this approach that the resolution is really presented.

May I say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that the comments I wish to draw upon this afternoon with respect to this resolution are made in recognition of the many laudatory and very important programs that have been taken by this government and past governments, and with the positive realization that by debates of this nature we may be able to construct and redirect existing programs to ensure that our senior citizens receive full value for each dollar spent by government on their behalf. During this session of the Legislature, the government has introduced two ministerial statements which have a profound impact on the lives of senior citizens in this province.

On March 8, 1978, the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health, Miss Hunley, announced the introduction over a four-year period, of a province-wide co-ordinated home care program. The program expressed five basic goals; namely, to meet appropriate health and social needs of patients in their homes, to facilitate more effective use of institutional beds, to promote greater personal and family responsibility for health, to relieve undue strain on families who are trying to care for an ill person in the home and, lastly, to provide continuity of care by inserting an intermediary service between institutionalized care and that point at which there is no further need for medical care in the home. As all hon. members are aware, the program allocated approximately \$3 million to home care for 1978-79, rising to an annual allocation of \$14 million, in 1977 dollars, at the end of four years when the program becomes fully implemented.

The program is important, Mr. Speaker. It's important to all of us, and I'm sure it's supported by senior citizens in the province because it exhibits an important move forward in government programs and care for our senior citizens. However, the program directs responsibility for delivery of the benefits to local health authorities and requires as a condition of eligibility that applicants require medical treatment.

The second important announcement made by this government during this session, Mr. Speaker, was by the Minister of Housing and Public Works on April 6, 1978. At that time Mr. Yurko announced the allocation throughout the province of senior citizens' lodges

and senior citizens' self-contained housing units, which had been approved by the government. The announcement involved intended budgetary expenditures of \$7 million for senior citizens' lodges programs for some 228 beds, \$58 million for self-contained housing programs for an additional 1,543 units, and \$10 million for some 400 nursing home beds, under a new program of capital construction. These two announcements present the dilemma faced in the programming of what is required by our senior citizens.

The first announcement quite importantly and very significantly recognizes the need for home care services to avoid the high cost of institutionalization, while the second announcement creates the expansion and availability of institutions that the first announcement endeavors to diminish. There is the dilemma faced by our senior citizens' programs. We seem to be going in both directions at the same time. Do we need to do so?

Mr. Speaker, I know my statement is an oversimplification of the problem, and that in many communities various forms of housing programs are a very important necessity for senior citizens. Notwithstanding the oversimplification, it is just as true to suggest from the point of view of priorities, that if this government embarked on programs with a higher priority toward home care of all kinds — not just medically oriented home care — the capital expenditures required for institutionalization and the attendant operating annual costs resulting from the creation of these institutions would appreciably reduce.

It is this approach and priority of understanding that I wish to impress upon hon. members this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, it has been said by those writing about our senior citizens that, "For all too long, old people have had to wait endlessly for services essential to survival and to a decent and pleasurable old age." They need an effective network of facilities, programs, and services to enable them to survive short-term crises and to meet long-term needs. Without these supports, many of them lose their capacity to live independently or semi-independently in their own homes. They wait through agonizing hours for their doctors to visit, the homemaker to come, the hot noon meal to be delivered.

Much too often they wait in vain, Mr. Speaker, for the services may be totally unavailable. Then one more senior citizen is forced reluctantly to abandon his home for a nursing home, a hospital, or other facility, and society is burdened with another unnecessary bill for institutional care. In my view, older people need a much wider range of services brought directly into their homes. Mental health counselling; medical nursing; homemaking, home health, dental, protective, legal, nutritional, and social services; religious support; outpatient care; and physical, occupational, and speech therapy, should all be available. In other words, one should not have to be sick to obtain home care. Merely to be frail and unable to perform certain chores in their homes is surely enough to qualify them for government programs of assistance.

Mr. Speaker, what I am suggesting is certainly not new in certain areas of the world, although it certainly is new in many of the horizons in Canada today. Studies of Scandinavian programs of home care for the aged are very relevant, in that in Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, the popula-

tions are particularly mature. In the case of a country like Sweden, the largest proportion of the population, some 14 per cent, are regarded as senior citizens. This makes Sweden one of the oldest countries in the world. I suppose that age and wisdom are somewhat related in this example. As a result one can find social policies for the aged that are both comprehensive and imaginative.

Scandinavians have generally developed a home health service utilizing to a large degree the volunteer sector, which provides all types and manner of home care services, particularly through middle-aged women, working on an hourly wage basis, who are available within their communities to come forward and provide homemaking service, Good Samaritan services as they call it, just to assist some of the senior people in the odd chores they find so difficult and that force them to leave their homes because of their lack of ability and strength to deal with some of these heavier chores. Mr. Speaker, in the Scandinavian countries the senior people pay for the service. They're not asking for anything for free. When able to do so, they pay for the service. And the result has been most impressive as to their ability to keep senior people in their homes, where they want to be, rather than expending immense amounts of dollars for institutionalization.

Mr. Speaker, it certainly is true, and the Scandinavians have found it to be true, that it is considerably cheaper for the taxpayer to develop programs which would allow for home life, which is philosophically, psychologically, and socially preferable to institutional life. These programs have been copied and utilized in some states in the United States and are now making their presence felt in Canada.

The province of Saskatchewan, in a report tabled in their Legislature in November 1976 by Dr. S.L. Scoble of Regina, has adopted strategies which clearly develop high priority to the expansion of home and community services for the elderly while giving low priority — yes, low priority — to capital expenditures on current forms of residential and inpatient hospital care. The report of Dr. Scoble suggested:

Our present attitudes to the needs of the elderly are unduly pessimistic and negative. With new approaches we should be able to improve the quality of care and thereby achieve a much higher rate of rehabilitation of our elderly and return more of them to their homes and community.

In a home care policy paper statement filed in July 1976, the province of Manitoba suggested the highest 'prioritization' of a program with the same philosophy I have expressed with respect to the province of Saskatchewan and, again, a de-emphasis on expenditure for institutions.

In 1975 a very important pilot project was conducted in the Kingston area of the province of Ontario, which has significantly determined the following, many of which are obvious. The cost in the pilot project showed that in a comprehensive home care program the cost amounted to \$10.50 per day per patient, not taking into consideration what the patient would pay if he were able to do so. By comparison the charge per person per day in a municipal home for the aged is \$18, and \$21 for ward accommodation to \$31.40 for private accommodation in the nursing home in Kingston. The pilot project clearly illustrates the immense cost benefits to the

taxpayer by embarking on this program. It is estimated that some \$200,000 per day would be saved in the province of Ontario if they embarked on a province-wide comprehensive day care program.

For those in this House, Mr. Speaker, who will stand up this afternoon and say they are frightened by the cost implications of a home care program, let me say to them: examine the programs in Scandinavia; examine the programs in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, albeit they're just in the embryo stage; examine the Kingston report; go to the state of Minnesota, where home health care is already very expanded. You will see beyond a shadow of a doubt that the saving to the taxpayer is immense and that you are providing a service to senior citizens that they want; not a service we think they want, but a service they want and need. As a result they are healthier, both mentally and physically, by the ability to stay within their own homes where they have grown up, where they have lived, where they feel comfortable, instead of removing them to other centres of an institutional nature in the province.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at a centre like the Fanning Centre in Calgary, which was just recently opened, I view it with mixed emotions. I know many senior people in our area need that facility and that it will be important to them. But I also know in two and a half years a facility of that nature will be double its cost from the point of view of operating expenses. I know we will have difficulty finding talented people who have experience in the geriatric field to provide the service and deliver it to the senior citizens who require it. I fear that much of our energies, our approaches, talents, and money will go to centres like the Fanning Centre in Calgary that sufficient funds will not be left over in a priority sense to deal with the problem where it must be attacked, and that is in the area and in the sense of an approach from the point of view of home care.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recommend within this resolution seven priorities that should be examined by this government, which I believe would be not only important from a point of view of creating a strong and firm relationship with our senior citizens but also would result in better, more meaningful directions in our senior citizens' programs. I am not making these recommendations out of any suggestion of negativism or criticism of what has occurred today. I applaud this government for what it has done to this present time, and I am proud to be a part of the programs which have been developed and which have occurred over the last seven years.

I applaud the Minister of Social Services and Community Health for her courage and hard work in bringing forward the home care program. It is a very significant, positive step in an area of immense importance. I would like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, in a constructive way for the consideration of members of the Legislature, and looking forward to their debate this afternoon, basically seven points which fall within the context of the resolution, and which I think are very important and very meaningful.

The first, Mr. Speaker, is that a cabinet committee of government be set up to co-ordinate programs related to the aged. I'm not suggesting we need a ministry of the aged, but I think we need a co-ordinating committee of ministers involved in dealing with senior citizens' problems who will meet to co-

ordinate the activities which I fear at times are not sufficiently co-ordinated, a cabinet committee involving particularly the hon. Miss Hunley, the hon. Mr. Yurko. Many important programs and analyses particularly relating to the aged could come forward from a committee of this nature, which we don't have at present.

Secondly, I would like to suggest that representatives of our senior citizens' groups in the province have the opportunity to meet annually with the Premier and the cabinet, as do other important groups in the province. Surely if the Premier and the cabinet, within their busy schedules, have time to meet with representatives of the chamber of commerce, labor, teachers, and the like — all of which is very important, Mr. Speaker — when you consider the numbers of our senior citizens, I think it would be a fine step forward if the Premier and the cabinet met on an annual basis with the senior citizens' group for an hour or two in the afternoon to maintain relationships and hear directly from the people involved as to their concern, receive the input of the senior citizens, the consumers of our programs, as to what is really needed in our province.

Thirdly, I would like to suggest that the delivery system of home care programs be administered by an independent board rather than by local health units. I know the present program directs that it be started with the local health units. In my judgment, Mr. Speaker, the problem of that approach is that it automatically over-orientes or overemphasizes the health component of the home care delivery program.

I envision a board in the local areas of our province, which is composed of officers of the local health units; representatives of consumer groups, our senior citizens; representatives of groups, and of our volunteer agencies, who would meet and assess the needs of the senior citizens in their particular areas — be it health care, home chore, or whatever — within parameters and guidelines set down by this government. I then envision that each of those local groups, with a feeling of the pulse of the senior citizens in their area, dealing with the problems in that area, would be able to analyse and determine what is really needed, within budgetary restrictions imposed by the government, also working out systems to receive money back from the senior people who tell me all they want is the service and they're willing to pay for it, but there's nowhere they can go to get the service. Those who have are willing to pay whatever they can afford.

This would accomplish two things, Mr. Speaker. It would bring home care to a local level. Secondly, it would have input from all interested groups and, thirdly, it would encourage the very important volunteer segments of our community who are, in varying degrees, very much involved with what is occurring in that respect.

Fourthly, I would like to recommend — and I think it's inherent in the statement of the hon. minister — that in every possible way the volunteer segment of our community be brought into the approach and delivery system of home care.

Mr. Speaker, let me give just one example that was handed to me this afternoon by Mrs. Allen from the Kerby Centre, who has taken a survey. As you all know the Kerby Centre is a very important fact in the life of our Calgary senior citizens, who find so much

comfort and stimulation in the programs, and so much companionship in the very fine work that is done in that centre for all senior people throughout our city. The Kerby Centre has been providing a shopping service to senior people. Some 64 people regularly use this shopping service. Of these 64, 50 will lose their independence and freedom of choice if the service is discontinued.

What this is saying, Mr. Speaker — and the names, the breakdown, and the personal interviews are here: the material is here for all to see — is that if that very simple shopping centre service were taken away from these 64 senior people, 50 of them would lose their independence and become institutionalized; at what cost, I might say, to the taxpayer in the province of Alberta?

In fact, when we announced our home care program I understand that senior people were contacting the Kerby Centre and asking for the shopping service on less frequent occasions, saying they would get along, because of their fear that they would lose this shopping service and not have the ability to maintain themselves and stay within their own homes, the result of which would push them into a situation where they would be required to come under government care. These individuals do not in any respect wish to become wards of the state, for lack of a better expression. They want to carry on; they want to stay where they are. Mr. Speaker, here is a very small but important example of the importance of home care service to our senior citizens.

Sixth, I suggest that a central agency be set up in each of these local areas so that the senior citizens know who to call and have a number at their disposal so they know where the service is provided. In Calgary many services are available that our senior people don't know how to find. I think that is a problem. They don't have a telephone number they can call. Many of them call the Kerby Centre and find out where programs are available. If we had one central co-ordinating authority through this body I previously mentioned, with one telephone number of which our senior people would be aware; if they had a need they could call and there would be someone to respond. Too many of our services float throughout the community without a co-ordinating body to deliver them or provide the information to the elderly. I think that would be an important and inexpensive step forward.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of direction and priority, I would suggest it is important that the government reassess its expenditures and seriously examine the tremendous amount of money we are budgeting toward institutions in comparison with preventive matters. It seems to me that institutions are often after the fact. They take the problems and live with them but really do little in the preventive sense. It's kind of like housing out the problem and saying, well, we have to provide a home to care for the people. Many people need it. There is no question that many need this service. But many would not be there if we had expansion approaches in our programs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to present this resolution in what I think is a very important area. I know we are just embarking on this program. I know it is new, and I must say again how impressed I am with the courage of the government and the minister bringing it for-

ward to see that it at least gets started. The purpose of this resolution is to encourage the many various suggestions being brought forward, with the idea that in future we will be able to embark on broader programs which will be very important to our senior people.

Last, and probably by way of proof, in order to satisfy sceptics who may reside in this House as to cost — and from private conversations I know there are some — may I at least suggest to the government that a pilot project be undertaken somewhere in the province, just expending some funds in one area, like they did in Kingston. I would welcome it in the city of Calgary. For the sceptics in this House who suggest it's going to cost more, that it's a bureaucratic hazard, and all the other things that have been said by some, let us at least embark on a pilot project. I welcome you to come to the city of Calgary with \$20,000 or \$30,000 to get it started, and let's see if what they've experienced elsewhere in Canada as to the success of these programs is true in this province.

I think it's important, and I welcome the debate. I thank all those from Calgary who have taken the time to come here this afternoon to listen to it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [applause]

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I deem it a pleasure to be able to be involved in this debate and certainly have been very appreciative of the remarks of the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo. I think we as members of the Assembly should certainly take heed of the remarks, the examples, the suggestion that if a program is not implemented in total, as would be desired, we at least look at a pilot project. I think that has gone quite a way to supporting the hon. member in the resolution and in supporting the actual concept before us.

The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo has presented a very excellent case, as I would examine it, with regard to the urban areas of this province. Speaking directly, I think the hon. member was looking at his experience in the city of Calgary. Mr. Speaker, not only do the seniors of this province who live in the urban areas require a more broadened type of home care program; the senior citizens of the rural areas of this province need and can use the same type of approach.

Mr. Speaker, since I support the remarks of the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, who has referred to an urban situation, I would like to relate my concern with regard to the rural areas of the province and exemplify them in the same context.

I think that we as legislators or as government can recognize that through various government-type programs we attempt to meet the needs of people. But there is a basic fault in that approach. We often feel that the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and health care of individuals be provided for the individual, for the senior citizen in many situations, but when we as legislators do that, we often forget one very, very important component that is most necessary.

Mr. Speaker, we forget that it is our responsibility to maintain and preserve self-respect in individuals, to maintain and preserve self-determination, because that's what built this province of Alberta. That's what built the industries in this province. That's what built anything that happened in this province. Self-

determination: people with goals, people with abilities, people with foresight who made things happen. Many of those people are senior citizens at the present time — seniors who are continuing in a leadership role, who have placed responsibilities in the hands of other generations in the province of Alberta. So when we plan programs and think in terms of responsibility of government, we must remember our responsibility to maintain self-determination.

When we examine a home care program in relation to institutional care, building large high-rises for senior citizens in which they can gather, or residential accommodation, I think we must remember the basic component that's necessary: people, no matter what age, want to have their own self-determination; they want to be independent. Mr. Speaker, I think one of the greatest things we can do for senior citizens is to do everything within our power to ensure and assist seniors in staying in their own homes, in their own communities, so they can become involved in whatever activity they have been involved in and continue a normal life pattern, which is so essential to each and every one of us, no matter what age we are, in this province or anywhere else in the world.

Mr. Speaker, as I relate that concept to the home care program and the needs of senior citizens, I think we must go beyond just being concerned with the component of medical treatment. I know a number of seniors in my constituency who are quite capable of living in their own homes, but they often need help with the lawn, with washing the windows or maybe the floor, or maybe need just some minor medical type of assistance. All they need is someone to come in and do that at an appropriate time, or someone they can call upon to assist them in that area. That to me would be the more effective type of home care program. We can make assumptions as to whether it saves dollars or doesn't save dollars. I think it would, in the assumptions I would like to make. But I'd also like to say we retain or preserve something through that type of mechanism that's even greater, that you can't measure in dollar value, and that is a person in their own home, in their own community.

One of the things that has happened in the last few years that has been very beneficial to senior citizens in my constituency, and I'm sure in others, has been the number of drop-in centres that have sprung up all over the province. I have something like nine or 10 in my own constituency, and I find that through those drop-in centres a number of the responsibilities we are talking about here with regard to home care are taken care of, are co-ordinated through the senior citizens themselves. Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest to the minister and certainly to the mover of this motion that when we consider this broader concept of a home care program, we involve the various drop-in centre organizations. They're there in the rural communities. They're active, they fulfil terrific needs, they're a lifeblood of most of the communities, and I could see the home care program being co-ordinated through the drop-in centre executives and volunteers. We could work it very, very effectively, and I'm sure that type of responsibility would be accepted with open arms by many of the seniors in the drop-in centre organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the Social Credit Party is in support of the broader concept of home

care. As you well recognize, we raised the concept of home care in the last session and the session before. We're pleased the government has moved and is willing to come forward with the home care program at the present time. We think that's a good step, but certainly at this point in time a broader look at the program would be of benefit to all senior citizens. I think it is one way we can assist seniors, and that will certainly apply to all of us. It's one way we will be able to help people carry on a normal life in their home, to enhance their own self-determination, and to me that's important. I think that is a very responsible and a very meaningful role for government to play in the lives of senior individuals.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to take part in the debate this afternoon. I certainly wish to compliment the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo for bringing forward this resolution and, in addition, bringing with him a cheering section. I think it's important that we have an opportunity of speaking to people who will be directly affected with the decisions made in this Assembly. This is the type of thing that should be done more often, so I certainly congratulate the hon. member, not only for his motion but for his political perspicacity.

AN HON. MEMBER: We had to educate him.

MR. HORSMAN: I welcome the fact, as have the hon. members who have spoken so far, that the members of our society are living longer, and they're living better in many ways. However, it is our role as a government and as members of this Assembly to ensure that they are in fact living better.

I think there is much we can do to improve the lives of senior citizens in this province. We must keep in mind of course that our province is really only a young province. Many of the people who are here today, and many of the people who are still active and involved in this in my community, my constituency, and throughout the province, were either vigorous young people taking part in the building of this province in 1905 or the children of those pioneers. So they remember and appreciate the history of this province. In fact in many parts of Alberta very few are elderly. I think of Fort McMurray, for example, where most of the population are young people. That just serves to illustrate the fact that we are a very young province and that much of our province is a pioneer province to this day. The fact that we have not had the hundreds of years of experience as a province and as a nation in dealing with the lives and the role of senior citizens makes our job that much more challenging, and I wish to make some comments on that.

I like the suggestion very much indeed that senior citizens should be directly involved with us in government in planning the types of services that we as a government will be providing. I welcome the fact that there has been the development of senior citizen advisory committees throughout Alberta. Certainly the one in Medicine Hat is very active, and I have had the opportunity of meeting with them on several occasions.

In particular, I've had the opportunity of meeting with the chairman, who also happens to be a member of the provincial senior citizens' advisory council to

the minister. I have been impressed indeed with the work he and other members of that council have been doing to identify the needs of senior citizens in Alberta. I think we as a government have responded in very significant ways toward providing improved housing, not only the senior citizen homes — lodges, self-contained units, and so on — but I think the programs of senior citizen home improvement, phases one, two, and now three, where we have added a new factor to deal with handicapped Albertans, were indeed more effective and important than that. Those are the things that really impress senior citizens I have spoken to: the fact that we are making moneys available to them to improve their homes, to allow them to live in their homes.

I have yet to meet a senior citizen, other than those who are really very ill, who really wanted to move from the family home. They want to stay there because that is really where they feel most comfortable, where they are surrounded by family, friends, and neighbors.

We've had reference today to the introduction of the first step in the co-ordinated home care program. I wish to add my congratulations to those of the mover of this motion and congratulate the minister for taking this first step. I've had the expression of concern put to me that this step will really deal with about 15 per cent of senior citizens who really require some kind of home care — and I'm speaking of home care in the broadest sense — but that 85 per cent of the individuals do not require the health-related services and will not receive help because of the fact that they do not receive a prescription, if you will, from a medical practitioner that they require that type of care. It is, however, an important step.

If I may, I want to deal with a couple of concerns I have about the role of government. Before we as a government get involved in a bureaucratic organization, which is rigid and structured as many government departments unfortunately tend to become or, in some cases, must be, I think we as a Legislature, as a government, and as people of Alberta have to take a look at some of the important additional matters that should be taken into consideration.

The first of those is the responsibility of the family. Now I realize that we have undergone a dramatic change in the nature of the family in the last few years; but I would like to emphasize how important it is to me that we as a government do what we can to support the family and the role the family plays, particularly in this instance, in dealing with senior citizens. I am sure every senior citizen here and every senior citizen in my constituency would be happy indeed if these small home services would be provided by members of their family. They would much rather have that than go to any other government agency, or indeed any other volunteer agency. I realize the day of the extended family has passed, when the very large homes were part of our way of life and you had the youngest child, maybe a maiden aunt or two, and the grandmother and grandfather. That just doesn't happen any more. But in many areas I think it is still possible for us as a government to encourage the family ties and the family responsibility.

The other matter that has already been alluded to by the Member for Calgary Buffalo is the role of the volunteer and volunteer agencies. Whatever we do

as a government, please do not abandon or make the role of the volunteer and the volunteer agency any less important, because I regard that volunteer role to be second to the role of the family as part of the very fibre of our society. I can give you many examples of the important roles played by volunteer agencies in my own area. I won't go into them, but I just want to mention one: the family service in Medicine Hat has been excellent. But bureaucracy has crept in, and in that particular instance has downgraded the role of the volunteer directors who have given many years of service to that agency. It has been suggested that their role should be replaced by a civil servant. I reject that.

One other agency which is of vital importance to our senior citizens, and I know most senior citizens support, is the church in our society. I think we as a government should encourage churches to fill a greater role in providing services in this province. Of course in the senior citizen self-contained housing we are doing that, working in co-operation with churches to provide those facilities for seniors. I welcome that, and I hope that type of agency, the churches of this province, will be worked into the proposals when we deal with the question of home care and home services.

I think there have been various pilot projects throughout the province. The hon. member would like one in Calgary, and I'd like to have one in Medicine Hat. I'm sure we would all like to have one. In the city of Medicine Hat we have a very fine senior citizen centre, The Veiner Centre, which by the way is being co-ordinated by my predecessor in this Assembly. He's doing a good job. I hope he keeps on doing a job in that role for many years and doesn't wish to resume a political career, because I'm convinced he's doing a better job there than he did here.

DR. BUCK: He might do a better job here than you're doing here.

MR. HORSMAN: But unfortunately they've had some problems there. Do you know what the problems have been related to providing home help for seniors? It's the federal government. The federal government has come along and provided some funding to The Veiner Centre and to various agencies there. It's lasted for a limited period of time, then it's been dropped: Senior citizens who have come to rely upon a certain level of service in providing home help have all of a sudden had that taken out from under them. So I suggest that before we embark upon a pilot project, we do so with the object in mind of retaining that type of service for a good long time, and not have people rely upon the service and then suddenly have it pulled out from under them, as has happened in several instances with federal government funding. That's not giving any help to the senior citizens of this province in the long run.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Let us guard against bureaucracy. Senior citizens who have reached 65 have had enough to do with bureaucracy all their lives, and I'm sure they aren't interested in battling bureaucracy the rest of their lives. Maybe it's a challenge that will help them live a little longer, but I would like to see

them have challenges in life other than just to fight the red tape that government can inflict upon the people of this province.

I would also like to emphasize the fact — it's already been mentioned — that the user wishes to pay for the services received. I wish to emphasize that most importantly. It's most important. I don't think the senior citizens want us to set up a very costly program for the people of the province without their paying a fair share, if they are able to do so. I'm not going to dwell upon the cost to the taxpayer, because I really believe we would save a lot of money if the senior citizens of this province could remain in their own homes.

I think we have to look at some concerns, however. First of all, too many seniors are unaware of the benefits they now can receive from government and how they can reach them. I like the suggestions made by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo in that respect. In addition, I think many institutions are providing too costly service, in excess of actual need. As mentioned, we don't have a co-ordinated program of simple home help, although I'm hoping that will develop, and we don't yet have the co-ordination among public, private, and volunteer sectors that we need to achieve the desired end.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I'm basically very supportive of the motion before the Assembly today, subject to my concerns with regard to over-bureaucracy and the creation of an expensive service, and certainly subject to any effort on the part of this government to downgrade or further destroy the role of the family, the church, or volunteer agencies in the delivery of these services. If we destroy or undermine those essential ingredients of our society in any way, we won't be doing any service to the people who want to have the benefit of new programs, and we will certainly not be doing anything for the benefit of future generations in Alberta.

I am impressed by an article in the *Weekend Magazine* which was handed to me just before I got up to speak. It's *Life Begins at 100*, and that's an interesting observation. It relates to a study in the Soviet Caucasus where some people live to be 140. Do you know what they attribute their long life to? Heredity of course is very important. Hard work, abstinence from rich food, and respect for the elderly — and you know, that is so important. We as legislators have a role to emphasize to the people of Alberta that the elderly are part of our society, and they are not to be taken out of our society and set apart by themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I have welcomed this opportunity to participate and to bring to the attention of the Assembly my basic support for the motion today, subject to the concerns I have alluded to.

Just to quote from the conclusion of this article, it says this of a citizen in Russia, and it's so true:

He thinks of himself as the creator of his circumstances. He is part of the present, not a relic of the past.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should like to begin this afternoon by complimenting the hon. member for bringing to our attention a motion of the significance this particular one has, not only for the present but also for the future. What we have today

in terms of the quantitative aspect of the challenge will be multiplied in the future, for several reasons. I think our society has moved a long way from the type of family arrangement that used to prevail, as the hon. Member for Medicine Hat-Redcliff said. It may have yet a little further to go.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, from looking at the statistics dealing with the population of our province, and of Canada in general; it's quite clear that in the next few years we will go through a change in the make-up of the population. In fact there will be more senior citizens relative to the remaining proportion of the population than we have today. So there will be a proportionate shift. A larger proportion of our total population will fall in the category of senior citizen.

Mr. Speaker, since there has been some discussion of the attitude of government, if you will, the philosophical direction in which government is going, I'd like to discuss my analysis for a moment, and present my views of what I see this government doing and why it is doing what it's doing. I'd particularly like to draw the attention of hon. members to, it seems to me, two main challenges the government has faced in the last five, six, seven, 10 years.

The first has risen in the last five to six years. Mr. Speaker, I refer to the problem of providing housing, the simple straightforward issue of how we get a sufficient number of housing units on stream for the population of this province. The population has surged ahead, as we all know; people have come from not only other provinces in Canada, but also from beyond Canada. The fact of the matter is that we have had each year, for the last several years, about 60,000 more people in this province than we had the year before. It has ranged between 40,000 and 60,000 for three years now, I think. It may even be four years that we have seen this rate of growth in our population. That, in combination with some federal government actions taken back in the early '70s, has presented us with a severe housing crisis. I should also add that the housing crisis was brought on by a change in the nature of our population, the post-war baby boom moving into the age of family formation and seeking its own accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, I think the government quite correctly looked at this problem, this challenge, and said, above all else we have to remove some of the pressure on the housing market. In combination with the challenges that have faced the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health, one way to do that is to provide more institutions for senior citizens, if I can use the term used by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo. I'll come back to the expression "institution".

The second thread of our policy and our concern that I have noted, which has moved us in the direction of group accommodation for senior citizens, has been the problem we as a government have inherited with respect to past building for medical and hospital services. I refer, of course, to a problem that all members are familiar with, the problem of too many active treatment beds and insufficient nursing homes and middle-level care beds. A very severe problem. In view of that, by bringing more nursing homes and institutions of that nature on stream, we could remove a problem of cost in the medical services area by removing the backlog of persons who are in active treatment institutions and could equally well — per-

haps better, and certainly more economically — be treated in nursing homes. We have moved in that direction. If one looks at what the government has accomplished, and it has been a very great deal in these two areas, it seems as though our philosophy has directed us in those two directions. Mr. Speaker, I submit that that is not an interpretation or a description of my philosophy, and I doubt very much if it's a description of governmental philosophy.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated that I would like to comment on the question of institutionalization. In my constituency there are several senior citizens' housing projects: Meadowcroft, which is a very large project sponsored by the United Church; Canora Gardens, which is quite different. It's still a high-rise. It's operated — actually it's self-administered by the senior citizens in it — by the community association in which it is located. It's unique.

The conception the residents of those two apartments have of their homes is vastly different. It's quite amazing to go from one place to the other. In one place it's like going into a high-rise anywhere in downtown Edmonton. It seems that very few people know very few people. They just don't mix very much. In the other one, it's a gung-ho organization. If you don't come down to the general meeting, somebody gets on the buzzer and finds out why you're not there. It's really a different attitude, a totally different type of operation.

I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, that there isn't room for both types of operations. I know persons in both apartments. They're quite happy, and I think either one would be unhappy if they were switched in terms of their apartments. I mention that to suggest that we should be careful in our assessment of what's desirable and undesirable. I can tell you that prior to having to live with or be familiar with these two apartments, I had some severe reservations about the nature of a program which tended to group many senior citizens in one location. But there are some very definite advantages. I must say my experience suggests that while I frankly prefer the one type of operation over the other — without identifying which here — nevertheless I think they are both meeting a very good need and are doing it in a manner which is providing a very pleasant home life to the residents of the respective apartments.

I might make one other comment on that, just in passing. At the opening of Canora Gardens, which was just this fall, one of the more senior residents, a Mrs. Brown aged 91, came to me and said, Mr. Young, I am so happy; I have started to live again after four years; last week I went out and bought a whole new suite for my apartment. She was just bubbling all over. Just tremendous. I don't know whether she was forced to move out of her little home or not, but she certainly regarded where she was then as being much preferable to the situation she had been in for the previous five years.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of having lunch with the president and some staff members of the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired in Edmonton. We had quite a discussion about how extensive the home care program should be and about how the announcement made in late March, if memory serves me, would affect the existing situation in Edmonton. Certainly these people have some desires, some concerns, and some reservations. They

have no quarrel with the direction of the present program in terms of the health-centred thrust — if I can use that — of the proposal. They think that's a desirable move and are happy to see it developing. As the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo has mentioned, they would of course like to see it extended. They'd like to see the shopping service, snow shovelling, home visitation, and all of that.

Mr. Speaker, I put some questions to them, because I don't think it's quite as easy and as simple as saying that the government should do it, the government should extend the program. In my own experience — I have a file here which is at least half an inch thick of challenges which some people consider we have either met very well or not met at all in the Edmonton area.

I have lived with and tried to assist the West 10 pilot project in the city of Edmonton, which did try on a community basis, funded by government, to supply a shovelling service, a handyman service, and what not. It sent out newsletters to a good proportion of the city of Edmonton advertising this service. I believe the results of that effort to have been a disappointment, not only to me but to some of the volunteers who really tried to make it go. They thought, and I hoped, that by getting West 10 in operation they would be able to supply a very much community-based, community-involved organization which could relate directly to the specific needs. As the governing body for the West 10 operation they elected residents from the community leagues and really tried to tie the whole thing together. I think it can be fairly said that it didn't work the way they had hoped.

It raises some questions for me, and I raised these questions yesterday with the officers of the society. Out of our discussion yesterday, which is going to be continued, I would like to leave with hon. members the state of my present thinking on the matter.

First of all, if we're going to move beyond the health-centred part of the home care program, I think we have to be extremely cautious; cautious about cost control, cautious about volunteer involvement, cautious about maintaining the responsibility neighbors have for their fellow man, and cautious about maintaining the involvement of other members of the family with the senior members of families. I would like to suggest that in the Edmonton area — where we have the Edmonton Home Care Program Advisory Committee, the Edmonton Board of Health, West 10, Area 13, regional offices of the department of the hon. minister, and many other volunteer groups — we turn the responsibility for this particular thrust, the overall umbrella responsibility, to the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired. I can't think of a better organization.

In this resolution today we talk about senior citizens, thinking of those who are frail, those who have problems. But there are many senior citizens whose bigger problem is finding something to do with themselves and who would love the opportunity to help their fellow man. I met some of those people yesterday. I can't think of persons who are better able to direct their energies and meet the challenge we have than these people.

So I would like to suggest that in the Edmonton area, and I speak only of the Edmonton area, we consider the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired

as the umbrella agency for volunteer groups. Make them responsible for the co-ordination, for the information service. I'm talking now about any programs other than the health-centred ones, which for many reasons may best be run through the Board of Health or through the preventive social services — I'm not sure about that. It seems to me all that would be required would be some funds to operate or to enable the director of the society to be paid. Perhaps this could be done on a matching grant basis. I'm not at all sure that we should supply all the funds. There are other ways, other groups in the city of Edmonton which, if they knew of the need, I'm sure would be prepared to help fund that society. I hope the society is prepared to look beyond the sources of revenue it has to date.

Mr. Speaker, I make that recommendation because, for reasons which I have already mentioned, I think they are the persons closest to the actual need. But they are also the only group that can face up to the challenge of determining how much senior citizens who do need help and who do want services can pay for those services. Pride would make a large number of senior citizens very anxious to pay, at least in part, for services they receive.

Yesterday I looked through some material I received on the Barons-Eureka and the Grande Prairie experiments. I noted, Mr. Speaker, that the difference in their charges was over 100 per cent between one operation and the other for the same income range, the same type of service. How do we reconcile that? I think the way to reconcile that is to force that discretionary action upon the volunteer group or the society itself. Let them make that decision. I don't believe it is possible for government, under strict guidelines and regulations, to be able to give that kind of discretion to its employees without challenges of: unfair, you're not charging enough, or you're charging too much.

Mr. Speaker, those are the main observations I want to make. I know there are many others who wish to speak to this. In terms of extending the home care program, which I support, I think it is needed. I've seen some very good results, hon. member, from my experiences in the Edmonton area, from the amount of home care that is provided here. I'm suggesting that the overall responsibility, aside from the health care thrust, rest with a volunteer agency, and in the Edmonton area I would see that as a society. I'm suggesting that the government commitment be primarily by way of a limited grant for the support of the paid help, which would simply be the co-ordinating staff to make use of the volunteer services, because if we get to snow shovelling, visitation, and shopping services, much of that is the kind of thing one good neighbor provides to another good neighbor in the spirit of fellowship and concern. It provides both, I think, with a realization that there's more to life than the almighty dollar.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to commend the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo for the very excellent and eloquent address he gave and for bringing the resolution to us.

I believe one of the basic principles of the Progressive Conservative Party and of some other parties, namely freedom of choice, is something that per-

meates a resolution of this nature. I don't like a system where the government tells people what's good for them, what they must do. I prefer a system where individuals of any age may make up their minds themselves and do what they want to do. Consequently, as people grow older the principle becomes more and more important, because their activities narrow. In my view, the government that provides a variety of programs in order that senior citizens may choose the one they like best is really the most humanitarian way of dealing with this problem.

Some people really love their homes. They don't want to leave. It doesn't have to be a luxurious or a wonderful home. I remember two days before Christmas, a few years ago, when I was asked to go and see a chap in the Drumheller valley, whom I'm going to call Mike. Mike lived in the side of a hill. He dug out the little one room he had, put a bed in there, put boards — incidentally CNR car doors — at the front, and put a stove inside and dug the hole up through the dirt. The smoke would be coming out into the prairie, and he had his very crude door. This was 40 below zero weather, and when the people came to me they said, Mike is going to freeze to death. You'd better go up and see what's going to happen. So I said, I'll be glad to go and see Mike.

I went to visit him and was welcomed by him. I went inside. The cave was cold; he had a fire on, but two or three pans of ashes that were so cold he didn't take them out. A couple of dogs were huddling in there too. The smell of the place wasn't very wonderful. I said to Mike, you're going to freeze to death here. I asked why he didn't go to what we called in those days the Youngstown Home. He said, no, I'm not leaving my home; I love it here, and if I once leave they'll never let me come back. After talking for a long time I said, Mike, if I promise you that if you want to come back in the spring I'll go up and get you and bring you back and take you right here to your home, which was a cave in the side of a hill — I didn't say that to him, because it was his home and he thought it was wonderful. He was cold, and he wasn't able to cook very much on his stove. He was a man maybe close to 80. After thinking for a while he reluctantly agreed. He pointed his finger at me and said, well, if you'll promise to bring me back in the spring I'll go for the winter if somebody will look after my house here. So I promised him and made arrangements.

The next day we were able to take him to the Youngstown Home, where he had a clean bed, somebody to do his cooking, and so on. But you know, as he left, and I was up there to say good-bye to him and to make sure his place was properly secured, there was a tear in that old man's eye. He didn't like to leave that cave, cold as it was. It was his home, and he only went because we gave him a promise that we'd bring him back.

I think of another instance too. Perhaps it was the pilot project that the hon. member was suggesting. But it wasn't really a pilot project; it was the real thing. When I was a young boy in the Drumheller valley at the old Newcastle mine, the flu was rampant. We weren't allowed out of the house unless we put a cloth over our nose and mouth. The hospitals weren't available. The schools were taken over, used as hospitals. They used every available space. People were dying right and left in the Drumheller valley,

all over the world in fact, in that terrible flu epidemic. There wasn't a room, there wasn't a bed in the old schoolhouse. But some didn't want to go anyway.

I remember a chap who lived close to our home at the Newcastle mine. He somehow or other got over to our house one night, and he was really ill; he had the flu badly. My mother was worried because there were a lot of little kids in the house, as a matter of fact 10 of us. Finally she said she'd see what could be done. He didn't want to leave the house, but he had to have someone look after him. My mother sent my older brother down to the Salvation Army captain, who was a young lady, to tell her about it. The next morning she came up — and I was required to carry the water from the old village pump over to the house — I saw that Salvation Army captain in her uniform get down on her hands and knees and scrub that place out, give the man soup, fix up everything she could. Then it wasn't a case of going away. She came back day after day until that flu was over. She made a route. I don't know how many homes she went to.

I listened to the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo talking about a pilot project. There was a pilot project. There was no government help, but there was a lot of heart, humanitarianism, and love for your fellow man.

You know, when the government introduced SCHIP, the senior citizen home improvement program, I thought that was a wonderful thing. It was another choice for our people. I remember visiting a home at Nacmine along with my assistant, Mr. Williams. The woman there wept as she showed us what she had done with her \$1,000. She had put in a bathroom; she had bought a bathtub, a sink, a toilet bowl; and she had a cesspool fixed up: all with \$1,000. She made that \$1,000 go miles beyond what would have been \$3,000, because she worked, her son worked, her neighbors worked, and they gave her an extra room. She was so happy. You know, the woman is still living in that home. We gave her a choice, and she wanted her home. She didn't want to go anywhere else.

But I've seen others too who don't want to stay in their homes. The home has a lot of memories, and one passes on. I remember one saying to me not very long ago, I want to get into the lodge. I'm too lonely here. Everywhere I look I have memories of my wife and children. I have to get out. It's driving me up the wall. I want somebody to talk to. We put him into the lodge. You know, you can't see a happier person. He has clean sheets, he has people to talk to, he plays games with the others, and he can go for a walk. He's happy. A freedom of choice.

The RRA program by the Canadian government has enabled many people to fix up their homes so they can live in them longer. I like the idea of a home improvement program and a home care program. I see tremendous problems, particularly in our climate. Where they're still heating their homes with coal it becomes a terrible chore to take out the ashes, bring in the coal, and do any cooking when they can't walk very well and so on.

But there's a freedom of choice. If that freedom of choice is exercised, I think the government that provides a variety of programs to the greatest possible degree is going to make many, many people happy. Any country that looks after its senior citizens, to

whom we owe so much, is reaching a high degree of civilization.

I would like to see the government take a look at this. Let's start modestly and see if it can work, if it will work, and what wrinkles have to be taken out of the program. It'll provide another choice for the people who built this country, the people who suffered privations we can hardly imagine today. Now we owe it to them to give them freedom of choice so they can have the very best life possible as long as they remain upon the earth.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, it's a real pleasure and privilege for me to speak this afternoon on behalf of my constituency, Calgary McCall. Calgary McCall is quite a mosaic of the old and the new. But this afternoon I would like to speak about a particular area of Calgary McCall, an area known as Inglewood. It is the oldest part of the whole city. In fact it's where the city actually started.

It's there that just over one hundred years ago the North West Mounted Police crossed the river and built Fort Calgary. I find that the citizens of that area are almost unique in the city. They have a fierce pride in that area. They have a great attachment to their homes.

At this point I would like to say thanks and congratulations to several ministers in the front row, Mr. Speaker, who have helped to preserve that heritage of Inglewood. I'd first like to say thanks and congratulations to the Minister of Housing and Public Works for building a senior citizens' lodge on the old rhubarb patch in the Inglewood area, quite close to the area of the historic homes. I would like to say thanks and congratulations to the Minister of Culture, who has declared as historic sites in that area a good number of homes such as the original Cross home and the home of Colonel Walker, the original commander of the North West Mounted Police. I would also like to say thanks to the Centennial Committee for preserving the remains of Fort Calgary.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, these people have a fierce loyalty to that area. They have no desire to move away. They want to stay in their own homes for the rest of their lives, and I can tell you that the calls I've had the last couple of years since I've been in that area have not been for medical attention but for home care. When I say home care, home chores, to clean up the sidewalks, to do some painting round the house.

Mr. Speaker, I might also say I have a personal interest in this program suggested by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo. The day it was first discussed in caucus I said that I was looking forward to the day not too many years from now when somebody would clean my driveway.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. LITTLE: A few years. I've met with a good number of these senior citizens at a club they call the Silver Threads. I've studied a great deal of the background information on this, Mr. Speaker, and I find that there are several things the senior citizen requires in this life: dignity, money, proper medical services, and useful work. I'm extremely happy that we've looked after a great deal of those needs in this province. Medical attention is no longer a problem to

all of our citizens, but for the senior citizen there is no charge whatsoever.

Last year I was down in the state of Washington visiting relatives of my wife. I met with a member of the Legislature in the state of Washington, and determined that in that state two-thirds of the senior citizens have an income of less than \$300 a month. Two-thirds of the citizens of that state are in need of either medical or dental attention, which they cannot afford. So I would say we are particularly fortunate in that area.

However, as I say, the calls I've had indicate that they would like to stay in their own homes, that they could do with these home chore services, and I would respectfully suggest to the minister that in the long run I believe it would be a saving.

Shortly after I left my former employment on the police force of Calgary, I was commissioned by the Rotary Club of Calgary to look into the possibility of a senior citizens' village. In the course of this research I journeyed to Olympia, Washington. There was quite a large construction there. As you came in the front gate the first residences were totally self-contained; that is, the citizens could look after all their own needs. As you moved farther into it, there were residences where they could have their chores done. Farther still there were residences where meals or housekeeping services were provided. I wasn't all that impressed with the structure, because it had a rather depressing effect on me. At the far end of the village you could see the hospital and the place to park the vehicle that took the senior citizens away. So I found this all rather depressing. But it did serve one thing: it was a live laboratory showing what all the services could do for the senior citizens.

A few moments ago my colleague from Medicine Hat told the story of the amazing longevity in Russia, and I'll recount a short story. Once again back to the days on the beat in east Calgary, there was a second-hand store on the street, and an old, old man by the name of Roginsky, a Russian-Jewish gentleman. I remember reading in one of the magazines about the tremendous longevity in Russia. I said, is there any truth in this? He said: oh, yes, there's a great deal of truth; in my village many, many people lived over the age of 100; in fact I can tell you a story about my uncle. He worked for the government. The government in those days didn't have a pension plan, but when you reached the age of 90 you were granted a coal and grocery allowance. This old fellow found that the coal and grocery allowance didn't meet his needs, so he built a still and was making vodka, which he was selling on the side. When he was apprehended and charged with this offence, it wasn't reasonable to put a 90-year-old in jail, so they withdrew his allowance of coal and groceries. He had need once again to go back to work, and he went back to work as a farm laborer. My old friend Roginsky told me he was killed by a runaway team at the age of 110.

I can foresee that the federal government is looking forward to Canadians attaining similar ages, since in last night's budget they revised the rules of the RRSPs so you can withdraw your funds from them right up to the age of 90. Mr. Speaker, it gave me a great deal of hope.

I want to be brief, Mr. Speaker, because several other members wish to get in. As you can see, I've

gathered a great deal more material. But I would like to congratulate the Member for Calgary Buffalo for bringing this motion before the House. As I stated in opening, it's of particular interest in my constituency because of the unique nature of this Inglewood area. I know how attached these people are to their own homes. One lady over 90 is living in that area. She's still living in her own home and still maintaining herself. Studies have indicated that 97 per cent of all senior citizens are able to live in their own homes and cope with that. I would like to give total support to this motion by the Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I am very honored and privileged to have this opportunity, becoming one of these senior citizens myself. I have to say that I know the majority of the senior citizens who came here from Calgary. I was so happy to see them here today. As a matter of fact, most of them even know my mother-in-law, Mary Komix. I know they do. [interjections] Yes, she lives in my constituency, Walter. We just brought her from the Holy Cross Hospital. She said: John, that's one thing; don't put me into the senior citizens' lodge; I want to live at home as long as I can. I said, well, that's the least I can do.

I remember very well that when my mother was old we didn't have the lodges or accommodations we have today. That's true. And they did not have the pensions they have today. We at this time have to be very thankful to this provincial government. This provincial government has been very good to the people, to the senior citizens. Indeed, I am proud to be part of that government, the role they have played to assist them in many different ways.

When my colleague here spoke about the rhubarb patch . . . I remember the family very well — Mr. Servonnet. He has passed away, but he has two sons, or as a matter of fact three of them. They are living in Inglewood and are doing very well. Mr. Chairman, it was an honor for me at the time we opened a new lodge in the Bow Valley Lodge, and many of my friends, even my neighbors, have moved into that area. You know, to them it was just like moving into a first-rate hotel. Some of them really didn't have very good homes, and some did not have the opportunity to have the kinds of homes we are enjoying today. Going back a few years, at that time it was their main goal as a senior citizen not to have luxuries, but to be able to buy and have adequate shoes and clothing so they would be able to go to school as other people. Yes, I remember very well when we walked to school barefooted. It was the sort of "in" thing to do, really, because we couldn't afford it.

That reminds me of another one. My brother was a good hockey player, and they got him a pair of skates. I wanted to play hockey, but my mother . . . I never had a dad; my dad was gassed in the First [World] War. So she said, I don't think you should get a pair of skates; you're liable to get hurt and kill yourself playing hockey. The reason she said that was that she couldn't afford it. But the next year I managed to get a pair of hockey skates. My mother was able to afford it.

At that time, in order to do these kinds of things — I remember very well they didn't stucco houses the way they stucco today. My mother used to go from neighbor to neighbor, not to clean houses but actually

to help stucco these houses with dirt, clay; they used to throw straw. I even remember myself going in there barefooted and mixing that clay with straw. She did it too.

You know, those were the kinds of days you don't forget. That's why I am so grateful that these people even had the opportunity to come here tonight to this Legislature, to see how government in fact functions. At that time they didn't have enough money to go to the grocery store and buy enough — maybe milk and bread.

When we talk about those days, I remember very well when my mother had to cook a bone twice to make soup. Maybe this sounds strange to some of you, but that's just the way things were. We had to

make things do with the little bit we had.

Mr. Speaker, I know I'm running out of time. I must say that because they're retiring earlier, the older people really want today the things they could never do before, going to school, or doing certain things. If we could assist them in being able to go to school and do certain things . . . I know a lot of them are very capable, and would like to be able to have that opportunity. I think we should be looking in that area.

Since we are running out of time, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn this debate.

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

