

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, April 13, 1978 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 29****The Condominium Property
Amendment Act, 1978**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a bill, being The Condominium Property Amendment Act, 1978. This bill reflects the changes in the bill known as Bill 55 in the last session which arose from submissions and suggestions received from the public during a series of public hearings held in the fall of 1977.

[Leave granted; Bill 29 read a first time]

Bill 30**The Agricultural Chemicals
Amendment Act, 1978**

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Agricultural Chemicals Amendment Act, 1978. The purpose of this bill is to update the legislation regarding the sale, handling, and use of agricultural chemicals.

[Leave granted; Bill 30 read a first time]

Bill 247**An Act to Amend
The Alberta Energy Company Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 247, An Act to Amend The Alberta Energy Company Act. On this day of the annual meeting of the Alberta Energy Company, the provisions of this act would be to change the structure of the company to make it fully accountable to the Legislature and to provide that the company shall provide the minister promptly with all information that he requests regarding any policy, transaction, operation, or other activity of the company.

DR. BUCK: Heavens, no.

[Leave granted; Bill 247 read a first time]

Bill 31**The Hazardous Chemicals Act**

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 31, The Hazardous Chemicals Act, 1978. This bill is a new act that parallels Bill No. 30, The Agricultural Chemicals Amendment Act. The purpose of this

bill is to have greater control over those chemicals that are not routinely used for agricultural purposes and are used by industry or special licensed operators.

[Leave granted; Bill 31 read a first time]

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that bills 29, 30, and 31 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. YURKO: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave of the House to file with the Assembly a Fort McMurray Housing Survey Summary of Findings. The House will recall that this survey was initiated last fall in an attempt to get some data to assist us in expanding the town or perhaps building a new town in the area. I think all members will find the statistics very informative, and a copy will be distributed to each member of the Assembly.

MR. CLARK: Why not the whole report?

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

DR. HOHOL: Mr. Speaker, as continuing evidence of the respect and regard that the constituents of Edmonton Belmont have for the Legislature and the government of Alberta, we have in our galleries 90 students from the St. Cecilia grade 9 class. They are visiting other parts of the Legislature as well as part of the sitting of the House this afternoon as part of a project and study they're doing in their classes. Accompanying them are three of their teachers: Mr. Charles Grelli, Mr. Lester Wasylycia, and Mr. Renato Del Fabbro . . . I rather suspect from that response that the Mr. is likely a Miss, Mrs., or Ms.

MR. RUSSELL: You've made it worse.

DR. HOHOL: I've probably made it worse. They're still my friends, I'm sure. They're seated in both galleries, and I should like them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and honor indeed this afternoon to introduce 35 grade 5 students from Mayland Heights school in my community. It was very thoughtful of the mothers and fathers to come along: Joan Gavel, Mrs. Skelton, Pat Zandee, Doreen Haydu; the bus driver Rod Smeed; and last but not least, the teacher Mr. Larry Taylor. I would ask at this time that they all stand and receive the welcome from the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to introduce to you, and to members of the Assembly, Dr. Cornelius Guenter. Dr. Guenter is the principal of the Lethbridge Collegiate Institute in the city of Lethbridge. In addition to those onerous responsibilities, in October 1977 he became the mayor of the town of Coaldale. He is in our city today where he will be

holding meetings with various government officials pertaining to community business of Coaldale. I would ask Dr. Guenter to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor this afternoon to introduce a gentleman in my gallery who has some connection with this Assembly, going a long way back. Mr. P.C. Fox was a page in 1909 and 1910, at which time, as members may recall [laughter] the Premier of the province was Mr. Rutherford and the Speaker of the Assembly was Speaker Fisher. I would like to ask Mr. P.C. Fox to stand and receive your welcome.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Urban Government — Edmonton

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It deals with Edmonton's long-term representation to the minister with regard to the form of urban government in the Edmonton region. My question is: at what stage are the minister's deliberations on the question of a form of metropolitan government for the Edmonton area?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I received no representation from the city of Edmonton on a metropolitan form of government.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then I'll put the question to the minister this way: what action has been taken by the minister or his department officials in respect to the city of Edmonton's long-standing request for a decision on the determination of a form of urban government needed to deal with the future needs of the city of Edmonton and the surrounding areas?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the researcher or whoever wrote the question go back and check what has really happened. In fact there has been no request for consideration of a metropolitan form of government in this area.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, before the minister so flipantly downplays the concerns of the city of Edmonton, let me put this supplementary question to him: following the meeting between Edmonton MLAs and Edmonton city council, what discussions have taken place between the minister and representatives of the city dealing with the city's concern about a decision on the form of urban government for the Edmonton area?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, once again the context of the question is perhaps not correct. I can advise the House, of course, that subsequent to the MLA meeting we have had several discussions with the mayor of Edmonton on a range of issues.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then very specifically to the minister: has the minister met with the mayor of Edmonton or members of the city council representing the mayor on the specific question of the form of

urban government to meet Edmonton needs since the Edmonton area MLAs met with the city council?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have difficulty answering that, because of course we meet on a range of issues. I can advise that we have contact with the city on a day to day basis. We may not specifically meet but, for example, we could have extended telephone calls on a range of issues. But I can advise the House and the hon. leader that we are in fact working to a resolution of the position of the city of Edmonton.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'll put the question to the minister once again: has the minister met face to face with the mayor of Edmonton dealing with the question of the form of urban government to meet Edmonton's needs since the Edmonton MLAs had their most recent meeting with the city council?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader puts me at an unfair advantage. Of course I can't put a time frame on when I last met with the mayor and whether that was before or after the meeting with the MLAs. I don't think it's really important. However, I can advise the House that I have met with the mayor to discuss the issues.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when does the minister plan to meet again with the mayor or representatives of the city to deal with this matter, and when might the city of Edmonton expect some decision by this government on the matter that's now been before the government for some time?

DR. BUCK: After the next election.

MR. JOHNSTON: That matter has been before the government since about 1968, as I recall, when that government failed to deal with it, and we are progressing with that problem.

MR. NOTLEY: Progressing to fail.

DR. BUCK: After the election.

MR. CLARK: Progressing to do nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In light of the representation made by the city, does the government at this time have a number of alternatives under consideration? I raise the question in light of the number of . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member isn't obliged to justify asking the question. He's entitled to ask it.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'm just trying to help the minister. [interjections]

DR. BUCK: He needs a lot of help too. Like he should quit.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, might I put this question to the minister. Is it the position of the government of Alberta that with the development of, I guess, four regional water lines that now flow out of the city of Edmonton, the government is prepared to accept the proposition of a number of regional authorities being

developed to deal with water lines and transportation in the area, rather than make a decision on the matter?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Leader of the Opposition has clouded the issue completely and, of course, has ignored the interests of rural Alberta, the people who are to be touched by annexation. It would be difficult to prejudice the views of rural Alberta, the people in the rural municipalities around Edmonton, and speak specifically about the interests of the city of Edmonton. I think it has to be a coalition. It has to be a co-operative decision, and we're working towards that end.

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the policy of this government to impose a form of urban government on Edmonton, or is this policy now changed?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to meet the requests and needs of this region in terms of an emerging form of government, but it's not this government's policy to lay any form of government on this region.

DR. BUCK: Not even RDAs.

MR. JOHNSTON: We respond to their requests, and we will continue to do so.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pose this question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What discussions has the minister had with officials of the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission in preparation for the commission's work to develop a regional plan which will affect the whole Edmonton region?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have had discussions with the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission on a similar range of questions that the hon. leader has asked. We have these on a very routine basis.

DR. BUCK: Continuing discussions.

MR. JOHNSTON: And I can advise the Leader of the Opposition that I've also met with the county of Sturgeon, the county of Strathcona, and the county of Parkland, if he wants to ask those questions too.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I won't have to ask those questions now. Could the minister just tell us the last time he met with the mayor of Edmonton on this particular matter? He doesn't know.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I've already answered the question. I've met with the mayor of Edmonton. You know, I can't give a date. Usually I can recall dates, but unfortunately today I can't. But I have met with the mayor.

MR. CLARK: Well, I'd hope so.

Autopsy Procedures

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Attorney General. The question re-

lates to the resignation of Alberta's deputy chief medical examiner in protest over the practice of doing 20-minute autopsies when, in his . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. CLARK: . . . when the practice was that there was a need for three hours to be involved.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If the leader wishes to ask his question, he's entitled to do so in a proper way. If that isn't acceptable, I would prefer he did not continue with the question.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to put the question to the Attorney General this way. In light of the concerns expressed by the deputy chief medical examiner, who resigned, what changes in practice have been instituted by the Attorney General's office to meet the concerns which were raised?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition is relying too much on press reports, if he doesn't mind my saying so.

MR. CLARK: Talk to the people involved.

MR. FOSTER: No, no. I think if you want to talk to Dr. Peter Markesteyn, you'll find that his reference to 20-minute autopsies was not intended to convey the impression that that was the norm. He did indicate that on occasion an autopsy can be performed in a very short period of time. At the same time, I think Dr. Markesteyn, Dr. Butt, or other medical examiners would acknowledge that an autopsy may indeed take hours. I think the press reports that came out about the 20-minute autopsy were exaggerated, unfortunately and perhaps unintentionally, to convey the impression that 20-minute autopsies or "quickie" autopsies were the norm. Indeed they are the exception.

I have discussed the matter with Dr. Butt, the chief medical examiner, and have his assurance that the situation is in hand and operating properly. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition can imagine circumstances in which an autopsy can in fact be done in a very short period of time.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Attorney General. Did the Attorney General take the initiative to meet with the deputy chief medical examiner after his resignation?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I talked to Dr. Markesteyn. I may have. Like my colleague behind me, I have difficulty remembering dates of meetings. Either I talked to him, or my deputy talked to him and reported the conversation to me. In any event my advice, from Dr. Markesteyn either directly or indirectly, was that he was very sorry that the public communication on this matter was so distorted, because that was not the intention he had when he made the statement.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Attorney General. Perhaps the most important part of the issue is: has the position of deputy chief medical examiner been filled?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, not to my knowledge at this time.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Attorney General. What are the reasons for the position not being filled? Is it a difficulty in getting someone with the same kind of expertise the former deputy had?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I probably commented on this in my estimates last year, when I said that Alberta was in the rather enviable position of having in its employ two of the four forensic pathologists in Canada. I think we had a discussion at that point. I do not anticipate that the deputy chief medical examiner or indeed the chief medical examiner need be as highly trained specialists as both Dr. Butt and Dr. Markesteyn are. Both are forensic pathologists. We will certainly be endeavoring to gain the services of a pathologist for deputy chief medical examiner. We will not necessarily be seeking one of that rare breed known as the forensic pathologist, however.

What success we are having in replacing Dr. Markesteyn, I don't know. I know that pathologists are rather rare birds and difficult to come by. I expect that's been our difficulty.

I'm sure that Dr. Buck — not Butt, Buck — could enlighten the hon. leader if he wishes.

MR. GOGO: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Attorney General. Could the Attorney General advise whether lay people have been appointed under the Fatality Inquiries Act at this point?

MR. FOSTER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have been successful in appointing three outstanding Albertans to that important board, including a very capable lady from the city of Lethbridge.

Private Schools

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Education. It's a follow-up to questions posed yesterday. Could the Minister of Education advise the Assembly whether or not the government of Alberta has sought a legal opinion on whether independent schools which have failed to apply for legal status under the revised regulations of The School Act can continue to operate, in light of Judge Oliver's decision that the Bill of Rights guarantee of religious freedom takes precedence over The School Act?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I don't think a legal opinion is necessary. We've passed regulations which will permit the operation of four categories of private schools. To date, the regulations have been distributed to those schools that are presently in the approved category. We expect an application form to be printed within about a week's time, at which time all the known institutions that haven't been approved will receive copies of the regulations and application form.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Education. In view of the fact that schools in Category 4 have opted out of the public school system, is it the position of the government of Alberta with respect to truancy matters and

with respect to applying under Category 4 that that is a responsibility of the local public divisions?

MR. KOZIAK: The application would be the responsibility of the institution that wants to operate as a Category 4 private school.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Education. At this stage who will enforce the regulations? Will it be the Department of Education acting through the regional offices? Will it be up to the school divisions?

MR. KOZIAK: Those regulations that would require enforcement would be enforced by the Department of Education. In other words, if we were dealing with a school that applied and was approved on the understanding that a certain curriculum would be offered, that the school met the appropriate fire and safety regulations, and subsequently something happened which changed that around, then that would be a concern of the department. If an institution is operating that has not applied for approval under the private school regulations, students attending that institution would theoretically, under the law, be truants. As I'm sure hon. members are aware if they read The School Act, the responsibility to enforce the compulsory attendance provisions of The School Act rests with the local jurisdiction.

However, I think in these circumstances, not only in terms of ourselves in this Legislature but in terms of school boards out there, we should wait a reasonable period of time to permit these institutions to exercise the opportunity they'll have to be approved as a Category 4 school, or a Category 1 school if they wish.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, does the government at this stage have any intention of amending The School Act to clarify the responsibility with respect to whether or not a school has applied for accreditation under Category 4, rather than leaving the responsibility to prosecute for truancy up to the divisions which the parents have withdrawn their students from? My question is: are there any plans as far as this government is concerned to change The School Act so that the responsibility in this matter will rest with the department as opposed to the local school jurisdictions?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I would hope that this Legislature would not spend its time passing laws and making offences for supposed hypothetical situations. At the moment, as I've indicated, regulations have been approved, an application form is in the process of being printed. In due course application forms will be sent to all the known institutions that operate under this category. At that time those institutions can apply. At the moment I don't see why we should be creating offences that may not even be necessary.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Education. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly why the regulations have not been sent to the school divisions at this time, and whether or not it is the intention of the minister, through the various local offices of the

Department of Education, to meet with school divisions that have potential Category 4 schools in their boundaries?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I think I've answered the question. Unfortunately the hon. member wasn't listening. I indicated that the reason the regulations were not out to certain schools is that we hoped an application form would accompany those regulations. They will go out within approximately a week or two. Regulations have in fact been sent to those schools operating under the Category 1 approvals.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Education. The supplementary does not relate to the potential Category 4 schools. The question relates to the school divisions that have potential category schools within their boundaries. Why have the regulations not been sent to these school divisions? Obviously, as a result of the minister's answers yesterday in the House, they have some decisions to make. Why have the regulations not been sent to them?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I didn't say the regulations were not sent to them. I see the hon. member is making certain assumptions. I think it should be important to realize that we don't expect any applications from school divisions to set up schools within the categories suggested.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. KOZIAK: The regulations that will be of prime importance for the jurisdictions involved are the regulations dealing with the grants those jurisdictions would be entitled to receive as a result of the creation of such a school within their jurisdiction. That information is being shared with those jurisdictions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I will try to frame it in such a way as not to invite debate. In view of his answer in the House yesterday indicating that public school divisions will have to undertake truancy measures if schools have not sought application under this Category 4, and given the fact that not all the schools have done so, my question to the minister is, very simply: why has the department not met with the public divisions who will be affected by this new Category 4 to explain the regulations and options for those divisions?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, representatives of the department regional offices are constantly in touch with these school jurisdictions. The information relative to these regulations, as well as to the regulations dealing with grants, is in the process of being sent to these jurisdictions. What else the hon. member seeks by this question, I am unable to decipher.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Attorney General. I should just say that, to date, the divisions have just received the press release. The question to the hon. Attorney General: since the ramifications of Judge Oliver's decision are widespread and have a number of implications . . .

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member answers his own question by suggesting that . . .

MR. CLARK: You won't.

MR. KOZIAK: . . . to date, divisions have only received a press release. If that's a suggestion that he has checked with all the divisions to see whether in fact they've received regulations or not, perhaps he should say so.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd be very pleased to say that at least two divisions have not received the regulations.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Attorney General . . .

MR. CLARK: Nice question, Julian.

MR. NOTLEY: . . . is simply this: has the government given any consideration to exercising that option in The Judicature Act which allows the government to refer matters of legal significance to the Supreme Court for a ruling? I relate to the question of The School Act, and the implications on The School Act of The Human Rights Act.

MR. FOSTER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We did consider the matter and rejected it as an option.

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

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Attorney General. Can he advise the Assembly, in view of the fact that it was the Department of Education that took up this particular truancy case, why the government did not choose to exercise the option of reference, not appeal, to the Supreme Court?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, in view of the government's decision with respect to private schools which my hon. colleague the Minister of Education has been discussing this afternoon, there didn't seem to be much point in referring the matter to the court of appeal on a reference.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I'd like to correct the misimpression the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview made in his remarks when he suggested that the Department of Education took up the case. I understood those remarks to refer to the Three Hills situation. If the hon. member will check the record, he'll find that the charges were laid in accordance with The School Act by the local jurisdiction involved, not by the Department of Education. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Go, Julian.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

Day Care Program

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health.

It's with regard to day care policy. I understand the new day care regulations will be administered by a day care co-ordinator. Could the minister indicate whether the day care co-ordinator will be responsible for negotiation with the local governments with regard to subsidies, provincial support, and the specific application of the regulations?

MISS HUNLEY: That's a matter of administration within the department, Mr. Speaker, and I haven't asked them who is carrying forward the negotiations. At one time the director of preventive social services was discussing the matter with other PSS boards. At the moment, I am not aware of who will be doing all the discussion with the municipalities.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question. From the minister's remarks, would we gather that a special position called "day care co-ordinator" will not be created, and that someone in the department may co-ordinate the program?

MISS HUNLEY: Well, I don't know the terms of reference, but we have funded a day care co-ordinator, I believe, who is an employee of the provincial government and a member of the public service.

Rent Decontrol

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and regards decontrol of rents in the province. Does the minister intend to take steps that will enable landlords whose premises were rented below market value before rent controls were established to bring their rents into line with current market values?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, not in the rather generalized sense that I think the hon. member has mentioned in his question. We have, of course, put in regulations that we will be able to deal with base rents in units which, for some reason or other, are out of line. I believe three categories are basically covered, but not in a general sense.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister been made aware that some landlords wishing to sell their rental premises have been unable to do so because of the low rent still in place on their premises?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, there is a problem which landlords have, and I guess that's one of the repercussions of a rent control system: that obviously it will have an effect on property values. In the short run I think that's right. But in the long run I think property values in this province have been maintained and in fact are increasing.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister had anyone approach him that landlords have been evicting tenants from their premises and leaving the premises vacant?

MR. HARLE: Not that I can recall. We have, of course, where there are certain provisions in The

Rent Decontrol Act to permit landlords to terminate tenancies. But we haven't had any that I can recall where such premises have been left vacant.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister: has it been a question of policy in your department to use factors such as market value in determining The Rent Decontrol Act?

MR. HARLE: No, Mr. Speaker, except in that one category where base rents can be adjusted for the three categories I've described. On those occasions, obviously there has to be a comparison with other rental units in the neighborhood.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to know who is the third- or fourth-string Premier, so I can find out who's the Acting House Leader, so I can find out who's the Acting Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. [interjections] I presume the hon. Attorney General is the Acting House Leader. Can the hon. Attorney General advise who is the Acting Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife?

Calcuttas

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, before I come to that question, since I've been asked to respond, and while I'm on my feet, I'll reply to another question the hon. Member for Clover Bar put to me some time ago about calcuttas. I can report to him that there are no prosecutions of calcuttas currently under way in the province. Calcuttas, according to my advice, may constitute either keeping a common betting house or pool selling, as contemplated by sections 185 or 186 of the Criminal Code. They are not gaming events that we would normally license.

Now with respect to your other question, I think it's . . . Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure who it is. But the hon. Minister of the Environment hasn't had any questions today, so maybe he could handle it for you.

DR. BUCK: Well, Mr. Speaker, then I'll just ask a supplementary question of the Attorney General on the Calcutta question. Have the minister or members of his department considered having a top limit for the small club calcuttas that curling rinks and golf clubs hold, so these small calcuttas can still go on?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware that that kind of flexibility or discretion exists under the Criminal Code. I have a feeling that it's either an offence or it's not. If it is, the only way I could allow that sort of conduct is to turn a blind eye to it and not enforce the law with respect to that kind of matter.

Now it may be that I should check those sections further and see if there is any capacity for that kind of flexibility. If that's your suggestion, I'll be happy to do so. I'm not aware of it.

Animal Trapping

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, may I ask my question now? My question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment in that it does deal with government policy. Can the minister indicate if the government has taken any steps or studies to indicate what measures are being undertaken to encourage the development of more

humane animal traps, in light of the fact that this is National Wildlife Week?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I presume the hon. member is referring to the substantial number of representations over the years that we as MLAs have received with respect to the leg-hold trap. Studies have been undertaken, and I'll refer that question as notice to the minister for his return.

Regional Libraries

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Culture. What progress is being made in establishing regional libraries in the province?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, actually the establishment of regional libraries is up to the region concerned. If the people there vote for the establishment, the Alberta government announced last year that it would be prepared for an establishment grant of, I believe, about \$6 per capita to establish those regional libraries. However, it really has to come as a request from the region to establish this type of library.

Security Systems

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Solicitor General. I wonder if the general could inform this Assembly on the pilot program he has installed in the Calgary board of education as well as the Edmonton board, monitoring our schools after school hours through the electronic system. I wonder if the minister can explain the difference, and if there has been any success.

MR. FARRAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's too early to claim success. It's a two-year experiment, and it really only got under way in October last year in 20 selected schools from the two school boards in each of the two cities. The school boards are generally optimistic. They've had some early indications of success and have picked up some intruders by night.

The difference between the two systems is: in the Calgary experiment the communications to a computer on the central police switchboard, from the sensors or the hidden silent alarms, are by way of a private or tied line, a special telephone line. In Edmonton, Edmonton Telephones has a similar system on the ordinary telephone line which, instead of a computer, activates the ringing of a telephone. If the Edmonton one works out, it obviously has much greater application throughout the province in rural areas and so on. As I say, it's too early for me to give you any judgment on the results.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question to the Solicitor General. I wonder if the general could inform this Assembly in regard to the pilot program you have in your department, sir, monitoring shopping centres with cameras and electronic equipment as well.

MR. FARRAN: That was another innovative policing project we introduced late last year, the concealed cameras directed against armed robbers of corner convenience stores, grocery stores, and so on.

Yes, we are having some success. Two days ago, a candid camera produced a wonderful picture of a thief in action at Brownies Fried Chicken in Calgary: one hand in the till, the other holding a knife. He's now in custody.

AN HON. MEMBER: Without the chicken.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Is the Solicitor General not concerned that with all this surveillance of civilians we're not perhaps moving into George Orwell's state of 1984?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Notwithstanding the obviously interesting aspect of the question, I doubt it's a requirement of a minister in his official capacity to ventilate his worries.

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, in view of the insinuation, I would just like to say that we're only concerned with civilians who have their hands in the till.

Hospital Construction

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Could he indicate to the Assembly, albeit quite briefly, the areas in which the new Deputy Minister of Hospitals has been primarily involved since his appointment?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, in asking that kind of question, then saying it can be answered in a brief fashion in question period, I think the hon. leader is incorrect in his assumption. I think it would be far better dealt with during examination of the estimates of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care next week.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate to the Assembly whether the new deputy minister has been involved in that very critical area of deciding which hospitals will go ahead and which won't?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I've just said that I think a full report and examination of that aspect will be forthcoming during examination of the estimates. It's also my intention to provide a full report to the House at the beginning of the estimates examination.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to repute the question to the minister and simply ask for a yes or no. Has the new deputy minister been involved in making decisions, for example, on whether the whole proposal from the Innisfail hospital board will go ahead, or whether only a portion of it will go ahead?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. leader . . .

DR. BUCK: He won't answer.

MR. SPEAKER: . . . there wouldn't seem to be too much purpose in repeating a question for which a minister has promised an answer during the discussion of his estimates.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, with due respect, sir, could I very specifically rephrase the question to the minister this way. Is the minister aware of whether the new deputy minister in his department has been involved in communications with the Innisfail hospital board with regard to their project going ahead in whole or in part?

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize for having to intervene again, but I don't see that stating the question for a third time gets it out of the problem.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, for an interpretation. In other words you are saying that the minister can refuse on the grounds that he can answer that in estimates. Is that what you're saying? Just about every question can be answered in estimates.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member may recall that the minister may refuse to answer a question without stating any grounds whatsoever.

DR. BUCK: In other words, he won't answer. He doesn't know.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. It would be difficult to conceive a proper supplementary in a situation of this kind. The item is undoubtedly going to come up when the minister's estimates are discussed, and if not it could be repeated at some question period thereafter.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could put the question to the minister this way. Did the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care direct the deputy minister to correspond with the Innisfail hospital board as to whether their hospital will go ahead in part or in whole?

AN HON. MEMBER: Why don't you just ask the question?

MR. MINIELY: That's much different than the way the hon. leader first asked the question. Now the hon. leader has asked a specific question. I can answer that the Deputy Minister of Hospitals has been in touch with the Innisfail hospital administrator in particular. The answer is yes.

MR. CLARK: Would the minister be prepared to table the most recent letter that the Deputy Minister of Hospitals sent to the Innisfail hospital board with regard to their proposed new hospital?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, if the letter is in the nature of a letter that is not an internal memorandum for planning purposes, and is in the nature of a letter that has actually gone to the Innisfail hospital board, the existence of a specific letter of which I am not aware, then certainly I'd be prepared to table it.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I wonder if the minister would confirm to the House that the policies and decisions of his department are

made by elected officials and not by non-elected officials.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. CLARK: That's part of the problem.

Single Men's Hostels

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's with regard to the overnight shelters in Calgary and Edmonton, and the influx of people using these shelters at the present time.

One, could the minister indicate in a general sense the numbers of persons coming in from outside Alberta? Number two, could the minister indicate whether there are plans in her program to upgrade facilities?

MISS HUNLEY: No, I can't indicate in a general sense how many people are coming into Alberta. I could determine, because I don't know, how many people make use of the single men's hostels. We do have a problem of overcrowding. We have not yet reached a solution to that problem, though we're exploring various methods of handling that situation.

What was your second question?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Are you going to improve the facilities?

MISS HUNLEY: Improving the facilities is one of the options we're examining and on which no decision has yet been taken.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Is the minister considering any increase of funding to the two cities I've mentioned, funding that would provide treatment programs for alcoholism, employment placement services, and day activities for these particular centres?

MISS HUNLEY: We did approach the cities to ask if they felt that it might be in their best interests, if they'd be interested in taking over the management of the single men's hostel, particularly in the city of Calgary. They have been considering that and have not got back to me officially with a proposal, although I too have read the news releases.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns 128 and 129 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

127. Mr. Clark moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the total number of full-time salaried employees for each government department and for Alberta Government Telephones as at March 31, 1978.

[Motion carried]

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

213. Moved by Mr. R. Speaker:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta urge the government of Alberta to introduce policies which would stimulate development of the manufacturing sector of the Alberta economy.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in making remarks with regard to the resolution, I think we must first of all examine where we are and what is happening in the province of Alberta at the present time. We must examine what the Conservative government is doing in the context of their objectives relative to their actions. Mr. Speaker, I think we must do that first of all.

DR. BUCK: It's like Municipal Affairs.

MR. NOTLEY: Yes, sir. It's sort of hitting them below the belt, but it's fair.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Following that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose to the Legislature some ideas and thrusts that we as the official opposition or the Social Credit Party in Alberta wish to stand upon and feel are needed for better industrial and manufacturing growth in this province.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote from the remarks of the Premier of the Conservative government, when he outlined the government strategy for economic development for Alberta. These remarks were made to the Calgary Chamber of Commerce in September 1974. The Premier said:

Our basic goal is that — as a province in transition — to diversify and become less dependent upon the sale of unprocessed resources, particularly non-renewable resources. We have four supplementary goals. Firstly, to spread the growth on a balanced basis across the province (decentralization . . .).

Very good.

MR. JOHNSTON: Read the whole speech, Ray.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

. . . secondly, to strengthen free enterprise in Alberta by strengthening small and locally-controlled businesses in this province.

That's very good, and we all agree. Excellent.

DR. BUCK: But they have to be reminded of that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Thirdly, and equally important — I should kind of move around a little when I do this, I know.

DR. BUCK: And give it a Harvard accent.

AN HON. MEMBER: Table the speech.

MR. R. SPEAKER:

Thirdly, by upgrading the skills of our citizens to create higher productivity, greater income and more job satis-

faction than comes from unskilled work. Fourthly, to capitalize upon our natural advantages such as the gateway to northern development . . .

Well, we have a philosophy. That's excellent. Very, very good. Very, very fine philosophy. Good objectives, but those are objectives. I think we must now examine that in terms of what is happening.

Let's talk first about the concept of diversification [interjections] and less dependency on non-renewable resources. Let's talk about those things. Let's examine Alberta at the present time . . .

MR. CLARK: They'd sooner not do that.

MR. R. SPEAKER: . . . examine some of those statistics. Diversification isn't really happening. We're not becoming less dependent on non-renewable natural resources at the present time.

Let's look at some of the statistics. In Alberta, 68 per cent of the labor force gain their wages from oil and oil-related activities. The manufacturing sector — and this is what we're talking about — has fallen from 19.3 per cent to 13.9 per cent of the net value of production from 1972 to '76. And it's continuing the same way. Mining, including conventional oil and gas extraction, has increased from 40.5 per cent to 52.8 per cent of the net value of production since 1972. Petroleum and petroleum developments comprise 78 per cent of all the projects under construction; 72 per cent of all new proposals in the government's latest industrial list in the propaganda that's put out.

We compare this to agricultural processing, 0.2 per cent; manufacturing, 0.6 per cent; forestry, 0.48 per cent — that's the manufacturing.

DR. BUCK: The puppets have quit chirping now.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Investment in mining and petroleum has more than doubled since 1971. Investment in agriculture has dropped a portion of the whole, while investment in manufacturing has stayed at a steady 6 to 7 per cent. Since 1971, government revenue from mining, including conventional oil and gas extraction, has increased 7.36-fold to 53 per cent of total revenue, Mr. Speaker. So diversification just isn't happening. It's just a big hoax and a lot of talk; great objectives, good speech, good movement. Most likely there was more movement in '74 than there is today; age does a lot to all of us. But diversification just isn't occurring. We're more dependent on non-renewable natural resources than ever before.

Now let's look at the three supplementary goals that were outlined by the leader of the Conservative Party: decentralization, private enterprise, and upgrading skills in Alberta. As I observe it around the province, the concept of decentralization is the spreading out by this government of civil servants across the province. We've increased our civil service to something near 40,000, up about 15,000 since 1971. Sure, that's a great type of industry, a great manufacturing industry. A few people are supporting that kind of growth. But at the same time, is industry really spreading? I don't think it is.

I think of the community of Picture Butte down in the south. When their industry was closing down I said to all the people there, what the government should be doing is to talk about some alternatives, get

their team of industrial experts in here and do something with the town. Well that never happened. What did we have? We had an announcement about a bridge. I see three iron piles catching a few weeds in the Oldman River. I see an announcement about a public building in Picture Butte. They're going to put some civil servants there. Why put industry to build a base? I see the mayor of Picture Butte crying about the fact that they're going to have a terrific deficit in the coming year. Is that decentralization of industry? Is that moving the manufacturing part of industry to various parts of this province? Nonsense. Total nonsense, Mr. Speaker. It just isn't happening.

Let's talk about free enterprise and assisting small business. This is even funnier. At the Think West conference held in Edmonton last September, the Premier stated:

Frankly, we won't stop until the very films that I see people taking pictures with in Banff and Jasper are made in Alberta . . .

Great statement. I can still hear him saying that.

. . . the very antifreeze we use in our cold winter days are produced in this province. So, it is a very key part of our economic strategy.

Beautiful words. Fantastic. Well, we still haven't got the film processing here. We still haven't got the antifreeze produced in Alberta. There's no manufacturing. It really sounds great.

But let's examine some things. You know, we've got to do things in Alberta. Well, last week this great group of guys and all their supporters across the province — Tory convention in Calgary. We're going to fight for Alberta. It's really funny. At their big, gala affair they passed out some very odd types of things: little trinkets, yo-yos. Well, I know there are lots of yo-yos in the Conservative party. Some of the guys who jump up and down and talk all the time act like yo-yos.

DR. BUCK: Just like puppets or yo-yos.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Puppets or yo-yos. It doesn't matter. But the funniest thing, Mr. Speaker: when you read on the yo-yo, where was it made? U.S.A.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame.

MR. R. SPEAKER: They had to get their yo-yos from the United States. Maybe a little yo-yo industry could put a bunch of guys to work.

But that's not all, Mr. Speaker. They also passed out some horns. They like to toot their horns. I hear a comment from that side every once in a while, a little toot here and a little toot there. They passed out some horns. Where were they made, Mr. Speaker? U.S.A. Made in U.S.A. Isn't that something?

MR. NOTLEY: Even their own horns.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's great for free enterprise and assisting small business here in Alberta. The Premier says we're going to have films and antifreeze. He should have talked about yo-yos and horns. That's what he should have talked about.

Sun visors were the other things they passed out. They said, we've got to have sun visors. The Alberta sun is going to be so bright, all the Conservatives must have sun visors. That's not the reason. The

reason is they've such great halos, not only on the front bench but the backbenchers, any Conservative: they have to wear a green shade to protect them from the bright shine of the halo. But where is it made?

MR. CLARK: The United States.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Right. Built and made in the United States. Shades from the United States. How do you like that?

MR. NOTLEY: Yo-yos, horns, and shades.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Assisting small business here in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, right where they're making policy, from the grass roots, they demonstrate irresponsibility. Total conflict with this great pronouncement of the Premier in '74, and a year ago he made the same thing again. Well, a pronouncement from the Premier, the leader. Now, if we had one from the Acting Premier here today . . . I'd love to have a statement from the Acting Premier.

DR. BUCK: Fourth-string Premier.

MR. R. SPEAKER: We just can't believe it. There is no credibility. The proof is when you listen to and deal with the grass roots. Their convention, the people who expect to have trust in them are misled on the basic policy of free enterprise and the growth of manufacturing in this province. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's rather odd. [interjections]

Let's look at some other things where this government intervenes with private enterprise. Alberta Opportunity Company/Willowglen electronics: interference with the private sector where they can carry on the responsibility. They're competing in patents and everything else. Another bad example: Altel Data. Yesterday in committee we talked about Altel Data and how it competes unfairly with the private sector; not only unfairly, but at a loss of \$672,000 in the last three months of 1976 and the first month of 1977. In that short period of time it had that kind of loss. When a small private business in Alberta has that, AOC folds them up and tells them to go home, if they've got any money from them. You're finished. But this government that intervenes and competes with the private sector pumps in some more money. I'm sure we're going to find a bit of cross-subsidization there, that certainly isn't very impressive in this province. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, let's look at some other things. What about larger businesses? It's not only small businesses. What did they do for the Firestone plant in Calgary? Not too much.

MR. NOTLEY: Nothing.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What about the coal industry in the province?

MR. NOTLEY: Nothing.

MR. R. SPEAKER: No new markets are being looked for; no new technology is really being worked on. They're all just ignored. I raised Picture Butte factory. There was a perfect example of helping a grass roots community in this province. Nothing happened.

That's it. Free enterprise and this government, and the whole pronouncement by the Premier that private enterprise and the small businessman is the greatest thing, and we're going to make him great in Alberta — it's just not happening.

Let's look at the Premier's third objective: upgrading the skills of our citizens. Again we find the credibility gap is just as big and obvious as can be. Quotas placed on the number of students entering the faculties of Agriculture, Engineering, Forestry, and Business at the two main universities: people we need in the field today. Opportunities are available for them. I'm told engineers are coming into the province at the rate of 200 a month.

The government allows the concerns developing our oil sands and heavy oil resources — they allow the design and much of the construction of the main components abroad. Bechtel designs many things in the United States. American designs were used in GCOS.

Look at tendering practices in AGT. The tenders let are for large contracts. The little contractors in Alberta just can't meet the requirements, can't put things together. There's no way this province is allowing them to do it; they allow big tenders, and who gets them? Some foreign or American company or Bell Canada. We are just not creating a grass roots type of manufacturing industry in this province.

The upgrading of skills: Alberta really isn't doing that. It's very short of skilled technicians. We could fill this. They're being filled at the present time by importing many tradesmen. Why don't we do some of those things? Requests by this government to the United States and Europe for professional types of people, are on file. Why don't they look at Albertans and help train them on the job? Mr. Speaker, that whole philosophy, the three supplementary goals of the Premier just do not hold water. There is a terrific credibility gap about the manufacturing sector of this province. It's just not going right.

What are some answers? What do we recommend to try to diversify, decentralize, and truly develop the Alberta economy, particularly the manufacturing sector, on a more sound and viable basis for Albertans? What would we do?

Let's look first of all at small business and private enterprise. I think they really need risk capital, and we have to look at this whole concept of subcontracting. A pamphlet called *Industrial Policies in Canada*, put out by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, has some very interesting things in it. I'd certainly recommend it to many members of the Legislature. They support that very fact and say:

For the most part, small business does not look for additional government programs. Instead, the important new horizontal measures that would strengthen the small and medium-sized manufacturing sectors are along the lines of greater availability [one.] of risk capital ... [and secondly,] subcontracting.

How would we provide risk capital? We think there should be a reduction of corporate tax, from 11 per cent to 6 per cent on the first \$500,000 of taxable income for Canadian-controlled, Alberta-resident corporations. Secondly, introduce a tax holiday for three years from the date of incorporation, or until \$500,000 taxable income is earned. Thirdly, encourage the formation of investment incentive cor-

porations to allow corporations a 250 per cent income tax deduction on an investment in a small business for as long as the equity investment is held. Fourthly, increase the funding of AOC and ADC, and liberalize their lending terms.

What about subcontracting? I've made some comments on this already. An aggressive policy should be pursued by government with regard to its Crown corporations, government proper, AGT, or whatever it may be. Also there should be an influence into private corporations so they will subcontract or break down contracting into small components, so Alberta industries that are in place or could be in place can meet the needs of the Crown corporations or these government bodies I have mentioned.

In support of this I'd like to quote also from the *Industrial Policy for Canada*, by the CFIB people. They say this, and I think it's important:

It should be emphasized that Japan, widely envied as the world's major success story of the century, claims the world's largest independent business sector. The multitude of small firms exists because Japan's enormous conglomerates deliberately attempt to provide work on a subcontracting basis to these firms. Often a valuable conglomerate employee will be encouraged to spin off his own independent firm. The conglomerate managers in Japan realize that entrepreneurial managers give the nation its edge on technological development.

And they've certainly proven themselves in many, many fields, Mr. Speaker. There's no question about that.

I believe the government could encourage and assist the employees of branch plants closed by foreign parent or employee ownership, to help employees either maintain jobs or get other jobs. I think that is also important with regard to small industry in our province, relative to manufacturing.

What about a vigorous and exciting Alberta-manufactured goods policy? At the present time that doesn't seem possible. I related very simple examples of yo-yos, sun visors, and horns. Why doesn't the government pursue and set out goals so they can help small business, so they can purchase from small businesses some of the things they may need? Why can't our small businesses get a portion of government business, more than they get at the present time? It could be done if we set up our subcontracting in a better way.

But let's read what the Minister of Business Development and Tourism, Bob Dowling, has to say about this. I quote from a recent *Edmonton Journal* editorial:

Alberta's own local preference policy, in the words of Business Development Minister Bob Dowling, is that "local firms must always be competitive in quality, price, delivery time and post-installation service. But if these conditions are met, then it is expected that the contracts and purchase orders would be awarded to those firms which provide the greatest Alberta and Canadian content."

But really, Mr. Speaker, it's not far enough to say we want to buy Alberta-manufactured goods, or maybe involve people in the construction industry and give them a first chance here in Alberta. When I speak of the construction industry, I think of an example that is

proceeding at the present time. The Brooks hospital is being built by a construction firm out of Winnipeg. Senior citizen accommodation at Brooks and Taber just about went to a firm from Winnipeg. However, there was a re-examination of the proposals and the specs, and an Alberta firm has it now. But at the present time there's no policy from the government with regard to this, and there should be.

As I say, what's happening now is just not good enough. The editorial I was quoting goes on to say:

B.C. has had a policy that it would award tenders to local companies if they were within 10 per cent of the lowest bid, or Canadian companies if they were within five per cent.

I think Alberta should adopt that kind of policy. I don't see any reason why that wouldn't enhance our manufacturing and the industrial sector of the province of Alberta.

What else should we be looking at? We should be looking at the funding restrictions that are presently placed on the faculties of Agriculture, Business, Engineering, and Forestry in Alberta's universities so the essential skilled manpower we need to diversify this economy is available to us.

Finally, I'd like to mention and use this example to show the benefit of manufacturing industries over resource extraction industries, and that it's very significant that we have a greater thrust in this whole area. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has this to say, and raises these supporting facts:

The critical factor in the production process is neither capital nor labor; it is technology. American economist E.F. Denison, for example, has shown that approximately 85 per cent of the American productivity increases and 45 per cent of the economic growth between 1929 and 1969 was directly attributable to technological innovation.

Boretsky, studying the same problem of technology, took a different approach and concluded that technology-intensive industries outperformed other industries to the extent of:

- 45 per cent faster growth in output;
- 88 per cent higher growth in employment;
- 38 per cent greater growth in productivity;
- 44 per cent decrease in the price per unit of output;
- and 49 per cent of higher growth in exports.

Conclusively, Mr. Speaker, it can be shown that for every \$1 million invested in manufacturing, 5.5 times as many jobs are created, compared to \$1 million invested in resource extraction.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly need technical innovation in this province to promote our manufacturing sector. In examining that, we must examine what the government is doing at the present time with regard to reforming research and development practices in this province. At the first ministers' conference in Ottawa the Premier was supportive, suggesting that we promote research and development. In the budget that was placed before us, Mr. Speaker, a 150 per cent tax reduction was proposed for investment in research and development, with the provision that this only be given to firms with a past research and development record.

To me that's rather ridiculous. How can you create more manufacturing, create the opportunity for more

ideas, if you just limit the matter to companies that have a record? Mr. Speaker, I don't think that is fair. When we just look at past records, how do we give an opportunity to young people coming out of university who haven't got a track record? So in light of that needed technology and that needed recognition of the incentive and the creativity that is stored up and maybe even utilized in the people of Alberta, I think we need a bit of a new approach.

Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest in my final point that what we should do at this point in time is reform the Alberta Research Council, and we should be assisted by what I would like to introduce as a new concept called the Alberta inventor and creative fund. This fund would do four specific types of things that are necessary at this time in our growth in Alberta.

First, it would provide assistance in research and development to the private sector, particularly small businesses and individual entrepreneurs. Secondly, it would help in the development of new inventions, new technologies, and new procedures to spur manufacturing in Alberta at the present time. Thirdly, it should be an independent body funded through the heritage savings trust fund. Fourthly, it should be governed by representatives of existing government research bureaus, private enterprise, the research community at large, and the general public.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that such an inventor and creative fund would be invaluable to the struggling individuals and firms in the market place in Alberta, which are striving to develop new technologies and market new products. To truly assist manufacturing in this province, both the government and the public must restore faith in the greatness of individual initiative, the driving force which has made this province and this country what they are today.

Mr. Speaker, I think those are the types of things we should recognize: one, what this government isn't doing; secondly, that there are some new approaches, some fresh things we can do. Mr. Speaker, I think it's time we examine them and do them as soon as possible.

MR. PLANCHE: Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I was surprised when I saw the designated resolution today. I'm not sure whether the mover is discussing manufacturing or processing, or what particular segment of the economy is concerning him. So in order to sort of put a few thoughts together, I thought back to what this government inherited in 1971: a province that had made no efforts to open up new markets, a government that had made no efforts whatsoever to guarantee any continuity of material source to fledgling manufacturers in this province, a government that had made no effort whatsoever to make any variation from branch bank financing, a government that had small towns dying, hadn't made any forward thrust toward solving transportation difficulties, and no visible government priorities whatsoever to sell manufactured products anywhere, no trade missions, no imaginative anything that I could see.

Having got that in my mind I went down and tried to develop some statistics, which I knew would come up in this debate today. The amazing thing about the statistics in the library was that this government was the first one that had any recorded statistics of any kind that made any sense. In addition to that, everything I could see was sharply up. So it was hard to

find anything that made any kind of comparison that would be fair in terms of this debate. Interestingly enough, however, manufacturing shipments doubled between the years 1972 and 1976. The Alberta gross domestic product as a percentage of the total for Canada from 1951 to 1971 — 20 years — increased 3.5 per cent. In the five years from 1971 to 1976, it increased 36 per cent. Incredible, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, anybody who's had any background in manufacturing knows that in order to be successful there has to be an area of natural advantage. For instance, my experience tells me that when I began in the oilfield equipment business almost everything was imported. Now in Alberta they manufacture pipe, tubing, casing, float equipment, pumping units, wellheads, valves, heaters, treaters, tanks, masts, substructures; in fact, almost everything that's used except drilling rigs.

Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the remarks of the previous speaker. Perhaps because oil and gas are doing so well here, it may very well appear that the manufacturing sector isn't doing as well in terms of the total. The fact is that a town called Brooks, just north of the previous speaker's constituency, has grown from 3,000 to 7,500 in the period from 1971 to 1977. If he's been reading at all, he will know that Luscar has developed the first coal market for Ontario. Further, just north of his constituency, they have done and will continue to do a great amount of coal gasification research.

In terms of the Alberta policy in setting out goals, I guess there is an area where we could balkanize Canada by setting up non-tariff barriers and in fact preferentials for each province. But having just gone through the experience in trucking regulations along with one of his hon. colleagues, it became clear to everyone that perhaps the best thing Alberta could do would be to create a lever whereby the other provinces would drop their differentials. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that Canada's in enough trouble without balkanizing it with trade restrictions.

As for his suggestion about investment incentive certificates, the previous speaker may not know it but those are already in effect in Ontario and Quebec. The history in Ontario is that none has been subscribed to; in Quebec, one. The reason is, Mr. Speaker, that individuals can't participate, only corporations. It makes it extremely difficult to have an area of simplicity that a fledgling manufacturer can take the time to deal with, without getting involved in the bureaucracy and a great amount of legal and financial expertise that's probably beyond his means. That isn't to say this government isn't going to proceed with that kind of idea; it's just that it isn't a simple band-aid solution.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you some of the things this government has done. This government took a share position in IPSCO, which has since been dissipated into two other vehicles. That was to assure manufacturers in Alberta that when short times in steel came, they would still have an opportunity to buy steel. That opportunity wasn't available to Alberta manufacturers previously from the eastern steel suppliers. They were simply put at the bottom of the list or shut off altogether.

Mr. Speaker, AOC is working very well. It's a difficult concept. It's difficult for the people who work there to try to run a business as a bank and still allow

the latitudes necessary. But along with some of the failures AOC has caused, there's been momentous success in a great many areas. Without getting into specifics, I can tell you they have caused some very real changes in the banks' outlook on financing in Alberta. So AOC has contributed in a positive way. I can't speak that well for ADC, because I don't know it. But my information is that the same philosophy exists there.

Mr. Speaker, we do have the beginnings of a merchant bank system in Alberta. We are going on trade shows and missions, and positive results are coming from those trade shows and missions. We are monitoring the purchasing of material for projects. I don't remember that being in place when GCOS went into Fort McMurray, but it's certainly in place now. We're upgrading our highways and small airports. Small-town living is becoming as viable for industrial access and manufacturing promise as the major metropolitan centres. We now have in place an energy preferential for cost for Alberta manufacturers. We have a tax structure that continues with no sales tax, and in terms of Canada there is only one lower corporate tax. No question there are some difficulties promoting manufacturing in an area so far away from markets. I just can't accept the fact that government should get involved in a short-term, band-aid approach to some kind of philosophical problem. I think one of the nicest problems we can have is to have a shortage of people to fill jobs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Fred, don't forget you made your millions on Social Credit.

MR. PEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Member for Little Bow for bringing forth this resolution, as it allows me an opportunity to speak against it. I also want to congratulate my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary Glenmore, as he has briefly stated some of the policies this government has invoked and established since 1971.

However, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of this House and the particular resolution in front of us, I thought we might just go back and review exactly what has been done by this government since taking office in 1971. In that time, as a general figure it has been stated that manufacturing value has increased by two and a half times in the short period of some seven years. In that short period of time we have seen a diversification of industry that the hon. Member for Little Bow possibly hasn't reviewed. The statistics in front of me indicate some 265 towns, villages, and communities have been stimulated in the area of secondary industry since 1971.

Mr. Speaker, that was brought about by a recognition of this government, taking office in 1971, that infrastructures had to be put in place to afford to rural Alberta an opportunity equal to urban Alberta before we could move into the bigger context of being competitive in the whole of Canada, and then into the international picture. In order to do that, we knew we had to have a program of water and sewage in these small communities. We knew we had to improve the market roads and trunks, although the trunk roads themselves were in reasonably good shape at that time. We knew that we had to improve the other modes of transportation and communication within

these communities in order to equalize the opportunity for diversification of industry and manufacturing to take place.

As we stated, we embarked on a program of sewage and water, of which 265 communities took advantage. We embarked on improvement of market and trunk roads. We embarked on a program of airport facility improvement, which heretofore was considered a federal jurisdiction and the provincial government had been afraid to step into, and which we did. We then further took in hand that these communities had to be made competitive with an energy resource, which is natural gas, and we went on the rural natural gas program we're all familiar with.

We then addressed ourselves to the overall picture of Alberta and its inequities in order to establish a climate, recognizing as a Conservative government that nothing is done without people and that the initiative of people alone is what makes manufacturing and industry move in the private sector as far as Alberta, Canada, or what the history of the growth of our country is all about. Consequently, we had to recognize that what we wanted to do in Alberta was eliminate those inequities and allow at least a climate of competition and equality so that the Alberta manufacturer might go into the market place on an equal and competitive basis.

What did we find facing the manufacturer or would-be manufacturer in Alberta in 1971? First of all, of course, we had small markets; inadequate transportation facilities and financial services; we had trade restrictions that had been implemented by general agreements on tariffs and trade in Ottawa without consultation with regional areas of Alberta; as stated, we had inadequate research development and technology, and no basic building blocks to build a manufacturing industry on.

Therefore the government of Alberta undertook programs to achieve more adequate transportation facilities to attract greater and more diversified financial services; to educate, acquaint, and attempt to overcome the trade restrictions implemented by those general agreements on tariffs and trade; improve access by entrepreneurs to the areas of technological, and research and development programs; to attract basic building block industries so that the possibility of manufacturing within this province could be expanded, and the opportunity to locate in Alberta would be afforded individuals, smaller and larger companies alike.

The natural areas of building blocks were things that were indigenous to Alberta: agriculture; certainly there's no history of any industrial, developed area that has proceeded without some steel base; and because we had an ample quantity of liquid hydrocarbons, it was natural to look at petrochemicals as a building block base. So we had three areas and three thrusts that were indigenous to this province, if we had in place the proper building blocks: agriculture, steel, and hydrocarbons. Of course, as I have stated and will state continuously, none of this happens without people: skilled people, entrepreneurial types, people who are desirous of obtaining their potential and have confidence in themselves.

So the government undertook a very vigorous program of transportation, reviewing what might be done

in regard to highways, how they might improve and make more competitive Alberta's position in regard to road transportation. That was done by looking at the access of the province of Alberta to its natural export market, which was B.C., and identifying that the B.C. gross vehicle weight limit was 110,000 pounds; in Alberta at that time it was 80,000. By moving those gross vehicle weights we didn't have to off-load, and we had a more competitive position, at least going west.

At that time we faced — and had faced since the institution of the national parks and traffic moving through them — a tithe. I don't know whether people in this Legislature are aware that prior to 1974 every truck that went through the national parks, both Jasper and Banff, stopped and paid a tithe on the load. Through the efforts of WEOC, the federal government, and Mr. Marchand, that was withdrawn. I'm not sure we're aware, in the movement of our trunk and market roads, of the kind of dollars and effort which has been put forth by this government since 1971. That's a case of record.

The next thing we had to look at in transportation — access to our market place — was our ports. Nobody on the prairies had had any real input to the problems facing us in regard to exporting our products through the western ports or, for that matter, eastern ports. So we addressed ourselves to that and, through the efforts and policies of this government, have had input to eliminating some four days' delay on turnarounds and car unloadings in Vancouver. We've been instrumental in supporting and developing an alternative port in Prince Rupert. We are working towards that now, and the development of the Yellowhead as an alternative route to the Trans-Canada Highway, and of course the paving of the Mackenzie into the north.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take too long suggesting what we have done in air: the bold, courageous step that was taken in order to protect the northern air lines and PWA. Whether one is aware of it or not — we were working very closely with the federal government at that time, and the policy of Mr. Marchand was that all regional carriers come under the umbrella of Air Canada. Wardair had already placed and taken an option of 25 per cent on their position and were moving to Toronto, were committed to a move, when it was forced by a bold and courageous step by this government, which attempted first of all to establish a private-sector purchase of PWA and, failing that, moved boldly to protect for future Albertans the gateway to the north, and PWA, considered one of the finest regional carriers in the world; and in world carriers, Wardair.

Mr. Speaker, in attempting to look at policies that would allow us entry to market, we then turned our attention from transportation to the areas of those financial services that were a shortfall in the province of Alberta at that time, areas in which the sophistication of risk and blending of debt and equity capitals were just not around.

We called the central banking system together, sat down the whole group of them in Edmonton, told them our ambitions, our aims, what we were looking for, and about the development of the Alberta Opportunity Company that would do three things for us as a province. It would be the last resort, because we didn't want to be in competition with the private

sector. But in the start-up period, when the cash flows were not there, there had to be some deferment on principal and interest payments in order to afford small companies to get going. That's the reason we were establishing the Alberta Opportunity Company and, at the same time, the Agricultural Development Corporation. We were not to be competitive with them but were giving them fair warning that they had better do something in the private sector to address themselves to the problems facing us in Alberta. At this time and place I must admit that the central banking system, of which I'm not a particular favorite, has responded. Today the loaning limits, the expansion of services, and the intensity with which they address themselves to the province of Alberta are indeed very encouraging.

Through the efforts of this government on various trips to Germany, France, England, and New York, four merchant banks are in place with headquarters in Alberta. They are banks identifiable in the area of small, medium, and large manufacturers, to look after financial problems that heretofore befell most of us, and that blending of debt and equity areas. So the Paribas, the Rothschilds, and the Warburgs that represent France, England, Germany, and New York, are now in place in Alberta, thanks in no small extent to the efforts of this government.

Through a Premier who understood and had the courage, against the comments of the opposition in this House, to move into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and identify with the federal governments of Canada and the United States, along with the natural trading areas we were associated with in Alberta and the adjacent states of Montana, Washington, Oregon, and California — that as Albertans we wanted to have a little of the action in those things we were interested in manufacturing and processing here in regard to petrochemicals and agricultural products. As a result, the federal governments of Canada and the United States, the heavy agriculture lobbies that exist in the United States, and the respective states I mentioned, are at least talking about how a bilateral arrangement could be attained. There's a precedent, because under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the auto pact between Canada and the United States was ratified. That was certainly in the interest of Ontario and a couple of adjacent states.

The other fact we had to look at, in order to establish a climate so the man who had the doing ability — the entrepreneur, or the smaller company that was elsewhere and wanted to come here, or the small company in place that wanted to expand, or the larger international company that we wished to attract — was the problems of technology, our Research Council, our science policies, and out of them were devised the following aggressive steps. It staggers me when the opposition suggests this is a weakness of this particular government. We moved into AOSTRA, ERP, the Vegreville environmental program, programs at the university, stimulation and encouragement in the private sector: sulphur, sulphur uses, sulphur applications. I can go on and on.

Then we addressed ourselves to getting basic building blocks in place. I refer now to the step taken in regard to steel, that my colleague from Glenmore alluded to. The building blocks for petrochemicals are in place today. The lack of knowledge of the opposi-

tion amazes me, when they refer to the fact that they can't get Alberta-made glycol. That's just about to be a fact, because one of the products of the ethane/ethylene/[ethylene] oxide program now in place in both Red Deer and Fort Saskatchewan will develop our own [ethylene] oxide, the base product for the development of glycol.

What then has this government provided? An economic climate, an infrastructure, financial services. I refer to *The Calgary Herald* of last night, in which Calgary is second to Toronto and surpasses Montreal and Vancouver as the financial centre of Canada. The resources and development through such programs as AOSTRA, environment in Vegreville, water resources and coal in Devon, our Research Council in regard to the manufacturing sector, the development of feedstocks in regard to petrochemical industries, the growth of our steel industry — that's a story in itself, and I'm sure the House is familiar with it — the access to markets the Premier and the minister of industry and trade have taken both in the United States and offshore: all indicate that indeed this government has moved.

The results show in the figures we have just given on gross provincial product in regard to manufacturing: some two and a half times what it was in 1971. But more than that, it's just beginning. The base is in place for people with confidence in themselves and in their country to move forward with confidence in the future.

In concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't allude to two or three things, to point out the kinds of programs and how effective they are as they relate to people. I have covered in a few moments the setting up of infrastructure, and the attempt to take away inequities and afford Alberta an equal opportunity in the market place of Canada, domestically as well as internationally. However, I would like to dwell for a few moments on people and programs as they relate to people. We have seen DREE operate. We have seen it impose people and money on a place, and the operation to be ineffective and close up. We don't have to go very far. Without mentioning names, at Great Slave Lake millions of dollars were lost because a government imposed upon people. It wasn't initiated the other way around, by people.

I refer to another small company called Dreco. I don't usually like to name names. But I do so for the reference of the opposition, so they might relate to the fact that this company, which is now doing some \$25 million, with \$15 million in export in the last three years, was developed and sponsored by the initiative of individuals who were assisted by the Alberta Opportunity Company.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to comment on another company in Canada that is an exciting initiation of what people can do for themselves: the Canadian Manufacturing Appliance Company. They told Mr. Warren, who is in charge of our General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, that as far as they were concerned they didn't want any latitude in regard to preferential tariffs or protection. They have taken the conglomerates — Canadian General Electric, their major appliances; Canadian Westinghouse; and General Steel Wares — merged them and through advanced technology have set themselves up. They now represent about a third of Canada's

total major appliance business and are looking forward to moving into the export market in the United States and even in Japan itself.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is up, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank you.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to congratulate the hon. Member for Little Bow for bringing in the motion, even though I didn't agree with too much of what he said. I think we're actually in relatively good shape in manufacturing in Alberta. Nevertheless, manufacturing is undoubtedly of growing importance to the Alberta economy, and I think it's timely that we hear from members on this subject.

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but the allotted time for a designated resolution has elapsed.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, then I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)**

**Bill 201
An Act Respecting the Right of the
Public to Information Concerning
the Public Business**

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on second reading of the right to information act or the sunshine bill, or whatever you wish to call it, I think if ever a government in the history of this confederation needed a right to information act, it's the government I am looking at at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill again for consideration in this Legislature. In many instances in our democratic system it seems to take a long time to bring change. It seems to take longer when we have a very, very powerful government, powerful in numbers, I might say. It seems the more powerful you get in numbers, the less prone you are to listen. I've said many times in this Legislature that a lot of the legislation that has been before us on the floor of this House would not have been here had we had a balanced Legislature. But, Mr. Speaker, that's neither here nor there. We still have the opportunity to correct that situation.

If need be, legislation such as this should be introduced and reintroduced year after year until we get some action. I would like to say that the Member of Parliament for Peace River, the hon. Mr. Baldwin, has taken this up as a personal crusade in the House of Commons in Ottawa. He hasn't given up, and I do not intend to give up, Mr. Speaker, until the government has changed. Then I think possibly I will have some decision-making ability to bring in that type of legislation.

[Dr. McCrimmon in the Chair]

The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House may laugh, but that's what the Premier of Quebec thought

a few years ago. The Premier of Quebec had a majority as large as this one, and he's now sunning himself and clipping his coupons on the beaches of Florida. So maybe the minister should never laugh. It's the sign of a good politician always to remain humble, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, this bill really challenges the present government on its assertion that it's open and responsive. It's an obvious opportunity for this government to prove this. This bill simply states that the information which is used to form public policy is made public. No one can argue that the public has a right to know about the decisions which affect it, and the manner in which these decisions were reached should be public knowledge.

Arguments have been made repeatedly that to pass legislation of this kind would negate the effectiveness of the individual MLAs and their ability to act as effective decision-makers in the Legislature. It's also been argued that there's no need for this type of legislation in Alberta. I'm sure we'll be hearing that from the hon. members on the government side.

The argument about interference with the decision-making powers of MLAs is not a valid charge, Mr. Speaker. The power to lead in government rests with this Legislature. It always has and it always will, let's hope. The right to information will simply make legislators more accountable, because information used in the make-up of public decisions will be available to the public, which is not normally the case now, Mr. Speaker.

I have said on many occasions that an overwhelming majority in any government does not make for good government, and I reiterate. I've said before and I say now that I was never in favor of the large majority the former government had, and I say now that I think it's even more unbalanced. But at least at that time when there was a large majority form of government, we had a benevolent dictatorship. Now it's just a plain dictatorship, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

DR. HOHOL: Why don't you give up your seat? We'll need it next time.

DR. BUCK: You tried hard last time, Bert. But that's what the game of politics is all about, hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont. I'll do everything I can to make sure the hon. member doesn't return to his seat next time too. So I say, Mr. Speaker, large majorities do not make for good government.

Mr. Speaker, the argument will be brought up that there is an opportunity for opposition members to get information through the recourse of oral questions, written questions, and motions for returns. That's true. That mechanism is available.

But let's review some of the little games that can be played when you ask for motions for returns. The motion for a return was asked by my colleague the hon. Member for Little Bow, when we asked, where do the funds go from the Western Canada Lottery? What did the government do with those funds? The answer came back: it doesn't apply; the government didn't get the money. Technically, Mr. Speaker, that was true, but the government did have the mechanism for the expenditure of those funds. So really the minister was playing games.

In fairness to an inquisitive reporter on one of the

local media, it seems that some of the information was dug out that the government in effect did have the opportunity to spend these funds. But that information was not made public in this Legislature through a motion for a return. So there are these little games. If the government wants to play little games, it can.

A second instance is when the hon. member Mr. Getty, the minister responsible for the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, was asked by me on what work Walter Levy consultants did for the government. The question came back that no such person had done any work for the government. So we reissued the question. The second time it came back: no such party, no dealings with the government. So again the minister was playing little games with us, because he wanted the man's name, the Company Limited, the Ltd., and all the initials behind his name. So really the minister was just playing little games.

But, Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't be playing games in this Legislature. The information made available to the government is information that should be able to be tabled in this Legislature, so the people in this province can have a look at the information and decide, in their wisdom, if the decisions we make are the right ones or the wrong ones.

Also, Mr. Speaker, if the minister wants to stone-wall in question period, he doesn't have to answer any questions. Of course we know this practice certainly works, if you do not want to give the answer. On many occasions we are told that information cannot or will not be made available because it's not in the public interest. Now who makes that decision? I say the government makes that decision, and whether we agree with it or not that's what we're stuck with.

Mr. Speaker, I believe a right to information act is needed in Alberta. That act is needed now, in case the hon. members of the government have forgotten what "now" means. The people of this province have a right to know what is happening to the expenditure and investment of their moneys. This government has persistently refused to give information about the Alberta Energy Company in which we, as the taxpayers of this province, have \$75 million invested; more information on the Syncrude project, Pacific Western Airlines, and a number of other areas where massive amounts of public money are being invested.

We in the official opposition have persistently stated, and with good reason, that the people of Alberta should be informed fully, in advance, about the use of billions of dollars resting in the heritage savings trust fund. That could be accomplished simply by making the fund accountable to the Legislature before — and I reiterate, Mr. Speaker — before the investments are made, not after. I don't know how any government backbencher of good conscience would not insist that that's where these investments are being made, right here in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I say that involving a committee of cabinet and government ventures into private business without the public's right to check in advance on investments or expenditure of public money is wrong in principle, because we've heard many times that the action should be here in the Legislature. I'm sure the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, furiously jotting his notes, agrees with that principle.

MR. GHITTER: Haven't you given this speech before?

AN HON. MEMBER: I thought I'd heard it.

DR. BUCK: The bill's the same, hon. member.

MR. GHITTER: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Are you allowed to give the identical speech that we've heard before in order to waste the time of the Legislature?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member doesn't even have a point of order.

AN HON. MEMBER: He didn't even write that.

DR. BUCK: I'll come to the juicier parts later, hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's got a new writer.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the right to information legislation will give the public recourse to gain in its information, and will not give the government the supreme right to withhold such information simply because government and the bureaucracy say it's not in the public interest to give out such information.

MR. FOSTER: You're reading your speech, Walter.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, another mechanism is inter-departmental memo. You can hide just about anything you want to under the guise of interdepartmental memo; just about anything you want to hide. So the argument in the case of the heritage savings trust fund, that debate in the Legislature would be too time-consuming when it comes to making decisions for investment, is weak and meaningless. It's used by this government simply because it doesn't want to be accountable or feels that with a huge, overwhelming majority there's no necessity for accountability. The attitude seems to be: what the public doesn't know can't hurt the government.

In debating this bill last year, Mr. Speaker, I made reference to the efforts put forward to get this legislation passed in the federal House by the gentleman I formerly mentioned, the respected Member of Parliament for Peace River, Mr. Baldwin. Many of the government backbenchers will remember an article in one of the prominent local newspapers where Mr. Baldwin said he thought there was a definite need in Alberta for a right to information act.

MR. GHITTER: When are we getting to the juicy part?

DR. BUCK: There is definitely a need for such legislation in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I feel obliged to refer to the Alberta Tories' first guidepost of policy in the manifesto, which states simply that the public has a right to know. But the government has to keep reassuring itself and telling itself that it is one of their guideposts.

So, Mr. Speaker, this government still holds to that belief. Hon. members on the government side will have little difficulty agreeing with the principle of this bill. If, on the other hand, the government has abandoned that principle, I'm sure the same argu-

ments used last year from the government side will surface again. So maybe we'll have some more speeches the same as we had last year.

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, may I rise on a point of order?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Agreed.

MR. GHITTER: Mr. Speaker, I refer to *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, No. 144, which I know you're familiar with. But just by way of reminding you, it says:

It is a rule in both Houses of Parliament that a member must address the House orally, and not read from a written, previously prepared speech, for the reason that, "if the practice of reading speeches should prevail, members might read speeches that were written by other people, and the time of the House be taken up in considering the arguments of persons who were not deserving of their attention."

I would think that's what we're experiencing this afternoon, and I would like a ruling from the hon. Deputy Speaker in that regard.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: With respect, I believe that if this were adhered to across the board, perhaps we would have a lot fewer speeches in this House. So with an element of discretion by the person making the speech and the presentation, it will be called by the Speaker if it goes beyond control.

DR. BUCK: I know the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo likes to play little games. Mr. Speaker, it will be interesting to see the next time the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo gets up. I challenge the hon. member to come to this Assembly the next time he makes a major address without even the guideline notes I use here. If the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo would quit hassling me and permit me the opportunity to continue with my speech, I shall do so.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's his turn today.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I say if this government has abandoned the principle that the public has the right to know, then I'm sure we'll be hearing the counterarguments from that government defending the position that the public should not have the right to know the reason this government makes its decisions.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question there can be imperfections in any legislation. We find that all the time. Amendments can be and are made in most of our laws. The same can be said for this bill. However, let's not get hung up on technicalities. Certainly we can all agree on the principles embodied in this bill; that is, the public right to know.

I believe hon. members of this House, Mr. Speaker, agree that government should not have the power to come up with unpleasant surprises for the people we serve. In recent times some of these rather unpleasant surprises have taken several forms. For example, the Minister of the Environment, coupled with this large steam roller of a majority, eliminated with a stroke of a pen the highly respected and reputable Environment Conservation Authority last year. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say and bring to the attention of hon. members that I think the Minister of the Environment should apologize to this Legislature and to the people of this province when we look at the seventh annual report of the Environment Council of Alberta. There is no way this should go under the guise of the seventh annual report of the Environment Council of Alberta when in effect that council has only been working these last few months. To me that's just as misleading as the Minister of the Environment calling the Environment Council of Alberta the ECA, under the guise . . . And I accuse the minister of trying somehow to make the people of Alberta think that the . . .

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I object very strenuously to the insinuation by the hon. member that I wrote that report or the title, or had anything to do with it. It was submitted to me, as required by legislation for tabling in this House, by the Environment Council of Alberta. They wrote it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the minister is responsible for his department. What I am saying is that this is not the seventh annual report of the Environment Council of Alberta. That's what I'm saying to the hon. minister. The minister is responsible, and he should make sure his department doesn't mislead the people of this province.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, again I must ask a step on the point of order. The Environment Council of Alberta is not the Department of the Environment. He ought to know that; he's been around long enough.

AN HON. MEMBER: Too long.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, then somebody in the government can inform the Environment Council of Alberta that this is not their seventh report.

MR. ASHTON: You tell them.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the puppets are again forgetting they are the government.

MR. HORSMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Clover Bar [interjections] has used a term which is distinctly unparliamentary. It has been ruled before, during this sitting of the Assembly, that that particular term he has used is not apt, or descriptive in any way of the informed members of the Conservative caucus.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, there wasn't even a point of order and it has never been ruled on.

I'd like to say that with the destruction of the Environment Conservation Authority and in its place a weak facsimile, ECA, many people in the province still think it is the old Environment Conservation Authority. That is very convenient, a very smooth move on the part of the government. I have to compliment the minister on that. The government can talk to the people of this province and say, the ECA is still in effect. Now that is really smooth.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank God Kinisky's no longer there.

DR. BUCK: Thank God Kinisky's no longer there. Maybe he'll run down in Palliser, or what's that constituency down there — Drumheller?

MR. TAYLOR: You tried to get him to run Social Credit and he chose the other worse thing.

DR. BUCK. The Tory cousins are conspiring again, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: We didn't want him.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, this government got rid of the Environment Conservation Authority because it didn't seem to appreciate the fact that this Authority was trying to give the government some independent information after public hearings. So if you don't agree with an advisory committee, get rid of the committee.

Mr. Speaker, we look at what happened at the hearings. After strong representation from the people directly involved and after the ECA — the Environment Conservation Authority, not the Environment Council of Alberta — had recommended against it, this government decided to build a dam on Site 6 on the Red Deer River.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hurray.

DR. BUCK: It's significant, I think, that the government decision came down on the same day as the ECA report recommending against that decision.

Again we have the little charade this government plays, and the little bit of lip service it pays to public hearings and public input. The government says to people, come and give us your presentations, and then pats us on the head and says, thank you so much; we'll make the decisions. Fine. Governments are elected to make decisions. But let's not try to kid the people of this province anymore that we're going to listen to public input. I find it very difficult to believe the decision to eliminate the Environment Conservation Authority and the Red Deer River dam decision are not directly connected. Certainly after the farmers in Spruce View and the ECA had made their representations and recommendations, they did not deserve the type of decision the government made in traditional — traditional, I say — unilateral fashion.

AN HON. MEMBER: What's that got to do with the bill?

MR. GHITTER: When are you getting to the new part?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, this government still has not proven to the people of this province on what basis it made its decision to build the dam on Site 6. This government was afraid to open the Legislature to a public committee so the people who were affected or concerned but didn't necessarily live in the area could bring their input. I say, Mr. Speaker, when the government feels that it's going to be to their advantage they have a public affairs meeting. But when it's a decision that may not make this government look so good, the government does not use the mechanism

and the vehicle of the Public Affairs committee.

Now we talk about some of the surprises we get. The establishment of a restricted development area is another instance of the government's power to give citizens somewhat rude surprises. Mr. Speaker, the RDA is another of these surprises. On what information, public or otherwise, did the government make this decision? It's particularly notable that a court decision rendered invalid a small portion of one RDA, because it was being established for all the wrong reasons. A change in legislation by an overwhelmingly large government made the court decision virtually useless. We just changed a few things. If all the information respecting these situations had been made available for public scrutiny and discussion, maybe these things might not have happened; maybe this legislation would not have been brought in.

Mr. Speaker, with the sad record of this government about listening to the people, laying the cards on the table, and letting the people of Alberta know on what grounds some of these major decisions were made, I would say the government of this province has not served its people too well.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, if this government really does believe in an open and responsive government, I say the members of the government can certainly support the principle of this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, you'll note that I have covered everything up on my desk. I'm not going to read my speech. [interjections] As a matter of fact, I didn't intend to take part in the debate at all. But when I hear things that are wrong being repeated and repeated and repeated, I just have to stand up. They say if you say something often enough you can persuade people it's true and even start to believe it's true yourself.

The hon. member, knowingly or unknowingly, just did that very thing. He said the government did not listen to the people. He said the ECA found that all the people and all the producers were against the Red Deer Dam. Well, I've got news for him. This has been repeated several times by Mr. Kinisky and several others, and it's a complete error.

Let me tell you about one hearing. I was there and I'll vouch for it. At that hearing in connection with the Red Deer Dam, one man from Red Deer, an extreme environmentalist, spoke against it. I have no objection to that. That's his thinking. He had a right to do it. And they counted him as one. The mayor of Drumheller, representing 7,000 people, stood up and supported the dam at Site No. 6. What did Mr. Kinisky count him as? One. Now, if that's saying the people were opposed to the Red Deer Dam, if that's the way they carry out their calculations, no wonder Mr. Kinisky and his gang were kicked out. They should have been kicked out long ago.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

That's not bringing the message from the people to the government. That's misrepresenting the people's views. I can tell you a lot of people in the Drumheller valley are thankful we had a minister who was prepared and had the intestinal fortitude to make a decision, in spite of representations contrary to the thinking of the people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. TAYLOR: I have no complaint at all with those . . .

DR. BUCK: The Tories are ganging up on me.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm not reading my speech. I have no complaints about the people at the dam site complaining. That's their right. But I do have complaints when a government body set up to look into it counts as one a man like the mayor of Drumheller or the mayor of Red Deer, when he's representing hundreds of people; putting him in the same category as an individual who speaks for himself. I also made representations at that meeting, and I . . .

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, I have difficulty relating a debate with regard to the Red Deer Dam to a bill which . . . It may well be that the Red Deer Dam topic came up earlier in regard to the right to know. I am not aware it came up in regard to its merits. That's a debate we've already had.

MR. TAYLOR: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, and with respect, the mover of the motion dealt with this as an example of people making representations to the government and the government not listening. I'm simply giving the other side.

MR. SPEAKER: I regret I didn't hear the earlier part of the debate, but it would seem likely that if that was raised by the hon. member who is sponsoring the bill, he himself was straying from the topic of the bill. If that happened, ordinarily fairness demands other members be entitled to comment on the same topic. The only difficulty is that in addition to the rule of relevance we have the obstacle placed in our way by the rule against debating the same topic twice. The issue of Site 6 and Site 11 I think has been pretty well dealt with under another heading on the Order Paper.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the point of order, the illustration I used was [interjections] that the information the minister used in making his decision has not been made public to this time, because the information that was made public was contrary to what the minister did. I just used that as an illustration. If the hon. member wants to go right through the entire Site 6 dam debate, fine. I'm willing to.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I recognize that the hon. member was stretching the point, but he had no other arguments to support what he was trying to say. I'm not arguing against it. He didn't have anything else to say so he used a far-fetched argument.

I want to say the argument he used was not factual. The information the people gave — a large body gave that board the information — was misinterpreted when it reached the government. A matter of fact: I will stand here and say more people supported that dam in those hearings than opposed it, yet we get the representations they gave to the minister. I say the minister did well to examine that and to make the decision he made. It was a good decision.

Well, I'm not going to extend that argument any further. But I do want to emphasize that when a board uses an argument of a mayor of a city representing 7,000 people and counts it as the opinion of one individual, there's certainly something wrong in Denmark, radically wrong. I want to enlarge further: the president of the Drumheller Chamber of Commerce, representing I suppose at least 200 people, strongly supported the construction of a dam at Red Deer. He was counted as one too. I as the MLA strongly supported the dam, and I was certainly representing at least 4,000 in that area. So you have almost 10,000 people right there, to say nothing about the mayor of Red Deer, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in the right to information. I don't agree with the arguments advanced by the hon. member. I have never had any difficulty getting information from the government. The information is available. I don't ask to see the individual files of people, and I don't think I should have the right to do that. I am entitled to public information that properly protects the confidentiality between an individual and his government.

MR. ASHTON: Mr. Speaker, considering the hon. Member for Clover Bar read the same speech so many times, I had hoped he would have memorized it by now, but I guess it takes longer for some.

However, I have spoken on this bill on occasions in previous sessions, Mr. Speaker. I hope I don't repeat myself, because I've a whole new list of reasons why we shouldn't support the bill.

Of course no one can disagree with the rather motherhood statement of the title of the bill, the public right to information. We all agree with that. The question is how to achieve that end. The hon. member who introduced the bill has expressed the objectives, which I disagree with.

It's rather interesting to note that the same or a similar bill was introduced in 1975 by the socialist member from Spirit River-Fairview. Mr. Speaker, in view of the political climate in Alberta, perhaps I should ask for a ruling as to whether or not referring to another member as a socialist is slanderous and unparliamentary.

The same bill was introduced again in 1976 by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. Then in 1977, the other half of the socialist-Social Credit alliance, namely the hon. Member for Clover Bar, introduced the bill. Now he has reintroduced it today. I suppose if he's back next year, it'll be up to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview to reintroduce the same bill.

The hon. introducer of the bill referred to is, of course, the highly respected federal Member for Peace River, who I am sure every member of the House has a lot of respect for. But it must be remembered that he faces different conditions in Ottawa than we have here in Alberta. They have different problems. I'm not afraid to admit, in fact disclose, that there are some things on which I disagree with my federal counterparts, particularly when you look at the vastly different circumstances of the atmosphere in the federal House of Commons and our own Alberta Legislature.

Of course it's very difficult to follow the dean of the Legislature, the Member for Drumheller. He covered the point very effectively of how irrelevant the discussion on the ECA was to the content of the bill.

We can say that the arguments presented with respect to references to the Western Canada Lottery motion for a return, the Walter Levy motion for a return, and the RDA motion for a return, were all entirely irrelevant, because in each of those circumstances they were rejected on the same basis on which the court would reject them in the bill. He lists numerous reasons in the bill as to why the court should reject certain motions for returns or certain requests for information. All I can suggest to the hon. member, if he had had any experience in the courts at all he would find they would in fact be rejected on more minor technicalities than the ones he suggested. In fact he would find that this Legislature is much more lenient with respect to some of their lack of competence in presenting motions for returns than the courts would be. So if he thinks he has trouble here, just let him go to court.

DR. BUCK: Remind me not to have you defend me, John.

MR. ASHTON: Yes. I'm pretty particular about the clients I take. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I notice that near the end of the bill there is a section which indicates that the introduction or passage of this bill would not in any way abrogate from the privileges and powers held by the Assembly. Of course I hope the members have read the bill. It's rather frightening in some respects, because it would remove the privileges of the Assembly and give them to the members of the public. There would be no need for the rules to provide for motions for returns and questions, because the opposition members or any other member could go direct through the courts to get the same information. So there's no need for that at all.

I suppose the basic reason I feel compelled to oppose this particular bill, although I agree with the title Public Right to Information, and I believe that the public is being served in that respect, I object to the way the bill does it because it impairs, in fact further weakens the parliamentary system. One must understand that the bill is suggesting it take away or reduce the importance of the Legislature and transfer that importance to the appointed judiciary. I have no quarrel at all with the judiciary, and I'm sure nobody has a higher respect for them than I do. But the fact is that we are elected by the people of this province to make decisions. When we transfer those decisions to some other appointed body, I just disagree with that concept in this circumstance. In this respect one might suggest that the buck stops with the elected people. The buck stops in this Legislature.

I suppose I might suggest that at the time of the next election maybe our intention is that the Buck will stop outside the Legislature. [laughter] I had to reach for that one.

Mr. Speaker, I have no intention to abdicate my responsibility to the courts as long as I'm a member of this Assembly. I have to face the public. Although it may be true that I won't be facing the public next time, the Legislature generally has to go back to the public at the time of the next election and account for its actions. That is what makes the system work. I don't in any way suggest, and I recommend against any steps we might take in this Legislature to impair that remedy of the public, or give them less excuse to

change governments.

What happens here is that we have a public debate on the issue as to whether or not a certain motion for a return should be accepted or rejected. The media are usually present. I notice they're not today. I guess they're probably as tired of the bill as some of us are after the fourth time. But the fact is that there is more public exposure on issues being dealt with in the Legislature than there is on issues being dealt with in a small courtroom.

The experience has been good. Again referring to the Member for Peace River, perhaps it's different in Ottawa, but the experience in Alberta has been good. As I recall, only something like eight motions for returns were not accepted in 1976. There were only 10 last year, and if members will check the record, I believe only two have not been accepted during this session of the Assembly, and we've been here approximately six weeks. Again, in each of those circumstances where a motion for return was not accepted, reasons were given. If you will check *Hansard* and the record, the reasons given were almost invariably the same reasons listed in the bill by the hon. member as the reasons the court would similarly reject such applications for documents and other information. Now when I mention those figures of 10 or eight or two being rejected, one must keep in mind the fact that 100 or more of these motions are submitted every year. That's certainly a good record for Alberta.

I suppose one could pick out a few of the small things which would concern one about the bill. If the hon. members of the opposition don't have enough time to write or prepare their own speeches, I find it difficult to know how they have time to read much more information, after we see the bucket loads coming in here every day and being filed by the ministers.

So on that basis, Mr. Speaker, I hope I haven't repeated myself from previous years. I'll quit there.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I've spoken on this bill in one form or another for the past three times, as the hon. Member for Edmonton Ottewell has suggested. I suggest the hon. member of the opposition has made an honest effort. But I'm also suggesting to the members of the Assembly that it's inappropriate and unnecessary in Alberta, as I've stated before. I think it's sincere. The hon. members recognize quickly by the title that it's an attempt to do something, to obtain public information concerning public business. Mr. Speaker, I suggest this is very well done in Alberta, and although this effort is in fact sincere, I suggest also this sincerity is only political in a very narrow sense.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition member tries to draw an analogy with the very respected Progressive Conservative member, the hon. Ged Baldwin, and his mission to seek public information from the federal government. The hon. Member for Clover Bar makes an analogy between the Progressive Conservative Party and government of Alberta and the federal Liberal Party. Mr. Speaker and hon. members, that analogy is probably as close as day and night. In the federal government at the present time, when an hon. Member of Parliament seeks information, as I understand it — and this is public information regarding simple statistics, information, or details about a

department — that hon. Member of Parliament, whether he's Liberal, Progressive Conservative, Social Credit, or even NDP, goes through a severe and extreme situation of justification to obtain that information. To the extent, Mr. Speaker, that even the hon. Members of Parliament in the federal House who are going on missions to other countries — I can cite the example of going to another country, to the United States as one example, to represent the government as a caucus committee or a committee of Parliament — in fact can get that information from that other country more quickly than they get it from the federal Liberal Party. Mr. Speaker, that information is public in the United States, yet our members in the federal House have to seek that information and justify it on an extreme basis. So I'm just suggesting to the hon. member opposite that there's no way that an analogy can be drawn to the federal Liberal Party and this particular government at this time.

Mr. Speaker, the last time the hon. opposition member introduced the bill — which I believe was Bill 204, now Bill 201 — referred then and refers again to the heritage savings trust fund, when that issue was amply resolved in 1975 by that provincial election. But at the same time; the information regarding that is obtained and is available in annual reports, as the hon. member knows: in quarterly reports by select committee of the Legislature where hon. opposition members are on that committee; by an appropriation act which has to be acted on by the Legislature. The hon. opposition member knows this. If he doesn't agree with the information, why doesn't he get up and suggest as a motion or resolution in the House to cut off that 30 per cent? I challenge the hon. member to do that on some occasion if he doesn't agree with the direction of the heritage savings trust fund for our future citizens.

Mr. Speaker, he suggested that during the debate of the bill, and he again suggests it today. Was he referring to the expenditures of government when we have a detailed budget review every year? Since we've taken office, we in this government even have so-called subcommittees, where detailed information can be asked in an informal way, and giving an opportunity for the opposition members to ask for it . . .

DR. BUCK: Tell us Mitchell's salary.

DR. PAPROSKI: . . . then bring it to the House and ask again. They can prepare themselves for that information because they have a 'double whammy'. Yet they are complaining today by bringing in this type of bill.

A question again, Mr. Speaker. Is he referring to motions for returns which are sometimes worded so badly that they're difficult to decipher? Then they expect the information to come forward clearly and precisely and they say it's misinformation. I suggest that maybe they should get a writer to write their questions and motions for returns.

Another question, Mr. Speaker, when I see this bill on the table for the third time. Is he referring to Public Accounts, when the MLAs from both sides of the House — the hon. opposition member has been here longer than I have, he knows — sit in this Legislature and cross-examine the ministers and the department officials, criss-cross the examination, criticize, and even compliment if they wish? Here

detailed information is available, not only to the members but to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I can't speak for the United States of America. I can't speak for the federal government, although I've given you one example regarding the federal Liberal government at this present time. I can't speak for Sweden and their problems. But I can say here, as a member of this Legislature since 1971 and re-elected for Edmonton Kingsway in 1975, that that information is available and is made public directly through each MLA.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest this type of bill has developed in some jurisdictions, and maybe federally in this particular case in our country because of a special problem. In some jurisdictions outside Canada there might be good justification for this type of bill, to seek information where governments are not like ours, where they're not elected members sitting in the House who have an opportunity to question the government publicly on any issue and obtain that information within the guidelines provided.

My understanding, hon. members, is that in the United States the ministers are not questioned daily and routinely. As a matter of fact they're not even available, because they're appointed. So I could understand this would be a valid type of issue to pursue in the United States, but in Alberta — I'm amazed at the hon. member. When he again brings up the ECA, whether it be the Environment Conservation Authority or the new Environment Council of Alberta, which is advisory, and feels the ECA should direct the government . . . This is the suggestion he's made. Not obliquely but directly, he's saying, ECA, which was a committee to advise the government, should direct the government. It's obvious, Mr. Speaker, on that point alone, that the hon. opposition members, no matter what information they receive, would improve their perception of that particular situation.

After all the debate has gone on regarding the dam issue and the dam decision, he still doesn't understand why the decision was made. All that information is laid out, not only on the table but publicly, and he still makes the comments he made.

So, Mr. Speaker, with this preamble, I would like to say again to the hon. member, it may be laudable in title, but it's certainly unnecessary from a practical purpose in this Legislature.

Let me proceed to explain why I take this stand; that is, this bill is not necessary. The bill implies that information should be available when policy is being developed, in fact before it is formulated. Mr. Speaker, I do not subscribe to that direction. I do not believe it is proper and even desirable that information should be obtained before the policy, program, or legislation is put forward in this Legislature. I would suggest that information should be confidential until it is in fact a policy in a program. Then the citizen can receive that information as a policy program, legislation, or direction, and properly extrapolate from that, criticize it, and use the information as he or she sees fit. In other words, access to formulated, factual information is proper; but information not yet formulated into a policy or program, information that may be used, as the hon. member opposite suggests, referring to interdepartmental memos, or may be a good idea, I suggest is not information at all because it is not ready for publication. What is used and what the policies, programs, legislation, and direction are, I

believe is very valuable, and I'm suggesting, freely available in this Legislature through the MLAs and to the public.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, is that the information is available to the public by a number of avenues. I don't know why the hon. opposition member avoids those points. Why doesn't he say, the information is available and I criticize this or that? The hon. Member for Drumheller of course summarized it very well: he just didn't have anything to grab or discuss, so he had to deal with the ECA. There is the question period. It's written or oral. There's the motion for a return provided by the will of the majority of this House, no matter what quantity or at what cost. With reference to the motion for a return, the key word is the majority will. If it's denied by this Legislature, democratic principle has in fact been followed.

Mr. Speaker, on at least one occasion I've seen — and I don't know if all hon. members were here — where a cart of information was wheeled into this Legislature, literally a cart standing about 4 feet by 6 feet as a return to one of the opposition members. To this day, I don't recall a question asked to follow up on all that information that was available. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, how much did that cost the taxpayer of this province to put this government, the taxpayer, to that wasted expense?

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame.

DR. PAPROSKI: Shame. Exactly. Whoever said that, say it again.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame, shame.

DR. BUCK: About the same as a trip to Russia.

AN HON. MEMBER: Frivolous.

DR. BUCK: About the same price.

DR. PAPROSKI: Frivolous. Exactly. He didn't even ask any questions following the fact that you reserved that information.

The third point, Mr. Speaker, more important than anything else in this House, are the elected members of the Legislature themselves. We ask the questions. The hon. member opposite knows very well that we ask questions on this side of the House too, prying and sometimes embarrassing questions. The hon. ministers answered them freely, and we're still here. The hon. opposition member thinks the hon. government members are afraid to ask questions. I'll tell you, that front line over there on the other side sometimes makes me shudder too.

Mr. Speaker, the important thing is that we do pry and probe. The hon. opposition members sometimes do a good job in that area too. They receive responses, and that's the important thing. They receive responses that are maybe inappropriate because it doesn't satisfy their whims or wishes. But a negative or a positive response can be used. It's printed in *Hansard*, and it's public information.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, what else did we do? We brought in not only the spring session but the fall session, so the hon. opposition members who are restless to get into the House and ask all these questions have ample opportunity between the spring

and fall to get themselves all worked up with all these questions and come in in the fall session. What have we seen, Mr. Speaker? The fall session opens and the question period has to be dominated by the government members who, in fact in 99 per cent of the cases, know most of the answers anyway. But that 1 per cent still has to be asked. We seem to have more questions to ask than the hon. opposition members. I'm amazed.

Mr. Speaker, the other point which the hon. opposition member has missed completely — and the hon. opposition party, the government at that time, brought this particular item in — is that we have the Ombudsman. It's very commendable that this particular Ombudsman — and the previous Ombudsman — is able and capable, and is acting effectively. But the central point here is that under the act which we support, every citizen has an opportunity to use this particular office to obtain any information that is necessary within the act, by an order of court if need be, by a fine if need be, and if that isn't citizens seeking information, I'll tell you. I've had one case. I followed it through with the Ombudsman, and I can tell you that that particular case taught me a lot about what can happen in a bureaucracy and how effective the Ombudsman can in fact be.

Mr. Speaker, the fifth point is that information given may be opinion or rumor and not based on facts or policy. I've indicated that already. This is an extremely dangerous thing, and I don't think it should ever be given. Half-truths are of no value to anybody, but the policy and the decision, when they are made, as a matter of fact are very important. To allow any citizen or the opposition members to obtain interdepartmental memos, which are inconclusive, may be threatening to all those involved, all those in research. One would even be afraid to think for fear that that information would become available. Mr. Speaker, 2(b), and 2(a) especially, says "any activity". That means thinking too. That means thinking is an activity. I may be medical, Mr. Speaker, but you had better write it down. I want that information: what were you thinking? Maybe it's exaggerated, but it's there.

Mr. Speaker, the seventh point is the cost and the quantity of information. We haven't defined that within the bill, and I think the hon. member has been negligent in that. I don't think any individual should ask for any amount of information, no matter what the cost, without proper justification.

Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands wants to speak, and I want to give him about one minute. I'm almost finished.

Mr. Speaker, concluding: in Alberta, no, at this time this bill by its title is correct, but by our action and the structure of our government, it's being done in fact. I do not believe that an MLA is denied any information, unless it involves private, confidential information by a non-government person, in which case a court order or an individual would have to give permission to give that information; otherwise it should not be available.

But I'd leave one thought with the hon. members. I think maybe the guidelines regarding the providing of information should be reviewed, Mr. Speaker, and that researchers and citizens should have access to a catalogue of all the information available in the government. Finally, if any information is ever denied,

we explain it here in the House, but maybe a citizen should have an explanation promptly that that information is not available, and why, if that isn't being done now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, 24 million Canadians are being traumatized daily by the declining value of the dollar, and 74 of us here face the additional trauma of daily watching the declining value of the Buck. [laughter]

DR. BUCK: You're as smooth as Russell.

MR. KING: I thought the basic principle of this bill was a good idea three years ago. I thought it was a good idea, but not so innovative, two years ago. I could speak to the principle of it last year, but not very enthusiastically. All I can do this year is . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Adjourn debate.

MR. KING: . . . say that the next time it comes to the top of the Order Paper I will be forced to say essentially what I said when we debated it last fall. In the one minute that remains before we adjourn debate, I would like to go on record as saying that I endorse wholeheartedly the right of the public to have access to matters of fact gathered by the public service,

provided that a certain number of exclusions are granted. Everyone has his list.

I reject the right of the public to have access to expressions of opinion by policy-makers during the course of formulating, modifying, or rescinding policy. I support the principle that information is critical to decision-making in our society, that every citizen of our society has a right to participate in the decision-making process, and therefore that every citizen has a right to information. I'm extremely concerned about the proposition that this Legislature and others in the country have become so ineffective in the performance of their role in the community that the means of discovering information must be created in forums other than the Legislative Assembly. When next I speak, Mr. Speaker, I would like the opportunity to go into that in greater detail.

I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, by way of House business, I would remind the House that Subcommittee A will be sitting tonight at 8 o'clock to consider the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. We will continue with estimates tomorrow.

[At 5:31 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]