

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Thursday, October 12, 1978 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wish to ask for unanimous leave of the Assembly at this time to introduce 11 bills without the full 24 hours' notice, notwithstanding Standing Order 36, knowing that hon. members on all sides will want to move ahead expeditiously with the business of the session.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Bill 50
The Glenbow-Alberta Institute
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Glenbow-Alberta Institute Amendment Act, 1978. The bill will allow certain investments of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, and will change the status of the executive director to director.

[Leave granted; Bill 50 read a first time]

Bill 52
The Dairy Board
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a bill, being The Dairy Board Amendment Act, 1978. This bill was designed to facilitate an agreement between the province of Alberta and the Canadian Dairy Commission relative to the collection of levies on the sale of industrial milk.

[Leave granted; Bill 52 read a first time]

Bill 58
The Agricultural Development
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 58, The Agricultural Development Amendment Act, 1978. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of the bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, is designed in the main to increase the amount of the revolving fund in the Agricultural Development Corporation, from \$150 million to \$200 million. In addition, there are other substantive portions of the bill with respect to farm lending, which I would like to comment on further during second reading.

[Leave granted; Bill 58 read a first time]

Bill 51
The Alberta Income Tax
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a bill, being The Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1978. The purpose of this bill is to make a number of amendments to our existing income tax legislation. None of the proposed amendments would involve major policy decisions.

The amendment proposed in Section 2 is necessary because the Northwest Territories is now imposing its own income tax. The amendment proposed in Section 3 deals with the calculation of the foreign tax credit. The amendments proposed in sections 4, 5, and 6 all deal with the royalty tax rebate. Section 6 makes corresponding amendments for the royalty tax credit. Section 8 proposes that the payments from registered retirement income funds be income from which tax may be withheld at source. Section 9 alters the provisions dealing with penalties applied to understatements of tax payable where there's a tax loss involved. Section 10 is necessary because of the decentralization of the federal Revenue Canada office.

[Leave granted; Bill 51 read a first time]

Bill 54
The Alberta Heritage Savings
Trust Fund Special Appropriation
Act, 1979-80

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 54, The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Special Appropriation Act, 1979-80. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The purpose of the bill, Mr. Speaker, is to authorize the Provincial Treasurer to transfer from general revenue to the Alberta heritage savings trust fund 30 per cent of the revenues received from non-renewable natural resources.

[Leave granted; Bill 54 read a first time]

Bill 55
The Oil and Gas Conservation
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 1978.

This bill provides authority, through the Oil and Gas Conservation Board assessors, to obtain information from third parties in assessing the value of oil and gas properties.

[Leave granted; Bill 55 read a first time]

Bill 56
The Gas Resources Preservation
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a

bill, being The Gas Resources Preservation Amendment Act, 1978.

The purpose of this bill is to provide additional flexibility in dealing with propane exports from the province and will allow, under certain conditions, removal of propane without permits from the board.

[Leave granted; Bill 56 read a first time]

Bill 59
The Freehold Mineral Taxation
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 59, The Freehold Mineral Taxation Amendment Act, 1978.

The purpose of this bill is similar to that of the first bill I introduced today, but it is under the freehold mineral taxation assessment. It also provides that assessors may require additional information from third parties when assessing the value of oil and gas properties.

[Leave granted; Bill 59 read a first time]

Bill 47
The Department of Education
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 47, The Department of Education Amendment Act, 1978. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there's one amendment in the bill that would increase the statutory limit of the advance from the general revenue fund for the operation of the school book branch of the Department of Education from \$4 million to \$10 million, thereby permitting an uninterrupted flow of educational materials to the schools and school boards of the province.

[Leave granted; Bill 47 read a first time]

Bill 53
The Alberta Opportunity Fund
Amendment Act, 1978

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 53, The Alberta Opportunity Fund Amendment Act, 1978. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of the bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The purposes of this bill, Mr. Speaker, are twofold: first of all to increase the amount of the revolving fund of the Alberta Opportunity Company from \$100 million to \$150 million in order that the programs of decentralization and balanced growth might be sustained and strengthened; secondly, to increase the authorization limit of the Alberta Opportunity Company board of directors from \$500,000 to \$750,000.

[Leave granted; Bill 53 read a first time]

Bill 48
The Litter Amendment Act, 1978

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a bill, being The Litter Amendment Act, 1978.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments proposed in this act are fairly substantial. The principles of the act clarify what litter means, and disposing of same. The act also spells out clearly the control of litter on, into, or under water or ice. This act insists that where litter is being transported it be covered, and who is responsible if litter is thrown from a motor vehicle, bus, or trailer where it cannot be determined which of two or more occupants is the culprit. Bill 48 also enables a municipality to collect expenses incurred for litter clean-up on privately owned land. Also under the act, if a person is convicted of a litter offence the court may order that offender to clean up litter along a highway or another area of public land.

Mr. Speaker, the principle involved in this act is to impress on that small minority of litterers: stow it, don't throw it.

[Leave granted; Bill 48 read a first time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 48, The Litter Amendment Act, 1978, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, under Section 5(3) of The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act the president of the Executive Council or a member of the Executive Council designated by him shall, with leave of the Assembly, introduce a special appropriation bill with respect to the heritage savings trust fund. I've just done that with Bill 54, Mr. Speaker, and now wish to file a letter from the hon. Premier to myself designating me as the member of Executive Council responsible for sponsoring and introducing that bill.

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file a report by the provincial Ombudsman to the Solicitor General on the events leading to the suicide of Mr. Robert Gordon Abbott in Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution in 1978.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the reply for Motion for a Return No. 121.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the reply to Motion for a Return No. 126.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 50 students from Alberta Vocational Centre in the constituency of Edmonton Centre. They are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Belyea. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they

rise and be acknowledged by the members of the Assembly.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 59 grade 9 students from the Leduc junior high. They are accompanied by their teachers Lorna Hatridge and Mrs. Goudreau. They are seated in the members gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of this Legislature.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Constitutional Reform

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier or the Attorney General. It really flows from the reference to the Supreme Court by the federal Minister of Justice, to phase one of the federal government's constitutional package. My question to the Attorney General is: does Alberta plan to participate in the submissions made to the Supreme Court on the question of whether Parliament has the competence to abolish the Supreme Court? Sorry, the Senate.

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, there may indeed be merit to the abolition of the Supreme Court of Canada in view of recent pronouncements, but I'll deal with that matter outside the House.

A short while ago I received a telegram from the Minister of Justice for Canada outlining the draft reference to the Supreme Court of Canada. I was then in touch with all 10 provinces of Canada by conference telephone. I am chairman of the Council of Provincial Justice Ministers. On behalf of the 10 provinces of Canada I have sent a telegram to the Minister of Justice for Canada saying that it is the view of the 10 provinces that this reference should not be directed to the Supreme Court of Canada until we have had a little more time to consider the terms of the reference but, more particularly, until at least following the conclusion of the first ministers' conference on the constitution later this month in Ottawa.

I haven't heard back from Mr. Lang, but I expect he will honor the sincere wishes of the 10 provinces on this point, since we are very directly involved. I expect that the reference will then not be directed until we have had more time to consider it and until the first ministers have had a chance to discuss the matter in more detail.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to the Attorney General or the Premier: is it still the position of the government of Alberta that Alberta favors the establishment of a special constitutional court for Canada? I ask the question in light of very recent rulings by the Supreme Court which have a very pointed effect on western Canada and Alberta.

MR. LOUGHEED: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a very important question. But as I mentioned in my remarks in the House yesterday, it is the intention of the government, through the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, to table in this House for debate and discussion a position paper of the govern-

ment of Alberta that is directly on the point raised in the hon. leader's question. So we would prefer to wait until the total position of the government of Alberta on constitutional change is laid before the House.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question. In light of the issue at hand, can the Premier give some indication to the House of when we will have the government's position paper in the Assembly, and of the time line between that and when the debate will take place in the House. Because the government has had a series of months in fact to develop this paper, and in the interests of a full and complete discussion in the House, I think there should be a fair lag between when the presentation is made to the House in the form of a position paper and the time that debate takes place.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's anticipated that the position paper would probably be available and filed within about 10 days. I would see a reasonable period, at least 72 hours, between the time of filing and the initiation of a debate, which may well take more than one day.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Government House Leader. Recognizing the government may not be able to have the paper ready for some 10 days, Mr. Government House Leader, certainly can't we do better than give members of the Assembly some 72 hours to prepare for that debate, to respond to the government's white paper, when the government's had a series of weeks and months, and experts working on this very area? To expect the members of the Assembly to have some 72 hours to respond is a bit naive, to say the least.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I said "at least 72 hours". It will probably be more than that. But it seems strange to me that the hon. opposition leader, who has been making statements over the last 18 months on this subject, some of them useful and some not so, now says that he has not had any opportunity or won't have enough time to study them. There will be full opportunity. I would hope that he and others in his party will have given some useful thought to the matter over the last 12 months. It is unfortunate he hasn't done so so far.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, we'll hold the assessment of the government's wisdom of their looking at this matter until such time as we've seen the paper. Still, 72 hours isn't a sufficient period of time for members of this Assembly or the people of the province to give that kind of assessment, and the minister knows so.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the Premier or the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. What assessment has been given to the suggestion contained in yesterday's Speech from the Throne brought down by the federal government that Ottawa would consider looking at phase two of the constitutional changes as well as phase one? Has there been any communication with respect to the agenda of the constitutional conference, in view of that mention in the Speech from the Throne?

MR. HYNDMAN: Well, in Regina in mid-August the premiers did say that the division of powers was a very key part of the exercise, and indicated very clearly that that should be discussed with the other matters concerning the reform of the institutions. The hon. member is right in suggesting that yesterday's throne speech contains a reference to that. It's a very guarded statement; it by no means guarantees that comprehensive approach or review. It does suggest that the federal government is now willing to initiate, I believe the word is, discussion of division of powers.

I think it remains to be seen whether or not that is a change in policy by the federal government. I think the key position, though, and one which the federal government should watch very closely and pay very considerable attention to, is the statement by the premiers that the division of powers is a key element and must be discussed with all the others in a comprehensive package. In our view that's the only way that useful discussions on the renewal of the federation can take place.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister for clarification. Am I correct that a matter of just 10 days or two weeks before the constitutional conference, the government of this province has not been given a clear undertaking on that request of several months ago? Because clearly that's going to be one of the major things — when we talk about the constitution, the division of powers is the crucial question. We can talk about the Senate all we like, but it's the division of powers that is the crucial issue. Do we not at this point in time have a tentative agenda?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs referred to, we're certainly working towards the tentative agenda that deals with the matter of division of powers. But we've thought from the very outset that this isn't just a matter of responding to the federal government initiatives. The federal government both presented a position paper, entitled *A Time for Action*, which I think every member of this Assembly received, and they tabled in the House of Commons their Bill C-60. But I believe the members are all aware that this constitutional debate has been going on for some time. We have tabled in this House the reference to the letter of October 14, 1976, that deals directly with the hon. member's question on division of powers, being the views of 10 provincial governments in October 1976.

We've just been moving, and our position paper will reflect that, on the whole issue of division of powers, and presume that it just isn't sensible to have a constitutional conference at the end of this month restricted only to the matters in Bill C-60. It will deal with the whole ambit of constitutional matters, as will our position paper.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. Premier for clarification. I couldn't agree more, but my question is: has the government at this time been given the assurance by either the Prime Minister or the federal Minister of Federal-Provincial Relations that in fact we are going to be dealing with the division of powers at the constitutional conference, as opposed to the provisions of Bill C-60?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, the division of powers has, in the Speech from the Throne, been stated as one of the elements the federal government's now prepared to discuss. The extent of time during which they would be prepared to discuss it, we don't yet know. We urged at a recent meeting that that be one of the specific items on the agenda. We hope that will be the case, but the agenda has not yet been finalized. I'm reasonably hopeful that that will be one of the items on the agenda. The extent to which the federal government or the Prime Minister is prepared to discuss it, though, is another matter; that's why I would want to put that caveat on the answer.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Could the minister elaborate on the composition of the delegation that will go to the first ministers' conference on the constitution? Will it involve members of the opposition and government members?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we haven't yet finalized our thinking on that. There will be a number of delegates and a number of observers. Within a very short time we'll be able to have more information on that.

Urban Transportation

MR. CLARK: I'd like to direct the second question to the Minister of Transportation. It really deals with the question of LRT in both Edmonton and Calgary, and some of the comments made by the assistant deputy minister in charge of urban transportation. My initial question, though, is: what type of assessment has been carried out by the minister's department regarding the effectiveness of LRT in Edmonton?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, that assessment is going on at the present time, and has not been concluded.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. What time frame is the minister looking at for concluding that assessment? I ask the question in light of the fact that, I believe it was in the middle of September of this year, the city of Edmonton council passed their resolution indicating that they felt the LRT in Edmonton had in fact been quite successful, and recently passed a motion to extend LRT in the same direction, at a cost of something like \$6 million in construction costs and \$3 million of additional equipment.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition will recall that at the time we approved unconditionally the granting of the \$7.5 million for rapid transit in the city of Edmonton, the city agreed that there should be a gap in time in which both the province and the city would evaluate the performance of the LRT. We're very gratified with the performance to date, but I still think that that needs to be refined somewhat.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I have made the commitment to all the cities in the province of Alberta that we would be reviewing our five-year program for urban transportation assistance, of which the LRT or mass transit is a portion, and that we would come forward this winter, after consultation with the cities,

with a new proposed program for the next five years. I can't go any further than that at the moment.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then a supplementary question to the minister. Will the government's assessment of the effectiveness of Edmonton's LRT be finished prior to, one, the consultations and, secondly, the finalization of the next five-year plan as far as urban transportation assistance from the province is concerned?

DR. HORNER: Well, Mr. Speaker, pretty obviously, even to the Leader of the Opposition, I can hardly bring forward a new five-year program without having an evaluation of what's gone before. So, yes, the evaluation will be completed prior to that time.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then while we're making things so very obvious, would the minister like to make it painfully obvious to the Assembly that the minister and the government do not share the views of the since-departed assistant deputy minister when he made the comments about the spendthrift attitudes of the cities of Edmonton and Calgary?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had paid more attention to the release by the former assistant deputy minister of urban transportation, he would have noted that he was talking about the general spending attitudes of the two cities and not necessarily the transportation components.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, the question was: is the Deputy Premier prepared to indicate to the Assembly that he does not share that attitude about the cities of Edmonton and Calgary?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I share the attitude that the former assistant deputy minister surely has the right as a private citizen to speak out, and that he had the courage to resign his position prior to doing that.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Premier indicate to the Assembly that he as the Minister of Transportation, who is now developing a new five-year plan for urban transportation in the province, doesn't have that attitude himself? Because if he has that attitude himself, we'd better make some changes. [interjections]

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition might want to make some changes, but he's not in a position to do so.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am responsible for the development of a new urban transportation policy, which I'll do my best to do. I've always had a good working relationship with all the mayors of cities in this province; I would expect that to continue.

MR. CLARK: Just one last question, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure we can get a definitive answer from the Minister of Transportation here, because I'm sure the minister would want to assure the Assembly that the Alberta government isn't going to be funding any sojourns to California to check on Proposition 13 down there, so that when the deputy minister does leave the department once and for all he'd be able to start a

Proposition 13 campaign in Edmonton and Calgary. We're not funding that, are we?

DR. HORNER: Of course not, Mr. Speaker. But I will say again: surely an independent citizen in this province has the right to speak out as he sees fit. I can only say that the former assistant deputy minister was a great help and did a great deal for the cities in this province prior to his leaving our employ. If he wants to, and feels strongly about the way they're financing certain activities, surely he as a taxpayer in one of those cities has the right to speak up.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I should just ask one more question. Has Mr. LeClerc, of whom we're speaking this afternoon, left the employ of the province as of today?

DR. HORNER: Not as of today, Mr. Speaker, but he will be shortly. At my request he is completing some assignments that were ongoing and have nothing to do with the particular problem the Leader of the Opposition refers to.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. Mr. LeClerc has not left the employ of the department; he's made these statements while there. Obviously the Minister of Transportation has not backed off those statements, so we can assume that they're the feelings of the minister. [interjections]

DR. HORNER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the assumption the hon. leader would like to make for political gain is his assumption, and is not correct. Again, the assistant deputy minister of urban transportation is completing some work which I asked him to do. When that is completed, he will be taking his holidays and will be officially resigning from the department on October 29.

Ambulance Service

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It concerns the problems of ambulance service throughout the province, in particular in rural Alberta. My question is: where do things stand on the proposal made a number of years ago, but reiterated recently at this year's convention of the Alberta Medical Association, that the province should initiate a co-ordinated provincial ambulance service?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the Alberta Medical Association's recent resolution, we have had close consultation with them over the last two or three years on the formulation of ambulance policy for Alberta. As I've said in the House, the movement of patients between facilities is inextricably related to the nature of the facilities and the different levels of care. I anticipate that the finalization of ambulance policy will be a natural follow-up to the announcements on hospital facility construction and policy which I anticipate making before the end of the current year.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the fact that there are, as I understand, at least five departments of government

involved in various aspects of ambulance policymaking, what provision has there been for co-ordination? Is it done under the minister's department? Has there been an interdepartmental task force? Has there been a task force of other people involved? And what target date are we looking at, the end of this financial year or the end of this calendar year?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, the primary departments involved, historically and now, have been my colleagues the Deputy Premier and Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. While co-ordination is necessary, my colleagues and I, in meetings over the past two years, have agreed that the primary policy responsibility will rest with Hospitals and Medical Care and, as I've said earlier, will be a natural follow-up to announcements on detailed policy and control on the development of health care facilities in rural and urban Alberta, how those facilities relate to each other, and how patients will move between different levels of care.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. During the five or six years, lo, this long time that the Alberta Medical Association has been urging the government to do something about ambulance service, has the government concluded that the ambulance service should be part of the basic hospital scheme in the province of Alberta?

MR. MINIELY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think everyone agrees that the development of ambulance service in Alberta — and the relationship to health care facilities, hospitals, and nursing homes is a very key relationship. That's why, in spite of the comments of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, in meetings with the Alberta Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and others, we have all agreed that in spite of the fact that policy decisions are very necessary in this area, the co-ordination and dovetailing with other policy decisions in the health care field are extremely important and that we should take the time necessary to ensure that the development of ambulance policy and the development of health care facilities in Alberta are closely related in a policy sense. Basically, the Alberta Medical Association over that period of time has agreed with us and has cautioned us in private meetings that we should ensure that those relationships are developed very closely.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary.

MR. NOTLEY: In order to ensure that relationship, has the government concluded, as apparently the Alberta Medical Association has, that an excellent ambulance system in the province of Alberta should in fact be a component of the basic health and hospital system? That's the point of principle that I wanted to know whether or not the government has accepted at this time.

MR. MINIELY: Well, Mr. Speaker, we haven't made a conclusion. I think the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview needs to be explicit as to how you define a component. On one hand, if he's talking about its actually being operated by the hospital system, the answer to that question is that while that is one alternative, no final decision has been made on that.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I should not leave the impression that we haven't moved in very important ways in ambulance service. We have, along with my colleague the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, moved in a very important way in probably the most important area in the longer term, which is the education and training of ambulance attendants in Alberta. Ambulance policy . . .

MR. CLARK: How many years ago?

MR. MINIELY: Well, Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect, that isn't true. We've substantially altered and upgraded the education and training of ambulance attendants during the early part of 1978. In fact, the kinds of things being offered have been developed in close consultation again with the medical profession, ambulance attendants, and others interested in health care. Certainly we must have quality people manning an ambulance service as a first step in the development of a quality ambulance service in the province.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, if I might be permitted one last question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. What contingency services does the department provide, or any department of government, for those communities in Alberta that are simply not able to provide ambulance service? We have situations in this province where station wagons are being used as ambulances.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, again there's an important balance between the need to ensure that communities have ambulance service and in terms of the qualifications of people who drive ambulances, on one hand, and the need to have some form of ambulance service.

As an example, ambulance service has been a local responsibility; that's been the case historically and currently. In assessing the directions that it should develop in the future, we must still accept that until the present time it is a local responsibility, locally funded and operated. To be specific, we act as soon as we are advised of any problem relative to moving patients. A good example was Spirit River-Fairview; as soon as the matter came to our attention we acted immediately on it. The report we received was that no patients were ever in a position where they couldn't be transported to necessary health care services. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police looked after ambulance service while they were in the process of attempting to hire someone. That's a natural problem if you can't hire someone; we all have difficulties and dilemmas sometimes in hiring people.

In short, Mr. Speaker, it's a local responsibility. Nevertheless, the province does everything we can to help local jurisdictions, to ensure that they have adequate and proper ambulance service.

Airport Construction

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. Minister of Transportation. In view of the federal government announcements of expenditure reductions that perhaps affect Alberta, and certainly affect all of Canada, could the minister indicate whether these expenditure cutbacks would in any way affect the Lethbridge air terminal currently under construction?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, no. While those cutbacks affect some other facets of transportation in Alberta, they won't have any effect on the Lethbridge or Grande Prairie terminals. I might point out, though, that the federal government is now terminating its assistance to small airports, which was minimal in any case in Alberta.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary while I have the minister's attention. Could the minister indicate to the Assembly if the construction of the Lethbridge air terminal is on target for completion? And perhaps he could indicate an anticipated opening date.

DR. HORNER: Aside from some smaller delays earlier in the year relative to construction labor disputes, the construction at Lethbridge is on schedule. We hope it would be available for service in the spring of 1979.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary to the minister. I've read of indications where the aprons at the Lethbridge terminal are being constructed to accommodate 737 aircraft. Is that true?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, it would be foolhardy not to establish the aprons to accommodate heavier aircraft, which are obviously going to be needed sometime in the future at Lethbridge.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. In view of the federal government's obvious interest in air terminals in Alberta, I wonder if the Minister of Transportation could advise whether he has received any communication from the federal government respecting proposed additions to or modifications of the air terminal at the Edmonton International Airport?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, some two weeks ago I had a meeting with the federal Minister of Transport, and we covered a number of matters. One was the question of the addition at the Edmonton International Airport. I told him we would be interested in a proposal from the federal government if they desired to put one before us, and that's where the matter rests at the moment. So far no proposal has come forward.

MR. KING: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister says that so far no proposal has been forthcoming from the federal government. I wonder if he could confirm that two weeks ago was not the first occasion on which this matter was broached with the federal government; rather that it was broached with them at least six or seven months ago?

DR. HORNER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that's essentially true. There have been ongoing discussions between my senior officials and senior officials of Transport Canada over a number of months. I think part of the reason, which will come up later when we discuss the air terminal situation at Lethbridge and Grande Prairie, was that they were preoccupied with the agreements they had negotiated there. I would hope they now can free themselves to address themselves to doing something about the Edmonton International Airport, which very clearly needs some improvements, and quickly.

MR. KING: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister of Transportation suggest to the Prime Minister of Canada that the next time he takes a vacation out of the country he make the Edmonton International Airport his point of departure? [laughter]

Bassano Dam

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Could the minister indicate when the rehabilitation of the Bassano Dam on the Bow River basin will be getting under way?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, if it had been up to the province it would have been under way three years ago. I'm disappointed at the delays and, quite frankly, at the way the EID board is dragging its feet at this time. I'm hopeful that project won't be affected by current federal cutbacks, and I'd like to see it proceed just as quickly as possible.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister give us a ballpark figure of what it's going to cost to rehabilitate the Bassano Dam, and whether there'll be any input of funds from the provincial government if the appropriated funds from the federal government don't cover the cost?

MR. RUSSELL: No, the agreement which we have — although I don't know what they're worth these days with the federal government — calls for 100 per cent funding by the federal government.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate at what stage the negotiations are with the Eastern Irrigation District in relation to turning over part of the dam site and part of the river basin to the province?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm really disappointed with the lack of progress we appear to be making on that part of the project. The most current development is that the board is reluctant to transfer the title of the works to the province pursuant to our policy which is in effect with other boards throughout the province. This has been long ongoing as a topic of discussion with the board. Quite frankly I feel it's gone on much longer than it should have, and I'm very disappointed that that work isn't under way right now.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta energy conservation board has recommended that they generate power at

this particular site. Has the minister taken any feasibility on this? Is this going to happen, or will this hold up the rehabilitation construction on the dam?

MR. RUSSELL: No, it shouldn't, Mr. Speaker. We're looking far more carefully these days at the generation of hydro power, using a renewable resource, on any water management project. Just as a matter of course now, we're now looking at the feasibility of including power generation as part of that project.

Prison Incidents

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Solicitor General. I wonder if the Solicitor General would indicate to the House whether the report of the Ombudsman on the so-called Abbott case received wide enough publicity, in view of the cloud that was placed on the staff and some of the inmates at the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution.

MR. FARRAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the purport of the hon. member's question. The harm done by inaccurate reports, blown out of proportion, is seldom fully repaired when the truth proves to be less sensational than the charge. In this case, some Albertans and some people in other parts of Canada and parts of the United States still think the alleged incidents took place, despite reports to the contrary from the coroner's inquest, the Ombudsman's report, and the internal inquiry. So the smear sticks despite the exoneration.

I've been hoping the Leader of the Opposition would apologize to the staff and members of Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution for whatever part he played in the false impression left with the public.

DR. PAPROSKI: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Indeed I would think that an apology would be nice and welcome from the hon. opposition member. [interjections]

However, a supplementary regarding the alleged Brazeau Dam work camp incident. I wonder if the hon. Solicitor General would indicate whether another Ombudsman inquiry will be necessary.

MR. FARRAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a very similar story. The evidence in court revealed that the incident bore no resemblance whatsoever to the allegations. The Ombudsman and I have reviewed the transcript of evidence which resulted in sentences of 30 days to some of the inmates. The charge of homosexual assault was withdrawn because it had no substance. The Ombudsman and I agree that no good purpose will be served by any further inquiry.

Water Management Study

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of the Environment. Mr. Minister, the question relates to your recent press release regarding the completion of the Edmonton and area regional water study. Could the minister advise whether the municipalities involved in this area have been supplied with a copy of this study?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. This regional study is now entering what I hope will be the phase of implementation. In order to get that started, we've made the report available to all the municipalities involved. I think it'll have to proceed from this point on a two-level basis: an exchange of engineering and technical information at officials' level among the municipal and provincial governments involved within the region; and I think there'll also have to be some ongoing discussions with respect to major policy decisions to be taken among elected people in the region.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Could the minister advise whether he has received any communications regarding the study from any of these municipalities and, if so, whether they favor the study?

MR. RUSSELL: I think it's fair to say in a general way, Mr. Speaker, that the study, recommendations, and concept have been very well received, particularly by the smaller communities surrounding the Edmonton metropolitan region. The city of Edmonton, although it supports at an officials' level the technical concepts of the study, naturally has raised some concerns that I think would have to be dealt with at the elected level.

MR. BATIUK: One more supplementary to the hon. minister. Could the minister advise whether, after communication with these municipalities, it is his intention to provide assistance on the most economical plan, or one which may be costlier but much more beneficial over the long run?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, if we could get agreement among the municipalities affected, we would hope that the province could, either through existing programs or perhaps some new level of support, give very substantial encouragement to the regional concept of utility distribution.

Hunting Licences

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. Senior citizens in this province may fish without purchasing a fishing licence. Many senior citizens would prefer to hunt rather than fish. Will the government consider a policy for the senior citizens who are hunters similar to that which has been so much appreciated by those who are fishermen?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the best way I can respond to that at the present time is that I've had some representations made to me with regard to hunting, and I have discouraged them, in the sense of not knowing what kind of mechanism one could come up with relative to assurance that the sight and health factors could be applied consistently across the board. At the present time, we're just looking at it, trying to see if we can come up with some kind of system that may be plugged in to allow that. But it's not encouraging at the moment.

Banff Hot Springs

MR. KIDD: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It concerns the town of Banff in my constituency, a town which is so important to the tourist industry in Alberta. Will the minister make representations to the federal government concerning the status of the reconstruction of the Cave and Basin pool, within the context that this facility is of major importance to that town?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I understand there have been a number of statements by the federal government, but they have left the situation somewhat vague as to whether that facility will be rebuilt or made into a federal historic site. I'd be happy to make the appropriate representations upon receiving information and advice from the hon. member.

The situation is perhaps symptomatic, a reflection of the kind of problems that occur when what is essentially a local matter has to be decided on by the federal government under the parks act.

Housing Programs

MR. R. SPEAKER: My question is to the Minister of Housing and Public Works. It refers to comments in yesterday's federal throne speech with regard to legislative changes in the National Housing Act. It's my understanding that loans and grants for low- and middle-income housing will be reduced. I would like to ask the minister what effect that will have on housing here in Alberta. Is the minister considering increasing funding from the heritage savings trust fund for low- and middle-income housing in Alberta?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I haven't yet received any information from the federal minister of housing regarding cutbacks. The last word I've had on the global master agreement which covers social and community housing — and this was a few weeks ago, I guess, but no different word since — was that it would only be a matter of a few weeks until that agreement was signed, which would essentially leave the programs intact, as outlined at the housing ministers' meeting in June, for example.

With regard to the community services programs, again no direct information from the federal minister. Of course we've read the rumors in the paper that there would be cutbacks in that area, but as yet we've had no direct communication in that regard.

Of course, through our Alberta Housing Corporation and Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation we're building very large amounts of housing for senior citizens and for social purposes over and beyond, by an appreciable margin, what the federal government through CMHC has historically been providing.

To answer the final part of the member's question with regard to the program levels, there is some indication that because of the building we've been doing, we're perhaps reaching a catch-up position in certain areas, which may mean that we might not need, for example, as many lodge beds in the years ahead. But our policy is to provide the requirement that's there.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Indications are that the loans and grants will be reduced. Will the minister just wait for communications to come to Alberta? I always thought it was a policy of this government to rush off to Ottawa or tell Ottawa what to do and give them some direction. Is the minister going to research the thing and make some communications and assure us here in Alberta that low- and middle-income housing demands can be met, and that we can assist people? Will the minister take some initiatives?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, there has been ongoing communication ever since the housing ministers' conference in June between officials at the CMHC, Ottawa level, provincial level, with all provinces; so that's an ongoing matter. In terms of housing construction, Alberta has built social housing, community housing. For example, this year we're building 1,548 senior citizens' housing units, 228 lodge beds, 900 community housing units. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think perhaps if we stuck to the question, it would get us through the question period a little quicker, Mr. Minister.

MR. CHAMBERS: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'll try to be a little more brief. You know, the fact is that no province in the country is doing anything like Alberta is in terms of providing housing for these social and senior ...

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. CHAMBERS: That's right. No other province in this country even approaches Alberta in terms of delivery of these systems.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I didn't ask the minister to stand up and make a campaign speech about what they think they are doing for Albertans. There are thousands of families coming into our cities who need housing in the low- and middle-income area. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The minister, as you understand, does not have to answer your question unless he feels it is necessary. Perhaps whether or not you receive the answer you wish to receive is beside the point. If you have a further supplementary, we have time for one more.

MR. R. SPEAKER: My supplementary question is very straightforward, and I recall seven or eight years ago a question similar to this. Is the minister prepared to be in contact with Ottawa, either by telephone or physically going to Ottawa, and say to the federal minister, look, this is what we want in Alberta; we want to protect our support for housing. Is the minister prepared to do that at the present time?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I've said it. We're carrying on with the greatest housing programs that are under way in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. CHAMBERS: We're going to keep doing it; we're going to keep delivering housing for social purposes for our senior citizens and where required. Whatever Ottawa's day to day changes may be, I'm not prepared to go down there and worry about that. In due course I expect we'll get an answer one way or another. But we're carrying on with our housing programs, and they are very adequate indeed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Time has elapsed for the question period. We will move to Orders of the Day.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could have permission to answer a question asked of me yesterday by the hon. Member for Drumheller.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CANFARM Program

MR. MOORE: The member asked how many persons were enrolled in the CANFARM program in Alberta. The answer is, as of September 30, that 1,593 were enrolled through the government and 600 through three chartered banks, equalling about 4 per cent of the total farmers in Alberta. Across Canada, my understanding is that roughly 10,000 farmers are involved in the CANFARM program.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

221. Moved by Mr. Mandeville:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta urge the government of Alberta to act immediately to provide relief for those Alberta farmers who, because of unseasonal weather, have been unable to complete their harvest.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, I realize and appreciate that Agriculture is a very tough portfolio. However, I've got to say that it's a very important portfolio. There are so many problems that we face as far as agriculture is concerned. We've got the climate, we've got the demand, and we've got the supply.

I can recall it wasn't that long ago that I had a resolution on the Order Paper. Our farmers were facing drought. I hope we get as many results from this resolution as we did from that particular resolution. The minister did act on some of the suggestions I made in the resolution. However, the day I got up to speak on the resolution it started to rain. I'm hopeful that . . .

MR. NOTLEY: Keep the sun shining, Fred.

MR. CLARK: He should have spoken yesterday.

MR. MANDEVILLE: . . . we'll get three weeks of Indian summer. However, I can recall that Whelan said we should get out and pray for rain, so maybe I'll have to give him the credit for getting the rain when it

was so dry a year ago when I presented that resolution.

The problems that our farmers face — they've always got such a large capital investment. The old saying is, a farmer lives rich and dies poor, and I don't think we'll ever be able to get away from that saying.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's backwards.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Just backwards. Right. Lives poor and dies rich. For the odd farmer it could be backwards, too, Mr. Speaker.

The simple reason is that we just never have any stability in our agricultural economy. Farmers can't pass on their increases; they can't set their prices as we can in most other businesses. They have to accept the prices as they're set by the consumer. For example, our cattle prices at one period are high, and then our grain prices are down. For the last few years some of our cattle prices have not been so good; however, right at the present time they are very good.

That's really going to hurt some of our grain farmers who switched from the cattle industry into grain. They've got to face the problems of adverse weather conditions. The cattle operators now are making, as I said, a few dollars. However, they're still not out of the woods as far as the cattle situation is concerned. But these farmers who have sold their cattle and gone exclusively into grain are certainly facing some very serious problems where they're losing some of their grain.

I can recall when the minister put \$43 million into the cattle industry, right into the industry. I think that was a step in the right direction, because it retained some of our farmers in the cattle business, and they are going to realize some benefit from this in this coming fall. However, we still have the \$75 cow-calf loan that we've got to contend with. Farmers who borrowed that still have to pay it back, our ranchers and farmers, and I know there are many of them who still have this to pay back. However, for the people in the cattle industry the future does look good. But the cow-calf operator still hasn't realized any returns as a result of the high-priced cattle. Some of the feedlot operators, or the people who have been speculating in cattle, certainly have got a good return on their money. They've got substantial returns on the money they've invested as far as the cattle industry is concerned.

But the future does look good. Our supply is down for the simple reason that we've been getting out of the cattle business. The ranchers and the farmers have been cutting down on their cattle herds. Statistics tell us that the supply of breeding stock on the North American continent is down as much as 12 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that our cattle industry looks good and is good in Canada is the fact that we have our devalued dollar. It increases the price of our beef up to \$10 a hundred, which is a very substantial increase in beef prices. For the cattle industry for this coming fall and this winter we're looking for our feed costs to be very low, and this is also going to help our cattle industry. Also Australian beef is not going to be coming into Canada, because they don't have a supply of beef for the Canadian or the North American markets. Our world beef situa-

tion looks good. So the overall situation in the beef industry right now looks fairly reasonable.

However, I was into a restaurant here some time ago. I looked on the menu — and this is the type of advertising we don't need in the cattle industry or in an agricultural economy. The menu said, if you're ordering anything that involves beef, there's a 10 per cent surcharge on your meal. Mr. Speaker, we certainly don't need this type of advertising in the cattle industry or in the agricultural industry.

Another area that could cut back or hurt the cattle industry is that the government could get involved and put ceilings on our beef and cause consumer resistance. We don't need this, Mr. Speaker, because we need several good years to recover the losses in the cattle industry over the past few years. We just don't want one-shot prosperity in the cattle industry.

But that is not the reason for this resolution, Mr. Speaker. My concern is the grain farmer, the farmer who was led into getting into grain by low cattle prices and high prices of wheat. Two years ago we had wheat at \$5 a bushel, so the farmer said, I'm going to get out of cattle and into grain production. Now what have we got for wheat? We've got approximately \$3 a bushel on our wheat. They've sold out of cattle; they're into grain production and the quota system. I talked to a lot of our farmers who never got their quotas filled for the simple reason that they never had orders so that they could fill their quotas from last year. They still have this grain on hand, and it could be very hard to move this grain while we've got so much wet grain in the province, with the carry-over of the grain that they've had for last year.

As well as harvesting a lot of wet grain, a lot of the farmers . . . I experienced some of them myself, went out and looked at some of the farms down in the southern part of the province around Warner, Milk River, and down in through there. After we had the big rain in September we had a lot of grain under water, and when I was down there looking at it myself I saw where there were lakes of water and the swathes were all in one bunch where the wind had blown the swathes up and piled them up at the edge of the lakes.

In talking to people in the north, I know they've experienced the same situation up there. They're not able to get on their fields. Their crops are wet, and the grain they are getting off is of low quality. There's a lot of sprouted grain. Many farmers who were growing barley thought they would be able to market it for pearling or malting. However, that is not the case with the adverse weather conditions. Their grain doesn't qualify for pearling or malting, so they can't get it into these markets.

Mr. Speaker, it is costly to dry this grain. It costs money to handle the grain and to dry it. Even in our hay — much of our hay has been baled and in the fields so long that it's completely deteriorated. Some of our hay dehydrating operators tell me that the market for hay is going to be very poor, and that they're going to be facing serious problems in marketing their hay. They just can't get good quality hay, and they don't have markets for the quality of hay they're trying to market.

I was pleased that the minister contacted our minister in charge of The Wheat Board, because we certainly do need new quotas on wet grain to move it and get it out of Alberta as soon as possible. I

understand it's an opportune time to be dealing with quotas, because the producer advisory committee also is making many recommendations as far as the quota system is concerned in the Dominion of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we do have one area that I think is good, and that is crop insurance. But I think we have to take another look at our crop insurance program. We need to re-examine and be able to insure the cost of production as far as crop insurance is concerned. Really, we have to have someone who can determine what constitutes the cost of operation on a farm.

With the high cost of farm operations at the present time, you can't get your cost back as far as crop insurance is concerned. For example, grain storage: it is costly to store grain. You can go out and buy a combine; it'll cost \$60,000. Up to \$60,000 to buy a combine; \$40,000 to buy a tractor; land cost, \$300 to \$500 an acre; fertilizer: all our operating expenses are very high. So I think we have to take another really good look at our crop insurance in this province and put it up to a realistic figure.

At the present time we have around 55,000 farmers in the province of Alberta, and I understand that about 20,000 take out crop insurance. Mr. Speaker, the reason for this is that it doesn't cover the cost of their operations. It can't ensure stability as far as the operations are concerned. I think we should possibly be educating our farmers, after we take a good look. I think this can solve a lot of our problems. If we could educate our farmers, then instead of 20,000 farmers in this province taking out crop insurance, let's have 50,000, especially our young farmers who have a heavy debt load. They have to have some type of insurance before they're able to continue to operate.

While I'm on crop insurance, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to suggest that the minister take a good look at irrigation — irrigated crops, our special crops. If we could have someone on the crop insurance board who is experienced and knowledgeable about irrigation, I think this would help to put irrigated areas in a better position to take out crop insurance.

At present in southern Alberta we have a serious problem with some of our potato growers. They're not able to dig their potatoes; they're not able to get them out of the ground. The ones they're getting out of the ground are not netting properly, and they're going to have trouble with the potatoes as far as storage is concerned. It's a high cost to produce potatoes and they have to have some type of insurance to be able to carry on in the potato industry. I've talked to one farmer down there who's going to lose 75 acres of potatoes that he can't dig. The potatoes that he is fortunate enough to dig aren't going to be of good quality. There's other farmers in the same area, but not to that extent.

Mr. Speaker, it's hard for us to go out and explain to farmers about interest rates. It's 1 per cent over prime if a young farmer or any farmer gets a guaranteed loan to buy a farm and machinery and whatever they get for capital. So that brings the interest up to 11.25 or 11.5 per cent. Then we gave Syncrude money for around 8 per cent. We lent money to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia for from 9.5 per cent to 10 per cent, in that neighborhood.

Well, it's hard to justify our farmers paying over 11 per cent when we've got interest rates at 8 per cent and 9 per cent to Syncrude, to the oil industry, and

also out of the heritage fund to other provinces. So possibly we could recommend that we help lower the interest rates to our farmers. Or in some cases maybe we could put a moratorium on the debt loan payment our farmers are going to have to make, especially this year to some of the farmers who are going to suffer losses as a result of the wet weather.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this resolution is really not to make recommendations, but to get prepared. Our harvest is not over yet, and lots of harvesting has to be done as far as special crops and grain crops in the north are concerned. We do know the possibility of some farmers not getting their grain in this fall. We know the quality is going to be poor. Before this House adjourns, I think we need a definite statement on how we're going to handle this, or what we're going to do for the farmers who are suffering from adverse weather conditions as far as harvesting is concerned.

I was pleased that the minister indicated yesterday in the question period that ADC had been looking at the situation as far as the farm operations in the province are concerned — and that is commendable — and also to increasing our fund from \$150 million to \$200 million. This is all good and well. However, we have to be able to pay this money back; it's a revolving fund, and it has to be paid back.

I think it's serious even if we lose one young farmer out of the farming industry. We have to keep as many farmers as we can on the farm, especially young farmers. So if they get into serious problems, I think we have to help our grain farmers. I don't know just how they can be helped. But we did help the cattle industry; we put \$43 million. Possibly we could put a moratorium or help our farmers, especially those who aren't going to be able to get their crops off, and it's costing them a lot of money to get their crops off.

Mr. Speaker, before the House adjourns, I would like to see us bring this resolution up for discussion again in the event that the farmers don't have their crops off.

Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in this debate, I listened with a little bit of interest when the hon. Member for Bow Valley said that he got up to speak last time when there was drought and it began to rain. Certainly that alleviated the problem of drought in the southern area of the province. The only difficulty is that we got 11 inches of rain in the Peace River country in northern Alberta that spring, so we had the problem of unseeded acreage. So I suppose the ongoing problem is how in heaven's name you can sort of homogenize this weather properly.

Mr. Speaker, addressing the subject today, I'd like first of all to review very briefly the conditions in the Peace River country as I understand them. There are remarkable differences from area to area. For example, last week I was about three or four miles north of the Peace River, and I would say 70 per cent of the crop was harvested. Yet you cross the ferry at Clayhurst and go just south of the Peace River, and somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 per cent is harvested. So you find quite a remarkable variation from region to region as you travel in northern Alberta.

I should say, though, that I think it's probably a fair comment that Peace River farmers may be — I don't want to say they're better off — a little better prepared for the situation because I think there are more grain dryers per capita, from a farm point of view, than anywhere else in western Canada. As you drive along the road, you almost think every farmstead is on fire, because the grain dryer is going full blast. But there is, as I say, substantial variation from place to place. I've been out in northeastern Alberta, and certainly the findings there were rather serious in terms of the amount of crop that had been harvested when I was there, or the prospects for harvesting.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the point that I think the minister and the hon. Member for Bow Valley made, that the quality of grain this year will decline seriously — that's something that perhaps some people in the urban areas might want to take a little closer look at. When you drop grades, that means dollars lost. For example, the difference between No. 1 Red Spring wheat and No. 3 utility is 60 cents a bushel. Now if you're talking about a substantial grade loss throughout the province in all the types of grain we produce, even if we complete the harvest — we're hoping we'll have that Indian summer and the harvest in general will be completed — but even if that occurs, there's going to be a very, very substantial drop in farm income because of deterioration in the quality of the grain harvested.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address one other problem in northern Alberta, the minister mentioned it yesterday: it's this question of damage from waterfowl. We have a number of complaints all over the Peace country that, as a result of the crops lying in the swath and the general lateness of the harvest, we have record problems as far as waterfowl damage is concerned. I want to come to that and discuss it in a little more detail in a moment or two, because it strikes me as rather unusual that the province is still dragging its feet in signing the agreement with Ottawa on the waterfowl damage question.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Bow Valley, when he introduced the subject for this afternoon's debate, pointed out the problems faced by young farmers, first of all as a result of higher land prices. There's been a tremendous escalation in land prices in the last seven or eight years, all the way from \$150 to \$200 an acre to as much as \$1,000 an acre in some areas of central Alberta where you're really competing with urban residential development.

There's been a tremendous increase in the cost of land in the first place, but the other aspect is because of the topsy-turvy situation in agriculture in the last few years. We've had the difficult times in the grain industry from about '67 through to '71, then we had improving grain prices, but suddenly in '72 to '77 we had poor beef prices. We had the hog market go up and down like a yo-yo during that entire period. We had people getting into one thing and then moving into another, and they always managed to hit the valleys. The larger farmers could perhaps catch the peaks on occasion, because they were able to stay with one type of production. But many people have had the unfortunate problem of always hitting the valleys.

I think it's worth noting this, because there was some debate on this matter, both last fall in the resolution I introduced and again this spring on a

resolution with respect to the number of farms, introduced by the hon. Member for Bow Valley or the Member for Little Bow. If we're concerned about preserving agriculture and about this resolution today, providing emergency assistance, maybe we have to take a close look at what is happening to agriculture in total numbers.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we all start from the same base. I'm not going to be using federal statistical material, which got us into a conflict before. I'm going to use the Alberta Statistics Yearbook. Since this a Department of Agriculture publication, I'm sure we can assume it is totally correct and that all the information in it is valid, otherwise the minister would have advised the Assembly of any errors or omissions. You know, between 1971 and 1976 there was a loss of 18,000 people among the farm people of this province. That's approximately 300 people per month leaving the farm. According to these statistics, a total loss of 1,600 farms — a substantially larger loss of farm population, but 1,600 farms.

What is more significant, using the province's compilation of data, Mr. Speaker, is that the largest loss is in the range of 240 acres to just under two sections of land. I would say that apart from truck gardening, most of us if asked to define a family farm would say, that kind of farm from a quarter, 80 acres, or a half section up to two sections of land. I think that would generally be the assessment of most people if they were to look at the average farm. That's where there's been the biggest drop: some 4,143 farms. Under 240 acres, oddly enough, there's been an increase. But of course here we have the larger number of hobby farmers, acreages, and what have you. There's been a very slight increase of the larger farm, over 1,120 acres.

If we're concerned about preserving the "family farm", we have to recognize that between 1971 and 1976 there was a fairly serious drop in the number of farm families and in the number of people in farming operations in this province. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that lends a sense of urgency to the deliberations this afternoon. Because, quite frankly, with the price of land and the cost of inputs, an awful lot of younger farmers particularly are just not going to make it through the winter, even if they have these off-farm jobs that the Premier talked about yesterday.

May I just say a word about off-farm jobs. No question, you know you're going to have many young farmers who will be seeking off-farm income this year, and I suppose in a sense we're fortunate that that off-farm income opportunity is available in Alberta. But I would say also that any person who represents a rural constituency in the north, where you have whole families broken up for a period of five or six months every winter because the young husband has to go out to work off the farm in order to make the farm pay . . . You ask the wives what they think about that kind of situation, Mr. Speaker. You ask representatives of the agricultural development committees what they think about that kind of situation, and they will tell you over and over again that they would just as soon be able to make a living on the farm rather than come back in the summer months and work on the oil rigs in the winter.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that I think this Legislature has to look at the present situation with a

fair degree of concern, recognizing that if, as the Premier indicated yesterday, agriculture is to continue as one of the major underpinnings of the Alberta economy, it's probable that some kind of remedial action will have to be undertaken this fall by this government, backed by this Legislature.

Now may I go from there, Mr. Speaker, to assess some of the proposals I've heard so far. I don't usually support the Minister of Agriculture, but I did support the statement he made to the House yesterday when he indicated he was sending a telegram to the Hon. Otto Lang, urging The Wheat Board to open quotas. It's my understanding that small barley quotas have in fact been opened, in the neighborhood of three bushels. I think the point is valid, because unless we get those quotas open, Mr. Speaker, we're going to find that the people least able to afford it are going to have to dump their grain on the open market and take whatever price they can get.

We all remember the situation seven or eight or 10 years ago when barley was selling three bushels to the dollar. Maybe that was a good thing for the feeder industry, but it left many grain producers one step away from bankruptcy. That was at a time, Mr. Speaker, when fuel prices were considerably lower, when it didn't cost \$60,000 for a new combine. I notice new Steiger tractors are now \$130,000, although I admit that's somewhat above the average price for a tractor. But farm input costs have climbed a long way in those last seven or eight years.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support the government's request to the minister in Ottawa to get on with the job of urging not only the quotas that have been opened, but hopefully even larger quotas.

Mr. Speaker, there are several other points that I think are valid too as far as federal action is concerned. I would like to see the federal government speed up payments under the grain stabilization act. There are still a number of payments that can and should be made under that federal act.

I would also like to see us ensure this year — and the federal Minister of Transport has special responsibility here — that there are enough cars available when shipping opportunities arise. It's a little frustrating, after you spend all the money that has been spent by federal governments in this country on getting hopper cars for the railroads, to find that not necessarily these hopper cars we've purchased but all sorts of cars that could be used for grain shipment end up being leased out to railways in the United States, where the railroads can make a better return on their dollar. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that if we're going to be serious about dealing successfully with the problem of this special difficulty in the fall, one of the things must be to try to ensure that our grain handling and marketing system works as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Speaker, those suggestions, while useful, don't deal with the plight of individual farmer Joe Brown, wherever he may be. I would say that perhaps the place we might start — and the hon. Member for Bow Valley mentioned this — is to look at the credit question. I don't think it would be wise at this point to bring in an across-the-board moratorium. Personally, the problems that would create for the small business sector, for example, the long-term problems it would generate for farm credit — not the Farm Credit Corporation but general farm credit — would

outweigh the advantages to individual farmers. What I do suggest, Mr. Minister and members of the government, is that perhaps we should be saying quite frankly to everyone that we should undertake an inventory, that farmers should go to their financial institutions, and those farmers who are in trouble — I'm told there are approximately 2,600 farmers in arrears to federal Farm Credit, for example. These are people who are vulnerable. The minister no doubt has a number of people who are in arrears to ADC. Again, these are vulnerable. But I think we should be issuing instructions to the Agricultural Development Corporation. And now with this additional \$50 million we can say to the ADC, look, where you've got arrears let's not push, let's not undertake foreclosure action at this point.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I would say that even though the minister will probably argue that this policy is in place already, we're going to have a lot of farmers who will want to come into ADC and get some kind of commitment to convert loans they have to finance companies or to banks or what have you. Where they are being pressed, let's take a look at a financial package from ADC. I submit that that would probably be a little more practical approach than a general moratorium at this stage. I suppose it would be best described as a limited or modified debt assistance program, as opposed to a moratorium itself.

Another area the government should look at, Mr. Speaker, is energy costs. I know we had a debate in the Legislature last spring about increasing the farm fuel allowance from 8 cents a gallon to 12 cents a gallon. But, you know, if you take a look at the royalty structure in Alberta and at the cost of farm fuel, just the basic cost of the oil that goes into farm fuel itself — forget the transportation costs and all the other additional factors that give the final price to the producer when he goes into the bulk station. Just looking at the oil component alone, the provincial royalties would work out to about 15.5 to 16 cents.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I submit that one thing this Legislature could do would be to increase this fall — not wait until next spring before we have the budget, you know, just before the election is called, if we have a spring election — but this fall we could increase the farm fuel rebate by an additional 3.5 to 4 cents a gallon, to at least rebate to the farmers of this province the royalties collected by the province. With an accumulated surplus this year in the heritage trust fund and the general surplus of the province, which on March 31 will be just a shade under \$7 billion, I really ask whether or not we should be collecting a portion of the royalties from an industry which this year is going to be in some considerable trouble.

I say to the members of the House that if you could justify increasing the farm fuel rebate from 8 cents to 12 cents last spring, we should go the next mile and in fact rebate that royalty. We claim to have a 40 per cent royalty, that's what we say whenever we go hither and thither about the province telling everybody what our royalties are. If you look at just applying that royalty rate, then we should be advancing another 3.5 to 4 cents a gallon in the form of a farm fuel rebate.

The other aspect of this question — and the minister will point it out. We had great fanfare during the Peace River tour, and an announcement was made of a rebate on propane for drying grain. Fair ball. I think

that's certainly a very useful step, and I support it. But the problem with the program is that if a farmer is in a gas co-op, he isn't eligible for the propane rebate. In a sense I think that's rather unfair, because we've got . . . The Minister of Utilities and Telephones shakes his head. I'm pleased he's taking that position, because I've had a number of people in my constituency who've contacted the powers that be and have been told they aren't eligible because the rural gas co-op there can provide enough energy so that grain dryers can be hooked up.

But there is a conversion cost, and where people aren't able to hook up, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the propane subsidy should be provided for every farmer for grain drying whether that individual is a member of a rural gas co-op or not. As I say, if that policy has not been correctly explained to my constituents who've checked it out, I'd be glad to have the minister at the appropriate time in the debate set the record straight, and we'll have some more applications for the propane assistance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about the wildlife waterfowl damage fund. The federal and provincial governments have co-operated in this scheme, and previously people could receive up to \$25 an acre. Of course that was a totally inadequate amount, given the current situation. So there was, in my understanding anyway, an agreement to increase that to \$50 an acre. The federal government has increased the amount of money even with the restraint program — I contacted Ottawa yesterday just to check this out — from \$1 million to \$1.5 million as its share for the three Prairie Provinces. Alberta gets 40 per cent of that, or \$600,000. My understanding is that our problem in not signing this thing is really twofold. Problem number one: there's some uncertainty over backstopping the program if we run beyond cost sharing of \$600,000, which is quite possible as a result of the situation this year. It could well be substantially over \$600,000. My understanding is that that is one problem as far as the province is concerned.

Another point that was brought to my attention is that there seems to be a little bit of dispute — and I'm really quite surprised at this — over the dual identity cheques, where you have federal/provincial money and the federal and provincial governments both get their names on the cheque, which I think is fair enough. But apparently there's a little problem over that. I'm told that concept doesn't sit too well with the provincial government. Now I wouldn't want to imply that the Alberta government would only want "government of Alberta" on the cheque this close to an election, but I would hate to think that that sort of situation, Mr. Speaker [interjection] — I don't know what the ducks think of it — would preclude us signing an agreement which would allow us to get on with making funds available under the wildlife waterfowl damage fund. There are a number of farmers throughout this province who are going to need that kind of — not assistance, but the kind of protection that the program could offer. It's also worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that the government of Saskatchewan has signed the agreement. So has the government of Manitoba. But the holdout at this stage appears to be the government of Alberta.

Now the hon. Member for Bow Valley, when he introduced the motion today, talked about crop insur-

ance. Slightly more than 20,000 farmers are enrolled — I think it's something over half the farmers — but only 40 to 45 per cent of the cultivatable acreage is covered. But again that varies as you travel around the province. In the Manning area, represented by the hon. Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, you've got a very small coverage, something in the neighborhood of 10 or 15 per cent. In other areas it's close to 100 per cent. But taken in total, about 40 to 45 per cent of the cultivatable acreage is covered.

As the hon. Member for Bow Valley pointed out, I think crop insurance is a very good plan, and any kind of assistance we make available shouldn't undercut crop insurance. Nevertheless there are limitations. When I talk to farmers in this province who I consider to be very successful farmers, and they tell me that they've reviewed the cost/benefit analysis, if you like, of crop insurance, and they've chosen against it, and I see that changes, important changes, have been made, and it's a better scheme today than it was six or seven years ago, I think there is still more that can be done. I would suggest that what has happened this year, Mr. Speaker, the inclement fall conditions, should convince members of the Assembly to follow a suggestion I made last year; that is, it's time we had another select committee to review crop insurance. The last select committee was in 1972. Some useful changes were made. But it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that we shouldn't be resting on our laurels, but should be undertaking another special review with all members of the Legislature having an opportunity to participate in a report prepared by a select committee of the Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to move from there, if I can, to look at the obviously difficult question of whether some kind of grant assistance can be made available. I think most of us would say, all right, ADC can be asked to look at it. I think most of us could say, perhaps we can look at the farm fuel allowance. We've already moved on the propane question. Most people in this Assembly would agree with the telegram sent to the minister regarding barley quotas, in particular, in northern parts of the province. The crunch issue is really whether or not some kind of cash assistance should be made.

I have to tell you quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that I have taken the trouble to contact officials of a number of farm organizations in the province, and I think it's fair to say that while they would like contingency plans to be prepared, they still feel it would be premature on October 12 to assume that we aren't going to get this harvest completed and to come out with a package of programs, here and now, forever, signed, sealed, and delivered, that's it. But that doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that we shouldn't be looking at the contingencies.

In discussing this matter, I think one obvious point that has to be examined is the loss of grade. That's going to be a substantial cash loss. Should we be looking at some kind of provision for loss of grade? Secondly, and I think this is something you get from both the major farm organizations: a recognition that no matter what happens we're going to have pockets of problems. We're going to have areas of the province which have been much more adversely affected by weather conditions than others. Therefore maybe we almost have to look at the old PFRA concept, where we look at little pockets and bring in a program

that covers everybody in that pocket. That's a suggestion that has been made to me, and I think it's one that the government, quite frankly, may have to evaluate.

I should just say, and I'm glad to see that the hon. Minister of Transportation is back, that I know some people are always a little concerned about assistance in the form of any kind of cash acreage payment, or what have you, to farmers. The hon. Minister of Transportation shouldn't be. We had the unharvested grain program in 1974, which was a useful program. Of course the hon. Minister of Transportation owes much of his political career to the acreage payments the Diefenbaker government brought out in 1959 or '60, I believe. We all know how successful those payments were. That happens to be as basic a part of Canadian history as the fact that Sir John A. Macdonald was our first Prime Minister. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we should not be overly concerned about making cash assistance available if that is in the best interests of the province.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, in charge of Disaster Services, was just able to persuasively convince, as he always does, his colleagues in the cabinet that we should make money available in the city of Edmonton because of a flood, because it was a disaster and we had all sorts of people who had basement damage. Now I don't begrudge that at all. I think that's a fair ball. I think the money we're spending through Disaster Services is quite fine and fair. But I think, Mr. Speaker, that if you're going to say, all right, we're going to make money available to fix up basements in Edmonton, if we still have a pocket in Manning, Deadwood, Camrose, Wetaskiwin, or Ponoka where we have very, very heavy losses, then I have no hesitation in saying to any group of people that we should be making funds available. If that means a form of grants similar to the unharvested acre program or our quality reduction loss program, then I would say, Mr. Speaker, let's not be afraid to do it. The only caveat that has come to me from people in the organized agricultural movement is: let's begin evaluating the contingency plans so that in three or four weeks, when we're at a stage to know where things stand, we can move with a program if one is needed.

Now I'm certain there are going to be variations of these proposals I've made this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, that will be needed regardless of whether the harvest is completed or not. As I mentioned, the major problem already has been the very serious loss in grade, and the financial implications of that kind of loss will be very significant.

So, Mr. Speaker, in general conclusion, I certainly support the thrust of the motion presented by the hon. Member for Bow Valley. It seems to me that it merits the consideration of the Legislature today. I would hope that in his contribution to this debate the minister would share with the members of the Assembly specific proposals the government now has in hand in terms of contingency programs to deal with what is already a serious matter. Hopefully the weather will modify the implications, but it is nevertheless a serious enough problem that it merits our concern.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like first of all to take the opportunity this afternoon to give the members of

the Legislature some assessment of the harvest progress across the province as of this morning. I think it's important that individuals should know what progress is going on in areas outside their own constituencies, in areas they may in fact not be familiar with. After that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to deal with some of the matters that have been raised by the two speakers before me and to indicate some of our views with respect to what can be, should be, and is being done with respect to assisting in the difficult situation faced by a good number of people.

First of all, in southern Alberta the situation quite frankly is better than it was a year ago in terms of harvest conditions and farm income. My information from the southern part of the province was that the yields, the total amount of grain taken into the bins when they were about 50 per cent through the grain harvest were equal to or perhaps a little greater than the total amount they took in a year ago. In all regions of southern Alberta, particularly in the dry-land areas, as members would know who live there, the yields have been excellent compared to other years.

In addition I should say the harvest in southern Alberta is virtually complete, with the exception, of course, of the sugar beet and potato harvests, which are generally later. My understanding is that there is indeed some loss in the potato crops. It largely relates to lower lying land, and it varies a great deal, with some farmers having a larger percentage of their potato crop on land that is, quite frankly, unsuitable for potatoes in a year when you have as much moisture as we've had this year, and with others continuing, as I suppose they should, to try to plant their potato crop on higher land not having nearly the same difficult problems.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to give the members a couple of quotes from the harvest report I received this morning from that region of the department, which is region one. For example, from Brooks: harvest progressed very well last week with many people now done. Yields and grades have been decreased due to weather damage in September, but almost everyone should complete harvest next week if the weather holds. From Claresholm: the best harvest weather of the fall occurred last week, allowing the bulk of the combining to be completed. Some 3 to 4 per cent remains to be done. In Foremost, 95 per cent of the crop is harvested with only a little in the southwest portion of that county. In Pincher Creek the comments are: four more days, that's including today, should show completion of the harvest. Generally that's the situation. Perhaps the most difficult area down there is the Warner-Milk River area, which was mentioned by the hon. member who spoke first. But even in the Warner area, our information is that the harvest is more than 80 per cent complete, with generally only the sloughs remaining to be done, and that most farmers have a substantial portion of their combining completed.

We go from there to what we call region two of the department, really centred around Calgary and Airdrie. The crop situation there is very similar to what it is in southern Alberta, in most of that region. All the districts there are coming along very well, with reports of 80 to 95 per cent of the harvest completed with most points reporting it's only a matter of two or three days and you can consider the harvest complet-

ed. Perhaps the farthest behind is the MD of Starland, north of Highway 9, running out to Hanna and through that area. Even there they report almost 80 per cent completion of combining.

In every case grades are down. They're not down as much in the south as they are going to be when the harvest is completed. Hopefully it will be in central Alberta and parts of northeastern Alberta, and perhaps the Peace River country as well.

Moving farther north into the Red Deer region and the area around Wetaskiwin, Ponoka, Camrose, and Stettler — moving as far south as Edmonton — it is probably the toughest area there is in the province with respect to harvest because of the amount of rainfall over the last six weeks. But even there, harvest is progressing. I'm advised today that combines have been running the last couple of days in almost all fields. They're naturally missing some low spots in areas where the ground is a factor. Even in that region we would expect that with a further 10 days to two weeks of good weather, once again harvest would be virtually complete except perhaps for some isolated low spots.

The region on the east side of the province, running north from south of Lloydminster up into the Bonnyville-Lac La Biche-St. Paul areas, varies a great deal. There are some areas where they are practically finished combining, particularly in the Lloydminster area and along the east side of the province. But there are some difficult areas. I'd like to mention three or four of the most difficult problems in that area. In Lac La Biche the barley is only about 20 per cent combined, with a lot of sprouting in what remains, while the rapeseed is more than 60 per cent done. In the Lamont area, which is another very difficult area, about 25 per cent of the barley and 75 per cent of the rapeseed has been combined. In Ryley about 40 per cent of the barley has been combined, with again a much higher percentage of the rape done. Those are three of the toughest areas in that region in terms of farmers' ability to get on the land. But in those areas I'm advised that generally they're going again today, and given some favorable weather they could very well complete the harvest.

Region five of the department, centred around Barrhead, Westlock, Athabasca, Mayerthorpe, generally just to the northwest of the capital city, is much like the region I talked about in the northeast part of the province. It's spotty. In some areas farmers have completed harvest almost in total, and others are having a difficult time getting on the field. But once again, everything is running today and has been for the last couple of days.

The Peace River country, quite frankly, is better off in terms of the total amount harvested and progress made than any other region north of Red Deer. Many points in the Peace River country are reporting harvest 100 per cent complete or two or three days to go. Perhaps the most difficult areas there are around Valleyview and some areas around Manning, where once again field conditions have been very wet and they've had some spotty showers.

Mr. Speaker, I make that rather quick review to indicate that on [October] 12, with many of the fields dry enough to support equipment and the combines running virtually around the clock across the province in the areas that aren't finish harvesting, I hope we can be optimistic about getting enough weather to

complete the harvest.

That leads to what the real problem is. I don't want to suggest that the harvest is complete, but certainly in my view we're not in a position today, as both members who spoke have indicated, to start announcing emergency programs of assistance when we don't in fact know the extent of the problem that may or may not exist in completing the harvest. Supposing we do complete it, and that's the matter I've been looking at. What happens if on November 10 we can say that we have enough good weather that substantially all the crop is harvested, it's in the bin?

When I started looking at the figures with respect to country elevator movements out of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to the port of Thunder Bay and to the Pacific coast, the amount of quotas that existed for farmers to deliver to the elevator system, there is no question that thus far in this crop year there's been a very great degree of barley and wheat moved out of the province of Saskatchewan, and practically none moving out of the province of Alberta. I'm not sure I know the reason for that. It may have something to do with the grades. It may have something to do with the interests of the gentleman responsible for the operations of The Canadian Wheat Board. However, I looked very carefully at that situation and had an opportunity, quite frankly, just before coming into the Legislature this afternoon, to discuss that matter briefly with the chief commissioner of The Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Esmond Jarvis. As well, Mr. Speaker, I might advise members of the House that I am planning to meet with commissioners of The Canadian Wheat Board on Wednesday of next week for further discussions along the lines of the telex I sent to Mr. Lang yesterday morning; that is, how do we, the Alberta government, this Legislature, influence or help The Canadian Wheat Board, the federal government, in moving a great quantity of low-grade grain into domestic and world markets?

In the meantime I am trying to get as accurate an assessment as I can from my department and from others involved as to what the total quantities of Nos. 1, 2, and 3 feed barley might be in this province, and whether there is any substantial amount of 3CW. I doubt there is. The same thing with respect to grades of wheat, because I'd like to have an assessment of what we expect to have in the bin once harvest is complete, in terms of grades, then an assessment of what we might in this province use in feeding over the course of the next 12 months until our next crop begins to come off. Then I'll be able to sit down with The Canadian Wheat Board and say, here's the challenge ahead of you; here's what you have to move into the markets domestically, the rest of Canada, and overseas. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I'll likely be absent from the House next Wednesday, either in Winnipeg or Calgary, meeting with the commissioners of The Canadian Wheat Board for those discussions.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention a few other things, but before I do I'd like to touch on some of the matters mentioned by the two speakers before me.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, the time allotted for the designated motion has elapsed, therefore perhaps we can conclude very quickly.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I know a number of other members are very keen on speaking in this debate, and I wonder if we might get the unanimous consent of the Assembly, in spite of the rules, to extend this debate until 5:30.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If unanimous consent is given by the House, I see no reason it could not be carried on. Are you agreed to just carry on until 5:30 with the designated motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. MOORE: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, I wanted to make a few comments relative some of the items that were mentioned by the two members who spoke before me. First of all, we're talking about payments to assist people who are suffering income loss as a result of non-harvest or, in this particular case, probably more as a result of lower grades and, quite frankly, lower prices even for high grades that exist and, in addition to that, a simple lack of opportunity to deliver. My information, Mr. Speaker, is that the three bushel quota we now have on barley only came about in this province on October 6. It was in place before that in Saskatchewan. So no farmers have had any opportunity, other than during the last very few short days, to deliver a bushel of this year's crop.

But really what we've been trying to do, over the last several years in terms of stabilization as far as this government is concerned, is to get into place on a national basis some reasonable stabilization programs for a variety of agricultural commodities that face this up and down cycle. Members may recall the trips and the discussions we had with regard to the cow-calf stabilization program. We had Manitoba going into a program that they don't know what to do with now. Incidentally, they've got farmers there who committed themselves to accepting the stabilization payments from the government in 1975 and 1976, and who now are committed to selling beef cattle for 50 cents a pound to the government of Manitoba when the open market will bring them substantially more than that. They're wondering how they ever got tied into this nonsense of going into a provincial stabilization program with those kinds of strings attached to it.

We've been saying continually that our stabilization programs should be on a national basis. They should be based on something that's meaningful in terms of today's cost of production. We've made some progress in that area, in terms of the cow-calf operators being brought under the plan, as members may recall, more than a year ago. We made some progress in July when I was in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, meeting with the federal Minister of Agriculture. Basically, the federal minister advised that his cabinet agreed that there should be a substantial change in the manner in which stabilization payments were handled in terms of computing the amount, and that it should no longer be based on some historic five-year average price or a percentage of that, but rather on something that was more related to today's cost of production.

I mention those things because we have in this country a national grain stabilization program that was started three years ago. I think most of you in

this Assembly who are farmers and are members of it will know that you put, I believe, about \$1,500 into it. The maximum, of course, is \$500 a year. That program was really designed to cover the very problem we're talking about: low prices, poor grades, or loss of income to grain farmers.

Now I don't happen to like all the ways that program is administered, in terms of the very, very technical method they use to figure out how much is actually being paid to the farmer. Quite frankly, I think you could devise a much simpler means. I don't like the way it's administered by the federal minister responsible for The Canadian Wheat Board either. No one can suggest to me that the payment of roughly \$1,000 that was made last spring, at the same time the announcement said, this is about half of what you're going to get, is the way you should fool around with the farmers' money. Because that's what it is, just because you think there's going to be a federal election in June. Now the fall election is called off. Mr. Lang has given up and said, I guess I'll send you the rest of it.

I don't know what he's going to do in June 1979, but my suggestion is that that whole payment could very well be received much earlier than was the case this year. Surely it doesn't take from January 1978 until October 1978 to figure out what the '77 crop was worth. We know the yields; we know the prices The Canadian Wheat Board is receiving for the grain sold. One could at least come within 10 per cent or 15 per cent of what should be paid to farmers, and make the final payment later on, if that's necessary. But surely more than 50 per cent can be paid at the same time.

Members know we've now apparently had an announcement, if you read the eastern papers, that very definitely says the federal government is giving the western farmers another \$55 million. That's just so much bunk. It's their own money, and interest on top of it. For those who pay into it, if you sit down and figure it out — and I have with some people I've talked to. One fellow told me: I've put some \$1,700 into it, including interest, and thus far I've got back \$1,100; and I read in the paper that the federal government is giving me some more money. Well, I want to put that straight for those of you from urban Alberta who don't understand how these things work. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: We all know that.

MR. NOTLEY: No wonder we're in trouble.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands has now become an expert on agriculture matters after seven years in the House. We'll look forward to his comments later on. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the aspect of migratory birds. The situation, quite frankly, is very, very different from that described by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. The draft agreement between the government of Alberta and the government of Canada for migratory bird damage compensation arrived on my desk in early August, with the recommendation from some of my department staff that it be signed. I read it and frankly said, there's no way I'm going to sign it like it is. And I'm fully

prepared to tell this House why.

In May this year, the federal Minister of Agriculture announced, without the kind of consultation there should have been, that the federal government had decided to increase the maximum compensation per acre from \$25 to \$50 per acre. I thought, that's great, that sounds good. We're on a roughly fifty-fifty cost-sharing basis. We'd been lobbying for something like three years to get that maximum payment increased from \$25 to \$50 an acre.

In the interim they made a decision in Ottawa that instead of funding the program by having half the money that was required in a budget and the other half by what we would call special warrant at the end of the year, they'd put it all in the budget. But the amount they put in their budget for the fiscal year we're talking about, if you use the same kind of loss conditions that occurred last year in this province, wouldn't even pay \$25 an acre. Now I couldn't buy signing a program, after the federal Minister of Agriculture had announced a payment of up to \$50 an acre, that had a clause in it that limited their total contribution to \$600,000. It could have been down to \$15 an acre.

I think it's just very, very bad politics to go out and announce programs at \$50 an acre and then limit the total amount of money you put in. They may as well have said to start with: we'll pay \$600,000. If it makes \$12 an acre, fine; if it makes \$60, fine. That's only half their problem. The draft of the agreement that the federal government wanted us to sign said: in the event that \$600,000 is not sufficient to cover the federal government's share, the province of Alberta will provide the balance to bring the payments up to \$50 an acre.

I don't know how young, how naive, they think we are, that we'd get into a cost-sharing program that's as open-ended as that.

Now, we're certainly willing to accept a program. I called Mr. Whelan and talked to him personally. I said, I don't mind trying to make some estimates of what we feel the wildlife damage will be in this province and going to our Provincial Treasurer and saying, look, it's going to be between \$600,000 and \$1 million. We may have to do that. But we have an uncertainty, just like we do in fighting forest fires. We don't know at the beginning of the year what it's going to cost. We do our best to judge that and put a figure in our budget. The federal government has decided it no longer wants to do that.

That's only one or two of the complications. In the middle of this process of what I thought was negotiation, they announced that for 1979 the federal government will be opting completely out of any provision for financial assistance for crop damage caused by migratory birds. Well surely, Mr. Speaker, we have I believe a 1916 Migratory Birds Convention Act that provides for co-operation between the United States and Canada and other points in North America in terms of the protection of migratory birds. It's clearly and totally an area in which the federal government has had jurisdiction for years. Our fish and wildlife people in this province have been assisting in terms of game management and control in issuing hunting licences and these kinds of things, and they turn around, tell us they're not going to pay 5 cents for crop loss, and then dictate to us what the bag limits are going to be, and this kind of thing. I think

it's just ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. Of all the cuts that have been announced in the federal Department of Agriculture, that is the one I intend to fight the hardest. It isn't a great deal of money — it's perhaps \$1.5 million a year — but it's the principle behind announcing a program is going to be increased and immediately backing off and withdrawing funds when there's no question that they have a great deal of responsibility there.

Mr. Speaker, if I can move briefly to the grain drying situation. My information is that about 80 per cent of the grain that's been harvested thus far in the Peace River country has been artificially dried. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is correct when he mentioned the number of grain dryers there. More than half the grain dryers in this province are located in that one area. It's correct as well, in my belief, to say that farmers in that area, who have suffered some pretty tough harvesting weather over the last few years, are better prepared to take a crop off under very difficult weather conditions than they are anywhere else in the province, simply because they've had to do it often enough and they've finally convinced themselves that the only way to do it is to buy a grain dryer and start out the first of the year.

I'd like members to think about ways we might encourage more grain drying in this province. Because, quite frankly, I believe the time has come when we might consider looking at our harvesting situation on the basis of, instead of being out there in August swathing and waiting 10 days, two weeks, for the grain to dry from 25 per cent moisture down to 14 per cent so we can harvest it, we might start harvesting right away and artificially drying it. When you consider the increase in the grade and the weight and the fact that you may have good malting barley or pearling barley as opposed to No. 3 feed that's lain out in the rain for five weeks, there could very well be a substantial degree of money saved by going at some kind of program to increase the number of dryers and the amount of grain dried, in addition to our 10 cent a gallon rebate on propane.

I just mention the thing with respect to gas co-ops. You know there's really no problem there at all. What we've said is that a natural gas co-op that is servicing an area and has a pipeline in a yard on a quarter section of land that has sufficient capacity and full of gas to operate a grain dryer — in that case we think that individual should be using natural gas, because the change-over from a propane to a natural gas dryer is very, very small, only involving a little cost with respect to the changing of some jets and some piping to your yard location, which, in terms of the difference in cost, is really not a great factor. If you're on a location where the natural gas co-op has either an insufficient supply of natural gas or hasn't brought gas into that area of their franchised agreement, the individual can receive the 10 cent a gallon allowance. But we don't want to undermine the natural gas co-ops across this province which have been trying, quite frankly, to do a good job and fill in and get everyone hooked up, by paying a large subsidy on propane for grain drying when we've already paid quite a few dollars in some cases to get the natural gas into that same yard and it hasn't been hooked up.

Mr. Speaker, I just conclude my remarks by saying that it is our determined view that the key to this year's grain income problems in this province proba-

bly does not lie with trying to develop a program of assistance for farmers who may or may not lose their crops, although it's important always to have that under consideration, as well as some of the other matters we've mentioned. The real key lies in the ability of the grain marketing people in this province, The Canadian Wheat Board, our private grain companies, our pools, and others, to market that grain. If it's worth \$1 a bushel now in the bin and you store it and pay the interest costs on it and so on for 12 months, it's only worth 75 cents a bushel. It will be our determination to do everything we possibly can to ensure there's an opportunity for farmers to deliver, market, and clear their bins as best they can, so they can have an opportunity to plant a crop next spring and hopefully have a better year in terms of grades and yields in 1979.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in this debate. As has been pointed out by the previous speakers, Alberta is a large province, and there are different problems in different parts of the province. I think there's a lot of truth to the statement that the farmer keeps one eye on the furrow and the other eye on the weather. It's a way of life. From the moment the snow goes in the spring, he's faced with the problem of the ground being dry enough for him to put his crop in. After he plants it there's always the problem of a heavy rain coming and crusting the soil so the seeds can't germinate. Then he's faced with possible drought or crop diseases, possible hail, and finally the problem of harvesting and getting his crop in the bin.

Many improvements have been made in the past years, particularly in the past 10 years, when we've seen new crops produced, particularly rapeseed, which is often referred to as a Cinderella crop and enables the farmer to spread out his harvesting period. Rapeseed, as you know, is an oil-seed crop. Once it's matured it doesn't take on moisture like cereal grains and, as a result, can generally be harvested ahead of time. This helps the farmer spread his harvesting operations over a greater period.

We've also found that we have better harvesting and farming equipment, and on top of that we have many, many drying facilities, as the minister has just pointed out. Particularly in the northern half of the province we find many grain dryers in operation.

But, Mr. Speaker, possibly the greatest benefit that the farmers have ever had came about in 1965 when the province and the federal government initiated an all-risk crop insurance program. With your permission, sir, I would like to file copies of this program with the Legislature. I believe that there is a copy here for each of the members.

This is a voluntary program, Mr. Speaker, and as was pointed out by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, approximately 40 per cent of the farmers participate in it. In fact, this year a total of 19,111 are actively participating, and there is coverage of 6 million acres. The fact it's voluntary and some people feel they don't need it is because they have other forms of income. I know of many mixed farmers who have cattle or a hog enterprise and feel that if they do lose part of their crop or if it isn't up to standard their livestock enterprise will offset the loss of income they would have from their grain crops. But it's there if

they want it, and it's a good program. Contrary to what the Member for Bow Valley said, it will and does cover your cost of production.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but we've continually upgraded this program. I was in Lacombe this morning. I'm a director of the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance program, and every year we are coming up with new coverages for things that previously weren't under the program. This spring, for example, we came up [with] and now have a program which covers unseeded stubble acreage.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we're going to get this crop off. Our farmers are hard workers. They will, if it's humanly possible. When I came from Lacombe this morning there were many combines working in the field. There were also balers out. As I understand it, the main area of concern is from Stettler north to Vegreville and then through to Barrhead and the Boyle area, along with pockets, as the Member for Spirit River-Fairview pointed out, in other parts of the country. But the main problem seems to be in this Edmonton area.

One thing I would like to say before closing is that we do a lot of harvesting in October. I don't think there is the great concern right now that there will be a month from now if conditions remain the same.

But I would like every member to go back to his area and tell his farmers, if they're harvesting and getting tired, to be extra careful. I had occasion last evening to go over to the University Hospital and visit a fellow who had lost three fingers in a baler. There is a tendency when you're tired and putting in long hours that you become careless. I would hope that farmers would take heed and make sure they get the crop off with due care for their own safety.

Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words on this resolution. I think really it's premature to bring it to the Legislature, and I'm somewhat surprised that the Member for Bow Valley brought it forward at this time.

Grain farmers in particular are always at the mercy of the weather. A good operator has to learn how to work around the weather. A way to do that is to keep his machinery in tip-top shape so his down time is cut to a minimum. Another way, of course, is to work every possible hour that the weather permits during seed time and harvest.

Mr. Speaker, with the exception of this fall, in my area at least, we have had a succession of very good harvest weather in fall, and we have got used to taking our crops off by the middle of September. But traditionally in Alberta we have run through October and sometimes into November. I don't really believe it's time to push the panic button at the present.

As far as my own constituency is concerned, Mr. Speaker, my assessment is that we are over 90 per cent complete with our grain harvest, and it has been one of the best harvests we've ever had. Our yield has been terrific. Our quality has been way down, and naturally there is going to be a real problem in moving this grain. We're fortunate in some ways. We've got several large commercial feedlots down in that country, and lot of feed grain always moves through these feeder operations.

Another thing that's happened down there this year, Mr. Speaker, is that there has been a real

increase in the off-board grain facilities with the commercial elevators. I've never seen anything like it before. I would like to commend the Wheat Pool for the way they've taken a little bit more, we'll say, than the 20 per cent they're supposed to. But we do appreciate it and, contrary to what the Member for Spirit River-Fairview says, we don't mind taking that off-board price when we're getting that big a yield. We're still doing better by far than we did last year.

But we do have a problem, and it's a real problem, and I'm glad the Minister of Agriculture has brought it to the attention of The Wheat Board and to this House; that is, we've got a large quantity of grain, and we've got some very poor quality grain. A real problem in the coming year will be moving this grain through the marketing system. I don't know what we as a Legislature can do in this area, but I am glad to hear that the minister is meeting with The Wheat Board, warning them about the problem, and giving them any suggestion he can to move it.

I would like to give you an example of what happened in my area in 1951. That year we had a crop something like what we got this year, only we did not harvest our crop until the next spring. We hauled it to the elevator, and between 40,000 and 50,000 bushels sat in one elevator for seven years. We paid storage on it, all of us. Every farmer paid storage on that grain. Now my memory is a little hazy, but as I recall we got a dollar a bushel for that initial payment, and I think after seven years The Wheat Board sold that for 80 cents a bushel, plus paying seven years' storage on that grain. That wasn't very good in an economic way, but besides that it had a real impact on our quotas during that time. I hope The Wheat Board has learned something about handling this poor-quality grain. Move it on its way at whatever price, I don't really care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. STEWART: It's always a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, that every session we have an opportunity to discuss the most important industry we have in this province. I think it's only fitting this particular fall, with the harvest conditions the way they are, that we should take a couple of hours of the Legislature's time to stop and study the problems of agriculture as they are related to crop and weather conditions affecting it at this time.

I think that agriculture has been plagued since time began by being at the whim of nature. We suffer from either too much water or not enough, or frost. Some hazard of nature seems to be the biggest problem in agriculture. The successful pursuit of top production is what we feel we have to have nowadays in order to be competitive.

I think the people who pioneered this province and diversified their activities in agriculture with livestock, hog production, dairying, and what have you, were building in a bit of a safety valve against disaster, because as you all realize top-quality grain is not always possible to produce, but livestock production is something that can utilize and get value out of a lot of our crops that otherwise don't have much market value. The end result has been that through a great percentage of this province we have a diversified agricultural pursuit going on that has probably been able to take care of itself in the majority of situations that the weather has affected, to the point that while

they may not be able to produce No. 1 wheat or malting barley, there has been a herd of cattle that would market and give them an income to carry on and try another year.

The other problem that's been creeping up on agriculture over the last few years — and the creeping has almost become a gallop — is the cost of production. I think it's a serious situation that we haven't seen the end result of yet. We have the younger farmers particularly who, in the pursuit of agriculture in the last 10 years, with the higher cost of land and equipment, possibly are carrying a debt load compared to the value of what they're producing that never before has been placed on farmers in this province.

I think there's something seriously wrong at this particular time when the cost of production has reached such a high plane that, almost, if you stumble once you'll never make it. I think we really haven't seen the net result of what this will do. I hope I'm wrong, but I'm afraid I'm not because I do believe we've got a lot of young farmers in this province who are heavily in debt. One or two crop failures is all it would take to make it impossible for them to complete their mortgages and carry on.

While we're looking today at some very bad crop conditions around the province, thankfully this afternoon weather conditions are quite good for harvesting. But they haven't been for the last month and a half. I hope this crop gets harvested. The deterioration in its value we can't replace, I'm sure. But certainly a crop left in the field over winter, with the moisture conditions we have now, is almost valueless in the spring. It's a serious situation, because the farmers who are going to carry on for the next 20 years are the ones who are carrying the debt load. As I say, I'm not proposing answers to these problems. But I think it's time we stopped and took stock of the problem agriculture is in and be prepared, if we reach a crisis, to recognize the obstacles some of these people are faced with.

With hail and crop insurance I think we've tried to accomplish a form of protection, but certainly this is not going to get these people completely out of their problem. If hail and crop insurance will cover the basic cost of production for a year, it certainly will do nothing to cover mortgage debts and machine payments that a lot of these farmers are going to have to face. I'm looking at the situation that some of our farmers are obviously going to face. There's not one crop that they're going to have to depend on insurance for but possibly two. With the heavy debt load some of these people are carrying, I do believe they will not be able to carry on if this is the situation.

Basically I think farmers are optimists. After three years of depressed cattle prices, if you go to the auction markets today you'll find the farmers are the most optimistic people in the world. The feeder cattle market has reached a point now that nobody can tell you how you can reap a profit out of it. But farmers are prepared to buy feeder cattle and try to market some of this low-grade grain we've got and show a return on it. I guess it's the difference between the optimist and the pessimist. They figure that the pot is still half full while the pessimist says it's pretty near empty.

There's no doubt in my mind that, given a fair opportunity, our farmers are going to be as productive

as humanly possible. While we have no control of weather conditions, I believe it's been a worth-while effort this afternoon to stop and take stock of what the problems of agriculture really are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I'm pleased to join in the debate on this motion put forth by the hon. Member for Bow Valley. In his motion he suggested that the government "act immediately to provide relief for those Alberta farmers who, because of unseasonable weather, have been unable to complete their harvest". Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this is a very noble gesture, a noble idea, a noble thought. I know that certainly he mentioned in his remarks that before the end of the session we should have some plan or program. I like the thought of the sun out there shining, doing the job for us, and I think likely it will. I'm not really that old, but generally the leaves are off the trees so long before we get our harvest off in other years.

But he did make one mention of an idea to solve some of the problems for some of the farmers, and I'd just like to caution him and hope that he had put that idea to bed and put it to sleep: a moratorium on debt. Certainly I would never imagine a man of his ability and background suggesting such a thing. I'm sorry you did, because a moratorium on debt certainly would not solve the farmers' dilemma. I think that first we have to establish whether or not there is a serious problem, and we won't be able to establish that for some time. The other thing we have to remember is where the problems are. There are many areas of the province where there are no problems. If we try to hurry a decision or a program where it may take in a few square miles here or a few townships there, and all over, we're going to be in a mess.

I like the idea of using something more long term, more definite, and follow along with the northern port development program of the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Transportation, Prince Rupert in particular, and hopefully Churchill in time to come, and go that route.

I also like the route we have been able to establish in the last few years of encouraging business to locate, to build, and to develop in Alberta. Out in my constituency we have a young business that's manufacturing grain dryers, and I understand they're some of the best grain dryers in the world. If we were to look at a program of help for farmers on a long-term basis, I would see where perhaps we would help in that way, where we have low-interest loans for the purchase of the dryers, not after the fact.

I believe we have gone a long way, particularly this year, in providing better secondary roads. I know there seems to be a heavy emphasis by the Minister of Transportation on the secondary road program this year. That's going to help in a long-term basis of moving a lot of grain, getting grain off the farm and, in general, helping farmers.

The other thing our government has done that I think is in the longer term, but has certainly helped us this year — it certainly helped me as a farmer — was the rapeseed crushing plants. Now my rapeseed, although it didn't yield very heavy, was more than I had really expected. But it's off the farm, it's sold. A few years ago we wouldn't have dared grow as much

rapeseed as was grown this year, because in the first place there weren't the sales. You had to store it, and it's difficult to store. So the government, by taking the initiative a few years ago to have assistance for rapeseed crushing plants, has already solved a good deal of the problems we would have had this year. Most of the rape in my area is off and has been off for some time.

The last thing I would like to mention is the research program for grain, new plants, soil research, and so on — \$10 million I believe is the figure, over a period of time. I think these, Mr. Speaker, are the right way to go. Certainly I would have to say to my colleagues here that if we get into far worse trouble than we are in now — and I don't think we could establish that for another month at least, or perhaps even till next spring — the government will almost certainly come up with a package or program to assist particularly the beginning farmers.

But there's no need to panic as far as the farmers I have talked to back home are concerned. There's lots of time, lots of concern, of course. But, Mr. Speaker, I think the sun that shines in the window up here is going to solve a good deal of our problems. I really do appreciate that this motion was brought to the House this afternoon so a full debate could be carried on.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the main thrust of the resolution is "to provide relief for those Alberta farmers who, because of unseasonable weather, have been unable to complete their harvest". I agree with the spirit of the resolution, although I don't agree with the actual wording. The farmers today, I suppose, could be classified in three categories. First of all, there are those who have their crop harvested, and this is a reasonable percentage of the whole throughout the province. When I was on my pre-session mainstreeting, an elevator man at Chancellor showed me grain, barley, wheat, and rape, which had been brought to the elevator prior to the rains, and it was excellent wheat: No. 1 Northern wheat, must have been 60 or 62 pounds to the bushel, a very, very excellent wheat. Then he showed me some harvested after the rains came, and even the most inexperienced person could see the tremendous difference in those grains. So those who have it harvested, I suppose, don't come into this resolution at all.

Then we have some who have crops still out: part of it's harvested, part of it isn't; some have none harvested. Last Monday I was speaking to a farmer in my own riding who told me that last year he hadn't threshed a bushel of grain until after Thanksgiving. Then he got a reasonable amount off. He wasn't worried. This morning I was speaking to a farmer in the Rumsey district who said he had completed his harvest over the weekend. I was up in the Peace River area over the long weekend, and the combines were working in almost every wheat field, every grain field, and throwing out straw that appeared to be very, very dry — dry enough at least to give you a reasonable grain without too much moisture content. I suppose this is the group we're really talking about, and until the next two or three weeks go by, no one will really know the amount of harvest they get or how much they will realize from that harvest. I think we might be surprised at the harvest after two or three weeks, particularly if we now can get sunshine

the way we've had it the last three or four days.

The third group are those who have no crop to to harvest, those who had to plough it under or couldn't get it seeded because of heavy moisture in the spring. These are the people really having a difficult time right now. They know where they stand; they have no crop to harvest. Then we look at what avenues they have. One such farmer told me that he carried his own insurance. He was a self-insurer. He said, I calculate that I'll have a poor crop or lose my crop once every four or five years. Over the years he had farmed, he said, that doesn't happen every four or five years; it happens every six or seven years. He said, I think I can afford to carry my own insurance and save money by not taking the crop insurance. He wasn't averse to the all-risk insurance plan. He thought it was excellent, but he preferred to carry his own insurance.

Many people are not in a position to do that. There are some areas where the crop fails much more often than once every six or seven years and some where it doesn't fail at all. There are districts in my own riding where I can't ever remember a crop failure. They've always had a harvest, and consequently they are in a position to carry themselves through the rough times. Those who are under the stabilization program should surely expect to get something out of that program. This program is voluntary, and while it is not working to the satisfaction of many farmers, it should nevertheless provide considerable relief to those who have paid money into that fund and now need money if their crop is ploughed under or they get a very poor yield.

I think we could make some wonderful changes in that stabilization program. I think even the present government would make a gigantic advance in the stabilization program if they moved it from under the baton of the hon. Mr. Lang and put it under the baton of the Minister of Agriculture, the hon. Mr. Whelan. At least Mr. Whelan knows what's going on on the farms and is prepared to talk about it. I think it would be tremendously improved if the three ministers of the Prairie Provinces had an opportunity — if Mr. Lang would even listen to them — to point out what changes should be made.

Surely a farmer who pays money into a stabilization fund should have a clear explanation of the amount he's going to get out of that fund and why. That's not being given today. That fund should not be used as a political plum by any government, present or future. It should be used to meet the needs of farmers who, because no fault of their own, don't harvest their crop. They've paid into the fund and are entitled to something out of it.

I believe there's no industry in the world that has a greater gamble than the farmer, as was pointed out by one or two members already this afternoon. He gambles with almost everything. He has to be a gambler. I'm satisfied that the present government will have a plan in place to meet the needs of those who will undergo suffering, if it comes to that point. That is really the assurance I think every farmer in this province should be happy with, that they know the government is interested. The government is not going to be giving handouts but will be prepared to help where need is evident and can be shown. I think the main item that comes out of this resolution is that now is not the time to bring forth a program for those

who still have crops out. It may be the time to help those who have no crop whatsoever, if they need help, if they have not taken advantage of the grain stabilization program or the insurance program. But it certainly is not the time to provide a program for those who may yet obtain a reasonably good crop.

There's just one other point I want to mention today, because I think it follows the resolution naturally and is certainly in the spirit of the resolution, which I think is good; that is, to provide help to our backbone industry in this province when help is required. I think one of the best things the present government can do for the farmers of this province is to keep advancing on the marketing of their products. That is the key to a great number of things in this province.

I'm glad to see that the Minister of Agriculture, and the government as a whole, is taking a keen interest in marketing. When we have to face things like strikes at the coast and bad weather, where we haven't got cleaning or separation facilities, we wonder why other countries are beginning to get interested in buying their grain from the United States.

We lost the pearl-barley market in this province a few years ago, not because of what the farmers did, not because of the type of barley we were able to market, but because the strikers at the coast prevented delivery. Those who wanted the barley said, we can't put up with this, we'll go to the United States. And we've never got that market back. It's still in the hands of the United States.

An American said to me the other day, why doesn't Canada invest some of their money in grain marketing facilities in the countries buying our grain? That's what the Americans have done. They've put elevators so they can haul all year round, and they can buy their grain. If China wants grain, they can go and get it almost immediately from the American elevator that's located in their country, in Taiwan, or in other countries. I think Canada, not provincial governments particularly, has to look at providing for the market when we get the markets and not lose them because of something over which the farmers have no control, such as strikes.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, in view of the time and the words of wisdom I'd like to extol in this great debate, which has been very interesting this afternoon, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, before adjourning the House. The House will not be sitting tonight. I understand the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee will be sitting. I would therefore call it 5:30 and move that the Assembly adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:23 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

