

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: **Monday, October 23, 1978 2:30 p.m.**

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, in your gallery today is a distinguished visitor from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He is Dr. Leon Bagramov, a distinguished scholar and social scientist. Dr. Bagramov is the head of the Canadian section of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada. He is visiting Alberta this week and meeting with officials and ministers in the government, as well with the Premier, and with people at the universities. He is travelling across Canada for the purpose of sharing views in the specialty where he has made his special contribution, and is looking at both the Canadian and American scenes.

I would like at this time to ask that Dr. Bagramov stand and receive the welcome of the Alberta Assembly.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 64****The Provincial Court Act, 1978**

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure today in introducing Bill No. 64, The Provincial Court Act, 1978.

This bill replaces The Provincial Court Act, The Juvenile Court Act, The Family Court Act, and The Small Claims Act. The bill provides for the creation of one provincial court of record, the provincial court of Alberta, which will replace the present provincial courts; namely, the provincial court, the juvenile court, and the family court. Part 4 of the bill will substantially update and streamline the procedures presently found in The Small Claims Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 64 read a first time]

**Bill 70****The Social Care Facilities  
Licensing Amendment Act, 1978**

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill, being The Social Care Facilities Licensing Amendment Act, 1978.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that licences are displayed in a prominent place so that members of the public will be aware that the facility is indeed licensed. It also makes it possible for the Minister of Social Services and Community Health to close unlicensed facilities. It also amends procedures which

may be used by licensing officers in the examination of records of the operators of the facility.

[Leave granted; Bill 70 read a first time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move that the following private member's public bill be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders: Bill No. 259, The Burial of the Dead Act.

[Motion carried]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move another procedural motion: that Bill No. 49, The Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Amendment Act, 1978, not be read a third time now, but be referred back to the Committee of the Whole for further amendment.

[Motion carried]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the fourteenth annual report of the Northern Alberta Development Council, as required by statute.

I would also like to file with the Legislature Library copies of the Northern Alberta Development Council five-year review of activities for the period April '73 to March 1978. Copies of that document will be distributed to all members.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I have pleasure to table the annual report of the Agricultural Development Corporation for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1978, as required by statute. Copies will be made available to all members of the Assembly.

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the Alberta Hospital Services Commission for the nine-month period ended December 31, 1977.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the second annual report of the surface reclamation fund.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Legislature Library copies of a minority report to the Select Standing Committee on The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not aware of any provision or authority for this kind of step. It's certainly something that has come up without any notice to me. We can take the document into our possession for the time being, but what disposition we will make of it will depend on giving it further consideration.

MR. NOTLEY: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, this weekend in Edmonton the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee held its third annual conference, at the Mayfield Inn. The conference is continuing; Members of the

Legislative Assembly had the honor and privilege of joining the conference at a luncheon today, and enjoyed — I am sure I speak on behalf of all the members — the opportunity for exchange of views. In both the members gallery and the public gallery we have members of the committee from the conference. I would ask them to rise wherever they're sitting and have the House welcome them.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. minister Dr. Hohol, the Member for Edmonton Belmont, in his absence I would like to present to this Legislature a class of some 55 students from the St. Vladimir school in his constituency. They are accompanied by teacher Carmela Marino. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the usual welcome.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to introduce Jim Reynolds, the mayor of the town of Fairview, and his wife Doris. In a rare ecumenical mood I would also point out that the mayor of Fairview is a Conservative candidate in the riding of Spirit River-Fairview. [applause] They are both seated in the members gallery. I would ask them to stand and once again be recognized by the members of the House.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to introduce two persons who have played an important role in the municipal councils in the Crowsnest Pass. I'd like to ask Mrs. Helen Gresl from Hillcrest and Mrs. Jean Broddy from Coleman to rise and receive the welcome of the members of the Assembly.

#### head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

##### **Department of Agriculture**

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, as you can see by the appropriately buttoned members of this Legislature, today is a special day, in that we are giving recognition to Alberta's most important renewable resource, agriculture.

This week is officially designated as Agriculture Week, a salute to those men and women who, through hard work and determination, are continuing to provide the basic necessity of life, food. Too often, Mr. Speaker, we forget these unsung heroes. Therefore this week of October 22-28 is appropriately devoted to highlighting their contributions.

About 500,000 Albertans are employed directly or indirectly in agriculture. Farms and ranches employ 100,000 people, and many more work in the long chain of industry carrying Alberta's food products from the farm gates to their final destinations. Over 65 per cent of Alberta's economic activity derives from agriculture-related businesses. In 1977 the sale of agricultural products turned over \$2 billion. It is my hope that during this special week all Albertans will realize the importance of the backbone of our province, the farmer.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that I have in my possession an extra button that I would ask that you pass on to the Leader of the Opposition so he might be appropriately attired as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: He just got it on.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, in responding to the ministerial announcement, I think the fact that I have a button on says something about the kind of vision the Minister of Agriculture has as far as agriculture is concerned. [interjections]

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we all support agriculture. But along with that, we couldn't have very much agriculture without women. So I also wear a button in tribute to our women. [interjections]

#### head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

##### **Women's Status**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my first question to the Premier and to the Attorney General. One has the conundrum whether one asks the first question today on agriculture or on the status of women. But having regard to the fact that half the people involved in agriculture are women and that it's our very proper tradition that women should be first, I'd pose the first question dealing with the recommendations on the status of women made to the government some two years ago.

The first question deals with the concept of a cabinet committee on equal opportunity. My question to the Premier: what progress has the government made in moving towards the formation of a cabinet committee on equal opportunity which was requested by the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee over two years ago?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I refer the question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs in his capacity as chairman of the social planning committee of cabinet.

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the social planning committee of cabinet, which represents all areas in the social development of policies in the government, consistently handles and relates and recommends to other departments those matters which would relate to equal opportunity within the government.

I think the record of the government over years past has been good. As was reported last year and in the spring by the Provincial Treasurer, work is being done in that department among many others. So equal opportunity is constantly being co-ordinated, and other ministers are being advised of the need for it, by the social planning committee.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, very specifically the question to the minister: does this government plan to set up a cabinet committee charged with the responsibility for equal opportunity, as was requested by the Status of Women Action Committee?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, in our view that would be a duplication and would be much less effective than the present organization. So we would not plan to do that.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Premier. It deals with the recommendation that a minister be established to be responsible for the status of women. When the Deputy Premier spoke to the status of women action group on October 29, 1976, he said: to create a ministership responsible for the status of women would be an act of discrimination, and an act of discrimination not against men but against women. Is this still the position of the government of Alberta today?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, our position is just the one that has been described by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. As a result of the submissions received, we examined our organizational structure and felt that we had an appropriate vehicle to assure the proper direction of matters that involve an organization of this nature and concerns with regard to the women in the province, and that that organization was very appropriately centred in the social planning committee of cabinet.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to rephrase the question so that the Premier clearly understands it: does the government plan to designate one minister responsible for the status of women?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I thought I answered that question in what we were saying. We felt that such a number of activities and departments are involved that it really isn't fair to the organizations to delegate to one particular minister the nature of those responsibilities conducted by others. Because the vast majority of these concerns flow through the ministers who are members of the social planning committee of cabinet, the best vehicle is to charge the social planning committee of cabinet and its chairman with that organizational aspect.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, if I might just interpret that answer, it means no.

#### **Matrimonial Property Act**

MR. CLARK: A supplementary question to the Attorney General. When does the government plan to proclaim The Matrimonial Property Act?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, our current intention is to proclaim the act on January 1, 1979.

#### **Human Rights Legislation**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour in his capacity of being responsible to the Assembly for the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Is it the government's intention to introduce during this fall session amendments to The Individual's Rights Protection Act?

MR. CRAWFORD: No, Mr. Speaker, it is not.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, is the government giving any consideration at all to the request that amendments be made to The Individual's Rights Protection Act which would prohibit discrimination by an employer based on matrimonial status?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the government gave a great deal of consideration to a number of proposed amendments, a result of work done by the Human Rights Commission, which were embodied in a presentation they made to me. The work done by the Human Rights Commission was a considerable brief on a very comprehensive number of revisions they had recommended for the human rights legislation.

The government came to the conclusion in might I say the exhaustive if not exhausting study of the work done by the commission — there were numerous meetings of the commissioners with myself and with a caucus committee — that the human rights legislation having been in place and being in very, very good order in any contemporary sense of its provisions having been in place only since 1972, it was premature to consider wholesale revisions. As I informed the House earlier this year, we had decided for that reason not to act upon the proposals of the Human Rights Commission at the present time.

#### **Great Lakes Shipping Strike**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my second question to the Minister of Agriculture. It's a result of the strike now in place on the Great Lakes. Has the Alberta government made representation to the federal government urging it to take whatever action necessary to ensure that the freighters on the Great Lakes will get back to service? It's my understanding that we're losing something like \$10 million a day in agricultural markets, primarily grain, in addition to other losses to western Canada.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I've had some direct discussions with officials of The Canadian Wheat Board, including the chief commissioner, with regard to the effects of that strike on our grain shipments and so on, but I have not made any direct representations to the government of Canada.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker to the minister. Can the minister outline to the Assembly the effect that both the minister and The Wheat Board see a prolonged strike having on grain producers, agricultural people here in the province of Alberta?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I find that a bit difficult, in that the matter of grain shipments through the port of Thunder Bay is not a direct responsibility of the government of Alberta. The discussions I've had with The Canadian Wheat Board would indicate that something in the order of \$10 million worth of grain a day is not moving. For anyone to assess accurately the long-term effects of that would be most difficult, but we know it is a very serious interruption in our grain trade with overseas countries.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Business Development and Tourism and ask if he's in a position to give some indication of the adverse economic effect on Alberta — of Alberta products going east, naturally those that use the Great Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect, we're getting back into asking ministers to make statements of opinion,

prognostications concerning market conditions, and so on; whereas, as hon. members know, the purpose of the question period is to ascertain facts and not to elicit forecasts.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to the Minister of Business Development and Tourism. What effects is the strike on the Great Lakes having on small business in this province?

MR. DOWLING: Mr. Speaker, I can only say that any disruption in transportation networks anywhere in Canada will have an effect on Alberta business; there is no question about that. As to the magnitude, of course we're not in a position to respond at this time. But we're very conscious of the effect it has on our entrepreneurs in Alberta.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier. Having regard for the seriousness of this strike, has the government given consideration to making the strongest possible representation to the federal government to take action to deal with the strike under way on the Great Lakes?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I will refer that to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Transportation.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, we have made representations to the federal government relative to the strike at Thunder Bay, as we did previously to the one that happened at Churchill. There's no doubt that not only is the problem of not moving the grain through the inland waterway a particular problem to the grain now at Thunder Bay, but it means a backing up in the total system, which is far more grave than just the question of the inland waterway. To assess the impact on Alberta is very difficult, as my colleagues have mentioned. But the indirect effect of that blockade, which then increases the pressure on the total system, will have a much more major effect on Alberta than the amount of grain presently going from Alberta through Thunder Bay.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. What form did Alberta's representation take, and what suggestion or recommendation did Alberta make to the federal government?

DR. HORNER: A communication directly to the minister's office relative to the strike, and we didn't use the mail.

MR. CLARK: That's good judgment.

Was the communication to the Minister of Labour or to the Prime Minister?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, it was directly to the federal Minister of Transport, who also happens to be responsible for The Wheat Board.

#### Women's Emergency Shelters

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I'd ask, Mr. Speaker, that you allow me a few brief comments in order to clarify the content of my question. I'd like to indicate to the hon. minister that

representations have been made from the Edmonton women's shelter group with respect to the difficulties they are finding themselves in insofar as having available financial support for women coming to the shelter under crisis situations of mental or physical domestic violence.

Could the hon. minister advise whether there's any possibility of assisting this group providing the service by having any funds available for them?

MISS HUNLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the project to which the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood refers. I would expect some funding is available based on funding similar to that we use for other volunteer agencies such as McDougall House, Kindred House, and the YWCA, which is a *per diem* basis for those who qualify for social assistance. Indeed, some of those clients who would be served in this area would probably be eligible for that type of assistance.

As far as a definite grant for this particular year, the answer is no, because the commitments are already established.

MRS. CHICHAK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. minister could advise whether she has received adequate representation or a submission with respect to the proposed needs of the shelter for consideration in her budget for the coming year.

MISS HUNLEY: I think that point must be taken into consideration as we review the available services. This particular case refers only to the city of Edmonton. At present we are taking a look at the services we already offer in this area, and we're under the impression that some of the facilities presently operated in the city are underutilized. So it means we need to take a look at the ones operated directly by the government, such as Hilltop House, and those operated on a funding basis, such as the City Centre Church Corporation, which operates women's emergency accommodation downtown, and the other agencies to see whether there is a duplication or whether we're making the best possible use of the present facilities available.

MRS. CHICHAK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. minister, after having assessed or put together the information with respect to the services of the various agencies, provide that information to this group to assist them in exploring other avenues?

MISS HUNLEY: Certainly. I would expect that officials of my department would be in contact with them as well, as they are an agency which proposes to offer services to women in a crisis situation. So they would certainly be involved in the consultation, because I think it's important we make adequate use of the facilities we have.

#### Election Act

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pursue some questions with respect to the human rights concerns of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, and direct a question to the hon. Minister Without Portfolio responsible for Calgary Affairs, who I gather is also the minister who pilots election legislation

through the House. If he's not, I would put the question to the Premier.

What consideration led to the provision in The Election Act which requires that a married woman appear on the voters' list by her husband's name, regardless of whether she is known by that name? For example, would Maureen McTeer be able to vote, were she an Albertan?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the answer to that very important question. I imagine it resulted from the recommendations of the select committee of this House which made a report back in 1975. However, I'd be glad to undertake to find the answer and report to the House or to the member.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of the fact that the voters' list has been prepared and that we may have an election in the not-too-distant future, the question to the hon. Premier is: will the government give priority consideration to amendments to The Election Act so that people can be listed on the voters' list on the basis of the name they use?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I don't know about the matter of priority consideration. I think the hon. minister without portfolio has responded in part to that question. Certainly that matter could be looked at. I believe the government took the recommendations of a legislative committee on this matter, but we'll be prepared to look into it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Attorney General. Will he assure the House that there will be no prosecution of women who, in violation of one of the provisions of the present Election Act, are listed by their maiden name on the voters' list even though they are married?

MR. FOSTER: Mr. Speaker, it's not very often I'm asked to give assurances of immunity from the law. But I can't imagine the agents of the Crown prosecuting a female person in such circumstances.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a very sage and wise answer.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would put a question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It flows from this question of the Alberta status group. Has there been any consideration of establishing in Alberta a formal advisory council on the status of women? I'm not talking about the sorts of things the Leader of the Opposition raised, but whether or not the government has given consideration to an advisory council. At the present time I believe that Alberta and Newfoundland are the only provinces that have not established formal councils on the status of women.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, no. As I mentioned previously, we find that the consideration of those matters and the disseminating of information in the social planning committee is more effective for the group and for those interested in that subject than the matter of a separate council.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In the absence of an advisory council on the status of women, has any consideration been given to provincial funding of organizations like the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to look at proposals when information is provided on the basis of which we could make some decisions.

#### **Human Rights Legislation** (continued)

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Labour. It flows from the question of amending The Individual's Rights Protection Act, and from a commitment made in the Speech from the Throne on March 2, 1978. Can the minister advise the House today when the government decided not to proceed with amendments to The Individual's Rights Protection Act, as was indicated on March 2 and further suggested as a result of his answer in the question period on March 8?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the answer was on March 8. But I don't have any difficulty in offering the hon. gentleman a full answer — full in the sense of complete; it need not be lengthy.

As I indicated to hon. members, I went over the whole question in an exhaustive way with the Human Rights Commission. At that time, I had the view that there were matters that should be brought forward and could indeed be put into legislation without specifying them in detail, which wouldn't be appropriate in the Speech from the Throne or even in that time frame. However, the government of Alberta operates probably more democratically than any other government in Canada, by comparison. We have discussions of legislative proposals in such a way that involves the entire caucus, representative as it is of the people of Alberta not only geographically but in every other sense as well.

The carefully considered view of the caucus — and it was a judgment seriously arrived at after much concern and much discussion — was that the human rights legislation in the province of Alberta, standing as it does among those in the forefront of human rights education in Canada and being a relatively young series of two specific statutes, could have a further period of maturing and observation by the people of Alberta generally and by the government as to its effects and operations before moving on the very specific and far-ranging proposals the commission brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, that is a short way of saying that, after much consideration, the caucus changed my mind.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question. I can appreciate the difficulty the hon. minister had attempting to drag his legislative caucus, kicking and screaming, into the twentieth century.

But my question is: is the minister in a position to give the Legislature any indication of the timetable as to when we might expect changes in The Individual's Rights Protection Act, as promised in the Speech from the Throne.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, responding first to the opening comment, I think the hon. member's timetable is such that he is plagiarizing the words, at least half a century old, of a well-known politician — I forget in which country. We've heard this reference to the twentieth century many times.

MR. NOTLEY: Even more accurate today.

MR. CRAWFORD: Even more accurate today, my friend says.

DR. BUCK: Now. Do you know what "now" means?

MR. CRAWFORD: I thought he might have gone so far as to be ready to give me the source of that, because it was done of course for the purpose of suggesting that this legislation isn't contemporary, which the hon. gentleman knows is not so. I just wanted him to have to face the fact that in bringing that in, he is plagiarizing a well-known saying.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, the timetable is under continuous review.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the hon. minister, it's true that it was plagiarism, but not quite as far removed as the hon. minister indicated. It was in fact Adlai Stevenson talking about the Republicans. What Mr. Stevenson said about the Republicans in 1952 is as accurate today with respect to the hon. members of the Tory caucus.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. GHITTER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. Minister of Labour could advise the House in this enlightened twentieth century if the human rights legislation of the province of Saskatchewan has any primacy provisions in it.

MR. SPEAKER: We have here the spectacle of a learned member of this Legislature seeking to find out from another learned member the state of the law outside this jurisdiction. I think there might be other places to pursue that inquiry.

MR. GHITTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and possibly the Member for Spirit River-Fairview would take the same opportunity.

#### **Pension Legislation**

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Will Bill 60, The Special Forces Pension Act, go through this session of the Legislature in its present form, or will major amendments be made?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I believe that bill will be up for debate on second reading this afternoon. I think that would be an appropriate time for the hon. gentleman to take part in the debate, and I'll respond to the question then.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in that case I would like to ask a supplementary question. Can the Provincial Treasurer indicate to this Legislature and the people of this province what discussions, negotiations, and

consultations went on between the minister or his department and the Alberta Fire Fighters Association before the legislation was brought in?

MR. LEITCH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to do that. I personally met with the representatives of the Fire Fighters Association recently, and during the summer meetings were held with representatives from the department at which representatives of the Fire Fighters Association were present.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Can the Provincial Treasurer indicate at this time if the firefighters will be taken out of the legislation that is going to be coming before us in committee study?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is doing some questioning which would perhaps be quite appropriate at the second reading stage, or even more so at the committee stage. In effect he is asking the hon. minister to predict the result of the debate on that bill, and the decision of the Assembly. I find that not a suitable topic for the question period.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, with great respect, the reason I am pursuing the line of questioning is that there's a major provision here. Two groups are involved: one group willing, and one very unwilling bride. I want to know because it's a major point which we'll be discussing later on, and we have to know if the two groups will be included.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: It still relates to the legislation. Surely that can be brought up when the legislation is under debate, admittedly without in any way disagreeing with the member concerning the importance of those two items.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Can the Provincial Treasurer indicate to the Legislature what consultation took place with the small firefighting associations in this province, if any?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I think these are all very important and appropriate questions, and just suggest they be dealt with at the time we're debating the bill in principle on second reading or, alternatively, at the committee stage. I'd simply call to the hon. gentleman's attention, in case he has not perused the legislation, that participation under that plan is entirely voluntary. [interjections]

#### **Health Care Insurance Coverage**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Does the Alberta health care insurance plan pay for abortions done outside Alberta on women who have established residence in Alberta?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take that question as notice and report to the House on it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, could I ask a supplementary that the hon. minister may also wish to do the same thing with? Are there any geographic limitations on where the Alberta health care insurance plan pays for abortions performed on women who are resident in Alberta? Thirdly, does Alberta health care pay for abortions performed in Alberta on women who are not residents of Alberta?

MR. MINIELY: Mr. Speaker, I'll take all of those as notice and report to the House.

#### **Federal/Provincial Fiscal Talks**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. I'd like to ask the minister if he has had recent meetings with the Finance Minister, the Hon. Jean Chretien, with regard to federal expenditure cuts.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I had a meeting with the federal Finance Minister that concluded several hours ago, but I wouldn't characterize it as a meeting on federal expenditure cuts. Although those matters formed part of the discussion, that wasn't the prime topic during our meeting.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer. Could the Provincial Treasurer indicate at this time the prime subject of the conversation?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, we discussed in very general terms the Alberta and Canadian economies, and economic policy in very general terms. I also raised with the federal Minister of Finance, in compliance with a question raised earlier in the House, the matter of extending the capital cost allowance for rental accommodation in Canada. Those were the principal economic items that we discussed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the Provincial Treasurer. Could the Provincial Treasurer indicate whether any progress was made with regard to the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act and the utility tax rebate?

MR. LEITCH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we also touched on that subject, and there was progress in the sense that we agreed that we would have some further discussions about it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the Provincial Treasurer. Was there any indication of the extension into 1978-79 of the waterfowl damage plan?

MR. LEITCH: That wasn't an item, Mr. Speaker, that we discussed.

MR. GOGO: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Provincial Treasurer with regard to his meeting with the federal Finance Minister. Could the Provincial Treasurer inform the House whether a loan from the Alberta heritage savings trust fund was discussed?

MR. LEITCH: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer. Was there discussion of grain storage facilities? Earlier in the House this was raised as a matter to be discussed.

MR. LEITCH: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, could I ask a supplementary? In view of a concern being expressed by many of the utility companies in the province of Alberta if this tax is repealed, has the minister considered making further protest to the federal government whether this action is going to affect investment in the utility industry in our province?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, as I followed it, the question was whether we were going to make further representations to the federal Minister of Finance to the effect that the proposed repeal of the public utilities tax transfer act would harm investment by the private utility companies in the province.

In response to that, I can say that that was one of the points I made some time ago in my submissions to the federal Minister of Finance in protest of that proposal. I reaffirmed it this morning, and expect to emphasize it again during further discussions on that topic. I anticipate that that will be a topic for discussion at the upcoming finance ministers' meeting.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a further supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. Did the question come up of the agreement between the producing provinces and the federal government on the \$1 per barrel increase, which had been agreed upon and from which the federal minister attempted to back off when he brought down his recent fiscal statement? And did the minister get any commitment from the federal government?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I would expect detailed discussions of that to be dealt with by the Alberta Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. During this session he's already commented in the Assembly on discussions of that. I would not be involved in the details of or discussions about that agreement.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Did the minister discuss with the Finance Minister the question of federal loans to the provinces under Section 43 of the National Housing Act? It's indicated they're to be terminated.

MR. LEITCH: No, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Cable Television Licences**

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs with regard to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. Could the minister indicate whether he or his department has an opportunity to make submissions when applications are made to the CRTC for expansion of cable television?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions we have asked the CRTC if they would provide us with information as to any forthcoming licence

applications or renewals which could be of interest to or have impact upon Albertans. This would be in addition to those which are publicized in the local media. The opportunity would arise particularly with respect to non-broadcast services, which are within the jurisdiction of the provincial governments.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, the reason I ask this question is that recently four applications were made at Red Deer for expansion of cable television. Unfortunately Lacombe was at the wrong end of the stick, because they ended up receiving permission to extend television in the area which is going to be at exceptionally high cost, and restricted programs. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if there is any procedure for us as a province to appeal a decision. Is there any formal route to appeal an approval of this type which is not really acceptable, certainly to my constituency?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe the only appeal route is to the federal cabinet, except for an appeal to the courts on a matter of law or jurisdiction. So if the hon. member would perhaps provide me with further information, and if that is an available route, I would be happy to look into it and see whether the opportunity for an appeal might be of use in his constituency.

#### Utility Rates

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, my question arises from answers to the question to the Provincial Treasurer. I'd like to ask the Minister of Utilities and Telephones if he has under consideration any plans that would help offset the increase in utility rates that is going to be passed to every person in the province of Alberta who pays a light bill if the federal government repeals the transfer act.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, not at the present time. It's our view that this is a proposal which shifts taxation onto a certain group of people in Canada, particularly in Alberta; that it is wrong in principle; and that those citizens who would be affected need to be alert to the suggestion of the federal government and in fact make their feelings felt so that a reversal of that ill-conceived proposal could be achieved.

#### Synchrude Ownership

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Has the government of Ontario given any indication to the government of Alberta that it wishes to sell its share of Synchrude?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, not in that way. They haven't said they are seeking to sell their share of Synchrude. I think they have said publicly, and in one formal discussion with me, that if somebody were interested in making them an offer they would give it serious consideration.

#### Federal/Provincial Fiscal Talks (continued)

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. The purpose of the meeting you

had this morning wasn't clear to me, Mr. Treasurer. Could the minister indicate clearly whether it was a meeting to discuss an upcoming federal budget, or in preparation for a finance ministers' meeting to be held shortly?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, it was not in preparation for a finance ministers' meeting. The federal Minister of Finance is discussing with the provincial treasurers — or the provincial ministers of finance, as the case may be — holding a general discussion with them about economic conditions in their provinces and in the nation as a whole. It was that general purpose that led to the meeting.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer. Did the federal Finance Minister indicate in the discussion that the federal government would like to suggest some new attacks on the economic problems of Canada at the present time, some new proposals or programs?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. gentleman is well aware that there is no way that kind of question could be answered in this Assembly or in the federal assembly. I'm surprised at his asking.

#### Agriculture Department Offices

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. It relates to an attempt by the Department of Agriculture to acquire office facilities in the offices of the MD of Rocky View. My question to the minister: can he explain the circumstances surrounding a commitment made by his department to take space in the new administrative building of the MD of Rocky View, and now the department's failure in fact to live up to that commitment?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I refer that question to the Minister of Housing and Public Works.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the information I have is that some discussions have taken place with regard to the lease rate and the department's request to the municipality for information on the cost of tenant improvements. We're waiting for that sort of information.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, would either minister indicate to the Assembly whether a commitment was made by officials of the Department of Agriculture to the MD of Rocky View that they in fact would be using space in those offices for the Department of Agriculture?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has a copy of a letter addressed to me, with copies to other persons, indicating some concern by the council with respect to office space they had purportedly provided for the Department of Agriculture. The matter was being followed up last Thursday and Friday, and is again today, by the Deputy Minister of Housing and Public Works and the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. I can assure the hon. member the matter will be resolved. Indeed, I don't believe any



commitments were made by this government that are not being followed through and lived up to.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to either one of the ministers. Would the minister confirm that in the course of building, work was in fact done by the MD of Rocky View in making facilities compatible for the Department of Agriculture; and now the department, either Agriculture or Housing and Public Works, is trying to back off? Are the ministers aware?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I have the same letter the hon. Leader of the Opposition has; it was addressed to me. I can't confirm or deny the contents of the letter relative to the comments that may have been made by members of the staff of the Department of Agriculture, whether they be in the Airdrie region or here in headquarters. But the matter is being pursued, and I'm sure concerns of the county will be resolved in due course.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, it's pretty obvious the reason this whole thing developed was that one department didn't know what the other was doing.

My question to the Minister of Agriculture is simply this: are the officials of the Department of Agriculture who negotiated with the MD of Rocky View able to make a binding commitment on behalf of the Department of Agriculture?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer further than I already have. The matter was drawn to the attention of me and the Minister of Housing and Public Works by way of letter, I believe last Thursday; and it is being followed up by officials of our department, I hope to a successful conclusion. I'd be prepared, as I'm sure the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works would be, to respond further when the matter has been resolved.

MR. CLARK: One last question, this time to the Minister of Housing and Public Works. Is it the responsibility of the Department of Housing and Public Works to enter into agreements and acquire space for all government departments? Does that include the Department of Agriculture or not?

MR. CHAMBERS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, Alberta Public Works actually enters into the negotiations and discussion for leases, and therefore acquires through lease or whatever arrangement for the user department.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister: is the Department of Housing and Public Works considering some sort of compensation to the municipal district of Rocky View if in fact no arrangement is worked out so that they can use the facilities?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I think it was last Thursday or Friday I got what I'm sure was the same letter, addressed to the Minister of Agriculture with a copy to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. In checking on it, routine negotiations with regard to lease rate and the cost of tenant improvement are under way. So I don't know what I can add to that.

MR. CLARK: Well, the commitment was made by your own people six months ago.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

#### **Student Loans**

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. A very short explanation is required first. Some graduate students who secured a federal loan to get their education, and who have since not been able to get employment, are now being advised that their bill is being transferred to a collection agency. My question is: has the federal government indicated to the hon. minister or to the government of Alberta that there will be an extra charge — some say it may be up to 18 per cent — by the collection agency against these loans?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had any information directed to me personally by the federal government on that matter, but if the hon. member would provide me with information and details as to the specific situation I'd be happy to take it up with the appropriate members of the federal government.

#### **Housing Developers**

MR. GHITTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to inquire of the Minister of Housing and Public Works whether his department has had occasion to monitor the amount of funds from our house-building industry which are leaving the province of Alberta to the United States. If so, could he give some indication to this House of whether or not this will have a serious impact on the housing construction starts in the province of Alberta, considering that our major developers seem to be leaving this jurisdiction?

MR. CHAMBERS: I'm assuming, Mr. Speaker, that you're telling me that isn't a question of opinion.

I don't know. Obviously we know that some of the larger developers are active now in various centres south of the border. I guess it reflects the fact that many of the Canadian developers are very, very successful and are able to operate in Canada and in the U.S. and compete very successfully down there. It's my understanding that their activities down there won't . . . From general discussions I've had, they've no intention of curtailing their activities here; rather it's a question of corporate expansion. As to the amount of capital moving there or the impact, I really don't know.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might provide an answer to a question asked on Friday.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

#### **Occupational Health and Safety**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, on Friday the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview asked me about the government's views with respect to a legal case which resulted after the deaths of three workers; a prosecution followed and was dismissed in court. I think hon. members agree that it was a very impor-

tant case, and at that time I was not sure whether a notice of appeal had in fact been filed.

The department advises me that a notice of appeal has been filed, and the case will be proceeding in that way.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Leader of the Opposition revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

### head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of some 50 students from the Olds agricultural college. They are seated in the public gallery. They are accompanied by two very fine instructors, Mr. Chuck Howard and Mr. Wayne Getty. I'd ask that they rise and receive the usual welcome of members of the Assembly.

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

#### Bill 62 The Crowsnest Pass Municipal Unification Act

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 62, The Crowsnest Pass Municipal Unification Act.

This act will create the fourteenth largest incorporated urban municipality in the province. It will be the sixth largest town, and it will be the third largest community or incorporated municipality in the province in terms of area, covering 166,796.72 hectares which, for us who aren't familiar with the metric system, covers an area of approximately 56 square miles. It will unify under one municipal administration the present towns of Blairmore and Coleman, the villages of Bellevue and Frank, and approximately nine hamlets in Improvement District No. 5 in the Crowsnest Pass outside the forest reserve boundary, being Hillcrest Mines, East Coleman, Blairmore Road, Graftontown, Carbondale, Willow Drive, Sentinel, and Hazel.

The history of the development of the Crowsnest Pass goes back to the turn of the century, with the construction of the CPR. It was perhaps the first area of industrialization in the province, with the establishment of coal mines, zinc smelters, and cement factories. It has had a very interesting and diverse history. I could perhaps go on at length, but I think I would like to comment on the development of the mines, which basically set up the communities.

Each town which exists there today had its own separate coal mine, and a number of the hamlets had their own coal mines. This led to the development of the area historically: the fact that the coal miners lived in a residential community virtually around the

minehead. I think that has led to some of the historic differences of the area, the historic diversity and the fact that over time strong loyalties to the local mining company were built up. This is reflected in history. Perhaps the [reason] the communities haven't got together earlier is that they had this loyalty to their mineheads and to their companies.

Perhaps the other reason for historic differences was the intense sports rivalry in the area. Each community has its own recreational arenas. There were hockey teams which had very fierce competition in those arenas. That has led to the history of intermunicipal rivalry which has extended to the present day.

I'd now like to turn to the process of discussions which have taken place with regard to suggestions for the unification of the communities. In an editorial in *The Blairmore Enterprise* in 1911, commenting on the amalgamation of the cities of Strathcona and Edmonton which took place then, the editor stated that it would be wonderful if the communities in the Crowsnest Pass were as farsighted as the cities of Edmonton and Strathcona in getting together. I guess that was the first public suggestion that the communities in the Crowsnest Pass should in fact become one body.

Since 1966 various discussions have taken place in the area to study the possibility of unification. A study committee was set up in 1970 and continued under the auspices of the Minister of Municipal Affairs at that time, the Hon. Dave Russell. That study committee had commissioned a number of studies to look into the question of utilities and what would be the advantages and disadvantages of the area getting together. It continued to 1974 and did not reach any clear resolution of the situation.

In 1975 the local councils again came back to debate the question of whether the area would be better off under one municipal government and to face some of the serious concerns they had in the development of the area. They requested a meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. That meeting took place on July 8. The hon. Member for Lethbridge East, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, was there. He met with the joint councils of the Crowsnest Pass: the towns of Blairmore and Coleman, the villages of Bellevue and Frank, and the Improvement District No. 5 advisory council. The conclusion of that meeting was a request to the province to undertake a study of the area to put forward what would be the benefits and advantages and to put forward some sort of framework under which the municipalities could get together. That study was led very ably by Mr. Frank Marlyn, director of special projects for the Department of Municipal Affairs, and Mr. Ellwein Kettner, also from the Department of Municipal Affairs. I think a great deal of credit should be extended to those two gentlemen for the time and effort they put into the amalgamation study of the Crowsnest Pass.

This study continued over a period of two years, with a great deal of consultation with the councils, looking at the different situations, reviewing it, and presenting alternatives. Finally a document came down in December 1978. A further meeting of the joint councils of the communities was held on February 4. The Minister of Municipal Affairs was present. It reviewed the amalgamation study. A reso-

lution was passed by the joint councils of the Crowsnest Pass that amalgamation was worth pursuing, and they requested that before making a decision on that matter they would wish to gain the advice of their citizens. At that meeting, a liaison committee on unification was set up with two representatives from each council in the Crowsnest Pass. At the first meeting, they requested that I become the chairman of that group. That really started my intense involvement with the process.

In order to gain advice of the citizens of the Crowsnest Pass, a series of public information meetings was set up. A meeting was held in each community in the area to present to the citizens the unification proposal which had been developed by the liaison committee and ratified by each of the councils. This was a very interesting process. I think the citizens in the area certainly benefited from the public information meetings in getting a better idea of what unification could do for them, some of the benefits, some of the advantages, and also a thorough discussion of some of the disadvantages.

After the public information meetings, a public opinion poll was scheduled on June 23 of this year, which resulted in overwhelming support of the citizens of the area for unification. The question asked was: are you in favor of one unified municipal government for the Crowsnest Pass? The results were that 67.2 per cent of the citizens who voted agreed that they wished to see the Crowsnest Pass under one unified municipal government.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Legislature Library two copies of the results of that vote, if I may.

I might just review how each community voted. The citizens of the improvement district voted 53 per cent in favor; of the town of Coleman, 57 per cent in favor; of Bellevue, 66 per cent in favor; of the town of Blairmore, 82 per cent in favor; of the village of Frank, 89 per cent in favor; the citizens who reside at the senior citizens' lodge said, we're already amalgamated, and voted 90 per cent in favor.

As a follow-up to that public opinion poll, a meeting of all the councils in the Crowsnest Pass was convened on July 14. The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs was unable to attend, but the deputy minister was there. The councils thoroughly discussed the results of the public opinion poll and passed unanimously a resolution that on the basis of the results of the public opinion poll the Department of Municipal Affairs proceed with the amalgamation of municipal governments in the Crowsnest Pass. At that point the legislation started to be drafted. A number of meetings with the municipalities, the liaison committee, and joint councils has been held to discuss the legislation to ensure that it has in fact reflected the unification proposal put to the citizens.

Now I'd like to review some of the conditions in the Crowsnest Pass which led the citizens to look at unification, some of the discrepancies in services and those sorts of things. The Crowsnest Pass lies along a very narrow valley. There are the four incorporated municipalities and the improvement district area, which I have earlier described. The communities probably would be one except for some physical phenomena like the Frank Slide in 1903, which separates the village of Bellevue and the hamlet of Hillcrest from the town of Blairmore and the village of Frank. In the west end, only approximately one mile

separates the towns of Blairmore and Coleman, which are the major urban centres in the area.

So what we have down there presently — the existing situation — are five separate units of government which service approximately 7,600 people, and we have 27 elected municipal officials governing that area. It has presented some difficulties which I'd like to go into.

The residents who live in the improvement district area, approximately 30 per cent of the people, have not enjoyed local government. This proposal will give those people local government. When you're providing services to an area like the Crowsnest Pass, you have a number of different hamlets. The discrepancy in where people live and where the financial resources exist does not give the entire citizens the benefit of the tax base in the area. There are a number of different municipal arrangements which must be entered into to service the needs of the people there. Look at your hospital arrangements, your school arrangements, your PSS arrangements. Any time one would want to do something to serve the people of that area, one would have to go into extensive and exhaustive negotiations, get the concurrence of five governments to construct a facility or provide a service. It can be time-consuming to get the concurrence of all councils. Often if one council did not approve a certain service or construction of a certain facility, it never got constructed or the service was never provided.

Another area which would benefit the area, or one of the problems there, is that with five different levels of government providing municipal services, there's quite a duplication in terms of equipment, time, and facilities. If there were one municipality perhaps there would be a minimization of this duplication of services and a more concerted effort to provide those services. Also one unit of government rather than the five existing ones would probably be able to provide improved professional services to the area.

One area where we really had a great deal of difficulty was with regard to the question of community identity, which has thrived there over the years, and how you resolve that when you put five levels of municipal administration together with the diverse history those people have had. It's been suggested that that could be handled by setting up local community associations within each of the existing towns, and they could provide that community identity which has survived throughout time.

One of the things pointed out was that when Jasper Place became part of Edmonton, it was still known as Jasper Place. That community identity has continued. The same with Bowness in Calgary. Within the improvement district area itself, communities like Hillcrest have always been known as Hillcrest and will continue to be known as Hillcrest. I think we've been able to get around that situation of preserving community identity by suggesting the setting up of local community associations and perhaps having some level of services given to these local community associations, such as libraries or running some of the recreational facilities.

As I've described earlier, the Crowsnest Pass basically serves one economic unit. The commercial activity serves one market area. There is one housing area and one employment area for all intents and purposes. It's served by one hospital, and there is a

common school board. One of the problems you face, though, is that if the industrial activity is located outside the incorporated municipalities, these incorporated municipalities have to provide services such as housing, yet they don't receive the benefit of the tax base which lies outside the urban areas.

There's a need to diversify the economy of the area. The coal industry is the basic industry and the area has had to survive basically on the ups and downs of the coal industry. The capacity of the present municipalities to attract new industry has, I think, been hampered by the political arrangements, because each municipality would like to see industry located in its area and not in another municipality and the competition has to some degree chased away prospective industries.

The question of land resource and utilization is important. As I've described, the Crowsnest Pass valley is narrow. Certain areas are conducive to urban development and certain areas are conducive to housing. If the industry does locate in areas best suited to industrial development, the local municipalities don't gain the benefit of the tax base yet they have to provide the services. If the area were under one municipal government, the benefits of the industrial tax base would be equalized to all citizens in the area.

There's a great discrepancy in the tax base of the area. The improvement district has the highest per capita assessment of the municipalities in the area, whereas the village of Bellevue has the lowest. By incorporating these areas under one municipality you would equalize that tax base. Presently 70 per cent of the industrial tax base is in the improvement district area, while it has only 30 per cent of the people. The incorporated municipalities don't have that tax base, yet they're faced with providing the services.

One of the important areas which the province has put forward would be to provide the municipality with transitional assistance in the first five years of a new amalgamated government. This capital transitional assistance will certainly benefit municipalities in terms of their ability to provide some services and capital works, which they haven't previously been able to do.

Briefly I'd now like to go over what are, I believe, the advantages of one municipal government for the Crowsnest Pass area. One municipality would eliminate the political fragmentation I have described. It would provide the people with one unit of government to solve together the common problems of the area. The shift in the tax base would provide all citizens with benefits rather than one community benefiting where others don't. It would allow them to plan rationally the scarce land resource of the area. It would allow them to have concerted economic development under one community rather than five different approaches.

Another benefit would be that all persons there would enjoy local government. In the situation I've described, the people in the improvement district area do not have local government. There would be minimization of the duplication of effort and services in the area. There would be an augmentation in the level of services provided, plus, I believe, the cost and benefits of existing and new development would be equitably shared. The consolidation of the assessment base of the area, together with the transitional assistance grant, would permit upgrading of some

services or speeding up of the timing of some improvements. Generally it would strengthen the capacity of the area to deal with either periodic recession or times of rapid growth.

I'd like now to turn to the bill itself and some of the provisions in it. Earlier I alluded to the fact that there's a provision for transitional capital assistance up to \$2 million to be provided to the area over a five-year period. There's provision in the bill for the initial political arrangement of nine councillors elected from three wards with the mayor elected at large. It also provides for the setting up of the election machinery for the first election, which would take place prior to the unification of the area in January 1979.

It provides for wildfire protection for the area by the Department of Energy and Natural Resources. It gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council power to provide for transitional regulations to effect the unification. It deals with the perhaps difficult question of utilities in the area and how they would best fit into a unified government structure; the question of the Coleman natural gas system for providing benefits to the citizens of the Coleman area from the development of that Coleman natural gas system by setting up a Coleman area recreational facility fund which would provide for the construction of a recreational facility in the Coleman area.

It provides for the ability of the minister to make regulations to cover the assessment inequalities which may happen from the amalgamation of an urban and rural area. It provides a grant structure which undertakes the principle put forward that by being unified the area shouldn't receive less in government grants than it would have if it had stayed as five separate jurisdictions. It provides that the capital assistance grant may be matched by other government grants and also provides for the area's representation on regional bodies.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for unification of a number of municipalities in the Crowsnest Pass and reflects the proposal put to the citizens this June. It is my belief that this bill will set the stage for the people of the Crowsnest Pass to fulfil their aspirations for the future.

Thank you.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a few comments dealing with Bill 62 in second reading. We in the official opposition plan to support the bill. I think it would be fair to say that this bill coming before the Assembly at this session is the culmination of a lot of work done by a large number of people over a large number of years. I give credit to the councils in the whole Crowsnest Pass, because if any one of them really had seriously wanted to stop this move, there's no question they would have been able to do that.

When I was involved with the Department of Youth, I can recall the attempt to set up a recreation board to serve the five communities of the Pass and the ID, and the complex nature of the negotiations getting all the communities to agree. Finally we got to that great occasion when everyone agreed. Then there was quite a long time before everything was signed. But it was only a year or two before the thing started to come apart.

Really the major point I want to make in taking part

during the debate of second reading is: it's going to call for the new council of the new unified municipality of Crowsnest Pass to have the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job during the first period of time. I wish the new council, when elected, the greatest of success, because a move in this direction can't help but be progress for the Crowsnest Pass area. But it will not be done easily and it isn't something that isn't going to have some real growing pains.

I would give this bit of advice to the Minister of Municipal Affairs; I know he's always anxious for advice from this side of the House.

DR. BUCK: He needs all the help he can get.

MR. CLARK: Indeed, that's very accurate.

But the point I want to make to the Minister of Municipal Affairs is that I believe a very good case can be made for sizable incorporation financial assistance to this new municipality. I notice in the bill that they will in fact get no less financial assistance from the province than they've received collectively in the past. I think that some special financial assistance to the Crowsnest Pass area in the initial few years of getting this unified corporation off and running would be a very, very wise investment. I think in terms of something from three to five years, with the size of the special financial consideration at its maximum during the first year, reduced somewhat during the second, third, and fourth, and perhaps phased out in the fifth year. I think it would be a move the government should very seriously consider when looking at giving all the assistance it actually can to this newly incorporated municipality of Crowsnest Pass, giving it a leg up, because the job isn't going to be easy.

We also must recognize that the coal markets of the world and the ability to have the mining ventures in that area operate successfully will either make this transition easier or more difficult, and there's a need to tie to the economy of the area this kind of special financial assistance I'm proposing.

Mr. Speaker, we plan to support Bill 62 enthusiastically. We think it's the result of a lot of work by many people over many, many years. I want to pay tribute to at least two past members of the Assembly: Charles Drain, who was the member from '67 until '75 — I have oftentimes heard Mr. Drain talk about this becoming a reality — and Mr. William Kovach, the member a number of years in the past, who also used to sit very near to where the Member for Camrose is now sitting. I can recall Mr. Kovach talking of that becoming a reality and his saying, basically it's a matter of timing, when the municipalities and the people in the area felt collectively that they could move in that direction.

Obviously the time is here, and let's move on with it.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take just a moment or two of the Assembly's time to make a comment on Bill 62, The Crowsnest Pass Municipal Unification Act.

Over the past 10 years, Mr. Speaker, I have had many opportunities of venturing into what's known as the Pass area and, as a member from southern Alberta, am familiar with some of the difficulties experienced with that area. Even I could detect, as I

drove through Bellevue, Frank, Blairmore, and Coleman, many distinct differences in that area. One would have to know and understand the people, their ethnic backgrounds, their vocational experiences, and the experiences in the coal industry that they'd brought from other parts of Canada, certainly from the maritimes.

As the Leader of the Opposition says, sure, it is not a one-man job. Agreed. Many people have been involved over the years. But I do think, Mr. Speaker, it should be very clearly pointed out to the members of this Assembly that it was pretty well, I believe, the leadership displayed by the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest that acted as a catalyst and motivating force to get these people to do it.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, in looking at the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, who just happens to be the youngest member of this Assembly, I think it would be very important to some of the younger Albertans around this province who question the role of a legislator in this province — that perhaps in some people's minds Alberta is a staid old province where objectives cannot be accomplished. I think this one outstanding example should prove to many young Albertans that they should get involved in the process of representing their citizens in the Legislative Assembly, and I'd like very heartily to congratulate the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest in moving this bill.

Thank you.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to make a few remarks about Bill 62. I was a little disappointed in the hon. Leader of the Opposition when he mentioned a couple of past MLAs who worked on this, and forgot to mention or intentionally disregarded the fact that the present MLA for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest brought this to fruition. He was the one who brought it all to reality.

When I served on the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission, I remember speaking to many of the representatives from that area and their many second thoughts and pessimism regarding this coming to fruition. It's truly a step forward, and the people down there are to be congratulated for their ability to communicate, reason, negotiate, and come up with this workable formula which the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has presented to us here this afternoon. Having known a little bit about the people, the attitudes, and the area down there, it has been truly a remarkable piece of statesmanship for the hon. member to have brought this to fruition, and he is to be very heartily congratulated.

Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to support the bill. Having lived in a coal-mining area for many years, I know the conflicts that arise between the hamlets, the towns, the villages, and the city. Knowing that, I can't emphasize the tremendous pleasure that comes to me when I realize that those conflicts have been overcome to the point where the people are prepared to join into one municipality. I believe this is a real achievement on the part of the Department of Municipal Affairs and on the part of the hon. member Mr. Bradley. Undoubtedly there must have been very frustrating moments, and maybe hours, during the periods of negotiation.

When the various coal-mining areas — whether

they're hamlets, villages, or towns — were in their prime, there was tremendous pride in each one of those areas centred around, normally, one coal mine. The feelings rise pretty fast and furiously when any suggestion is made that they lose their entity. I have looked through the bill to some degree, and I haven't spotted the clause that I would like to have seen; namely, that each of those hamlets, villages, and so on will be able to keep its entity by a sign like "Bellevue District" or "Blairmore District". Perhaps the hon. member will deal with this when he's closing the debate. I think that's very, very important, and would go a long way toward making the people feel they're still in Blairmore, Bellevue, or Hillcrest, or still in the ID.

Those who have never lived in coal-mining areas might think this is a very insignificant point. But the average coal miner and his family have a tremendous allegiance to that particular area. That's the mine where they made their living for many, many years. That's the mine where sometimes some of their loved ones were injured or killed. It becomes almost part and parcel of the life of each family in these hamlets, villages, and towns. So I marvel at the achievement the hon. member, the people of the Crowsnest Pass, and the Department of Municipal Affairs have made in the unification and bringing the people to the point where they themselves decided they wanted to have a new municipality under one government.

I say these things, Mr. Speaker, because I too am going through a similar process in the Drumheller valley, where we have at least a number of hamlets without government other than Municipal Affairs — East Coulee, Cambria, Lehigh, Rosedale, Nacmine, Wayne — each one feeling some pride in their particular hamlet, and then the city of Drumheller in the midst. There's still some of the old rivalry and some of the hatred, almost, that exists between a hamlet and the city.

So coming from a coal-mining area and being part of one of the mining camps, not part of the city, I can well understand how the people feel. Consequently I say again, this is a marvellous achievement. Along with the hon. members of this Legislature, I want to wish those who are appointed to office, and the new municipality, tremendous success in their endeavors.

In our consideration of this matter in the Drumheller valley, where tremendous similarities as well as quite a number of differences exist — undoubtedly the same as in the Crowsnest Pass, where there are a number of similarities and common interests among the various towns, villages, and the ID, but also a number of differences too. The amalgamation or the willingness of the people by a vote to join together and to share the common interest, the good and the bad, is a tremendous achievement. It's going to be a little bit different in the Drumheller valley, because we have one city and all the rest are hamlets. But even there, problems are arising because we have only one government; for instance, the transportation grant for the city, part of which they can use for bus services within the city, whereas the bus service outside the city is far more urgent and far more needed — not that it's not needed inside the city too. That builds up another point of conflict.

I'm hoping this bill will be the forerunner of similar things happening in similar areas. I know it's not exactly the same in the Drumheller valley as it is in

the Crowsnest Pass. But it's very similar, and we will now have something definite to follow and build on. I'm sure the people of the Drumheller valley, whether in the city or in the hamlets, will be looking with interest on what happens in the Crowsnest Pass municipal district.

One other point I'd like to mention, and this has been one of the items of concern in the Drumheller valley, is the place where the Department of Municipal Affairs of the government of Alberta offers special grants totalling \$2 million over a five-year period. I think this is very, very worth while and very, very wise, because there are going to be a number of things now that have to be done that couldn't possibly have been done when you had a number of separate entities. This \$5 million, or \$2 million — I almost raised the ante for you, hon. member — will be a tremendous boost toward doing some of the things that will unify and equalize the situation in these various places. Because they aren't equal in almost any respect. When we talk about roads, the ID roads may be good but they can't equal the roads of an incorporated town or city. The garbage collection is reasonable but can't equal that which is found in towns and cities. The police protection is another item that has to be equalized. We could go on and on and on. But these are essential items, and I congratulate the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, the government of Alberta and, of course, the hon. member for providing this special fund to be voted by the Legislature for the purpose of helping out this municipality.

I look with interest in following the progress of this new municipal district. I plan to support the bill, and again commend the hon. member sponsoring the bill, and the Department of Municipal Affairs specifically for what I consider a red-letter achievement.

DR. WARRACK: Mr. Speaker, I move to speak on this matter. I do so as a member of a rural constituency and with some status as a veteran, I guess, in this Legislature — to comment in two or three areas of what's involved here as I see it. First of all, those of us with rural constituencies nearly always have some competing centres in them. I think of my own case, for example, the very obvious and, if well-managed in terms of the leadership of the communities, very healthy kind of competition that exists between Three Hills and Trochu, between Acme and Beiseker, between Olds and Didsbury, between Didsbury and Carstairs. In that regard I think of the overpass developments that occurred in the last term.

But most of all [I] take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to point out, particularly to those who might be from urban areas in Alberta, recognizing they have their unique problems, that it is really a massive and difficult statesmanlike kind of task to bring together communities that have traditions, literally by way of their community personalities and the individuals involved in them, in terms of competing with one another, and to bring them together into a compatible form, for the vision of the future that's been done here and reflected in this act, something I think this Legislature should not take lightly and should fully recognize the contributions of those who made it possible.

I really must express my disappointment in the Leader of the Opposition — who I rather admire in a

number of areas; after all we are next to one another in geographic constituency configuration — mentioning the two Social Credit MLAs who previously represented that constituency before my colleague Mr. Fred Bradley, of whom I'm very proud. Also I think it's fair to say that that overlooked an MLA of yet another party who preceded those Social Credit MLAs, or was in that time frame somewhere, and who no doubt tried very hard to achieve these kinds of things for the good of the people in the area as well.

I really feel disappointed in the Leader of the Opposition being so remiss as not to include in the series of congratulations on this, the person who helped make it actually happen. Any member of a rural constituency will readily agree from his own experience — and the hon. Member for Drumheller has shared some of his with members of the Legislature — what a difficult, time-consuming, and important task it is to bring people and communities together for their common good.

This kind of thing involves a tremendous number of meetings, individual conversations, discussions, and assurances. Through people I know well personally in that area of southern Alberta, I happen to know that Fred Bradley has performed those matters extremely effectively, not only by way of his best intentions but effectively as well to get this done. I really regret that that's not even recognized in the comments of the Leader of the Opposition and that that is presumably the consensus of that caucus, since no other member of the opposition party has spoken.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's also important to note — and I note this because it's so easy to look at things, and complain about things, knock things, and overlook the sorts of achievements that are sometimes upon us, of which this is one. After all, it is easy to criticize various things, and it doesn't take very many criticisms to make a complex kind of package like this fall apart.

There are some reasons why it did not fall apart, and that in fact we have this bill before us for discussion in the Legislature on October 23, 1978. Those reasons go far and wide. They go throughout the communities involved, their locally elected governments and other leaders, and the member of the Legislature for the area, no doubt assisted by the previous member of the Legislature, Mr. Drain, who I came to admire very much during the first term I was in this Legislature. But it also should not be overlooked that there are members of the government — the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, who I think has been open, effective, and reasonable in dealing with this and many other matters. Now that I've said that, he might laugh at some of my jokes.

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't count on it.

DR. WARRACK: But it is a fact that this surely could not have occurred without that sort of co-operation, openness, and vision on the part of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Also, I happen to know that transportation planning was a major element of what was required. For all the people who might have political feelings of one kind and another, surely none see a person more dedicated to the development and opportunities in

rural Alberta, including the Crowsnest Pass, than our Deputy Premier Hugh Horner, who would easily have been a sufficient problem to have stalled this process in terms of co-operation and flexibility in the transportation planning and funding areas. Maybe that's what happened in the old governments. Because it didn't happen then, even though we're told the MLAs wanted it to happen. Well, it's happening now.

No doubt a number of other areas are involved in some of these. No doubt a number of areas will need to be resolved in the future, not the least of which might very well be utilities, not only those utilities that involve myself but those that may involve the Minister of the Environment as well. I do think the point by the Leader of the Opposition is well taken, when he suggests that it may very well be that there is some need for additional capacity to fund transitionally those kinds of things that can come up in a complex package like this that are not readily evident at the outset. I do think that's a point well taken. I, for example, as one member of the government, have heeded that and am prepared to be open on that matter.

Mr. Speaker, most of all I wanted to take this opportunity to point out to members of the Legislature, particularly those who might not be from rural areas, the extent of difficulty that has been overcome in this process and to congratulate the MLA in that area — and I know he will extend the congratulations mentioned earlier than my remarks in the Legislature to others in the local leadership in that region of southwestern Alberta — and also some of my ministerial colleagues, which does not include myself, who have been very much involved in the necessary parameters that could make such a complex package come together with assurance and competence, be open and flexible as to its handling, and bring to reality this long-sought-after goal by the people in that area of our province.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I wanted an opportunity as well to participate in debate on Bill 62, The Crowsnest Pass Municipal Unification Act, perhaps more to talk about the character and nature of the legislation, which we have worked on for the past year or so, and partly to pass on to my colleagues in the opposition some of the comments which have already been dealt with. But I might have an opportunity to deal with those as we move through the legislation.

As Mr. Bradley, the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, pointed out, this legislation brings together in a unique way — I think for the first time in the history of Alberta — the unification of several municipal entities which are not formally incorporated but are hamlets, and also brings into this unifying process the improvement districts which have been administered generally by the government and which work on a very tenuous form of self-government. This bringing together for common municipal purposes tends to unite approximately 7,000 people under one common government. It is important for the people to know and be able to communicate with their local level of government. We have placed much emphasis on that level in terms of delivery of services, planning, land use, and taxation. In terms of effective communication I think we can see that this unification attempt through a common form of local

government will serve the people much better and will assist us in this communication process.

The Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest mentioned the trip I made to the Crowsnest Pass some two or two and a half years ago. It was a beautiful day in July. I was fortunate to be able to visit a small, now desolate town called Lille, which was just on the valley side above Blairmore. As I sat here listening to the comments from the Member for Drumheller, some of the thoughts I had at the time were cast through my mind.

We had a town actually fabricated and set up in France and delivered in whole to the Crowsnest Pass. The major construction still standing are coking kilns, which were actually cast and prenumbered in Belgium and shipped here to provide a coking facility for the valuable coal resource. The fire hydrants and remains of old settlements were still in place up and down the streets. On that day in July, I couldn't help but think of the character, uniqueness, and resilience of the people of the Crowsnest Pass and in the coal-mining industry as a whole, who make up a very important part of the fabric of our society in the province of Alberta. In particular I appreciated the comments of the Member for Drumheller as he expressed very well, I thought, the views and feelings of this unique kind of people who have settled and made the coal industry so important to us.

But, Mr. Speaker, that visit, along with the substantial encouragement by the people of the Pass, suggested to us in government that we should be more aware of this long-standing issue of unification and that we should devote more of our attention and time to this purpose. I can assure you that I came away from there very convinced that this was the direction we should pursue if we were to have more effective administration, better land-use planning, and a more cohesive and unique form of municipal government for the Crowsnest Pass.

As the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest pointed out, that plebiscite focussed the views of the people of that pass just this last June. It was a focus with an overwhelming support, I think, both in terms of each of the municipalities and horizontally in terms of the total reaction to that plebiscite, that vote of public opinion. The comments of the hon. member, of course, are important.

What passed the year or so before that has to be unique and must be spelled out in this Assembly. I think it's one of the best forms of intermunicipal co-operation we have seen in this province for some time, where the true spirit of the people, the characteristics of leadership and determination, emerged. They worked with themselves on these very difficult problems to find a joint resolution of the situation so we could move forward with this process. But I know this kind of co-operation will prevail, and we will see more fine examples of this kind of leadership in the future. It was a sacrifice not only of time but of devotion and of criticism. I know that on behalf of all the province we will express to these fine councillors, at least two of whom are here in the Assembly today, the appreciation of the province and I'm sure of the Crowsnest Pass as well.

Let's remember also that the electors, the people of the Crowsnest Pass, were responsive. They took it upon themselves to understand these very complex issues of assessment and the ward system. They

took the time to attend the public meetings, to hear the information, and to weigh the views presented and articulated by many. In that sense, they were acting in a very responsive way as they provided guidance through the public opinion polls so their councillors could then by resolution bring together a formation.

Others, of course, have mentioned the efforts of the MLA. I will only add that it's very rewarding, I guess, to be in public office and to be able to see things getting done. In the predictably long career of the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, I'm sure he will historically review this as one of the keystones of his political career, and I know he will be noted for this some time in the future.

I might note that the members of my department participated and provided a needed catalyst in terms of providing information, bringing together ideas, and engendering debate, in engendering the kinds of expression necessary for us to form legislation to effectively provide for this unification and for the transition. Perhaps the only gentleman not mentioned was Mr. Acorn, who I see is with us today, who has acted in a drafting capacity as a special counsel to my department and has been able to bring together many of the subtleties of all pieces of legislation. I'm sure we will express our thanks to Mr. Marlyn, Mr. Kettner, and Mr. Acorn.

The urban form itself must be considered. Again, Mr. Speaker, we have here a unique experiment in municipal government. We're bringing together a ward system within a town. Right now the ward system is restricted generally to a city. But because of the uniqueness of the communities involved — Coleman, Blairmore, Frank, and Bellevue — we have thought that we should have a ward system which would fairly and equitably allow them to represent their views at the table once the merger takes place. But to provide the cohesiveness and the unity, the mayor will be elected at large. I think that in terms of competing priorities, naturally each community will be represented at the new council, and they will voice and express their priorities for allocation of funds and for programs. But it will be tied together by a mayor elected at large. I think the balance between these two will provide a very effective form of municipal legislation.

Let's also look at the question of the first election, spelled out in the legislation, which provides, as I said, for a ward system. Under the act, this nomination and election process should take place before the end of 1978, so that a new working council will be in place early in 1979 to deal with the questions of transition. It's also to be noted, Mr. Speaker, that after the first election the council has its own possibilities in terms of striking a form of government. It can continue with the ward system, it can expand the ward system, or it can adjust it to any form it may wish. So in fact we've allowed that responsibility to flow to the new elected council.

Let me talk about land use briefly, Mr. Speaker, for it is here that I think the major advantage must be seen to emerge from the unification process. I think the physical constraints generally in the Crowsnest Pass — physical constraints such as sheer cliffs of rock, a very high water table, and accessibility to certain pieces of land — have made it very difficult for a good, balanced land-use policy to emerge in the



Crowsnest Pass. As a result, you have people competing for industrial and residential development. You have development being moved back and forth between communities, not on an objective basis, on a need for land, but on a basis of such things as mill rates, for example. I don't think this affords a very positive land-use planning process.

As well, we have a varying assessment base between the municipalities. Of course, as the character of this area has been mining, some of the buildings are not very valuable in terms of assessment. In fact, what has emerged is a very high mill rate, and therefore it's been very difficult for some of these communities to attract new industry and new residential development.

We have on top of that the varying financial capacities of the municipalities. I touched on the need for utilities and major services, which has not been easy for these municipalities. It's been very difficult in terms of the financial load which had to be accepted. Therefore they've had to avoid or defer making these large financial commitments and thus have not been able to attract as much commercial and industrial development as possible.

What about the provincial assistance? We had a couple of comments on the question of assistance, Mr. Speaker. I was able to convince my colleagues in Executive Council that the unification process did warrant some special and significant recognition. Approximately \$2 million will be contributed over a five-year period to assist the municipality to deal with unique situations on the capital side. Some research and studies have suggested that a major water system could be put together, and perhaps more recreational facilities. Several facilities and several kinds of capital projects could be proposed, but the government is merely putting in place a financial commitment and leaving to the municipality the decision as to what kind of commitment they should wish.

On top of it, as the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones and other speakers have noted, there is a unique form of co-operation within the departments themselves as they have agreed, at least for a five-year period, to maintain the existing level of grants to these various municipalities, so that through unification there will not be any reduction in the various municipal grants or assistance programs which flow to municipalities. As the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones pointed out, this in itself is a major contributing factor to the success of the merger and is in fact a unique form of our co-operation among departments. I hope more of this kind of uniqueness and co-operation can flow from us as well.

Let's also look at the transition. To be realistic, we can foresee some problems in the transition between the existing and the new municipal operations. We hope we have covered them specifically. There are some extensive sections in here which deal with the by-laws and the fact that they're transformed into the new municipality. Probably we haven't foreseen them, and likely there will be amendments in the next day or so which will deal specifically with some of the adjustments we have discovered to be necessary.

We have also provided for the employees. In fact, the employees of the existing municipal districts will be absorbed into the new entity, at least initially. That provides for the tenure and the transition there.

Mr. Speaker, I think others have talked about the

kind of positiveness that will emerge from this merger: more effective administration, an opportunity for balanced land-use strategy, and a greater emphasis on intermunicipal co-operation. On top of it, we'll have up in the valley of the Crowsnest River perhaps one of the most beautiful urban areas in Alberta, very scenic with a lot of open spaces and forested areas.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me suggest that here today we can trace the story of the unification process to this debate in this Assembly, a process of many years and much effort. I think, however, that the crucial chapter will probably be built around the theme of making the solution to the problem in the Crowsnest Pass work to allow us to make this effective, to deliver the kinds of services and to provide the kind of assistance to the municipality that we think necessary.

Because of this legislation and this spirit of co-operation, it will obviously be the responsibility of the new council to make the plan effective, to spark and mold a community identity from a variety of municipalities, to translate concepts and thoughts into action, and to mediate disputes between the various municipalities which obviously will emerge from the unification process. A great deal of effort will be required from the new council that will be elected and in place early in 1979. It's a crucial episode, Mr. Speaker, that will determine how well our solution will work.

How effective we will find the solution in Bill 62 remains to be seen. But I am particularly optimistic. I have a very determined feeling that the people of the Crowsnest Pass, the elected councillors, are capable of meeting this challenge, and I expect their ability and creativity will allow the municipal unification to be a keystone in municipal co-operation in Alberta for many years to come.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the comments of my colleagues in the Assembly with regard to this very important and unique piece of legislation, particularly those of the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, the Member for Highwood, the Member for Drumheller, the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones, the Member for Three Hills, and particularly the remarks of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Member for Lethbridge East.

I think the minister has dealt with the question, raised by the Leader of the Opposition, with regard to a need for operational assistance. The significant contribution, which will be made in the form of a \$2 million capital assistance grant, will free the municipality from the necessary capital requirements and give it a greater scope to bring forward the necessary operating changes which will occur in the first five years. I might note the significance of the capital transition grant. It's equivalent to the total amount of moneys received by the municipality from residential property tax over the five-year period. It's a significant contribution, and I think it will permit the municipality to have the necessary flexibility in its operating and capital budgets to proceed with a number of

needed improvements in that area.

The decision for the people in the Crowsnest Pass to get together has perhaps been the greatest difficulty which had to be resolved in the whole question of unifying the area under one municipal administration. How in fact do you come to that momentous decision to get together? Do you pass a resolution of the municipal councils and proceed by that route? That could have been a very quick and effective way of proceeding. The councils in their wisdom wanted to get the wishes of their citizens known, to get the citizens of the area to participate in the decision. That was why we went toward the idea of having a public opinion poll which could be held on the same day in every municipality and in which the same question could be asked. If the amalgamation of municipal governments was to work, certainly it had to have the support of the citizens of the area. I have to commend the councils that they agreed on taking this important question to the citizens to let them have their say on that important matter.

I concur with the hon. Member for Drumheller in his remarks about the types of fierce loyalty which coal-mining communities develop toward their own centres. Those feelings of community really develop underground, where the coal miners are working together each day and their lives depend on what the other coal miner is doing underground. They have to work together underground; their lives depend upon it. That transacts also to the way they feel about their community outside and how they interact with other communities. Overcoming that fierce loyalty toward each mining community was a very significant aspect in the whole question of getting people together in the Crowsnest Pass.

I too have to credit the co-operation, which the Minister of Municipal Affairs has alluded to, of the councils in the area, in approaching this question. Although it has been under discussion for a number of years under different provincial administrations and different councils, the present councils there have acted responsibly, have shown leadership in getting this question resolved by the citizens of the area, and deserve a lot of credit for the time and hours they too put in with regard to this whole question.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs alluded to his trip to Lille back in July 1976. One of the interesting facts is that the old mining town of Lille will be within the boundaries of the new municipality of Crowsnest Pass.

On the question of the initial five-year transitional period set out with regard to the capital transitional grant and some of the regulations in the act, I think it was important that the citizens and the councillors there knew that the question of unification would undergo a constant review by their own councillors and the province and that discussions would be held over the period as to how we may be able to assist them better or what decisions may have to be made to make sure this unification goes forward and works. That review period is an important part of the consideration by the people there.

I might also note that in the transitional period, which some of us consider to be taking place right now, officials from the Department of Municipal Affairs are active down in the Crowsnest Pass putting together the different municipal by-laws, consolidat-

ing the tax assessment bases, doing a lot of work, so that when the new council takes over on January 1, they'll have a set of by-laws to work with, the tax base consolidated, idea of a proposed budget to work with, and a number of proposals with regard to carrying out municipal administration functions and integrating the staff in the area. That work is taking place right now so the new council will at least have recommendations to work on once the amalgamation takes place.

Also the present councils are putting together a list of the priorities they have set forth for their community over the next period of years, and that will also be transmitted to the new council. So they'll have the advice of the former councils as to what sort of capital developments they were proceeding toward. The new councillors are going to face probably the most significant challenge they have faced in their lives, because to a great degree whether in fact this unification works in the manner in which a number of us have envisioned depends a great deal upon the wisdom of the new councillors to effect this amalgamation and to make sure it works. Like the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I am confident that citizens and present councillors who have the capability to work together to provide for the future of the area will stand for office in Crowsnest Pass.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 62 read a second time]

#### Bill 60

#### The Special Forces Pension Act

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 60, The Special Forces Pension Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would characterize this legislation as accommodation legislation. In many respects it's similar to the legislation the Assembly passed in the spring dealing with a pension plan for the universities and some of their staff. Essentially we have been requested by local authorities to pass this legislation, and I understand the police association has joined with that request. The Fire Fighters Association of the province has some concerns about it, and I will touch on those in a moment.

If this legislation is passed, the provincial government would assume some responsibilities and liabilities it does not now have with respect to these pensions. That would occur, Mr. Speaker, in two areas. First of all, we would provide the cost of administering the plan. Although the funds to service the pensions would be provided by contributions from the employees and the employers, the government would bear the administration cost. In addition, as matters now stand, in some respects the entire pension benefits of policemen and firemen are covered under the local authorities pension legislation, but in other areas where they have supplementary plans, additional pension benefits are provided by those plans which are looked after and administered by local authorities. For that portion of the pension — and in some cases that would be all the pension — that is under the local authorities pension plan, the provincial government does, of course, guarantee the payments under that plan at the moment. But that's not the case with the supplementary pensions. With the passage of this legislation, we would of course

become responsible to ensure that the supplementary pensions were paid.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress one other distinction between this legislation and the similar legislation I referred to as having been passed by the Assembly in the spring session. It is that participation under this plan is in all respects totally voluntary. The applicable section, Section 3(2), provides that the board referred to in the bill could, upon application by the local authority and with the consent of the respective police or firefighters association, issue an order bringing that association and that local authority under the terms of the legislation.

As I mentioned a moment ago, the Fire Fighters Association had some concerns with the legislation. In some respects they do not agree with it. One of the concerns raised with me, which I feel is valid and should be considered, was the concern that the consent referred to in Section 3(2) could be provided or given by an arbitrator in the course of arbitration proceedings between the firefighters or policemen, as the case may be, and the local authority. I have advised the representatives from the Fire Fighters Association that I thought that concern was valid, and that my advice from the Legislative Counsel's office was that that wasn't the case. But I invited them to have their solicitor contact Legislative Counsel's office to review the matter. If there was still some concern about that possibility, the matter would be held now at the committee stage, and I would propose during the committee stage of the bill an amendment to remove any doubt that the consent referred to in Section 3(2) could not be given by way of arbitration. There would actually have to be consent by the employees affected.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that that assurance and that change, if there is a change, if lawyers feel a change to the wording in the bill is necessary, does make it totally voluntary. I don't think the other concerns that have been expressed are relevant to this legislation. Because if a particular association doesn't wish to come within the plan, of course it doesn't need to come within the plan.

Mr. Speaker, as I say, I'm going to ask the Government House Leader to hold the matter in the committee stage until that question is resolved. It may well be that during committee stage I will propose an amendment.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say a few words on Bill 60. It seems that in all the material I've been able to uncover, this appears to be a shotgun marriage with an unwilling bride. I say that in all sincerity. In all the material I've had brought to my attention, it seems that the initiation was really without the consent of the firefighters. I'm waiting to have the Provincial Treasurer assure me that that is not so. And I tried to ask this afternoon in question period how much consultation there was with the Provincial Treasurer and the Fire Fighters Association, be it the cities of Edmonton and Calgary and the smaller associations, because in all the correspondence between the Public Service Pension Administration — on this one, February 10, 1978, subject, the police and firefighters pensions act, and the copy goes out to the president of the police association and the supervisor of policies and procedures, city of Edmonton. The same thing with the city of Calgary,

but nothing to the firefighters. This is why I am really hesitant about the Provincial Treasurer trying to convince me there were sufficient negotiations and consultations with the firefighters. The Provincial Treasurer, as eloquent and as good a member of his profession as he is, still hasn't convinced me that there has been sufficient consultation.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly in no way want to indicate that the firefighters are at loggerheads with the police association, or in no way do I want to indicate that I am not in favor of the legislation as it applies to policemen. But I certainly want to make sure, and I want the Provincial Treasurer and the government to be sure, that the firefighters want in. Because from the information I have they do not want this marriage. They do not. In pursuing this, it just doesn't appear to me that the firefighters are a willing bride in this marriage.

Mr. Speaker, there are areas of concern that the Provincial Treasurer did bring to the attention of the Assembly; that is, the aspect of it being voluntary. The firefighters are concerned that maybe they will be unwilling voluntary participants through the process of arbitration. The Provincial Treasurer certainly has brought up that there will be consultation between legal counsel of the Fire Fighters Association and the Provincial Treasurer. The area that was of great concern is that the firefighters will lose the right to negotiate pensions, which of course are vital to them. Because they are under binding arbitration, they felt that this area in the negotiation of pensions was quite sacred to them.

Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be making a further representation when we go to committee study of the bill. Then we will be able to have a dissertation back and forth without having formal debate, where we can certainly clear up some of these points. I would like to leave with the Assembly a quotation from a letter sent to the hon. Mr. Leitch by the president of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association as late as October 17:

The Alberta Fire Fighters ask you to remove this legislation from the order paper, withdraw it from this session of the legislature, and hold formal hearings so that our legitimate concerns can finally be expressed.

This is what makes me very uneasy and very hesitant about supporting the legislation as it presently stands. The Provincial Treasurer has not convinced me that we have two willing partners in this marriage.

Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking further on committee study of the legislation, because I feel that many questions have not been answered. As far as I'm concerned, there has not been sufficient consultation with the Fire Fighters Association. I would like to have that clear in my mind before I vote for the bill as presently constituted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, rising to make a few comments on Bill 60, it seems to me that the responsibility of the Provincial Treasurer in this case — because after all, we are dealing with people who do not have the right to strike. The normal "or else" that exists in the labor market, [that] people can withdraw their services if they ultimately disagree with an employer, doesn't exist for policemen and firemen.

So it seems to me that if we remove the right to strike, society as a whole, and the provincial government in particular, has an obligation to go that extra mile to make sure the rights of people who do not exercise the ability to withdraw their services are protected.

Mr. Speaker, as I view the rights of people who don't have the right to strike, they surely must involve consultation before any decision in legislation is made, particularly with respect to something as basic as pensions. Now we all, at least I'm sure most members, had information sent to us from the Fire Fighters Association. Over the years, firefighters have been able to negotiate supplementary pensions. That happens to be a matter of significant concern to them. But their concern about this bill, as I understand the submissions they've made to me, goes somewhat beyond just the question of supplementary pensions, to just how this government relates to the firefighters of Alberta.

Now we were told that there was consultation; but what kind of consultation, Mr. Speaker? We have the letter from Mr. Schnee to the Premier. Mr. Schnee certainly doesn't think there's been much consultation. We have the gentleman working on the legislation who apparently thought that the firefighters were fully involved in the preparation of the legislation. But it says on page 3 of Mr. Schnee's letter to the Premier that this gentleman said: "I wondered why the firefighters were never present at any of the meetings." Well, nobody had invited them to be present. What kind of consultation is it when you have people to whom we say, in the interests of society you don't have the right to strike. Fair enough. If we're going to say that as a society, the other side of the coin must be that if we're going to change legislation that affects these people, we have an obligation to sit down with them.

Mr. Speaker, all one has to do is read this letter, and the one thing that comes through loud and clear is that the firefighters in this province feel they have been ignored and by-passed, and now we have legislation being brought in at the last minute, [to which] they weren't part of having at least some input. The quotation on the bottom of page 3 of Mr. Schnee's letter:

There is no doubt that this action was all cut and dried in advance and that the Fire Fighters were being forced into this plan with seven days to deadline.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people who are protecting the life and property of this province from fire — for us to bring in legislation in what I can only say is a rather cavalier manner, if this information is correct, and I have no reason to believe it isn't. I say to the members of this Assembly: we have an obligation to wait. If we're not prepared to honor the request of the firefighters to have their name taken off the legislation, at the very least hold it over and have the hearings the firefighters have requested.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with some other concerns that have been brought to my attention. The hon. Provincial Treasurer rose and said, we're prepared to hold the bill in committee so we can introduce an amendment which would clarify this question of whether they can be brought into the bill as a consequence of arbitration. I appreciate that. The fact of the matter is that Bill 60 was drafted in such a

way that there was certainly, at the very least, ambiguity. The firm of solicitors who were handling the affairs of the Fire Fighters Association were led to the conclusion that under the provisions of Bill 60 it would be possible for the firefighters to become involuntarily connected with this particular pension plan as a consequence of an arbitration decision. Now I appreciate the decision of the Provincial Treasurer to clarify that and say that in no way will that be a factor.

But there are still several other features of the bill that disurb me; for example, the composition of the board itself. We have a board where we have representation from the province, from the local authorities, and one representative from the police and the firemen. Now, Mr. Speaker, firemen and policemen have different interests. I think that was one of the points they brought to our attention. You can't lump them both into one bill and say, you're special forces and you've got the same kinds of interests. They've got different interests, certainly different interests when it comes to a pension plan. Again, that point is made in Mr. Schnee's letter to the Premier.

The composition of this board doesn't guarantee there will be representation on the board from the firemen and from the policemen. When the Provincial Treasurer introduced the bill, why didn't he give an assurance? Because this is obviously going to be a matter of some concern to the people; again, some concern to people who don't have the right to strike. Why didn't he give us the assurance that we would have representation from both groups on the board, instead of one person representing two groups as different as apples and oranges? Mr. Speaker, I really question the wisdom of the government's pushing forward this particular bill at the time.

Another feature of the bill that disturbs me a little bit: I notice here that application must be made by the local authority with the consent of either the local police or firefighters association. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's rather interesting to note that the application must be made by the local authority, and then consent of the firefighters or policemen can be obtained. Fair enough. It's doesn't go the other way around, which is rather interesting. Suppose the police want to move into this — I think the policemen want this particular bill — but a local authority doesn't. In other words, the kind of legislation we have for annexation, where developers can initiate annexation proceedings and so can local levels of government, doesn't apply here in the case of the policemen. Perhaps the policemen in a particular community would want to come under this bill. They should have the right to initiate the action, rather than the action being initiated by the local authority with the consent of the firefighters or the police.

Mr. Speaker, another rather important aspect of the bill is: how will consent be obtained? What do we mean by "consent"? Is consent a vote of three to two at an executive board meeting? Is it a vote of the membership at a meeting or a referendum of the membership? How will consent be obtained? That isn't specified in this legislation. What happens if the members decide that they want to change their minds?

We had a very good case in Calgary not too long ago over an industrial question — it was Firestone rubber, if I'm not mistaken. We had a meeting where

a position taken by the president and secretary was repudiated by the membership. Now what would happen in the case of a community where the consent obtained was the executive board saying, all right, we'll agree to this, but then at the next membership meeting the membership says, how could you possibly agree to a harebrained proposal like that? We're going to lose our supplementary pensions. And they say, noway. Under the terms of this legislation it's ambiguous, Mr. Speaker. What does "consent" mean? It may well be that the decision of the executive board to attach their name would then bring that particular unit, be it a police or a firemen's association, under the provisions of Bill 60.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not standing in my place and saying there aren't some good features in this legislation. Obviously this legislation will be extremely beneficial to the police association in particular. As far as the legislation goes, I'd have no hesitation in supporting it if it were to apply to the policemen of the province of Alberta. There was obviously good consultation with the police association. I think they're pretty satisfied with it; we haven't heard any indication to the contrary. But the problem is not with the police. The problem is lumping firemen into a special forces bill that is set up, agreeable at this stage to the police of the province, but where a fairly serious number of unanswered questions remain in the mind of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association.

I close by saying that I appreciate the fact that in committee we're going to try to clarify the arbitration provision. But that doesn't deal with the composition of the board; it doesn't deal with the whole question of how consent is obtained. Because of that, Mr. Speaker, I would say to the minister that it would be well worth the government's time to wait until the spring session, hold this matter over, and carry on the sort of meaningful consultation with the Alberta firefighters that should have been undertaken before the bill was introduced in the first place.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks just to reinforce the concern we have on this side of the Assembly, and that is the whole concept of accommodation legislation.

When the minister introduced the legislation in second reading, that was the term he applied to this legislation. To me, "accommodation legislation" means legislation that is accommodating a certain group at its request. But from the discussions we have had with the leading members of the Fire Fighters Association, from a large group of letters — correspondence between the minister and the firefighters, between the Premier and the firefighters, between the Minister of Labour and the firefighters — there is no indication in any of that correspondence that they wanted this kind of legislation, or any legislation at all. They were pleased with the conditions and the situation they were in prior to any kind of discussion relative to legislation. The question is: why are they involved at the present time?

My colleague has raised the question: why were they not consulted when they have become involved, if it was so important to accommodate them in a form of legislation? But at the present time the discussion still has not occurred. I have to ask the Provincial Treasurer: why the hurry to get the legislation

through the House? The feeling I gain from his discussion this afternoon is that we're going to pass the legislation in the form it is in, include the firefighters, and then they have to live with it. The minister has said that, number one, we're going to accommodate them; number two, that the legislation is voluntary, they don't have to come in. Well they don't want to come in. Why even set up any kind of ground rules for them? [interjections] I mean it just isn't logical at the present time. How can you do this to a group in the province of Alberta?

The police association, the policemen, is another case. They have been involved in all this correspondence, had ample discussion it seems with Mr. Wickers of the pension board. That's great, and they're going along with the legislation. So if they need the legislation in a hurry and some benefits have to be provided for that group, let's pass the legislation for the police association. Let's go ahead and do that. I see nothing wrong with that.

But if the firefighters wish to wait, wish to talk about the legislation, or wish to be excluded, let's give them the opportunity to do so. Let's withdraw in committee that portion applying to the firefighters, take the time between now and the spring session to discuss the matter with them. It's easy to bring back amendments. In the spring session of the Legislature include them, and include them with their awareness and their commitment behind the legislation.

I don't know how as legislators we can approve legislation that hasn't got the approval of a community group. We don't want to force them into something like this. They make it very clear in the correspondence, as I read it, that they are satisfied with their pension benefits, that they have the right at the present time to negotiate pensions, they have not got the right to strike. They accept that. That's the way they want the situation. Well, why don't we leave it that way? Do we need them involved in this group to make the pension plan viable? I haven't seen any information in that respect. Maybe that's the answer. The Provincial Treasurer can tell us in this Assembly. If they are included to make the plan financially viable, the firefighters should be told that is why they're being brought into the plan. I kind of worry, and that's the overall viewpoint I have of the legislation.

There are some parts of the legislation that I'm concerned about. The Provincial Treasurer has said that he will review whether the firefighters or the police people can be taken in on an involuntary basis. I think that should be reviewed. But that's secondary to the basic principle of why the firefighters are involved in the first place.

I read Section 3(2), referred to earlier, that seems to have been placed in the act to protect the firefighters from this involvement against their will. But it groups the police and firefighters associations. It doesn't say police and/or firefighters associations. It doesn't say the vote of one can't bring in the other group on an involuntary basis. It doesn't say that. It's very, very unclear at the present time. I'd have to say that the firefighters are in a very vulnerable position. As members of the opposition and members of this Legislature, I think we've got to call on the Provincial Treasurer at this time to delay that part of the legislation, withdraw that part with regard to the firefighters, give them some time to discuss it with the Provincial Treasurer or with other government minis-

ters and bring in something that's done on a consultative basis, on an open-government basis.

DR. BUCK: What is that?

MR. R. SPEAKER: But maybe that's not now. It's got to be just a little later.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, I think I can speak with a certain amount of authority on this subject, being a pensioner from the Calgary police force. [interjections] And I'm in the rather unique situation of having first received pension from the city of Calgary plan, and after a few months we were switched over to the local authorities plan. I also served for a number of years on the pension board of the city of Calgary pensions. I also enjoy extremely close relations with the city of Calgary fire department, and I haven't heard any complaints from them.

But let me for a few moments tell you something about the local authorities plan. For the several years previous to our entering this plan, Mr. Speaker, there was a great deal of apprehension and some misgivings on the part of members. But once they came into the plan they couldn't be happier. I haven't heard one member of the Calgary or the Edmonton police organization utter one word of criticism. The benefits were far beyond their beliefs. In fact in many cases, particularly those of older members who had been on pensions for a number of years, and very, very minimal pensions, their pensions were more than doubled, not only by the new factor of 2 per cent versus the old one of 1.7, but supplementary payments were given to them to bring their pensions up to this area.

In my own case, as I say, for a short period of time I did receive payments from the old city of Calgary plan, then at a later date switched over to the local authorities. I personally couldn't be happier with the plan.

The only area I heard criticized during the last few years by the police representatives is the period of employment necessary to acquire a pension. What they had been asking for for a good number of years was the 25-year factor. I see by Section 10 that this is now included. So I know of no criticism from the police.

I would like to inquire — and I wish the minister would comment on it — first of all when the 25 years becomes effective, providing the bill is passed. Secondly, does the 2 per cent factor still apply?

Another area that I'm extremely pleased about is the care of the widows. I see in this new act that 65 per cent will be paid to a surviving spouse. Once again, Mr. Minister, I sincerely hope this is retroactive. If not, would you comment on the present arrangement?

I'm also pleased with Section 19(5) that gives minimum monthly payments — extremely commendable. If it is new, what was the former arrangement? Of course, also opposed to the old plan, a type of indexing takes place in the local authorities. In reply to the criticisms, there was originally a certain amount of misgiving, but once the plan was enforced everybody was totally happy with it. The only criticism I can see any validity whatsoever to is your criticism of lack of representation. Maybe this is valid, but I can tell you from my own personal

experience and my discussions with members of the police community in this province that they couldn't have been more satisfied with the plan. As I see the present act, it makes improvements on an act that was previously more than satisfactory. I also enjoy extremely good relations with the firefighters in the city of Calgary. I haven't heard any of the criticisms that have been enunciated this afternoon. Going through the act, I find exceptional improvements, and I think all persons effected by the act will be extremely happy with it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar is asking whether the hon. Member for Calgary McCall would permit a question.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, I believe it's usual for the minister to answer the questions, but with his concurrence, yes, I'd be quite pleased to.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the question of the hon. member Mr. Little. At any time did you hear us criticizing the police section of it?

MR. COOKSON: That's not a question.

DR. BUCK: It is a question.

We're not criticizing that, hon. member. We just want to know why the firemen are put in. There's no argument at all with the police section of it. We're happy. We're not criticizing that; we want to know why the firemen are included.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, yes, I'd be quite pleased to answer that. In spite of the fact that the references were directed to the firefighters, there were insinuations that the whole plan was not a good plan and the ...

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege, I'll ask the hon. member to withdraw that, because there was absolutely no insinuation, and I made that very clear when I started my address.

MR. LITTLE: May I continue, Mr. Speaker?

DR. BUCK: If you'll withdraw the insinuations.

MR. SPEAKER: As I understand it, the hon. Member for Calgary McCall is now answering a statement which was made in the form of a question.

AN HON. MEMBER: With another statement.

MR. LITTLE: Yes, the whole theme of the discussion seemed to indicate that this was a bad plan. I thought it was only reasonable to give ... [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Surely the question as to how one hon. member construes another hon. member's remarks is not a point of order. There is no suggestion of anything improper.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ. There certainly is. The hon. member said we are insinuating that we are not happy with that plan. That is not a fact.

That is not the representation that I, my colleague, or the Member for Spirit River-Fairview made.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to hear the answer. There's so much screaming when he's talking that we don't know what the answer is. The question was asked, and surely the member has a right to answer in his own way.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview rising on this point of order?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I don't think there is a point of order. I think that what happened is that the hon. member . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, there is a point of order because I raised it. The point of order is that surely we have the right to hear the answer without all the screaming that drowns it out. Whatever the answer is, I'd like to hear it. The member surely has a right to answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member now wish to proceed with the answer?

MR. LITTLE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll stay with my previous statement. I didn't hear one indication that this was a good pension plan. It's an exceptional pension plan. I thought it entirely reasonable that the members of this Assembly should know the particulars, not only of how good that plan was but how well it was accepted by members of the police organization in particular, who switched from their own plan to the local authority. [interjections]

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe and I call to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that the principle of this bill that is under discussion is The Special Forces Pension Act as such. The discussion which was prevailing was with regard to the concept of accommodation legislation and whether it should be brought forward at this time. The discussion at this point was not to assess pensions as such but to recognize whether certain groups — the policemen and the firefighters — should be brought in under the pension act. That was the topic of discussion. I think the evaluation of a pension act was something different and off the topic of the bill.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. LEITCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for Calgary McCall for his contribution to the debate. He has raised some questions that are of a detailed nature. I would prefer to hold my response to them until the bill reaches committee stage, because I expect there may be other questions of a similar nature and it would be useful to deal with them all at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I will respond to some of the comments made by the members of the opposition, in particular the comment about consultation and certain correspondence they have received. Frankly, I

don't want to get into a debate in this Assembly about the comments in that correspondence. I think I'll limit myself to the recounting of some matters of fact and simply say that this matter has been under discussion for some appreciable time.

Early this year the Fire Fighters Association brought to my attention some concerns they had about the legislation. They then were under the belief that a bill was coming forward in the spring, which was not the case or our intention at all. At that time I wrote to them and assured them that they would have an opportunity to know what was in the legislation and to comment on that. That was carried out. The director of the pension administration did contact the Fire Fighters Association, along with others, and did review at a meeting at which there were a number of representatives from the Fire Fighters Association. That meeting took place in September. The bill in all material respects, at least those that were raised here this afternoon in the debate, was discussed. So I simply want to leave those facts with members of the Assembly, because I'm sure that if the comments of those members of the opposition who spoke had gone unanswered there would have been an entirely different impression about consultation than was actually the case.

I'd simply go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that I have to stress again: this is a voluntary plan. In their comments members of the opposition used phrases like "bringing them in" or things of that nature. This bill doesn't bring them in. They've got to do an act on their part before they come under it at all. So it's perfectly appropriate to refer to this as accommodation legislation.

I should call to the attention of members of the Assembly a fact which seems to have escaped those of the opposition who spoke; that is, there are very few supplementary pension plans in the province. There are policemen and firemen in smaller centres who do not have them. Now it may well be the local authority there would wish to offer some additional plans during the course of the negotiations between the local authority and the policemen or firemen, and this gives them an opportunity to do it without their getting into the pension fund management operation, because they're small centres. No matter what one may say about it, you have to come back to the basic fact that those who don't like it don't need to join it. It's a voluntary thing on their part, and I've said I'd remove any doubts about that. We can deal with that when we come to the committee stage.

Now the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview makes a dramatic speech about no representation from the firemen. I simply call to his attention the words of 2(1)(b)(i). They refer to "one or more", so it's not restricted to one.

MR. NOTLEY: Why put in "one or more"? Why not say "two"?

MR. LEITCH: One or more includes two. That's what comes after one. That's the more; after one the more is at least two.

The members of the opposition try to refer to shotgun marriages, but there's no force here. There's no shotgun. You join us if you like. But there maybe groups of firemen in the province and their local authority who wish to join, and if that comes about

they can do that. They don't all have to come in. They can come in by units, which is really the intention of the legislation. That's its useful, accommodating purpose. For those areas of the province where they wish to come in as a unit, they can do so. There's no requirement that they all come in. They come in by section or not, as they wish.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have responded to the comments and concerns expressed by the members of the opposition. Undoubtedly there ought to be further discussion on the particular wording of the legislation. If in some areas the wording is not as clear as it might be — and I noticed one speech from the opposition indicated there must be something awful about that. I simply say to him that I don't know of any significant piece of legislation that moves through any House in the democracies that doesn't, of necessity — that's the reason you have debate. The value of debate is that they can bring to the attention of the Assembly some areas in which the legislation may not be carrying out the intention that all think it ought, in which case you make an

amendment. So there's no need for anybody who introduces legislation into the House to feel apologetic because at some time during committee stage you need an amendment to clarify it. That's the proper working of an Assembly. If there weren't amendments suggested and accepted, the Assembly just wouldn't be doing its job.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think this bill, as was pointed out very clearly by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall, is of very great benefit to all those who want to join and those who do not like it don't need to join.

I move that it be approved.

[Motion carried; Bill 60 read a second time]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Assembly will not sit tonight, so I move that we call it 5:30 and the Assembly adjourn until tomorrow at 2:30.

[At 5:25 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]