

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: Tuesday, June 19, 1979 2:30 p.m.

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, I have the distinguished pleasure to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly a member of the British committee on invisible exports. The group is a very important influential cross section of British financial leaders who are on a familiarization visit to Alberta to seek out possible areas of joint co-operation.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce Lord Polworth, Member of the House of Lords and of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, who is leading the mission to Alberta.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon it's a very great pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly six people from the Rotary foundation's group study exchange from Bombay, India. The Rotary foundation sponsors outstanding young business and professional men to travel to other countries and have a chance to learn about the people and the institutions in the host country.

The six individuals are in the members gallery, accompanied by two Albertans, Mr. Lewis and Mr. MacNeil. I'd ask the gentlemen to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 230****An Act to Amend****The Condominium Property Act**

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 230, An Act to Amend The Condominium Property Act. This Bill would allow the council of a city, town, village, municipal district, or county, or the board of administrators of a new town to set up an advisory board to look into some of the problems now experienced by condominium owners.

[Leave granted; Bill 230 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Legislature Library the copy of the letter dated June 14, 1979, to the Hon. Allan Lawrence, Solicitor General of Canada.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 70 grade 5 students from Lee Ridge school. Not only are they in the constituency of Edmonton Mill Woods, but they're in the community of Lee Fields, which is my neighborhood. It gives me pleasure to introduce these students in both the members and public galleries accompanied by Kelsey Hunt, Olga Severin, and Francis Hessels. If they would be kind enough to rise, I would ask that you join me in wishing them the greetings of this Assembly.

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, three people from Penarth, Wales: Mr. John Emmons and Mrs. Mary Emmons and their daughter Angela. Penarth is located just 3 miles out of Cardiff. They're accompanied today by some dear friends of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Al Ulveland from Ponoka. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I introduce to you and to the rest of the Assembly a second class from my constituency. They have made it known to me that it's very important that they are introduced from the Trochu area as opposed to the Three Hills constituency; there's a lot of rivalry there. They are 25 grade 10 students, accompanied by their teacher Terry Schlinker. They were ably chauffeured by Mr. Ed Cook, and I'm told Mr. Walter Anderson did the navigating. Would they kindly rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of Environment**

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly three copies of an engineering report which confirms the feasibility and costs of constructing a multipurpose dam at the Dickson site on the Red Deer River. The Department of Environment will now be proceeding with the detail design and construction of the dam, with completion scheduled for 1983.

The dam is located approximately 25 kilometres or 15 miles west of Innisfail in the county of Red Deer. It will be 36 metres or approximately 118 feet high, 850 metres or 2,600 feet long, with a reservoir storage capacity of 200 million cubic metres or 160,000 acre-feet of water.

The main purpose of the dam is to provide flow regulation of the river in order to assure a water supply for all uses in the river basin for the foreseeable future. The provision of a guaranteed flow of 16 cubic metres or 540 cubic feet per second downstream of the dam will improve the water quality in the river. The multipurpose structure will decrease flood and erosion damage and will have potential for the development of electric power.

The operation of the dam will be designed to maintain relatively stable reservoir water levels during the summer months, so that reservoir-oriented recreation can be developed.

In accordance with the wishes of the county of Red

Deer, the department will provide a two-lane roadway crossing the dam. This will improve local access and reduce the number of miles residents in the area have to travel to cross the river. The land acquisition program for the dam and reservoir is proceeding, with eight parcels already purchased and others under negotiation.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that the regulation of the Red Deer River is an important step in the development of the province's water resources and will assure the long-range economic stability and growth of that part of the province.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Metis Settlements — Documents

MR. R. CLARK: I'd like to direct the first and really the only question I propose to ask today, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It flows from the questions initiated yesterday by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

My initial question to the minister is: what information was being sought when officials of the Alberta government paid visits — to use the minister's term of yesterday — to the Metis settlements?

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly the question can be answered in unspecific terms, but I would remind the Assembly that the subject matter which gave rise to the incident referred to by the hon. leader is under litigation.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the ruling of the Chair, we are asking the minister simply to outline the reasons. What was the minister trying to acquire?

MR. SPEAKER: Without wishing to argue the point, my understanding was that the question asked what information was being sought. That information could be in the nature of a solicitor-and-client confidence insofar as the Crown is concerned.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. If the information were of that nature, the minister would indicate so when he answered the question. But the question really related to what information was being sought: was that the only information sought, or was other information sought?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. The purpose of our question would be to assess whether that information would be used for the litigation. If the minister indicates it is, we understand the purpose. But he doesn't have to give details.

MR. SPEAKER: Precisely. This is why I suggested that the question might be answered in general terms, but if it were answered in exact and specific terms it could be outside the scope of the question period because of dealing with a matter under litigation.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, to give a brief overview of the background and then come directly to the question, there are eight Metis settlements in Alberta. For the past four to five years litigation has been pending as to the ownership of the mineral rights under the

land occupied by the residents of those settlements. This was one of the real concerns of my predecessor the hon. Helen Hunley when she had this responsibility. From the discussions I had with her, as well as my previous knowledge through my responsibilities as Minister responsible for Native Affairs, I knew it was a real concern to the Metis people.

Approximately two months ago I instructed the Chief Deputy Minister of Social Services and Community Health to accelerate, if you like, the process by which we would be able to determine through the courts the actual ownership of the mines and minerals. It is my further understanding that, in attempting that, the legal advice we obtained from the Department of the Attorney General — and the hon. Attorney General may wish to comment — as well as the advice from the law firm with which we have a contract was that they wanted to examine all the government documents to ensure that all pertinent information would be available.

It should be understood, Mr. Speaker, that over the last six to seven years there's been quite a transition in the Metis settlements. If we were to go back to that earlier date, we'd find that settlement councils had far less authority than today. There's been a gradual process of turning more and more responsibility over to the settlement councils.

Six of the buildings in question are owned outright by the government of Alberta, and the other two are leased. What ...

MR. SPEAKER: With respect, I regret interrupting the hon. minister, but it would appear that we're getting somewhat far afield from the question, which dealt with the nature of the information sought through these searches.

MR. BOGLE: I was coming directly to that point, Mr. Speaker.

In the desire by the officials to satisfy the request made by the legal firm to make all information available, the instructions were that the files owned by the government of Alberta — not files owned by the Metis settlement councils or anyone else, but only those files which are the property of the government of Alberta — should be brought to Edmonton so they could carefully be screened. That process was undertaken by officials of the department.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, would the minister indicate to the Assembly who in the department initiated the plan to collect materials from Metis settlement offices?

MR. BOGLE: The executive director of the Metis betterment branch.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Did the chief deputy minister approve this plan of arriving at the settlement offices at 8 o'clock yesterday morning?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, it should be understood that the chief deputy minister is the chief administrative officer for a department of nearly 8,000 public employees. It's my understanding that the chief deputy minister was not directly contacted — nor would he normally be — by the executive director of the Metis betterment branch, but that consultation did take place

with the acting deputy minister of that division of the department.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Did the acting deputy minister discuss the proposal with the minister prior to approval being given by the acting deputy minister that these visits to all eight offices should be made at 8 o'clock yesterday morning on an exact [simultaneous] basis?

MR. BOGLE: Just for clarification, Mr. Speaker, I answered yesterday that I was not aware of the actions. But it should be understood, and for information of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that the visits did not all take place at exactly the same time. In three of the settlements, as an example — Gift Lake, Big Prairie, and East Prairie — the same individual visited all three offices.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly how, much delay would have been incurred by consulting the elected settlement councils before moving in this manner to visit the colonies Monday morning?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. [member], the question is clearly hypothetical.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, let me rephrase the question to the minister.

In light of the fact that the government felt it had to go about getting the files this way, and that one of the reasons the minister gave the Assembly yesterday was that there was a need to accelerate the claim settlements, how much delay would have been involved had the government not moved in the manner it did yesterday?

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the question is in order, because the minister would have had to assess that delay, and to have approved what happened yesterday he must have felt that that delay was very long. So my question to the minister is: how much delay would there have been had the government consulted the elected people in the settlements?

MR. SPEAKER: The question is clearly and unmistakably hypothetical.

MR. R. CLARK: Oh!

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat concerned that the slanted questioning is creating ... [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. ISLEY: My question is this: is it true that government files were removed from government buildings in which they were being administered by government-paid staff?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is clearly seeking information — if he is — which has already been given, and it would appear rather that he is merely attempting to emphasize a point already made.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I would ask the hon. minister if he can advise the Assembly why the government took all the files — in the case of the Gift Lake settlement in particular, the entire filing cabinet — as opposed to a discriminate removal of files which were exclusively those of the government of Alberta.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, this morning I asked for clarification on that point, because I too am very concerned. I gave assurances yesterday that, from the information I had, only files which were clearly the property of Alberta were to be removed. That was information I learned after I was in the Assembly. In further discussions I've had this morning with the chief deputy minister, the instructions have gone out that if in fact some files were removed which are not clearly owned by the government of Alberta, they are to be returned immediately.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. What steps will the government take, and what assurance can the minister give the House, that in assessing which files are those of the government of Alberta and which are confidential files of the settlements, there will be no reading by anyone on the part of the government of any information of a confidential nature that could be involved in this case?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I've given assurances that the files are to be returned immediately. It was not the intention of department officials to remove files which were clearly not owned by the government. But it must be appreciated that the buildings we're discussing are owned by the government of Alberta, there are employees of the department there, and there are files that belong to the department. We're removing files which belong to the government of Alberta, not files that are the property of the Metis Settlement Council or other individuals in the settlements.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Will the minister assure us that a representative of each of the eight Metis settlements will be present when the file cabinets are opened or any of those files are inspected?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon I gave very specific instructions that the department should determine if any files are now in our possession that do not belong to the government of Alberta — that those files should be returned immediately. If such files are in our possession, I would hope they're already on their way back to the settlements.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, for clarification of the minister's remarks. The minister is indicating at this point in time that whether the files belong to the Metis settlements and the duly elected board of governors or whether they belong to the government will be a decision of departmental officials in isolation from the local Metis settlements.

MR. BOGLE: Again, Mr. Speaker, I've indicated the offices are in most cases shared. That's due to the evolution of responsibility that's being granted to the Metis settlement councils. But there are certain files

which are purely government files. I would expect that people who work with the Metis leaders on an ongoing basis will be able to do that. As I've indicated, Mr. Speaker, approximately 20 hours ago I gave that instruction. I would hope that that work has proceeded and that the files are on their way back — if there are such files.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate the reasons representatives, elected persons from the Metis settlements, have been excluded from this decision-making process?

MR. BOGLE: I'm having some difficulty with the question. If we're talking about joint files, that's one thing. But surely if we're speaking about files which are clearly the property of the people of Alberta, about employees on those settlements who work for the government of Alberta, about buildings which are owned by the government of Alberta, I don't understand the import of the hon. member's question.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to clarify it for the minister, I'm talking about the files that were taken from the Metis settlements, period. In the determination of who owns which file, why are the elected representatives from the Metis settlements excluded from deciding whether it is their file or the government's file?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, there's an assumption in the hon. member's question that such files are in our possession. I do not know that. One of the clear ways that I would expect differentiation between such files would be by letterheads and 'memoheads'.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the fact that the minister has indicated he's already sent instructions for these files to be sent back, in order to ensure that there was no question these files were removed for other than the most proper purposes, why was the position not taken by the government that there should be a representative, for example from the Gift Lake settlement, when the department goes through the filing cabinet that contains everything from hunting licences to the confidential records of the settlement to government documents?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'll try again to explain the process for the hon. member. I don't think the Assembly should automatically assume that there's only one filing cabinet in each settlement office and that it's shared. The assurances I was given by officials in our department were that only files owned by the government of Alberta were to be obtained. I've assured the House — and the instructions, as I've indicated, went out some 20 hours ago — that if by chance some files are mixed in with the government files and are not the property of the government of Alberta, they are to be returned immediately.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister indicate if the information acquired is information the government has no record of at present? This is all new information that the minister was seeking?

MR. BOGLE: That's a very important question, Mr. Speaker, and it's one I asked my chief deputy minister. The request we received from the legal firm contracted by the government was that they wanted a review of all information. Now it's quite probable that most of the information in the district offices in the various settlements is a duplicate of information we have in the office in Edmonton, or vice versa. But to ensure that no stones are unturned, if you like, and that the case is well-documented, that extra step was requested and complied with.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, for clarification. Why are we maintaining government staff and files in the Metis colonies?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, some years ago the Metis settlements were administered directly by the government through this department and through The Metis Betterment Act and branch. As I've indicated, there has been an evolution over a period of time of more responsibility being handed back to the settlement councils. I recall as one example the housing program in the settlements. That was a responsibility turned over to the settlement councils, I believe some two years ago. So although there are still some employees of the government on the various settlements, the major responsibility is now carried on by the employees of the settlement councils themselves. The buildings are owned by the government of Alberta; they're shared office space, if you like. Some of the employees are responsible to the council, some to the department.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the minister, in light of the answer. In the minister's definition then, the information in the settlement offices contains not only public property — that is, owned by the government of Alberta — but there is private property as well, which may be owned by the settlements or private individuals.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, if that is accurate it is the very reason we've moved to ensure the information is returned to the settlement councils at the earliest opportunity.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

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

MR. NOTLEY: The minister indicated six settlement offices were owned by the government and two were leased. In the case of one of these settlements, Gift Lake, the local settlement had paid some \$3,000, I believe, for the leasing of the office. In the case of the offices that were being leased, why were the files removed without prior consultation with the settlement board members, especially in view of the landlord and tenant obligation of providing 24 hours' clear notice?

MR. BOGLE: Well, there's a small but important distinction, Mr. Speaker, which should be noted; that is, although the office space is leased from a private concern — I believe it's a trailer unit — the money to pay the lease comes out of a vote of the department.

MR. SPEAKER: We've had four questions and about 12 supplementaries on this topic. If there's time, we can come back to it. [interjections]

Dickson Dam

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Environment. Is there any information on the basic infrastructure for hydro-electric power in the Dickson dam?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, the report indicates that there is a practical possibility of using the Dickson dam as a source of power at some future date.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Has the minister any figure on the estimated cost for power construction in the dam?

MR. COOKSON: The report indicates that for an expenditure of approximately \$2 million one could include in the basic construction of the dam itself the basic requirements for future power development. One has to remember that that would just be the basic requirement; it would require considerably more investment to expand that into a practical power unit.

Metis Settlements — Administration

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Attorney General. It also concerns the action yesterday by officials of the Metis development branch.

Is the Attorney General in a position to advise the Assembly where matters now stand with respect to the proposal advanced by the Federation of Metis Settlements that there be a without-prejudice agreement — without prejudice affecting the legal case, which we don't want to get into — that would allow recognition of the status of the Metis settlements so that programs could be delivered?

MR. CRAWFORD: No, Mr. Speaker, I haven't made any inquiry with respect to that matter. As I understand the hon. member's question, it would relate to the overall approach of something closer to a municipal form of government for the settlements. That would not be primarily a matter for the Attorney General to consider, but perhaps for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the hon. Minister responsible for Native Affairs, and consultation to follow. But if an existing agreement is being negotiated on a without-prejudice basis, in my position I'm not up to date on that.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs or the Minister responsible for Native Affairs in the province. Has there been any consideration of the submission regarding without-prejudice agreement that has been advanced on several occasions by the Federation of Metis Settlements to cabinet tours, as well as in a formal presentation to the government by the solicitors on behalf of the Federation of Metis Settlements?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I have not considered that matter since assuming the portfolio of Municipal Affairs.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. In the absence of a without-prejudice agreement, is the government of Alberta prepared to take any steps to restore some measure of local autonomy to the Metis settlements in this province?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, since I assumed the office there's been no specific request to my office from the Metis federation or individual Metis colonies with respect to this matter. Indeed I would have to say I believe a number of ongoing matters recognize the independence of the Metis colonies in a number of ways. An example is the introduction of the municipal debt reduction program a short time ago, which indicated quite clearly our determination to ensure that funds were allocated to those colonies through the Department of Social Services and Community Health and the jurisdictional responsibilities they have.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I would refer the hon. minister to *Hansard* of October 16, where the matter was discussed in some detail with the former Attorney General.

My question is to the hon. Premier. How long does the government propose to delay any action to provide self-government to the Metis settlements? Is that delay inextricably connected to the \$30 million legal suit now before the courts? Is the government prepared to look at the question of recognition of the settlements aside from the legal case?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, as was pointed out in this Legislative Assembly on an earlier occasion, that is one of the options the government is considering. Certainly it was one of the disturbing factors in terms of the dispute over mineral rights, because we have the view that it would certainly be in the best interests of the Metis settlements, and of all people involved, if we could put aside that legal dispute and have it narrowed to the question of mineral rights, whether the Metis settlements do or do not have the right to the mineral claims, and concurrently but on a separate path work with them with regard both to autonomy within the settlements and to various municipal services that may be established. That matter will be before the government this summer.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

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

MR. NOTLEY: The hon. Premier indicated last fall that there were specific problems in developing this program. Will the Premier give assurance to the Assembly at this stage that the government will in fact look favorably on the proposal of the federation, which was a without-prejudice agreement so that there could be recognition of the settlements, giving them authority to act in certain areas that would be separate, without prejudicing the legal claim on the part of either the settlements or the government of Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'll have to check the record. I thought that's what I had said previously in the Legislative Assembly, and that certainly is the view

of the government. However, the technical legal nature of the action, which of course has to be commenced as a plaintiff by the Metis settlements, and I can't go beyond that, raises technical questions for the solicitors involved. Our view is that we hope we can overcome those technical objections, soon during the course of this summer, so that we can respond, as I said previously in the House; that is, work with the Metis settlements in establishing their position as they would like to on an autonomous basis. I certainly will be pressing the government to take that course of action.

Metis Settlements — Documents

(continued)

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's with regard to the question of the entrances to the Metis offices. The minister indicated that both private and public property were involved in the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly we might have just this one further question on the topic. It would seem that without the unanimous approval of the House we're not going to tend toward a custom which will devote an entire question period to one topic. Five other members, and I can't anticipate what topics they wish to deal with, have not yet asked their first question, and our time is running close to the end.

MR. R. CLARK: Speaking to your observations, Mr. Speaker, I would concur that this should not become a custom. On the other hand, I would hope we wouldn't have an incident like this every day. It's for that reason — the importance we place on what happened yesterday — that we in the official opposition have chosen to ask all our questions in this area, as I outlined at the start of question period.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition is certainly entitled to his opinion as to the importance of any topic that is dealt with in the question period. But the fact of the matter is that we have now had eight questions and 12 supplementaries on one topic. That in itself is somewhat of a departure from the ordinary custom of the Assembly and from the custom of most assemblies of our tradition. There's no problem about coming back to the topic, if there's time left, or coming back to it tomorrow. But in fairness to the members who have indicated they still wish to ask their first question, we should get on with it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, because I've been recognized as having the next question. In essence, your ruling prevents me from asking a question. You do not know what that question is going to be. Therefore, if I ask a question and you rule it out of order because it deals with this matter, you are taking away my privilege of speaking in this Legislature.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could add a couple of comments on this matter. With great respect, it seems to me that as long as questions come within the confines of the rules of this House, those questions should be allowed to be put, once the Speaker has recognized the questioner. That may involve a disproportionate number of questions in one area. That usually isn't the case. But as the Leader of the Opposition

has indicated, this is a matter of very great public concern. If all the questions from the opposition happen to be in that particular area of concern, it would seem to me that as long as those questions fit the rules of the House, they should be permitted to be placed before the ministers. The ministers may or may not choose to answer them; that is their right.

I would add, sir, in observing *Hansard* in the House of Commons, that on a number of occasions very crucial issues have come up and almost the entire question period has centred on those issues. As long as the questions are within the confines of the rules of this House, it would seem totally correct to me that once you have recognized the questioner, those questions should be allowed to be put.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order, I would indicate that I feel your judgment should be with regard to a time allotment for me to ask the question and, secondly, to whether my question fits the format of the general rules on asking questions in the Assembly. But thirdly, as to the content of the question, as long as it fits the agreed format I don't think it can be questioned.

MR. SPEAKER: Of course we are using up time which hon. members of the opposition might prefer to devote to this topic. But briefly, if we were to follow the precedent in the House of Commons, there would be a maximum of three or four supplementaries per member, and I doubt that that would be welcome in these circumstances.

What we have here in fact is a topic being started by one member, and then a large number of supplementaries — whether they follow immediately after the question or at a subsequent turn. If we're going to adopt that kind of custom, it will mean that whoever asks the first question during the question period, if he or she can keep the supplementaries going long enough, may monopolize the question period with that topic.

I think without further discussion I'll recognize the hon. Member for Clover Bar. If he wishes to ask a question — possibly a supplementary on this topic — we can hear him, since he hasn't asked another question. But I would not be inclined to allow any excessive number of supplementaries on this particular topic, as has already occurred in this question period.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, speaking to your decision. Certainly we'd like to have a reconsideration of that particular ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: As you know, the Chair gets very little opportunity to reconsider a ruling. Let's get on with the question period.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my question of the hon. Premier. It relates to the visitation of the affected colonies by members of the Department of Social Services and Community Health. In 1972 or '73 all hon. members who were in the Assembly remember the Lesser Slave Lake incident and the Dr. Craig case.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

DR. BUCK: Just wait, you'll get the question.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. At that time the hon. Premier assured the members of this Assembly that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member going to deal with some very far back history, or is he going to ask a question concerning a current topic?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. The Premier assured the Assembly . . .

MR. SPEAKER: What the Premier might have assured the Assembly a decade or more ago is not relevant to this question period.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Premier, who was head of the government when we had these other two cases, stated that there would not be an occurrence in this province of the incidents that happened at these colonies. Can the Premier indicate if it has happened?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I don't see the slightest connection between the three cases.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question was also going to be to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Due to your ruling, I withdraw my question.

Quebec Referendum

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a question to the hon. Premier. I wonder if the Premier would advise the House whether the government of Alberta will be participating in the referendum debate in Quebec.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, we may be participating in the referendum debate, depending upon the wording of the referendum motion that we understand will be announced shortly by the Premier of Quebec. If it obviously involves the federal system, the nature of that participation is difficult to assess at the present time. I am involved in some public communication regarding the issue.

I can't really answer that question, Mr. Speaker, until we have the precise wording of the referendum, but I do think that all Members of the Legislative Assembly will be sharing a concern with regard to how it is phrased in terms of federalism and the country.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. I wonder if he'd also advise the House whether he intends to raise this important item or whether this item will be discussed at the premiers' conference this summer.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that is a difficult one, because this year's conference of premiers is in the province of Quebec and hosted by the Premier of Quebec. I would have to say I anticipate that the premiers would be discussing the referendum issue at the premiers' conference in Quebec, presuming that the nature of that referendum question has been phrased at that time.

GATT Negotiations

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Premier.

Could the hon. Premier please inform this Assembly as to the status of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations in Geneva relative to the economy of Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I would refer that question to the hon. Minister of State for Economic Development — International Trade.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Speaker, with the excellent cooperation of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs we have established that so far we have had only preliminary reports from the Geneva conference. But I hope to have the results regarding the tariff and non-tariff items as soon as possible and then report to the House or, if later, by memo to the members of the Assembly.

Metric Conversion

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Government Services. Will the minister inform the House as to the rate the metric system is being implemented in Alberta and the comparison of that rate with the rest of the provinces in Canada?

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, that is an ever-timely question, and I want to thank the hon. member for giving me some forewarning of it so that I might acquaint myself with the background.

Mr. Speaker, in responding to the question, could I say that the metric system, or metrication, has been with us for some years now. It began way back in the late '60s. I believe in 1974 there was a meeting between the Prime Minister and the premiers of the provinces, wherein all parties agreed to accept metrication in Canada. The implementation of that happened in Alberta in 1976 with the passage of Bill 81, The Metric Conversion Statutes Amendment Act, and then again in 1977 with a related piece of legislation.

Since that time, Mr. Speaker, we've been proceeding on a phase-in basis. Originally it was planned to phase in the implementation over a period of five years. It is my understanding that by design we're some two years behind in the implementation, but it is progressing.

I should say that a number of other ministers may well like to supplement my answers, because all of us have a shared responsibility in this area. Not that I don't want to accept full responsibility, Mr. Speaker, but we are all involved.

In any event, the Department of Government Services, through the director of the metric branch, is responsible for co-ordination. As I mentioned, we have been proclaiming sections of the two Acts from time to time so that metrication — I suppose you might say, as objectionable as it may seem in certain areas — becomes a fact of life because it is so important to trade in Alberta and Canada.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I still didn't get an answer as to who was proceeding most quickly. At the same time, could the minister tell the House if we were the first to implement the recent changes in the Land Titles Office to hectares from acres? Maybe that will lead you into your next question.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member is asking questions which are really outside the scope of the hon. minister's official duties and largely relate to matters already publicly known.

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, if I could respond just very briefly to the hon. member. It is a very topical situation; we've seen a . . .

MR. R. CLARK: Out of order.

MR. NOTLEY: It's out of order. You can't respond.

MR. SPEAKER: It would seem that we would be launched on a very, very extensive field, especially if we followed the indication of a moment ago to make a department-by-department canvass of progress in metrication.

I should say to the Assembly that although there's only a short period left, my concern about accommodating hon. members with their first questions has been met. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Metis Settlements — Documents

(continued)

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Twice in question period today the minister indicated that he directed his officials some 20 hours ago that materials other than government materials should be promptly returned. Is he in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether he's heard from his staff, and have the files which we believe were not the property of the Alberta government in fact been returned to the settlements?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I have not had any word yet as to whether there actually were files that did not belong to the government of Alberta. As soon as I have that information I'll be pleased to pass it on to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, just one further supplementary question to the minister. Are we to understand that 20 hours after a directive given by the minister to the staff of the department, the staff haven't advised the minister whether there are any private files and if those files are being returned? Who's running the department?

MR. NOTLEY: Whoever it is, they're running it slowly.

DR. BUCK: And badly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Attorney General. What steps does the government propose to take to retrieve documents from the two colonies where they weren't successful yesterday? Do these steps include obtaining warrants?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think in order to answer the hon. member's question fairly I might just prefix the answer by saying that in the case of the six settlements where documents were obtained yesterday there was no indication from any of the people present — whether they be department employees, or as my colleague has indicated, others in shared space — that

in none of those cases was there any indication that the documents did not belong to the government and should not be taken.

The hon. member's question has arisen in respect of the other two. The procedure there is what I think members would expect; that is, we have referred the matter to legal advisers to consider what steps they should now take in regard to obtaining the other documents that belong to the people of Alberta.

I should add that the reference the hon. member made to a warrant is not the only occasion that that has been made in questions today and yesterday. In all respects it is totally inappropriate to use such language in regard to civil proceedings where all that is being done is the normal process that happens in every lawsuit of any consequence at all; that is, that the parties are entitled to see not only the other party's documents, unless some privilege is claimed, but in all events their own documents.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary. We've exceeded the time allotted for the question period.

MR. NOTLEY: Is the Attorney General in a position to advise the Assembly whether he was aware of the searches made yesterday and whether either the Attorney General or someone from his department discussed this matter with officials of the Metis betterment branch before the raids were made?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member persists in using objectionable and entirely inappropriate language in phrasing his questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: He should know by now that his references as disclosed to raids or the like are entirely wrong, entirely out of context, and bear no relationship whatever to the facts.

MR. NOTLEY: Tell that to the people in the settlements.

MR. CRAWFORD: Now as to whether members of the Attorney General's Department were in consultation with employees of the Metis betterment branch, I do not know the answer to that precise question. However, I have no hesitation in saying that the normal flow of information and advice between legal officers in the Attorney General's Department and persons — whether it was at the level the orders to acquire the documents were carried out or at another level, I don't know — but certainly through solicitors in the department there would have been some consultation in regard to the need for the government to have possession of these particular documents in order to see them.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: I wonder if the Assembly would allow me to revert to some reference to yesterday's vote on

second reading of Bill No. 22.

I have today received letters or memoranda from four hon. members indicating that had there been greater opportunity for reflection or consideration, they would probably not have voted on second reading of Bill 22. It would be my intention then, in order to give effect to the second part of Standing Order 31, to cause an appropriate notation or memorandum to be entered into Votes and Proceedings indicating the position of these four hon. members.

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that questions 104 and 105 and motions for returns 108 and 109 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

107. On behalf of Mr. R. Speaker, Mr. R. Clark moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
- 1) the initial amount of money budgeted by the government of Alberta to support publicly initiated projects in celebration of the International Year of the Child;
 - 2) the amount of supplementary funding added to the above total;
 - 3) the number of projects funded under the above program;
 - 4) the number of projects denied funding.

[Motion carried]

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, while we're under Orders of the Day, I'd like to ask you, sir, if at some time in the near future you could outline, perhaps in written form to my colleagues and me, the basis for the ruling you made earlier this afternoon with regard to question period, whether that basis is in the *Standing Orders* of the Assembly, *Beauchesne*, or *Ersine May*. We'd appreciate very much if you would outline the basis for that at some appropriate time, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I can do that very briefly and simply right now. As a matter of fact, I had intended to mention this when I was speaking with regard to the point of order.

First of all, the tradition is that all supplementaries are irregular, as of course originally the question period itself was. However, we've gone considerably beyond that, and now it's a very well established rule that all supplementaries are at the discretion of the Chair. I can't really make any great analytical display in analysing a discretion of that kind. It just seems appropriate that we should give hon. members a chance to ask their first question, especially after an almost unprecedented portion of the question period has already been used to deal with one topic.

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

206. Moved by Mrs. Embury:
Be it resolved that this Legislative Assembly recommend for the consideration of the government of Alberta that an occupational health and safety foundation be

established with the following responsibilities:

- (1) to examine and make recommendations in respect to safety training programs and to recommend ways in which such programs might be provided to work-sites through private and public agencies and institutions;
- (2) to recommend ways in which research for the betterment of working conditions in Alberta might be stimulated and supported.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to bring this motion before the Assembly.

In 1973 the Gale commission was established by the provincial government to review existing health and safety policies and programs in Alberta. This was a result of the identification of health and safety problems which affect the human and economic resources of the growing industrial work force. Over a period of two years this commission worked diligently, gathering information from presentations within the province, visiting other provinces in Canada and European countries to assess their programs.

The Gale commission did consider a separate ministry, similar to what was established in the United Kingdom. However, at that time the commission felt Alberta was not sufficiently advanced in industrial development to warrant this change. Following the acceptance of the commission's recommendations by the government, the occupational health and safety division in the Department of Labour was established in 1976. Eight months later, The Occupational Health and Safety Act came into being. The purpose was to provide a co-ordinated program to promote occupational health and safety, and to assist in the prevention of work-related accidents and ill health.

This work has been carried on by six branches: the laboratory services branch, the medical services branch, the occupational health and safety inspection branch, the radiation health branch, the occupational hygiene branch, and the research and education branch.

In 1979, a new ministry of Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation came into being. This achieves one of the basic principles outlined in the Gale commission: to establish a separate body that would ensure occupational health and safety, and have a separate, recognizable identity and a very high profile.

The prevention of accidents starts with safety programs. There are a great variety of these in private industry. Many of them are significant: the approval of plans; the inspection of equipment before, during, and after its installation; providing safety equipment and some education for workers.

One example is one of the larger oil well service companies, that has been in business for 27 years, employing 212 people and operating 26 rigs in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. This company has organized a school for new recruits to cut the high accident toll in this industry. The school is located at their headquarters and is composed of lecture space in the main building, classroom space in a well-site trailer, and a 1,000-foot well, cased and cemented as an operating field facility. Before new employees go on a service rig, they are put through a seven- to eight-day training program which includes lectures from provincial occupational and safety staff and from company officials; reaction and site tests; training in the use of emergency air packs, fire extinguishers, and first-aid

kits; and hands-on operation of a service rig. By the third day of training, recruits are involved in using a service rig to pull tubing from the training well and place blowout preventer stacks.

This program was introduced in 1978, and four of these have been completed so far. This orientation is for new employees, and the size of the class is restricted to about half a dozen people. The company faces the problem that its investment in training is lost if a man leaves right after the initial period. In the service-rig field, turnover rates are traditionally high. This problem has been partially alleviated by careful screening of applicants. The training program also has a component for long-time employees. Through the co-operation of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors and the Petroleum Industry Training Centre, men working on rigs have a certificate in first aid, hydrogen sulphide lifesaving techniques, and blowout prevention skills.

The training makes good sense to a company, due to the cost of equipment. Also, the frequency of injuries affects the size of compensation payments paid by the firm to the Workers' Compensation Board. Service-rig companies pay \$7.50 per \$100 of employee wages. This compares to about 70 cents per \$100 in other parts of the oil industry, such as refining and petrochemicals. Accident rates have been reduced. The underlying philosophy of this company is not safety first, but safety always.

A large oil company that employs 1,800 people has a 1979 budget of \$315,000 for its safety program. Its accident-prevention program offers approximately 45 courses a year on defensive driving, first aid, safe driving, hydrogen sulphide, survival training, winter driving, off-highway driving, and fire fighting. Also, noise level surveys are carried out, and they participate in hazard surveys at all plants, major field locations, and drilling-rig locations. Detailed monthly reports of statistical information are kept regarding personal injury through lost-time injuries per million man-hours worked, and automobile accidents per million kilometres driven.

While both personal injury and automobile accidents have been reduced 50 per cent since 1969, a lot of work is still to be done keeping long-time employees alert and training new employees. Prevention of accidents and disease must be passed along to all employees, instead of coping with isolated problems after they occur.

Unions also sponsor excellent programs. These include seminars, group activities, and educational sessions which deal with safety and health promotion in the work area.

In the past, safety and health did not receive high recognition in the collective bargaining process. This is beginning to change.

Other types of isolated, yet excellent programs are: a new livestock safety film that has been produced in Edmonton for people of all age groups who live on farms, because it has been found that livestock is the second most common agent in farm accidents, next to machinery. One area in the province has been very progressive by introducing a total community-coordinated safety program, where health and safety factors would be important on the job, in the home, and in the community.

While various isolated programs do exist, these are not consistent throughout any one industry or all

industries in this province. Also, unfortunately, where safety and occupational health programs do exist, they have often been a management function. This is not to say that management does not want involvement of the worker, but priorities and attitudes have made this difficult. Safety has a low priority. It is difficult to measure safety in terms of dollars and cents. Our national criterion is the gross national product. The emphasis is on increasing man-hour production. There are also excellent examples in industrial businesses where management has encouraged workers, their families, and the union to participate in safety. These are exceptions instead of the rule.

[Mrs. Chichak in the Chair]

Accidents result from a lack of education or from errors in judgment. The individual does not encourage safety, sometimes by not using the special equipment supplied. One uses excuses to rationalize irresponsible actions. Only after an accident does one become concerned about his personal welfare and, in retrospect, criticizes and condemns existing safety and health programs. There is little research devoted to determining the forces that shape the attitude of the employed person. It is difficult to prove that the work, the work environment, and satisfaction and rewards other than monetary affect attitudes. What is needed is greater awareness, knowledge, and personal motivation. Employees need to be involved in the development of new programs and how they can be incorporated to ensure physical safety.

Management and individuals must take the initiative to ensure a comprehensive program of prevention. Instead of concentrating on the physical aspects of safety, it is necessary to develop safe working procedures which become a way of life for individuals wherever they are: at work, at home, or in the community. The whole area of health promotion and illness prevention has to undergo the same scrutiny as the safety aspect of industry.

People working in this area, such as the professionals and technologists, will have to be skilled and dedicated, because it is a difficult area to promote. It basically becomes a public concern only when a disaster occurs. Illness and accidents are often confused, due to lack of qualified staff that can diagnose occupational health disease. Knowledge is limited. Educational programs in institutions of higher learning are very limited. There is great scope for well-qualified specialists to bring an interdisciplinary approach to solving the vast number of concerns.

Why an institute at this time? While awareness of occupational hazards is growing, and requests to all branches within the department have increased, it is evident that government programs and the attempt to enforce legislation will not significantly reduce injury and illness. It is also recognized that it is the responsibility of everybody: the worker, the employer, the union, the general public, and the government. There needs to be co-ordination of all types of programs so they reach all individuals in industry, even reaching into the homes of the workers.

In spite of encouraging trends, such as the reduced fatality rate, it is becoming increasingly apparent that traditional methods of preventing occupational injuries and ill health are inadequate. As the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn said, in his maiden

speech, on the establishment of a new ministry responsible solely for workers' health, safety, and compensation:

This clearly shows the priority our government attaches to the well-being of the working person in this province. It is my personal hope that the efforts of this ministry in the area of workers' health can dovetail in some respects with . . . activities of the proposed Alberta heritage foundation for medical research, for in a growing province such as ours it is important that research be initiated into the effect on workers of employment in various industries over prolonged periods . . .

What will the institute do? It will provide leadership in research, with major emphasis on prevention, by providing scholarships and grants for occupational health and safety professionals and technologists for training inside and outside Alberta; by co-ordinating the education and training programs now being offered by diverse groups; by promoting education and training by sponsoring lectures, workshops, and seminars for the professionals, the employees and the workers; and by setting up endowment funds for research and teaching at universities and colleges.

The foundation could endow a chair of occupational medicine, occupational nursing, or occupational safety and health, or provide research centres at universities which would provide information and teaching capabilities to students, the business sector, and the public.

MRS. FYFE: Mme. Speaker, I would like to speak to this motion this afternoon and perhaps provide a slightly different dimension from some of the concerns I have with it.

During the five-year period, from 1974 to 1978 inclusive, the number of workers under workers' compensation rose from 493,500 to 692,000, an increase of 40 per cent. Although there was a downward trend in the number of deaths during this period, the injuries stabilized. This clearly demonstrates that we have made some tremendous gains in improvement of conditions for workers, but a lot remains to be done.

The Gale commission, as the speaker before me outlined, has concluded that no occupational health and safety program would be complete without a comprehensive education program and a research capability. A major area of concern in Alberta is the acute shortage of trained personnel to carry out this educational function, and I think we are going to have apply ourselves to improve this situation. We have a newly created department, which demonstrates a strong commitment on the part of this government to support health and safety. In the many dimensions of health and safety, it is imperative to have the support not only of government, but of all who are concerned: the employer, the worker.

An awareness of health and safety does not begin when you are an adult and you've suddenly come to a job location. Awareness of health and safety begins at a very early age in the home. We've had many programs to try to improve our awareness of the concern for health and safety. Child-proof packaging, labelling, recognition of hazardous product symbols: these are programs we've tried to start at a very early age, so people are concerned from that age until they are old enough to enter the workplace. We cannot legislate people into thinking about safety. We can only make them more aware of safety and, hopefully, more con-

scious of what they can do to assist themselves. While enforcement of legislation has had the effect of reducing deaths in the workplace, it is clear that both employers and workers need a greater awareness and knowledge.

I feel we should take time to evaluate the effectiveness of our newly created department before we set up another agency or body armed with similar responsibilities. If we are to increase awareness and reduce the rate of injury and illness, the co-ordinated approach to the delivery of services is most important. While this government has had an excellent record in the area of occupational health and safety, it is clear that there is a need for greater involvement of other agencies. I feel it may be more appropriate at this time to look at the possibility of establishing an advisory committee to the minister, made up of representatives from employers and workers. This may also co-ordinate the various approaches.

In summary, Mme. Speaker, I am concerned firstly about the fragmentation of services, particularly those for which we are responsible. Secondly, I feel that an advisory committee to the minister could examine and make recommendations relating to the safety training programs emphasized so strongly in the Gale commission report. Thirdly, an independent organization may be useful to attract private funds for research, training, and scholarships. I fully recognize that this may be one argument in favor. But I would like to see an initiative from business and workers in the establishment of an independent body responsible for the functions set out.

DR. REID: Mme. Speaker, I rise to take part in this debate primarily to support the motion presented by the Member for Calgary North West. I believe I said something in my maiden speech about the significance of the sequence in the title of the department: health, safety, and compensation, the third being essentially an indication of failure on the part of the first two. I also promised the minister that he was going to be a busy gentleman and that I hoped to take part in keeping him busy for the next four years.

Mme. Speaker, I have worked with the results of industrial accidents for almost a quarter of a century. During that fairly long period of time I was involved in what was then the construction of the largest industrial plant in the province, the pulp mill at Hinton. Since then I've continued the involvement in treating the results of injuries in industrial accidents. I've had a little more experience than most doctors because, in addition to that normal medical involvement, I have been the medical consultant to that pulp mill, to one of the largest lumber industries in the province, and to one of our larger open-pit coal mines.

As part of that consultative work, some 15 years ago I was involved in what was then the earliest serious attempt to delineate and do something about the problem of industrial deafness, or rather noise-induced deafness. As most of you know, all noise is not industrial; you just need to go to a disco to find that out. [interjection] I like your remark, sir.

The program was initiated by private industry with no push from government or the Compensation Board, because in those days nobody was really aware of the problem.

During that time as a consultant, I was also involved with designing chain saws that didn't kick back, so they wouldn't hurt the workman, and with such mun-

dane matters as the design of special boots and clothing allegedly resistant to power saw cuts. Mme. Speaker, I'm not indulging in an autobiography; I'm just trying to indicate that I have a fair length of commitment to this particular subject.

The problem is very large, and I'm just going to expand on certain parts of it. As justification for my support of this motion, I would particularly like to mention one problem that exists and another that I see coming over the horizon.

Mme. Speaker, at one time the largest industry in this province was coal mining. In those days it was predominantly underground coal mining. I'm speaking about industry as opposed to agriculture; I noticed frowns on a couple of faces. A good number of the many thousands of men who worked in that industry from 1905 through to 1955 are long since dead of old age and intercurrent disease and accidents, but a significant number are still around the province. Of that number, some are showing the effects of exposure to coal dust over long periods of time. This problem of coal miner's lung has been left to the Legislature. It's just as contentious an issue medically as it is from an industrial relations standpoint, in that it is a very difficult problem to delineate.

The last Legislature, in its wisdom, decided to adopt what is called the automatic assumption principle. What this basically comes down to is: if you've got bad lungs and you worked in a coal mine, it's due to working in the coal mine. I presume members of the Assembly, affected workmen, unions, and industry thought that was a nice simple answer to the problem, and from their standpoint it was. They threw it to the medical profession, for whom it is not quite so easy.

Unfortunately, to define coal miner's pneumoconiosis medically is a very difficult problem, especially if you look at one patient in particular. You have to look at whether they have allergies or asthma, whether they have smoked, and what their other work patterns were during their lifetime in industry. I have patients who spent the whole of their career working for the department of lands and forests, not even cutting wood. Their lungs are in worse shape than those of some people I know who worked for 15 years on the dynamite crew at Luscar or Foothills or Mercoal. In other words there are individual responses of the lung, in addition to all the other factors I've mentioned.

The present policy of the board is that if a claim is established it will be sent to outside pulmonary specialists. The board no longer makes the decision. This board has to look at the different factors I mentioned and then decide whether or not the person's condition is essentially industrial. Although the number of claims have gone up from three or four a year to eight or 10 a year, half of those claims are still rejected. It's not an isolated problem of coal miners. It also exists in asbestos workers, welders, and other people who work in dusty environments: farmer's lung, in those who handle large amounts of grain; even people who work with glass get pulmonary problems as a result.

It has been 15 years since the coal mines closed down, and there's a considerable problem with the miners from those days. I'm not convinced we are dealing fairly yet with those men, who are essentially the veterans of what was a very dangerous industry.

I'm convinced there is a need for research on this particular problem in this province, because as you know the coal-mining industry is having a rebirth.

Admittedly, most of it is open-pit mining, but the large number of men involved are still working in coal dust, especially those who treat the coal in coal plants. I hope that if we can do the research now, we will avoid a further legacy of disease 20, 30, or 40 years down the road, such as we have from the last peak of the coal industry.

In Britain, where they've had much more experience of this, it's 20 years since the Medical Research Council started to try to delineate the effects of smoking on industrial workers. I don't want to get on to what is nowadays regarded as a hobbyhorse of the medical profession. But one thing that has come out of the Medical Research Council's work is that if you take the prevalence of pulmonary disease in industrial workers — and they have what they call light pollution industries and heavy pollution industries — it makes no essential difference what type of industry it is, the incidence of pulmonary disease is approximately 5 to 7 times as great in any given industry amongst smokers as it is amongst non-smokers.

As you well know, we have tried to educate people on the hazards of smoking. Whether it has been successful is beside the point. But it does indicate that it is essential that we try to minimize the apparent multiplying factors between smoking and industrial pollution by at least reducing industrial pollution to an absolute minimum.

Mme. Speaker, so far I've dealt at some length with an existing condition and a problem we have in the province, which I hope will not recur. I'd now like to spread on to a problem I can see coming over the horizon in this province; that is, the multitude of chemicals in modern industry. As we all know, one of the policies of this government is to try to diversify the economy of the province. Two very hopeful areas are the petrochemical industry and the chemical industry which will be derived from development of our coal for reasons other than just burning it. As you may know, most of the German chemical industry is based on coal, and with the exception of the American industry, is in actual fact the largest chemical industry in the world.

I would hope we can monitor very carefully what will be a burgeoning chemical industry, so we don't get a repeat of what has happened in the history of that industry elsewhere: a sequence of new industries based on new chemicals. It seems that every new chemical brings its own new hazards, and it's often 20 years before we realize, as in the case of vinyl chloride, that we are dealing with extremely hazardous chemicals. I would hope that in this province the foundation proposed in this motion will result in our setting standards for chemical exposure before rather than after the event and, while not criticizing the efforts of industry, labor, and past governments, that we can learn enough from those events to prevent a further chapter in this province in that rather sorry story. We can set up a chemical industry in this province that can be an example to the rest of the industrial world and a good example to show you can have safety and profitability.

[Mr. Speaker in Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I would like essentially to conclude my remarks with some attention to what has always been regarded as the main bailiwick of the Workers' Compensation Board; that is, the industrial accident. In this particular area we get on to the subject of education as

well as research. In the province of Alberta in the last 5 years, we've gone from a work force of approximately .5 million to 1 million, and at the same time the number of paid compensation days has gone from .75 million to almost 1 million days a year. Fortunately amongst those paid days we have not had an increase in the fatality rate. It has stayed relatively static, in the vicinity of 140 a year. I have a sneaking suspicion that may partially be by good luck rather than good management.

I'm not idealistic enough — maybe unfortunately — to believe we can eradicate accidents and thereby eradicate injuries. But as I mentioned earlier, I was on an executive safety committee in Hinton that did manage to cut down considerably on chain saw injuries by revising the design of the chain and devising peculiar items of clothing that would help avoid injuries. This type of response to repeated similar injuries is essentially a form of research project. By these two means, we managed to reduce our accident frequency and severity by 90 per cent. This shows that adequate investigation and research can be very useful tools.

As I noted in the figures just a moment ago, we have doubled the work force and have only increased the number of lost-time accident days by some 33 per cent. As far as the frequency is concerned, there is some indication of improvement. To get the information we require for that improvement to continue requires considerable research work. I would hope the suggested foundation would be able to finance that research, partly with government funds and partly with private funds from industry. The implementation of the findings of that research will require a lot of education of all aspects of industry and probably of the medical profession.

Mr. Speaker, in the second paragraph of the suggested proposals for this foundation are the words "the betterment of working conditions in Alberta". I can think of no worthier aim for the Minister responsible for Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation. I would therefore ask the Assembly to support the motion to set up a foundation, as proposed.

Thank you.

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak on the motion brought to this Assembly by the hon. Member for Calgary North West. I also note with interest that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is not present for this debate on such an important motion affecting the labor force.

DR. BUCK: Neither is the Premier, in case you haven't noticed.

MR. KUSHNER: This motion is of particular interest to the constituents of Calgary Mountain View. Through their occupations a good majority of the work force in my constituency is going to be affected either directly or indirectly, by this motion.

In 1977, one Alberta worker in five was injured on the job, at a cost of \$47.6 million in compensation payments. The amount of compensation paid is alarming, but even more alarming is that 43 per cent of those accidents involved workers 25 years of age and under. Although 923,700 man-days were lost, the important thing is that I'm sure the injuries would have been significantly reduced with proper on-site and off-site safety programs. It goes without saying that the

man-days lost would also have been reduced. In comparison, last year 938,400 man-days were lost — an increase of 14,700 man-days over 1977. This is one case where I would not enjoy seeing those statistics reach the magic million.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is obvious that the traditional methods of preventing accidents are inadequate. To reinforce my point, a few hon. members present may recall that at the time of the construction of the high-rise apartment building directly across the rail line from the Palliser Hotel in Calgary, there were a rash of freak construction accidents on various projects in the downtown area of the city. These accidents included, if I recall correctly, Mr. Speaker, a crane partially breaking loose from its base, throwing the operator out in the process and, as a result, the operator falling to his death; a cable attached to an industrial elevator on the site of a high-rise building breaking, causing the elevator to fall a number of storeys, which resulted in a death and serious injuries to its occupants; and a number of other accidents.

The accident that stays foremost in my mind during that unfortunate period is of two bricklayers working on the outside wall of a high-rise, approximately 20 storeys above ground level. Apparently one of the cables on the swing stage slipped and threw both men out. For the information of some hon. members, Mr. Speaker, a swing stage is the device that window washers use to stand on while cleaning windows on the outside of high-rise buildings. This allows them to go up and down the outside of the high-rise with relative ease.

Both men were wearing safety belts at the time. Apparently the way these belts work is that a safety rope fits through a harness system, and if the harness is squeezed, the rope will slip through and allow relatively free movement of the person wearing the belt. I suppose we'll never know why one of the men squeezed his harness while being thrown out of the swing stage and did not let go until he fell the full 20 storeys.

The other bricklayer's life was saved by his safety belt. He was forced to climb up his safety rope to the next storey after watching his workmate fall to his death. Mr. Speaker, the man who survived that tragedy was unable to continue his trade because of the trauma he associated with his occupation and the fear of heights instilled in him.

My intention is not to stand before you, Mr. Speaker, and tell horror stories. But two significant questions arise from this particular accident. Number one, why did the cable on the swing stage slip? And number two, why did one of the men squeeze his safety harness? I submit to this Assembly that there is a good possibility that this and many other accidents could have been prevented through proper safety programs. I'm sure that diligent and proper equipment maintenance, and proper education on the use of safety equipment, would have eliminated unnecessary pain and suffering in the lives of at least two Calgary bricklayers' families. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, both of these families live in Calgary Mountain View.

Mr. Speaker, with the skylines in Alberta's cities constantly changing due to the increase of construction throughout our province, we as a government have an obligation to educate and instil awareness with regard to practising safety methods, not only in urban centres but in rural areas as well. The govern-

ment has taken positive steps toward this by creating the new portfolio of the Minister responsible for Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation. But we must not stop there. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I give full support to this motion.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak in favor of this resolution before the House. It's an important resolution, because I think a foundation implies a partnership between government, labor, and industry. To tackle this problem, we have to recognize that no one group can exert moral or legislative force on the other partners in the problem to take a measure they don't choose to.

It's a positive step, Mr. Speaker, because of the partnership. And I think the Assembly's interest in this is nobly motivated. It doesn't come from a desire simply to cut down on Workers' Compensation Board payments. It's something more fundamental than that. It's a recognition of this administration's very deep concern for the health and safety of our work force.

It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that just recently we passed the one million mark in the number of people employed in this province. It's an indication of the growth and diversification of this province. Alberta is not the agricultural province in the backwaters of economic development in the country. Now more than ever this province is in the forefront of some very exciting developments. For example, it is simply phenomenal to take a look at the billions of dollars being spent on petrochemical industry development in Fort Saskatchewan. Implicit is a recognition that many thousands of workers are going to be employed in a very complex field of endeavor with which this province doesn't have much experience.

Mr. Speaker, I think anticipation of problems saves lives. That's the genius, if you like, of this foundation, because it will be trying to anticipate problems and research areas that have led to disease or occupational hazards on the part of workers in the market. I've alluded to petrochemicals, but we're very involved on the agricultural side for the rural members. Agricultural spraying, for example, is increasing. This involves occupational risks and hazards as well. Our construction industry, as the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View has pointed out, naturally involves very real risks and hazards as well.

I think this foundation — because of its implied nature, it's a partnership — would go a long way to anticipate problems, research those problems, and try to avoid problems before they're created. This government has a very good record in terms of occupational health and safety. I think this resolution is a natural extension of the fine record the administration has developed over the past eight years.

I congratulate the Member for Calgary North West for bringing this resolution to the House. I'm sure the government will note it with interest. I note that the minister responsible for this area is in the House. It's a credit to the government's sincerity in following this up that this resolution is being supported by a number of members on both sides. I look forward to its adoption, and spurring this kind of development.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all hon. members in the House to support this resolution and encourage the government to take this kind of step.

MR. MACK: Mr. Speaker, since this is my first address in the Legislature, if I may, I wish to congratulate you upon your re-election as Speaker of the House. I believe it goes without saying that it is indicative of the high esteem and respect in which you are held by this Assembly. I also wish to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the constituents of Edmonton Belmont for allowing me to represent them in the Legislature.

Briefly, the constituency is composed of a fairly generous number of professional and business people, but the citizens are predominantly wage earners. So it is certainly appropriate for me to address myself to this motion — and I might say, in support of it — having spent almost 15 years in the area of labor relations, and having been exposed to many of the problems that directly relate to workers and some of the major concerns in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this foundation will serve as a viable vehicle to create greater worker and management awareness of working as a team on an ongoing basis, thereby creating a climate of safety in the workplace. It cannot be done by legislation. It must be done by awareness, by education, but [through] teamwork.

When this government first took office in the early '70s, it was committed to people-oriented programs. I applaud the government, because one of the initial recognized deficiencies was in workers' health and safety. Early in their term of office they took positive action to determine the pluses and minuses, and the most appropriate manner to alleviate or certainly come to grips with the difficulties and the many, many injuries, as well as fatalities, that were being experienced in the workplace. In recognizing this, they established the Gale commission. We have had the reports on it. So although I have it in my remarks, I will not reflect on it. When the commission was established and their report received, the government initiated action and responded positively and established a safety division within the labor legislation, separate and apart from what was previously known. Subsequently, they established and enacted The Occupational Health and Safety Act, which provided the mechanism by which it could be most effectively implemented.

I would like to reflect briefly on the two aspects of the legislation: one, the mandatory aspect, which I certainly support and applaud. I think it has the capability of making the occupational health and safety awareness program more meaningful and more involved, both by the worker and by management. I believe that because of the manner in which it is established, where there is a mandatory occupational health and safety program and committee, the representatives of the workers are appointed by the workers. By so doing, they accept the responsibility that goes with acceptance of the responsibility. The responsibility is to make certain that when they go back to the workplace, to their fellow workmen, they impart that to the workmen and in fact are self-policing and self-supporting of the enacted program.

There are inherent weaknesses in the voluntary aspect, in that it is basically initiated by management. Quite often — and it certainly does no service to the committee itself — management would choose the employees who would sit on that committee. Quite often the employees on the committee do not feel the freedom and the support they would otherwise feel if they were in fact appointed by their peers to speak on

behalf of their peers. Those who do are very often removed from the committee, and new ones are brought forward. And I think that if there is ever a breakdown in the actual functioning of a committee, this is one area where the breakdown occurs. I believe very strongly in and am looking forward to the day when we can see a standard, regulatory application of mandatory safety committees in all workplaces. I believe that should be done on a gradual interface basis, but that the regulatory standards should be of a mandatory nature rather than a voluntary thing, as we currently know and experience it. There is merit in considering it, simply because, coming from a workplace of many years' standing, I think I appreciate the psychology of people, their reticence in becoming involved, particularly if there may be an imaginary concern of retribution or criticism. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think we should remove, where possible, many of these areas of concern insofar as occupational health and safety programs are enacted and in the workplace.

Consistent with authority is responsibility. As I have indicated, responsibility is not necessarily totally assumed when we have the voluntary type of representation.

Mr. Speaker, in the past five years there has been a marked decrease in fatal inquiries in the workplace. However, in 1978 we still had an inordinately high percentage of injuries in the workplace. We had a total of 122,222 claims reported. I believe the minister should be applauded for taking cognizance of the inordinately high number of injuries and coming to grips with a very difficult task. It is not an easy task; it's a difficult one. Injuries are costly in terms of dollars; moreover, they are far more costly and devastating in terms of what they actually do to the worker and ultimately to the family unit and particularly the community that cares. Very often, if the injury carries with it a prolonged absence from the workplace, psychologically there is a deleterious effect.

I would certainly be very interested in this kind of research, because I believe absence from work has to be of great concern to all of us, if for no other reason than the cost to all of us. In sick pay alone from one large employer in 1978, there was a total of \$5.6 million. That's incredible when you actually take a look at non-productive money that was spent. That's not totally related to injuries but to non-productive time. We have to be concerned about this particular issue and take every precaution and exercise any meaningful program, and initiate it, to attempt to create the kind of awareness and atmosphere within the workplace that will cause employees, first, to be working in a safe place but, secondly, to feel they want to return to the workplace rather than to the physiotherapist for an unending period of time. We find that that is happening. This is the psychological effect on many of our workers.

I certainly would welcome research in this area on how we might cope with it. Perhaps we might be able to apply an earlier return to some form of employment with subsidization to those workers, rather than keeping them on 100 per cent income replacement. We might place them back in the work force earlier, so that the psychological syndrome of drawing a salary but not working does not set in. This area must be explored, must be studied, because I don't really feel we have the kind of expertise, knowledge, and back-

ground in it that we can properly address ourselves to. None the less it is of concern to us.

Mr. Speaker, the occupational health and safety foundation for Alberta would help alleviate some of the research shortfalls. It would provide much needed-research funds for universities and colleges that are independent of government. In fact today, if we were wanting one of our physicians to take an occupational health and safety program at the physicians' level, it is my understanding they would have to leave the country to be able to take that kind of advanced educational training. Many and varied research needs remain outstanding, particularly those relevant to Alberta — technological areas in which alternative safe procedures are explored and developed as they would relate to engineering and manufacture of industrial equipment, architectural design of the various workplaces, air exchanges, noise, et cetera. I believe that much of our cost today is being spent in modifying structures that are already placed — and many of them are new, because not enough attention has been given to the initial design in the protection of noise levels, the air exchange, and just the total environment of a particular area of work.

In the area of human aspects of work-related accidents and diseases, very little is known about why individuals become involved in unsafe situations. What is required is the methodology to make individuals aware of practising safety and identifying dangerous habits. Much can be done. It will obviously have to be done through research. Hopefully through utilization of the place of work, which is the practical aspect, but through the experiences of various people involved, I believe we can make great strides in achieving perhaps the kind of information which can ultimately flow and be disseminated to make employers and employees — and I believe under The Occupational Health and Safety Act as it currently is, and hopefully someday it will become mandatory, the responsibility doesn't lie only with the employer, but with the employee as well. I think this is fair, and it cannot work unless it does just that. The employee may well have a safe piece of equipment. It's the manner in which they handle that equipment that ultimately causes either their demise or serious injury to them and others working around them.

So I'm a great supporter and believer that the occupational health and safety program and Act should engage an equal responsibility on both so that the employee will protect his fellow workmen as well as himself, rather than just taking the blase attitude — and I'm not suggesting that the employee is the only culprit in this area. Many, many employers are very lax in the kind of safety provisions they ought to be providing. The point I attempting to make is: it's a two-way street. It must be embraced by both employee and employer in order that it might work, and work very effectively.

Occupational health and safety must address itself to the need for isolating illnesses, which result from the working environment as opposed to those associated with social and environmental influences. These are unknowns, and we are reticent to make judgments without some factual, professional back-up material. Even our medical profession has difficulty in coming to grips with these kinds of situations that very often affect employees in the workplace. I believe much research is required to determine the most appropriate

preventive measure. I believe the foundation will at least be the beginning of providing us with this kind of information and knowledge that we might be able to draw on and, hopefully, make the workplace a much better and safer place to work in.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, today we have before us an interesting and serious topic which has made great strides in recent years in this province as well as in other provinces in Canada, but perhaps first and foremost in the province of Alberta. Some background material was laid out with respect to occupational health and safety development in this province. This afternoon I thought I would take the opportunity to review a little history of the whole area of workers' compensation.

Recognition of difficulties employees faced as a result of industrial injuries, and occupational health and safety through its various steps, were born out of many years of experience with regard to injury, loss of life, and the cost that has been borne by workers, the families of workers, employers, and the government, both in the ability to continue in a meaningful role in life as well as respecting the financial cost of the whole area of injury in the workplace.

If we go back in history of what we might call workers' compensation legislation, which is really the forerunner of occupational health and safety legislation — although that's not necessarily to say that that is the proper order in which these should have been recognized. Nevertheless, that is the order in which these matters have taken place. We can go back a century and find leaders at least in the area of bringing in legislation, recognizing the disadvantage or the difficulties that workers and their families faced as a result of industrial injuries. The countries that finally brought in legislation, the leaders in bringing about legislation to cope with and ease the difficulties of the worker, were really Germany and Britain.

We go back to Germany as far as 1884 before legislation was finally brought forward to recognize that there must be some small compensation to the injured worker and the family. Britain followed on the heels of Germany in recognizing the problem and developed its legislation about 13 years later, in 1897. It is interesting that although we may say a century ago, that really is not that far back when we consider that some of these countries were pretty heavily industrialized many years before that. To begin with, I think the early legislation was primarily concerning itself with fixing the blame for the industrial accidents. Although some compensation was paid, no attention was being paid to the rehabilitation of the worker. This didn't appear to be important at that time.

In Canada safety and injury in the workplace really began to be recognized in the early 1900s. I think probably to some degree that was put in motion and brought forward by Sir William Ralph Meredith, the chief justice of Ontario. He was then commissioned by the government of Ontario to check into what laws existed in other areas respecting worker safety and to submit some recommendations. The study resulted in legislation based on the recommendations of the chief justice being brought forward in 1915.

In what we might call western Canada, at the turn of the century, before Alberta received its status as a province, under the Northwest Territories a form of legislation was introduced in 1897, an ordinance

which was passed giving dependents of workmen killed in accidents the same rights to sue for damages or compensation as the workman would have had if he had only been injured.

In 1900 the government of the Northwest Territories moved further to abolish the haven that appeared to have been established insofar as the employers having the strength or time on their hands to find ways to make it difficult or almost impossible for a workman or his family to succeed in recovering any kind of damages from the employer. Subsequent legislation was passed to close up what we might call that gap, so that an employee was in a more favorable position.

When Alberta became a province in 1905, this legislation was of course passed on to the province. In fact, in 1908 the first workmen's compensation Act was passed. The history continued in that way. As Alberta became more industrialized and the incidence of accidents and injuries increased substantially, more and more concern was demonstrated with respect to what might be done to control the accident rates. So the Gale commission came about, and the establishment of the occupational health and safety division under the Department of Labour.

At the same time as the legislation was passed and the division established, there was an appointment of an advisory council to the Minister of Labour, a council of lay members from different walks of life in the province, representing the various interest groups, if I might refer to them as such, to examine, assist, and advise the minister on the steps that might be taken to implement the recommendations of the Gale commission most quickly and efficiently. Although it was not feasible to implement all the recommendations immediately, certainly very many of them needed attention very quickly, and a mechanism was required to be established.

I had the privilege of serving as one of the Members of the Legislative Assembly on the occupational health and safety advisory council, and certainly benefited a great deal in better understanding the whole problem area, the need that had to be filled, and the education that was necessary. Some of the steps being taken in that were the setting up of the various educational programs and the legislative requirement of establishing joint safety committees, with the employees and employers and with specific procedures, guidelines, and directions that had to be followed. During the time I served on this council, I had the opportunity to visit a number of the workplaces and observe the organization of the safety committees. What I observed there was certainly the kind of step forward that was long overdue in bringing about or stressing the importance of safety in the workplace.

There are many problems in the workplace, in the sense that it is often very easy to shift the blame or responsibility to one party or the other, when in fact it is a responsibility of all those involved at a particular site. Setting up safety committees and rules by which one must work is certainly the basic step that must be taken. But unless there is heed and recognition, a conscious effort on the part of both the employer and the employee to do everything they can, not only to ensure that the rules set forward are observed but for each to do everything in his power to ensure the safety of a workplace or a site under every conceivable circumstance — unless the conscious effort and decision is made on the part of every individual present, no

amount of programs, research, or education will succeed, short of that personal dedication and responsibility. I think it's extremely necessary, perhaps part of the educational program, to be able to stress that time and again. In my understanding and recognition, the educational programs that have been developed are very excellent. They have attempted to set out step by step the direction and the embedding of self-consciousness of the responsibility for health and safety.

But there are areas in the workplace, Mr. Speaker, over which the worker and perhaps even the employer have little control. Those are in the areas where the materials being worked with are air pollutants of one kind or another. In many instances their existence in the air we breathe is not recognized. There is an area that perhaps needs a great deal more consideration and research.

On the subject of the recommendation that a foundation be set up in the province to perhaps enable contributions from the private sector, or wherever, to build up a bank to provide the funds that would be necessary to do the research that must be done, I would like to say that the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety was established under the federal government and federal legislation. Although I believe the intent of that centre is to work on matters of national interest, it's my understanding that the cost of this centre will have to be borne not only by the federal government — although it was set up by the federal government under their legislation — but eventually by the provinces as well.

Now, if we are going to be contributing funds to this centre to carry out research in the many different areas of occupational health, I think it is necessary for us to ensure that the vehicles we now have in place, and the intent and design of the centre under the federal legislation, should be fully explored and utilized before embarking on still another outlet. That is not to say it may not be necessary. But it seems to me the kind of research that needs to be carried out at this time is that which would be of benefit to industries and workers not only in Alberta but throughout this nation and beyond, internationally.

It seems to me that research, which because of its nature is extremely costly, should be in co-operation with all other governments. And we should utilize the facilities at the various universities, research centres, and laboratories that do exist in this nation. They are not concentrated in any one area. The fact that a Canadian centre is now established, perhaps a pooling or a centre for locating where research is being carried out, in what areas, the areas of benefit that might come about, and the kinds of funding contributions made available not only by the governments of our 10 provinces — perhaps we should say 12, including the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. The responsibilities in total, as well as the workers' groups under their various organizations — the contributions that are being made perhaps should be recognized and centralized, or at least the funding from these various groups might be available through a particular resource centre and then carried out so that no one body or group might have on its shoulders the kind of expense that I'm certain we can all foresee is going to be involved in carrying out the research necessary to make the workplace safe, particularly with respect to the kinds of gaseous conditions that can be caused in our

Health, as I've indicated, by way of the pollution of air and the intake of poisonous gases and other materials.

So although I think the hon. member should be commended for the motion she has brought before the House today, I would like to suggest that this motion should serve notice to all of us to direct our attention to exploring how we can utilize all the facilities that have been put in place not only in this province but under federal legislation and in other provinces of this nation that have attempted to move forward, although I believe Alberta is still in the forefront in the strides it has taken. That is not to say that we should pat ourselves on the back, that we are the leaders in this area and we can sit back and relax. We most certainly cannot. We can push forward further and further so that we not only continue to be the leaders but continue to impress upon our counterpart governments and the national government that they too must speed up the processes they have put in place or the recommendations and recognition they are giving, and really move forward to assist to a greater degree in the strides we must make to make the workplace safer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for St. Paul revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

(reversion)

DR. C. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege and honor to introduce to you and through you 22 grades 5 and 6 students of the Frog Lake school. It may be of interest to the students to know that at one time Mr. Speaker's daughter taught at Frog Lake. These students are accompanied by their teacher Mary Jean Quinney and her husband Erwin Quinney, and by their teacher Alphonse Dion. They are also accompanied by their bus driver Norman Quinney. It is interesting to note that during the campaign I just about got eaten alive by a dog at Norman Quinney's. At this time I'd like to have the students and their teachers and bus driver stand to receive the welcome of the House.

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

(continued)

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a few comments to Motion No. 206 this afternoon. First of all, as members have probably gathered, it's not always my practice to congratulate hon. members across the way. But I was rather impressed today with the remarks of the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont, that in my judgment showed the many years of experience that hon. gentleman has had representing working people. It was also an occasion when the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood made some very constructive and useful comments.

I suppose the question of overall compensation is perhaps a place to start, Mr. Speaker. Compensation as a principle was really a quid pro quo established generations ago. In return for the worker giving up the right to sue the employer, a system of compensa-

tion was established. Compensation would be awarded when injury took place and, based on their safety records, all employers would pay into a fund.

Mr. Speaker, we've come a long way since the Meredith report. Clearly compensation is an established part of Canadian life and, indeed, of industrial practice in this country. But as we look at the resolution before us this afternoon, it seems to me that probably two major areas have to be examined. One is the question of safety itself. I think that is much more easily understood than the larger question of health. On the question of safety, I say to the hon. Minister responsible for Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation that we should be placing a great deal of emphasis on ministerially designated committees at the various worksites in the province, not on the voluntary committees. If we're going to improve safety in the workplace, it's going to be important that we have both management and workers working together. That's obviously a place to start.

But the second thing, just as important in my view, is that those safety committees in fact have clear power at the bottom line. We know that a lot of things can be done on a voluntary basis. You could probably get away with voluntary committees where trade unions represent the workers, because sufficient bargaining power is in the hands of working people that they can make it pretty tough on the employer if he doesn't heed the recommendations of a voluntary site safety committee. I'm a little more troubled, though, in the area of the workers who aren't organized and have voluntary committees. It seems to me that here you don't have the balance, between the employer on one hand and the workers on the other, that you do when an organized trade union is in place.

For some time now, the Alberta Federation of Labour has been solidly in support of ministerially designated committees. Their view and, as I recollect, that of the Gale commission report several years back, is that these committees should be established throughout the province, not on a voluntary or phased-in basis but as a universal aspect of occupational health and safety for businesses of a certain size in the province.

I want to move from there, if I can, to address the larger question of health. I don't think there's any doubt that this is an area — and I agree with the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood — where there has to be co-ordination of the information obtained and the research undertaken in Canada and other parts of the country and, for that matter, in other parts of the world. The whole question of occupational health and the implications of hazardous substances and the impact these substance have on the health of people in the workplace is not common to any geographical boundary. It's common to those types of occupations and industrial enterprises wherever they may exist. It makes sense to me that there has to be a tremendous amount of co-ordination.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, it would be not overly useful to get into research that simply parallels research being done in other jurisdictions. I think there needs to be more research; no question about that. A broad range of research is necessary, but clearly it should be co-ordinated so we don't have half a dozen jurisdictions toppling over themselves to research the implications of black lung, for example, but not to look at the impact of the petrochemical industry. We have to make sure our research is co-ordinated.

I think that is especially important in a province where much of the industrial activity is going to be in areas with a high susceptibility to industrial health problems. If the type of industrial expansion taking place in Alberta were in the field of cabinet making, for example, we might worry about safety. But the impact of health in the largest sense is much greater when you look at a petrochemical plant or major expansion in the coal industry. Not too long ago we had questions in the Legislature about black lung disease. I recall the resolution concerning black lung that the [former] hon. Member for Drumheller put on the Order Paper and that was actually passed by this House.

Particularly with respect to our move into petrochemicals, I think we're getting into an area ... There's no need to be an alarmist, but certainly the studies made elsewhere on the continent indicate that we have not only implications for the people, who work in those plants but very definite implications for people in the surrounding areas.

Mr. Speaker, my view is that we need substantial research. I don't believe research into an area as important as occupational health should be funded on a hit-and-miss basis as a result of contributions made periodically from private industry. I believe we have to co-ordinate, as I say, but it has to be co-ordination where both government and industry in fact are obligated to make sure these research programs are properly funded. I don't think we should get into a situation where we have to rely on the charity of industrial enterprises, because that is completely opposite to the principle of workers' compensation. The whole philosophy behind workers' compensation is that every industry is assessed on the basis of its safety record. There is not a maybe-yes, maybe-no situation. Once you are in the workers' compensation program, you have to pay your assessment. It's not a case of you may or may not pay it.

It seems to me that we're really dealing with a subject that is too important just to be left up to the good will of certain people to make contributions from the private sector to fund ongoing research. That's not to deny that there won't be a tremendous amount of additional research done by the private sector on a voluntary basis, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the work of government and the occupational health and safety people in various provinces. It seems to me that that's a sort of bonus we can expect from the private sector. But in setting public policy I don't think we should undercut or minimize the impact the various kinds of hazardous and gaseous materials people are now working with are going to have on the health not only of the workers but of people who live in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks by saying that I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton Beverly has landed a rather more important portfolio than he was given credit for when the announcement of the cabinet was made. The area of workers' compensation and occupational health and safety is going to be just as crucial, I would say, because we're dealing with the human component of Mr. Lougheed's much talked about new west. Part of that human component is to make sure we have the highest possible standards of occupational health and safety.

I would simply close by saying to the minister that we have made some progress, yes. No question about that. Not as much progress as many of us would have

liked to have seen. I think many of us would like to see the government move a little faster in implementing the recommendations of the Gale report. But there is still much left to be done. So over the next two and one-half, three, three and one-half years, however much time the hon. minister has before the next election and he's booted out of his position and shifted to some other portfolio — whatever time he has left, he has a tall order and one that is very important.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Motion 206 presented by the Member for Calgary North West. The motion recommends the establishment of an occupational health and safety foundation. The frame of reference for this foundation covers two points:

- (1) to examine and make recommendations in respect to safety... programs and to recommend ways in which such programs might be provided to worksites through private and public agencies and institutions.
- (2) ... research for the betterment of working conditions ...

First of all I would like to say that we now have a workers' compensation program that is second to none in Canada. This motion would take the program even further in the prevention of needless lost-time accidents and illnesses related to occupational health.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the farming community is not overlooked in this legislation. As you know, severe morbidity and mortality is related to the farming industry. Farm machinery is some of the most hazardous equipment in our province and society. Couple this equipment with the sense of rush and the urgency of the haying and harvesting seasons, and we see many tragic accidents.

Last summer I was called to the hospital emergency to see a man who had been haying by himself in the field. While out there he had been using a big round baler. The baler had become plugged. Without disengaging the power take-off he got off the tractor to remove some of the hay from the rollers where it was caught. He managed to grab the hay out, but at the same time his glove got caught in the rollers.

Those two big rollers pulled his arm into the machine and caused severe injury to his arm. He had strength enough to stand up to the pressure and hold himself out of it, or he would have been pulled right in and a more serious tragedy could have occurred. However, when he came to the hospital he had lost the flesh, the tendons, the muscles in everything up to the wrist of his right hand. Emergency care was given, and he was brought to Edmonton where the arm was amputated.

These kinds of injuries happen on a regular basis in the farming community. I would hope that the research part of this program would also look into the hazardous nature of our farm equipment and that something could be done to prevent their occurrence. We have a long-standing program of trying to caution farmers, to tell them and train them, but it hasn't worked.

Besides the injuries, there's the constant threat of farmer's lung. This condition yearly takes its toll in the farming community, leaving a severe morbidity of chronic obstructive lung disease, which is one of the most severely disabling illnesses in the later years of life. To complicate these problems, our farmers are

using some of the most toxic chemicals around, and they haven't had the opportunity for the training to teach them the precautions they must take to guard themselves against the hazards.

Recently I was in conversation with the Member for Drumheller. He was saying he doesn't worry about putting on gloves and whatnot for dealing with weed spray. It's just too much nuisance, and you can't do it anyhow. I would like to say that that's the common occurrence in our farming community. Farmers don't know the toxicity level of these chemicals or their long-term effects. I would hope we would take some initiative in getting a more extensive training period for them.

I dare say the farming community still doesn't know about the problem of hearing loss related to the noise of their equipment. Every year I have to counsel farmers to start using earmuffs and to get cabs on their tractors to protect their hearing. At the time we find them, it's usually too late. We have to get to the younger farmer. We have to start our training on that level. So I would hope that the farming community is a major target in this legislation.

I have a memo here that we should also go to the new farmer. Maybe our green certificate program is the one that should zero in on these farmers and help give them a safe occupation.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen some of the industry in my area starting to become alert to the problem of illness and injuries related to industry. Recently the Canadian Salt plant at Lindbergh has had each employee take a spirometer test to check their lungs and their respiratory capacity. In doing so they've found a number of men have lung difficulties. These employees have been referred to their medical practitioners and in turn sent to Edmonton for investigation. This plant has also become aware of the noise level that has occurred and that hearing problems are affecting their employees. They've taken on the responsibility of checking these things out, even to the point of purchasing a sound room to test employees' hearing loss. This sound equipment is to be placed in the Elk Point hospital under the care and supervision of the northeastern Alberta health unit. The company will allow the checking of its own employees but is offering the service to the farming community in the area as well. I'd like to commend them on this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I'm totally in favor of this motion, and I would request every member of this Assembly to vote affirmatively.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I want to share a few points. First I want to compliment hon. members who have participated in the motion this afternoon. The hon. Member for Calgary North West, in doing the preparation, indicated to me that she found it one of the more exciting things she's done in this Legislature. I want to say that I'm pleased to see the enthusiasm.

We have a challenge before us. Very early in my time in office I indicated that I see my challenge in three sectors. One sector is the old one we are so familiar with: the mining, construction, and lumbering that has been with us now for many years. We still have a lot of work to do in it, a lot of research, a lot of educational programs. Possibly our work in safety and health is an ongoing thing that we'll never be able to complete.

The other area, which I'm pleased the hon. members for Spirit River-Fairview and St. Paul indicated, is a new area. That's the toxic area facing us on the horizon. And no one must overlook the X-ray concern facing us. We could be facing so many unknowns and so many problems. It's most difficult to bring about real solutions when sometimes you don't even know the results of these problems.

The third area, which has been mentioned, is the farming area, the agribusiness area. As hon. members indicated in their presentations this afternoon, many of the toxic areas, the chemicals used, the attitudes, the simple things that are overlooked, so often cause the biggest problem.

It was made very evident to me by people in the occupational health and safety branch that in their search for some presentation, some film on animal-related accidents on the farm, they did not find one in North America. The federal agriculture department in the United States had all kinds of films on machinery-related accidents. That is why I was very pleased to see a film called *The Sixth Sense*, produced here in Alberta and very well done. I recommend it. I know that people in the occupational health and safety branch have been presenting that film to 4-H groups and chamber of commerce groups. It was of interest to me, because I grew up on the farm and knew that one of the most unprepared-for incidents is when — the old cliché — you spook an animal. You just don't have any way of knowing when an animal can be spooked, and this goes from the big horse to even the old gobbler or gander that has a lot of strength in those wings and could cause some injury.

The compliment paid to me by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview — I will only reflect that when I was first in office some people considered that the portfolio was created to satisfy my ethnic background, possibly because a number of years ago my colleague sitting to my left nicknamed me Super-Uke. Maybe they need somebody of supernatural ability to head this portfolio. I accept that challenge, because it is so dear to me. In my years of social work I have seen the trauma a family goes through when anybody is ill or disabled because of an injury or even natural causes.

We have the question of safety, which we could do a lot better in. I look forward to further participation, because the resolution indicates that a foundation be established to do further work. This would be a sharing between the employers' or business section and the labor people, the trade union movement, or the work force.

Where workers are not organized, I appreciate the concern that they do not have a shop steward, they do not have an organization that has the clout to enforce the regulations. I can never accept the charge — and I've said this to employer groups — which so often is used that workers should be charged for insubordination, that they want to get injured. That to me is unacceptable. At the same time, I have indicated to

labor people that I don't believe employers want workers to get injured. The training, the preparation, everything else — nobody wants it. I hope these two will be able to work closer, that we would still be able to have volunteer-organized joint worksites rather than designated by ministerial order. But I share the concern of some people that voluntary joint worksite committees work more effectively on a site where there is a strong trade union movement.

The role we're looking at is beyond what we can appreciate. In our recent meeting with the Alberta Federation of Labour, my officials and I received a challenge from the Alberta Federation of Labour. They want to do a reassessment of the joint worksite committees themselves. We have endorsed this, and recently I signed an agreement that we would fund a one-year study that will be the property of officials of my office. This is a step in the right direction. We can't always say, well, we're doing it ourselves from the civil service. So the labor organization is sharing in evaluating the role the joint worksite committees are having. I only hope they have the open door that is required to be able to do a very effective job. Where there is some concern, I intend to overcome it directly. I have offered publicly that where workers — it is the nature of a worker that sometimes he does not want to indicate the concern he has identifying himself, making the complaint.

In this short time, we have already received several anonymous letters about a certain industry or worksite. My officials will investigate them. We appreciate the fact that sometimes a worker would rather not indicate who is making the complaint.

Mr. Speaker, because of the time, I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, this evening the House will dissolve into subcommittees. Subcommittee A, under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House, will meet in Room 312, considering first the estimates of the Department of Transportation, followed by the Department of Environment.

Subcommittee B will meet in the cafeteria under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for St. Albert, continuing with consideration of the estimates of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, followed by the estimates of the Department of Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow afternoon the House will consider reports of the subcommittees, which may be received at that time, followed by the estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

[At 5:29 p.m. on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]