

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, June 21, 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, may I be permitted to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, some very distinguished visitors: the Consul-General for France in the province of Alberta, M. Pierre Guerand, accompanied by his son, who is visiting him from Lagos, Nigeria, where he works in the commercial section of the embassy.

Also with him is the new appointee from France to Alberta, Mr. Patrick Berron. He will be residing in Calgary and will be the trade commissioner there. I think we can thank M. Guerand, our Consul-General, very much for this appointment, because I know it is through his efforts that this was made possible.

Could I ask members to welcome the distinguished visitors in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 217****The Recreational Rivers Act**

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 217, The Recreational Rivers Act. This Bill would allow the Minister of Recreation and Parks to give protected status to a river or section of a river that has potential for recreation, tourism, and nurturing of wildlife, or for educational purposes.

[Leave granted; Bill 217 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file an interim report by the Alberta oil sands environmental research program. It covers the period April 1975 to November 1978.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file the most recent annual report of the University of Calgary. Yesterday I inadvertently filed the calendar. I am sure both items will be of interest to members of Assembly.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual report of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation for the period ended March 31, 1979.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure

to introduce from the constituency of Edmonton Whitemud, in particular from St. Monica school, a group of 29 grades 4 and 5 students, accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Sue Luchak. I would ask the students and teacher to rise to receive the welcome of the House.

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, I have a pleasant duty today, to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly nine junior high school students from the community of Swan Hills, the area where all the petroleum comes from and where the particular kind of grizzly bear still lives. They are accompanied by their teacher Marilyn Baird. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I too have a very pleasant duty, to introduce to you and to members of this House 40 students from a very special area in my constituency, the Heisler school. There are 40 students in the public gallery. They have with them their teacher Maureen Cheram and the bus driver, who happens also to be the principal of the Heisler high school and the son of the Member for Vegreville. I will ask them to stand and be recognized by this Legislature.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the House, a large group from the town of Grande Cache: 50 grade 6 students accompanied by their teachers Ian Abraham and Anton Hauck, and by Mrs. Hauck and Mrs. Allison. I would like them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time I would like to introduce two other students, who are from Edson. They took part in the Edson junior parliament: Connie Peterson, who took the part of the hon. premier, and Teresa Barker, who took the part of the mayor of Edson. They are accompanied by the mayor of Edson, Mr. Jim Watson. I would like them to rise also and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Oil Price Agreement**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my first question to the Premier. It's with regard to the new oil pricing agreement. I wonder if the Premier could indicate what agreement was reached with Ottawa, whether there are outstanding issues, and what outstanding issues will be negotiated in the next few months.

MR. LOUGHEED: Important as that subject is, Mr. Speaker, I would prefer that we hold the response to the question until the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources has returned to his seat on Monday. This afternoon he is attending a coal conference in Denver, Colorado, and making an address there with regard to North American energy. Because he was the principal participant on behalf of the Alberta government in those discussions, I think we should hold the answers until he returns to his place in the Assembly on Monday.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question in light of the Premier's answer. In providing

direction to the Provincial Treasurer in going to Ottawa, was an indication given that there should be an increase every six months until the price of oil reaches the world price, as a guideline and Alberta's position in the negotiations with Ottawa?

MR. LOUGHEED: Having been on the other side of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, it's a skilfully put question. But to answer it would really be to avoid the answer to the first question that I've already given. I think that would be appropriately put to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources when he returns to the Legislature on Monday.

Metis Settlements

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It stems from the minister's statement that removal of files from six of the eight Metis settlements was a case of repossessing government files from government offices.

Mr. Speaker, to clarify that claim that these are government offices, would the minister indicate what agreements, if any, written or in verbal form, exist between the government of Alberta and the Metis settlement associations setting out the property rights of the Metis settlement associations in the use of those offices?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, six of the offices on the eight Metis settlements are owned outright by the government of Alberta. In the other two cases, office space is leased. In one case it's a lease where the rent is paid by the department directly to a community association; in the other case the rent is paid by the department to a private company which leases a trailer unit to the department.

It is not my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that there are any formal agreements as to contracts. It's my further understanding that the space is made available to the Metis councils for a portion of the office space in each of the settlement offices.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Do any agreements or guidelines exist as to rights of access held by the government on lands included in Metis settlements? I refer to both the common lands and those designated for sole occupancy by members of the Metis Association.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, that question could very appropriately be answered by looking at The Metis Betterment Act, which clearly outlines that the land set aside in the Metis settlements is held in trust by the government of Alberta for the people on those settlements. So it should be clearly understood by all members of the Assembly that there are no land titles as such on Metis settlements. It's Crown land.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in clarification of the answer, and I believe the minister has answered this, is it then the position of the minister, and in the interpretation of The Metis Betterment Act, that all the lands in Metis settlements are occupied solely at the pleasure of the minister and that the Metis have none of the property rights normally held by landowners or tenants as such?

MR. SPEAKER: It would appear that the hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition is asking for the interpretation of a statute. As he knows, the question period is not the vehicle for getting that kind of solicitor-and-client advice.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the interpretation.

A further supplementary to the minister. It's with regard to a report and submission made to the government of Alberta by the Federation of Metis Settlements associations in December 1972. In the report there is a request for the establishment of a joint committee of the Federation of Metis Settlements and the government to answer some of the questions with regard to property rights, the use of offices, and establishing a strategy for transferring more responsibility to the Metis settlements. I wonder if the minister could indicate what progress has been made on that committee and on the recommendations of the report, specifically with regard to property rights.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I can certainly think back to the last four years when a number of important steps were made at the various Metis settlements in fulfilling the overall policy of this government to return more responsibility to the Metis residents for the operations of activities on their settlements.

I think of two things carried out by my predecessor, the hon. Helen Hunley. One was in the area of housing. Whereas in the past the Department of Social Services and Community Health, through its Metis betterment branch, was responsible for housing, that responsibility was turned back to the settlement councils.

Another area rested with regard to the managers on these settlements. Whereas in the past they were all employees of the department and directly responsible to the department, the responsibility was shifted to the Metis settlement councils, again fulfilling the overall policy of this government to see to it that more responsibility was passed back to the Metis people themselves.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister — in light of the situation that occurred last Monday, a question with regard to the rights of the Metis settlements, their people, and the rights of the government. Will the minister be establishing this joint committee of the federation and government representatives to deal with some of those problems that may come up in the future?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, along with the Minister responsible for Native Affairs, in the past has met on a regular basis with the Federation of Metis Settlements. In addition, I know my predecessor visited most, if not all, of the eight Metis settlements during her eight-year term. So an ongoing dialogue is taking place between the elected councillors from the various Metis settlements and the policy decision makers of the government of Alberta.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, hopefully not to repeat the question, will consideration be given to establishing the joint committee and fulfilling the recommendations of this very, very important report that

answers many questions raised on the Metis settlements in the present day?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, one aspect we should not lose sight of, and it was raised in the hon. member's earlier question relating to ownership and the like, and the incident last Monday, is that we are speaking of government offices, government employees, and government files.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I apologize for asking the direct question. Will consideration be given to establishing the joint committee of persons from the Metis settlements and the department that on a more formal basis [would] make recommendations to the minister, and through to the Cabinet, as requested by the task force established by the government to make recommendations to the government to come to grips with some of the problems on the Metis settlements?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, if that kind of thrust is a priority of the Federation of Metis Settlements today, then I'll be very pleased to listen to the argument when it's presented by them.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. After Monday morning's unsolicited visitation, can the minister indicate if the records from those two settlements that did not offer their records to the minister's department are now in the hands of the government?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I did report to the House earlier that some resistance was presented at two of the settlements, and government employees, acting very appropriately, withdrew. I also indicated that there was consultation between the chief deputy minister of my department and the assistant Attorney General, and that any action that might be taken would be initiated through the Attorney General's Department. He may wish to supplement my remarks.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, with respect to any files that might still be necessary in the two settlements the hon. member has asked about, no specific steps are planned. A formal request will be made through the solicitors who act for the two Metis settlements in question, and presumably that request, when made in that way, will be responded to favorably.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Is the minister aware of the submission made by the Federation of Metis Settlements associations to the Premier and the government of Alberta on December 11, 1972, which outlines a very good framework for establishing a strategy to solve some of the problems before us? Is the minister aware of that brief?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, as the brief was presented to the then Minister of Health and Social Development, and there was one other minister between that time and now, no, I'm not aware of the specific report. I have indicated that if that recommendation is a concern of the Federation of Metis Settlements today, if they feel the actions which have been taken between 1972 and now to ensure that there's adequate dialogue need to be supplemented further, I'm sure the case will be

made. When we have such a meeting, my colleagues will be interested to discuss that with them.

Tourist Industry

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Tourism and Small Business. Could the minister indicate whether the department has any plans which will reduce the tourism deficit recorded in Alberta in 1978? In tourism \$145 million more went out of Alberta than came in.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, that is certainly one of the problems we have in the province of Alberta, recognized by both my previous colleague and me.

The only thing I can add at this point, other than that I have discussed it with the department, is that although it would be nice to have a surplus in every account, this particular one is showing a deficit. It's created in part by the affluence of Albertans and a willingness to take vacations outside the province during the winter months. I'm not sure I personally want to discourage that, if they have the opportunity to do it. But we're looking at alternatives that may get more of them coming back into Alberta in the future.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate whether the government has any definite statistics to indicate the effect of the Stamp Around Alberta program?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it has been most positive. I don't have the exact numbers at my fingertips, but in the first year of the program 100,000-plus people picked up and used their passports in the province; some 7,000 of those applied for and received the first medallion; and over 2,000 families received all three — in other words, had visited all 14 zones in the province of Alberta. In order to get one, you must visit six. If you visited 10 zones you can get the second or the silver medal. So at this particular point it is most successful.

I should also point out, Mr. Speaker, that in early April we went to the province of British Columbia to kick off what we called an invitation to all the residents of British Columbia and the northwestern United States to come and stamp around Alberta and use the various passports, so that they in turn could have an opportunity to see what we have to offer. That has been most successful. I believe initially something in the range of 600 responses had been received asking for information relative to destination points, passports, and the like.

I can update that, Mr. Speaker. I'll take it as notice and get some more information.

Fuel Shortage — United States

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Premier arises out of his visit to the United States governors last week. Has the Premier been notified of the status of the requests by the Montana government to the National Energy Board to have the use of Alberta diesel fuel over a short term to alleviate the shortage in Montana?

MR. LOUGHEED: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There has been communication between the Montana government and officials of the government of Alberta on that matter.

Of course, as the hon. member is aware, the governor of Montana has, as we discussed with him, pursued his request and desire directly with the federal National Energy Board, which has the ultimate authority on exports. I understand from reports that they have advised a surplus of diesel fuel is not available, but there is some discussion as to possible swap arrangements. We've said we would do what we can. In the last few days we haven't been called upon by the governor of Montana to take any action, but if we are requested and the action is reasonable, we will do our best to support their present predicament.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification. Did the hon. Premier say a diesel surplus is not available at this point in time?

MR. LOUGHEED: Subject to checking and verification, Mr. Speaker, that's the advice we have. When we met with the governor of Montana, we said that at that time we had no way of knowing whether there was and that we'd do some checking. The checking that we did on our own behalf and that was also done by the National Energy Board indicates that so far as diesel fuel is concerned there is not a surplus that we could look for in terms of export, but there may be a time-trading situation. That is being discussed directly, as it should be, between the governor of Montana and officials of the federal National Energy Board.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Deputy Premier. Can the Minister of Economic Development indicate if he has had discussion with the refiners in this province to find out if an increased capacity can be cranked out to supply diesel fuel to Montana, if it is requested?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, we haven't had discussions directly with them, but my information is similar to what the Premier just responded. It would have to be a seasonal thing.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary to the Deputy Premier. Has the trucking industry in Alberta that operates especially on the west coast of the United States given any information or any request to the Premier to try to supply fuel for Alberta truckers going down to the western United States?

DR. HORNER: We've had very few phone calls relative to that matter. Indeed there isn't a shortage for our truckers to move produce from southern Alberta and British Columbia into our markets. I feel that's adequate.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. The question was, from the western states. As a follow-up to that, last week the question was asked: because of the fuel shortage are we in Alberta experiencing a shortage of fresh leafy vegetables that come from the western states?

DR. HORNER: Mr. Speaker, in my view we are not. It's an opportunity for us to produce more of what we can produce very easily in this province and in neighboring British Columbia.

DR. BUCK: Has the Deputy Premier ever tried growing lettuce overnight?

Early Childhood Services

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Minister of Education relates to recent statements by the minister in support of community-sponsored early childhood services programs. It relates more particularly to the plight of two such programs in Calgary, the St. Luke and the Sarcee Park programs, both of which have applied for financing of so-called portables, space in which to operate their programs: St. Luke because they've been given notice to vacate their present space by June 29 and have no place to go, and Sarcee Park because they've recently experienced a 150 per cent increase in rent.

My specific question is: can the minister advise the status of these applications for financing portables?

MR. KING: Both applications are going to be dealt with tomorrow morning, Mr. Speaker.

For the information of hon. members, I might add that the two situations are somewhat different. In one case, I think St. Luke, what is under negotiation would be to have the ECS program operated under the aegis of the local school board. To be perfectly frank, it appears that the local school board and the Department of Education are doing a dance around an interpretation of a recent policy decision we made.

With respect to the private ECS program at Sarcee Park, there is an alternative way of dealing with that problem which is also under consideration. As a matter of policy, we have to consider whether or not we are going to provide facilities to privately operated ECS programs, because alternative facilities are unavailable or because alternative facilities are too expensive or for both reasons.

But I'm aware of both decisions, and a decision will be made tomorrow and could be communicated to the hon. member.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question. Could the minister then assure the House that neither of these programs will be forced to shut down as a result of lack of facilities for operation?

MR. KING: I could, Mr. Speaker; I would prefer not to until tomorrow.

MR. HYLAND: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the problems of the Seven Persons ECS group also be included in the discussions? They are indeed facing the same problems as those in Calgary and need a portable unit.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, Seven Persons, St. Luke, and Sarcee find themselves in good company, because we have the same problem in Innisfail and in other points around the province. It was only this spring that the government committed itself to the policy of providing portable classrooms for ECS programs where other facilities were not available. The ECS programs we are talking about right now are the first direct expressions of the application of that policy, which is in large measure why the meeting is being held tomorrow. At that meeting, in dealing with these four programs, we are going to give substance to the

policy. Of course, I hope and expect that we will make the policy really useful in concrete terms to ECS programs operating in that kind of situation.

Education of the Handicapped

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, my question directed to the Minister of Education is with regard to his release of the evaluation report on a program for Shelley Carriere in the Chipman school. Since the recommendations of this evaluation team differ considerably from the recommendations of Justice O'Byrne last summer, could the minister advise whether it is his intention to see that alternatives will be provided to the existing program?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, if by "existing program" the member is referring directly to the program offered to Shelley Carriere in the Chipman school, then the answer is yes, that will be done over time. But the availability of alternatives does not necessarily mean that Shelley Carriere's parents will choose any of those alternatives. So the other side of the equation is going to be that, again over time and in co-operation with local school boards, we have to improve the programs offered by the local school boards that are attempting to integrate children with one or another handicap into the local school situation. We're going to be involved in both those things: developing alternatives and providing support to the local school board so it can improve the opportunity for education in the local schoolroom.

Of course the early evidence of that lies in the announcements made by my predecessor and others in January and February this year, particularly the program unit grant provided to local school boards, the availability of paraprofessionals as well as professionals, the infusion of capital into the building quality restoration program so that schools could be renovated to make them accessible to handicapped students, and some others which I have probably not thought to mention.

Lieutenant-Governor

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is with regard to the upcoming appointment of the Lieutenant-Governor of the province. I wonder if recommendations have gone from the Premier's office to the new Prime Minister with regard to potential candidates and, if so, how many. I'm not asking names.

My second question to the Premier is: has the government of Canada, through the Prime Minister's office or other offices, consulted the Premier about the appointment?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the first question, it's clearly the prerogative of the federal government to make that appointment. The practice in considering such an appointment has been that discussion will take place with the Premier of the province affected when a tentative conclusion on that matter has been reached by the Prime Minister.

Discussions of that nature certainly wouldn't be discussions I'd be prepared to speak about to the Legislature until such time as an appointment has been made.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the Premier in a position to indicate or does he have knowledge that the term of the present Lieutenant-Governor will terminate on July 1, or has that been extended?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, it's a little difficult to answer that question, because it's clearly within the jurisdiction of the federal government. But as the question was raised in the sense of whether I as leader of government have knowledge with regard to the matter, I would respond — I don't believe without breaching confidences — to the effect that, as we all know, the Lieutenant-Governor's term expires at the end of June, but in communication to the federal government he has stated that he's prepared to extend that term for a short duration.

Pipeline Safety

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, before the question period concludes, I wonder if I might advise the House of a matter that I took as notice on June 5, a question from the Leader of the Opposition that dealt with the timing of the report of the Energy Resources Conservation Board with regard to the inquiry in the Mill Woods pipeline matter.

I was asked by the Leader of the Opposition what the anticipated time frame was for the Energy Resources Conservation Board report to the government. I've now been informed by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources that the report will be ready within six to eight weeks of June 18.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the questions on the Order Paper, I wish to advise the Assembly that questions 104 and 105 are acceptable to the government. I would ask that Question No. 110 and Motion for a Return No. 108 stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion of the Deputy Government House Leader with regard to the question and the motion for a return standing and retaining their places on the Order Paper, does the Assembly wish to agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

109. Mr. R. Speaker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing

- (1) the total revenue of the Western Express lottery for the period June 1, 1978, to June 1, 1979,
- (2) the amount awarded as prize money during that period;
- (3) the amount of prize money unclaimed during that period,

- (4) administrative costs incurred during that period;
- (5) the amount designated to each of the four western provinces during that period;
- (6) a listing of projects funded with Alberta's portion of the proceeds during that period, and the amount awarded to each project

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the Western Canada Lottery Foundation is not an agency of this government. Therefore it is not appropriate to return the information to the Assembly. The Alberta division annual report for the year July '77-78 is available on request from our office. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge that members of this Assembly defeat this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Little Bow conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my only concern is that a minister of the Crown, responsible to this Legislature, is involved in the western lottery committee, as I understand. Under those circumstances I feel that minister could certainly make a report as to actions and where the funds are being allocated. I certainly don't think the information I'm asking for is out of line.

[Motion lost]

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

12. Moved by Mr. Crawford:

Be it resolved that Item 2 of the resolution reported under Government Motions in Votes and Proceedings for June 14, 1979, be amended by reassigning the estimates for the Department of Culture from Subcommittee B of the Committee of Supply to Subcommittee A of the Committee of Supply.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, before proceeding with the balance of the business of the day I wonder if, pursuant to the notice I gave yesterday, I might ask hon. members to concur unanimously in Motion No. 12.

[Motion carried]

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

215. Moved by Dr. Buck:

Be it resolved that a select committee of the Legislative Assembly be established to inquire into the existing assessment and taxation of acreages and small holdings in Alberta, and that the select committee report its findings and recommendations to the 1979 fall sitting of the Legislature.

DR. BUCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising this afternoon to commence debate on the designated motion, I would like to say that the reason I placed the motion before members of the Assembly is the numerous phone calls I have received from constituents I represent, especially in the county of Strathcona, as to what has happened through reassessment. It would not

be unkind if I were to say that some phone messages I received or what happened to some of the reassessments would be horror stories. But I will go into the details in a few moments.

The unique situation we find around the large cities, especially Edmonton and Calgary where we have numerous acreage developments, has been a rather recent phenomenon. Just a brief history, which I will go into later in a little more detail, is that many veterans were not eligible for mortgages in towns, villages, and cities, but the Department of Veterans Affairs indicated that these veterans should go out into small holdings. That was basically how the acreage movement originated.

From that, we see the many, many acreages we have. I would say the preponderance is in my constituency, in the county of Strathcona, but it also applies to neighboring constituencies in the Parkland area. I'm sure the hon. Member for St. Albert and other members who have the same concern as I do will want to be involved in the debate. Mr. Speaker, I welcome their views.

As I stated, the principal reason for this resolution is that representation has been made to my office from constituents caught in the reassessment situation in the county of Strathcona. The representations have been brought forward by the Strathcona acreage owners' association, one of the largest associations of its kind in Alberta. It's my duty, as the elected representative, to bring these concerns to the Assembly and attempt to convince the members that a thorough study by a select legislative committee of this House will be useful in trying to solve some of the problems.

In opening the debate, Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should agree on the premise that assessment and property taxation should reflect the amount and quality of service provided to property tax payers. In other words, that's really what taxation is all about.

The Strathcona acreage owners' association has been working on this issue for some three years. They have put in hours and hours of volunteer work, trying to bring their concerns before elected representatives at the municipal and provincial levels. The membership and the executive have predicted that land reassessment would result in a significant shift in taxation to acreage owners. Three years ago, Mr. Speaker, a 70 per cent increase was predicted. The actual increase in 1979 is 68 per cent, so the people concerned were almost bang on with their predictions.

An area that causes great concern is taxation on vacant acreages. Properties upon which houses have not yet been built increased this year as much as 350 per cent. In many instances it was even more than that. I saw the tax notice of an individual whose taxes from one year to the present year went from \$102.50 to \$1,081, almost tenfold.

Mr. Speaker, this seems to be really a speculative tax, which should not be the object of property taxation. Unfortunately, it seems some attempt to knock off the speculators, justified or unjustified, has resulted in striking down the innocent landowner or the young person who wishes to retain his property, save up some money, build equity, and then build his own house. These people acted in good faith. They were trying to build up a nest egg so they could build a house on these properties. But with the taxation now in place on these vacant residential properties, some young people may never be able to attain the goal of having their own home on an acreage.

The acreage owners have been opposing the present property tax system for some years, and they're just a little miffed at the buck-passing — if you'll pardon the expression — that goes on between the municipal and provincial governments. The municipal governments appear to be waiting for the province to come forward with guidelines.

In fairness to the present government, Mr. Speaker, it is not a new problem. The problem has been with us many years, under the former government and under the present government. We have to be fair when we try to recognize the problem.

The municipal governments say, the province won't give us guidelines; they give us assessment guidelines. The province says it's a municipal responsibility. The poor acreage owner, the taxpayer, is caught in the middle.

Using the county of Strathcona as an example — and I'm sure other members will be able to give us examples in their areas — tax inequities carried by acreage owners are evident and well illustrated. Acreage owners are neither farmers nor urban dwellers, but have been generally lumped together as urbanites. In the county of Strathcona, acreage owners, for the purpose of taxation assessment, are included with Sherwood Park, one of the largest hamlets in the world. The Sherwood Park residents get the advantage of acreage owners' larger land assessments. As a result, acreage owners see a tax increase averaging 68 per cent, while the taxes of residents of Sherwood Park increased 2 per cent on average in 1979.

Mr. Speaker, the shift in the tax load has resulted in acreage owners providing as much tax revenue to the county as is provided by Sherwood Park, this large hamlet. But the acreage population is about half that of the large centre of Sherwood Park. Since acreage owners provide most of their own services — and people who represent those areas well know it — one would be hard pressed to convince acreage owners that they receive twice the services provided residents of, in this case, Sherwood Park, although the basis on which taxation should rightly be measured is that you pay for the services you receive.

In one of the public meetings I attended, Mr. Speaker, a resident of the county of Strathcona, an acreage owner of 20 years, brought the point home very, very clearly. He said, I still use the same road. True, it has been oiled a little bit, but basically the services have not changed in 20 years. He said the schools would have been required, the roads are required, so basically in that 20-year period the services have not changed as drastically as taxation and the assessment picture.

Of course we hear the argument that acreage owners are the idle rich. Well, no politician would ever want to say that at a public meeting of the acreage owners' association. I've tried to make the point that historically the acreage owners were encouraged through the Veterans Land Act to build on these acreages. That was how it all started. Many people who go out on these acreages have to put up with many inconveniences for many years while they're building their homes. If this high rate of assessment and taxation continues, many acreage owners will be forced to sell their properties. And when these holdings are picked up by these so-called speculators we are worried about, the fallacy that all acreage owners are rich could indeed become a fact.

Many of those who have contacted my office are

holders of property which up to this year had been considered farmland. Under the new assessment these properties, some up to 160 acres, a full quarter, have been considered vacant residential land, with tax increases up to 360 per cent. Mr. Speaker, hon. members may be interested in one tax notice I saw: on a quarter section that is anything but prime agricultural land, the taxes went from \$350 to \$3,025. Another lot, in the fairly prestigious area of the Windermere golf club, has been vacant because it is a legacy handed down in the family. This lot has been vacant for 10 years; the family intends to build on it. The taxes went from \$100 to \$1,000.

Mr. Speaker, we've had this large increase. After what has happened in the United States, I'm sure the Minister of Municipal Affairs, in consultation with his colleague the former minister, is aware that these inequalities exist. I'm not going to be the first to tell the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs how to solve the problems. But I am saying that I think it is an appropriate time to set up a select committee of this Legislature which takes the question and the study out of the partisan political arena and puts it on the shoulders of both sides of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe municipalities should be in the position where, in essence, they are levying speculative taxes. Taxation is supposed to be fair and equitable. In many of these cases I don't think it's fair, and it certainly is not equitable.

Recently a former member of this Assembly and the cabinet, the poet laureate of the Southam chain, Mr. Farran, wrote an interesting article on the taxation system in Alberta. The former minister makes this interesting observation: "... no tax should be so punitive that it forces someone to sell his home because accident has made the lot more valuable". I'm sure hon. members of this Assembly are aware of some of the horror stories that have occurred in the United States. In communities with modest residences valued in the vicinity of \$50,000 or \$60,000, property tax is in the vicinity of \$2,000 to \$3,000. Many of these people are forced to sell their homes, because they cannot continue to pay the escalating taxation on their property.

Mr. Speaker, again using the county I represent, at this public meeting the information was brought forward that we seem to be having nearly a 20 per cent increase every year. The study done by the Strathcona acreage owners' association three years ago predicted a near 70 per cent increase. They just about hit it on the nose, because it came to 68 per cent. Can this rise continue? Can people afford this continued escalation?

Mr. Speaker, these assessments and taxation problems have been with us for years. As I say, I'm not blaming just this present government. But we have to blame the government of the day, because it is going to have to make some decisions.

Mr. Speaker, a select committee of elected representatives of this Assembly could take a hard look at the issue. I feel that that would be the vehicle to bring the information to this Assembly and to the hon. minister. This committee could reach some conclusions and bring back some solid recommendations to this Assembly. In a summary of the problem, the former member Mr. Farran said that solutions won't be easy, nor will they be popular with everyone.

Because of a shortage of competent assessors, reassessment is done every eight years, give or take a year or two. In the age of computers, Mr. Speaker and

members of this Assembly, surely we do not have to wait six to eight years for a complete reassessment. I am confident the minister is looking at that problem. With the figures the acreage owners' association had, they could project what would happen when reassessment took place. As the former minister, who writes in this daily newspaper, said: "The shorter the time [period] between [major] assessments, the fairer the system, and some sort of rolling assessment would be [still more] fair". I don't tend to agree with the former minister too often, but I do in this case.

Mr. Speaker, none of the measures taken by the provincial government, including the billion dollar municipal debt reduction program, have solved the problem of property tax reform. They may provide relief to some taxpayers, and that's fine, that's commendable. But they don't alter the basic inequities in the system, and that's what we're talking about.

The Provincial-Municipal Finance Council has been studying these inequities for years but has not come up with any answers. We are all guilty of this, members of the Assembly: when we have a thorny problem we strike a committee, it brings in recommendations, and then we put the study on the back burner.

MR. HORSMAN: Not always.

DR. BUCK: Not always, says the hon. Member for Medicine Hat. But the hon. minister will have to admit that it's a great ploy.

The issue is very, very pressing, hon. members and Mr. Speaker. This select committee of this Legislature could make recommendations after consultation with acreage owners' associations, individuals, municipal people, counties, IDs, and anyone who has input, because legislative committees are public hearings. Mr. Speaker, we should give some of the people who are concerned some answers to the problems, because the needs are great. The way taxation and assessment are escalating, we as elected representatives are going to be driving people out of their homes.

There was some hint of anarchy at this public hearing. People said, let's refuse to pay our taxes, 5,000 of us; that may wake up the politicians. But I don't think we want to come to that. Some of the young people I've spoken to and some of the presentations that have been made ... I'd like to quote a person who said, in speaking to the meeting of the Strathcona acreage owners' association: we are reasonable people seeking a reasonable solution. They know taxes have to escalate as services escalate, but they are asking for reasonable escalation for reasonable services.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I would like very briefly to summarize. The problems are long-standing and very real. I'm sure the minister and members of the minister's department are aware of some of the inequities and some of the problems split mill rates bring to counties. I feel that some of the problems could be solved by a committee struck by this Legislature and reporting to this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government not to vote against this and to speak against it just because it's an opposition member's resolution. Because there is a problem, I am asking members of good conscience, with concern for the people they represent and the people we all represent, that this committee be struck. With those few words, I welcome debate on this

resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Mr. Speaker, as Motion 215 is very similar to my Motion 214 on the Order Paper, I'd like to make a few remarks about it. It's the same motion I had on last fall, but we didn't get a chance to debate it.

It's a vital issue with my constituents also. It's vital enough that the ratepayers in one area south of Calgary had four meetings about taxes, three in community halls and one with the council. I was able to attend three of the four and listen to their concerns. My assessment of the matter is that I think the assessment manual is the real culprit. That's why I made the motion that the Act be revised.

Of course the Act is subject to many interpretations, the same as any manual. How many interpretations are there of the Bible? It's all the same book, printed the same way. So I can understand some assessors interpreting it a little differently. I believe they're all well intentioned and do it to the best of their abilities. They could quite easily have different interpretations.

As I see it, the problem with the assessment Act is defining what a farmer is. As the assessment Act now stands, either you qualify for agriculture — that's one group. The other takes in the whole gamut of land-owners. I'll just give you a little example of how that can affect the assessment on agricultural land. In our area there are two 40-acre parcels side by side. Each has an approximately 2,200 square foot house on it. A couple lives on one acreage; they pay about \$2,200 taxes. Incidentally, they both work to try to make a go of it. Because the other is fortunate enough to have some well-bred horses, he can qualify as a farmer by selling a couple of colts a year. In that MD, to qualify as agricultural land they basically use the old age pension plus the supplement, which I believe is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3,500 to \$4,000. If you make that much income off your acreage, you can qualify as a farmer.

The MD has made a couple of recommendations. One is that all residences be taxed. The other is an either/or concept: the land or the residence, whichever has the highest assessment. The ratepayers association wants taxes to be for services provided. I don't understand the concept too well, because I don't see how it could work.

I don't really believe we need to have a committee to look into this, because I've spent considerable time talking with both the former minister and the present minister about this. I know they're working on it and spending a lot of time trying to come up with a new variation of this Act. While it's a real problem, I don't think we need to strike a new committee to look into it, because I know the minister is looking into it and is going to revise it.

Thank you very much.

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, in rising for the first time, I would exercise the custom of extending to you my sincere congratulations on your election to the office of Speaker. At the same time, I wish gratefully to acknowledge the recognition accorded me by the people of Sherwood Park in electing me to represent them in this Assembly. It is appropriate that in rising for the first time I am addressing a matter of very considerable concern, that affects a sector of my constituents.

In speaking to the motion presented by the hon. Member for Clover Bar, I would raise two points. First, I would speak to the spirit and philosophy of the hon. member's motion and, second, its intent and purpose. I would express my support in the strongest terms and commend the hon. member for the motion in terms of its spirit and philosophy, for it clearly demonstrates a valid concern based upon one's current perceptions of the problem. I recognize the problem facing owners of acreages and small holdings under the present system of assessment and taxation.

The hon. Member for Clover Bar has provided a brief historical review of the evolution of the small holdings and acreage situation, and I need not go into that at any length. However, in more recent years, Mr. Speaker, there is another reflection in terms of the movement toward the acreage owner situation. In a way this reflects the desire of urbanites to get away from it all and live in a country setting, yet close enough to centres of employment. This is a life style I support.

The question of taxation is at best very complex, Mr. Speaker. As an example, there is a question of taxation applied to the rural farm area compared to the rural residential or acreage owner situation. As indicated by the hon. Member for Highwood, in the case of farmlands only land is taxed. On acreages both the land and buildings are taxed. There also emerges a very peculiar hybrid situation where an acreage owner could be taxed as a farmer.

In comparing urban taxation to acreage taxation, the provision of services is a critical element. In the urban situation all services, such as garbage, sewer, and water, are supplied; in acreages this is practically nil. When making the comparison, it becomes evident that a fair taxation formula should reflect a balance between the level of taxes levied and the quality and quantity of services. Taking this into consideration, it is very apparent that acreages should not be taxed as heavily as urban dwellings.

In some counties, Mr. Speaker, such as Strathcona and Parkland, there is recognition of the validity of this line of thinking by instituting a split mill rate. This in itself has not provided the level of relief sought by acreage associations. In effect no specific accommodation presently exists governing the assessment and taxation procedure as it relates to acreage owners and rural residential dwellings. Legislation is silent on the matter. As a consequence, the onus for the assessment and taxation process has been left more or less up to individual municipal jurisdictions.

With this in mind, as a consequence of meetings held by the acreage owners' associations, there evolved a provincial acreage owners' group. It was through their initiative, along with member organizations, that a meeting was held with the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. This meeting, Mr. Speaker, was in a spirit of co-operation, not confrontation, and it was to rationalize the assessment and tax procedures as they affect all acreage owners throughout the province of Alberta.

During the course of discussions, it was determined that in order to get a clear handle on the matter, the report of the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council should become an integral part of the discussions. This raises an interesting but important point when speaking to Motion 215.

For the information of hon. members of this House, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial-Municipal Finance Coun-

cil is a 10-man group that was structured and became operational in May 1975. It set out in its terms of reference a number of considerations, two of which were to examine municipal property assessment and taxation procedures, and the Alberta assessment equalization procedure. The membership of the finance council is comprised of five MLAs of whom two were cabinet ministers, two representatives from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, two representatives from the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, and one representative from the Alberta School Trustees' Association. The report of this council will be available shortly and will be provided to the association, enabling them to meet further with the hon. minister to resolve the matter.

Now to the second point I raised earlier, Mr. Speaker, relative to the motion presented by the hon. Member for Clover Bar, and this is where the hon. member and I part company. In view of my earlier remarks, the hon. member's motion asks us to reinvent the wheel. In effect it will delay the progress resulting from discussions between the provincial acreage owners' association and the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, and require the select committee to restudy what has already been accomplished by the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council over the past three years. This is not the time to restudy the situation until it dies a slow death. It is a time for affirmative action.

Given the current situation, Mr. Speaker, I find it impossible to support this motion, and I urge all hon. members to vote against it.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, as the vice-chairman of the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council, which has now completed its responsibilities, I would like to say just a few words. I see the hon. chairman is sitting across from me. Perhaps he won't agree with some of the comments I would like to make, but they're in the spirit of give and take on opposing sides of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I can't support this motion because, as the previous member just said, we certainly have looked very carefully at this situation. We have spent four years at it. I might say that the four MLAs who were members of that council — and two of them were members of the Executive Council — were in the fortunate position of being able to attend the meetings and have some continuity. But unfortunately the membership from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, Municipal Districts, and the Alberta School Trustees' Association changed almost from one meeting to the next. Naturally this is not conducive to accomplishing critical tasks in the manner that, in my opinion, they otherwise could be.

One of the difficulties I had on the council — and I have discussed this with the former chairman — is that I think wealth should be taxed wherever it is, and I think it should be taxed fairly. I know some of my rural colleagues will take exception to this, but that means that farm homes should be taxed as well as my home in the city. It also means that farm buildings should be taxed. I know of a lot of rural members who say, my gosh, if we do that we'll lose the next election. Regrettably that is the problem you have on the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council; it's made up of politicians, all of us. The recommendations that come out of it may have — I haven't seen the final report — strong political biases that we're going to find difficult to accept.

But going back to some of the comments made by

the hon. Member for Clover Bar, I can't accept that young people who buy land on the fringes of our major cities are necessarily just starting out and struggling to buy a home. You know, on a 20-acre parcel of land they're paying roughly \$1,000 an acre, so they're laying out \$20,000 for a piece of land that has no power, no water, no gas, no sewage system. Then they'll build a 1,500 square foot house at maybe \$40 to \$50 a foot, which means they're going to have an investment of roughly \$100,000. Then they have to have at least two automobiles so the wife can get to town as well as the husband. I'd suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that these are not poor people.

Another point I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, that has come up in the council's debates, is that with the new wealth being generated in our industrial complexes in the province, such as Fort McMurray, Cold Lake that's coming up, or the Alsands project of Shell Oil, some of us thought that kind of wealth should be pooled and the taxes generated by it could be spread throughout the province of Alberta, so that communities that did not have large industrial developments in their areas would be able to benefit. I know similar situations exist in the city of Edmonton.

But these are tough things to convey to the public and to my colleagues in the House. These are economic decisions. They're not necessarily political decisions, and they may not be favorable, particularly if you happen to own a multibillion dollar investment in your back yard; you don't want to share it with somebody who lives 600 miles away. But in fairness to all the people of Alberta — for example, the hundreds of millions of dollars invested in Fort McMurray belong to all the people, not just the people in the area where the plant is and where the tax revenues will be accruing.

Mr. Speaker, it's a difficult problem. Another area we concerned ourselves with and wrestled with and found very difficult to come up with an answer was: how do you tax farmland, how do you assess farmland? We have an arbitrary assessment of, I believe, \$40 an acre that was put in many, many years ago, and anybody in his right mind knows that's totally unrealistic. I agree with the hon. Member for Clover Bar. With the modern technology we have today, there's no reason we shouldn't have a fairer tax system. We can have more current assessments. For example, assessors don't have to assess farms or rural areas every year. They can just drive by; a drive-by assessment is just as good.

I think it's a complex problem, Mr. Speaker. I would strongly urge that the motion be defeated, because we've already wrestled with it and probably will continue to wrestle with it. But we should not make any decisions with regard to this until such time as we have the final report of the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council and are able to consider the recommendations made and act on them.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to comment on the past chairman of the council, the hon. Mr. Johnston. The executive director was Ross Ellis, who used to be a member of this Legislature. I believe he was the mayor of High River at one time. I think he did a very commendable job for us, particularly in view of some of the council members with whom he had to work. I would like to make those comments at this time, Mr. Speaker, because he's no longer with us; he's gone to British Columbia. I think the people of Alberta should be grateful for the work he did for them. Whether or

not we accept the recommendations of the council is up to the Assembly. But he did a fine job, and I would like to pass my thanks on at this time.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I also would like to make some comments on this motion before us this afternoon. When it comes to anything relating to municipal issues, it seems that we line up in our batting order. Last time I think the member on my right spoke, and I followed him. I hope this isn't a precedent for the rest of the term.

I compliment the Member for Clover Bar for bringing this issue to the Legislature so we can debate it. I do not support the motion as it is set out, not because I don't agree with the concern you expressed and some of the points you brought forward. I just don't think the solution in this motion is the proper one for us to follow at this point.

I would like to make a number of comments on assessment and taxation. First, in development of subdivisions I have experienced two philosophies. The philosophy of the urban communities is more concerned with planning and orderly development. I think we see this in Edmonton's annexation proposal, where they have suggested that one of the bases of their argument is the need for orderly development in the metro area. In the rural area we have found landowners whose grandparents homesteaded the land maybe two or three generations ago, and there's a different philosophy, a feeling that there is a right, that this land has been in my family and I have the right to subdivide and make a profit on it. That's probably a very simplistic overview of the differences of the two philosophies, but it has caused a conflict.

Between the subdivision of rural, agricultural land — there is a lot of pressure to preserve it for future growing needs we know we're going to face — has come a whole group of people who have found it an easier or better life style or whatever, to move out of the urban areas to what we have now term acreage developments. Two components relate specifically to any taxation. The first is the assessment of the land, and the second is the mill rate. Of course you multiply those two, divide by 1,000, and get a dollar value, which is the yearly taxation rate. The assessment for urban land or developable land other than farmland has recently changed to be based on 65 per cent of market value in the year before the assessment. The differences between taxes within Sherwood Park and the taxes on acreages demonstrate that a tremendous change has taken place in market value. This rural land was of a lower market value previously, but has been escalating at a tremendous rate. When you take the assessment times the mill rate, rural taxes have increased due to the fact that that land has become immensely more valuable. So you can't say that this is simply a poor group living on these acreage developments. This land is a valuable commodity, and a lot of people are very pleased.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

MRS. FYFE: You may ask it when I'm finished, sir.

This is a valuable commodity, and many acreage owners are certainly very aware of it. I'm not saying this is not a plight that they face. For those who say, this is my land and I'm being taxed off it, certainly that's a concern. That's exactly one of the concerns we

have been trying to address through the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council.

I would like to refer to one other comment the hon. member made: that we should have assessment more frequently than on the seven-year basis, or extended an additional year by permission of the minister. If we were to say, okay, we'll train more assessors. If you pay them enough you're going to get lots of assessors coming into the field, so that's not going to be a big problem. We'll assess the property every year, every piece of property in the province. What is the cost of it? Is the cost of assessment not relevant? And what are the gains?

Look on it from the point of view that during that seven-year period you get a bargain because your assessment base has remained at one level. I know many people are upset that after that seven-year period they get a rapid escalation in one year, but if they look on it in terms of having a bargain over the seven years — maybe it's a complex issue to get across to some members. But it's something we should think about.

I really did chuckle when the hon. Member for Clover Bar suggested we take this out of the political arena and turn it over to a group of MLAs. I thought maybe we were political. Maybe I'm mistaken.

The Provincial-Municipal Finance Council was set up with some pretty broad terms of reference, not just with the plight of the acreage owner. They were to examine such things as which services should be provided by the provincial and municipal governments. That is really a key element, because people want more and more and more services. We know that. We are a have society; we do want more. Where do we say no? We've just gone through this process of saying we have the money in Alberta but we won't always have it. How do you draw the line? What is the division between provincial and municipal responsibilities? There have been many cost-sharing programs, such as preventive social services, that many municipalities balked at because they said, we're going to get drawn in and have to pay for services we won't be able to afford in the long run. This is just an example of how broad this whole question is.

The second term of reference was the source of revenue. This has been important: what is the basis of the taxation, the basis of the assessments? The third term of reference was the taxation procedures, the fourth was equalization procedures, and many other matters were to be included.

All I say in not supporting this motion is that it is very, very narrow in scope. It certainly brings forward a very important issue, but let us look at it in light of research, fact, input from the various associations — municipal associations that participated in the process — and the very competent staff who have worked on this over a period of years. For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this motion.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

MRS. FYFE: Yes, you may ask.

DR. BUCK: To the hon. Member for St. Albert, Mr. Speaker. In the member's comparison between Sherwood Park and the outlying acreages, would the member not agree that the assessment was also done on the Sherwood Park property, which would escalate the

same amount as the acreages outside the hamlet of Sherwood Park, because the assessment was done in the entire county?

MRS. FYFE: Certainly the assessment was done in the entire county. There's no doubt about it. But the value has increased at a much higher rate in the rural properties than the urban. You said yourself, sir, that there is a tremendous ...

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly the hon. member might lapse into the well-known third person.

MRS. FYFE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate being corrected.

The hon. member did bring up that there is tremendous pressure for acreage development, and close to urban areas it is a commodity many people want. As in the sale of anything: if it's in short supply, the desire to own it increases, and the value increases. This has happened in rural property. So the value has increased at a much higher rate than urban property values have.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can I ask the hon. member a further question? Is the hon. member aware that many vacant acreages are available in the county of Strathcona, so the law of supply and demand does not exist?

MRS. FYFE: I don't think the hon. member's statement is particularly relevant to the fact that the market value of a piece of rural property has escalated at a higher rate than urban property. Whether or not they're available, they may be asking more than the market will pay.

MR. L. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to speak on Motion 215, because I agree with the hon. Member for Clover Bar that the problem is real. I also agree that it's a long-standing problem. That's about where I quit agreeing with him.

I can't see setting up another select committee. When I was with the county system, we did a study on just this thing. We went through it for two years. We put all our recommendations before the government and before the select committee. We had some of our own men on it. As I see the problem, the one reason it is a long-standing problem is that it's very complex. It affects a lot of people. It affects a lot of counties and municipalities. To be quite honest with you, they can't even agree among themselves. I happened to be on one of the committees on this at one time. When they did come to a conclusion and made the recommendations to the government, it was certainly not universally accepted by all the MDs and counties. This has been a problem and has maybe delayed this report. But I understand it's now at the printer's and should be here in the near future. I can certainly wait until it gets here before we bring in another committee to study the same situation.

I've heard just one side of the problem of taxation and assessment here today. I've never heard the side of the people moving into farm country. When you realize that farmland is assessed at a maximum \$40 an acre, based on its value to produce, and that most of the farmland around the cities is not that good, so it's based at maybe \$25 or \$30 an acre, and when you also take into consideration that farm houses are tax exempt, you see that for the last 10 years these acreage

owners have been getting a pretty good break.

The reason they have been getting that break is that they are taxed only on the 20 or 40 acres of farmland they own, as long as they could be classed as a farmer. To be classed as farmers the first rule was that you had to have at least 20 acres and make \$1,200 a year. Since then I think it's gone up to approximately \$3,500, as they base it on the amount an old age pensioner gets. It's getting pretty hard to get that amount of money off 30 acres, the way farming has gone these days. I guess that's why a lot of these people were dropped from the farm roll with the new assessment. They were classed as urban residents, and their land and houses were assessed immediately. Their houses were assessed for taxes, and their land was assessed as commercial land.

I happened to sit on the court of revision in our county, in fact I chaired it for the last two years. It's not very easy to sit as chairman of a court of revision and try to decide who is a farmer and who is not. The biggest problem is trying to define who should really be qualified as a farmer. Lots of farmers on small acreages make a lot of money. Some of them are sod farmers, peat farmers. We even had a fellow in the county of Wheatland who grew worms. He made \$20,000 a year, and he called it livestock production. He had as legitimate a claim to be a farmer as many of the others classed as farmers.

In the last few years we on the court of revision have decided that in our county at least we would class them all as acreages unless they were definitely farmers, and let them take their fight to the government. Maybe this is what's caused the problem.

But from sitting on that I know it is a real problem, and something has to be done about it. Because they now come back and in their usual way class them as non-farmers. Some taxes have gone from almost nothing, from a few dollars, to \$2,000 or \$3,000. One fellow in the county had his whole 90 acres classed from a farm to commercial, and it really hurt. I don't blame them for being concerned, because it's gone too far the other way.

On the other hand I have my own version of what should happen. I might as well tell you what I believe and what I will vote for, if this ever comes to a vote in this Assembly, even though I might lose a vote or two, because I have lots of acreages. I believe that all land should be classed as farmland and that all residences should be taxed. I believe this because it is a management decision whether a person makes money off his 20 or 40 acres. If he wants to raise cows on it or let it go to weeds, that's his decision, a management decision. I don't think we can interfere in that. But I really believe all farm homes should be taxed — not the buildings, just the homes — and that all the land, from 10 acres up, should be classed as farmland. This way it would be easier for municipalities to administer it. We wouldn't have to have a split mill rate.

This is what I really believe. For this reason I think I can certainly wait until this report comes down. I'm anxiously waiting to see what is in the report, and I hope that is one of their recommendations.

Thank you very much.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, in introducing his motion the hon. Member for Clover Bar has suggested the formation of a select committee of this Assembly. The purpose would be to investigate and come back with

recommendations.

In speaking against his motion, I hope he will not take it that I am not agreeing there is a problem. The principle in real estate taxation has historically been based on two things: first of all, on the service rendered to that piece of real estate, and secondly, on the ability to pay of the person who owns the real estate. Services on acreages, as most of us know, are not what they are on urban land. The district road, in whatever state it may be, courtesy of the hon. Minister of Transportation and the district council; policing by the RCMP or the other form of local policing; and of course the local school requisition, are fairly uniform across the province. On some acreages there is even some form of fire protection, which is a justifiable charge against that acreage. But when it comes to sewer service, water, the acreage access road, and garbage disposal — about which I made some remarks in a committee meeting the other evening — those services are always provided on an individual basis by the acreage owner for his own purposes. If you look at it on this basis, it's quite obvious that on the same value of property the acreage owner should be paying less tax than the urban person who gets those services provided by his municipality.

The ability to pay has been judged, as far as improvements are concerned, on the size and quality of the house and, recently, as far as land is concerned, on the current market value. Percentages and changes are made, allegedly to reduce it. But it doesn't matter. Because of the equalized assessment, it is, in actual fact, based on the current market value. As in the urban areas, the value of the house and land has been escalating because of inflationary factors that apply to the whole provincial economy. The acreage owner doesn't object to that any more than the urban owner does. It's a fairly uniform escalation in assessment, and therefore in the total assessment of that particular municipality, and is distributed equally.

Mr. Speaker, really the problem we are discussing this afternoon is that the increase in assessment on acreages has completely outstripped any inflation factor. This has been based on two things: the shortage of available land has had a market effect and, the other thing adding to that market effect has been the increasing interest people have expressed in living on acreages. It's become a life style. When I first adopted it 15 years ago it was relatively uncommon, and now it seems to be the main aim of half the urban population.

So far I've been discussing the general problem across the whole province. It's also been discussed very adequately by other speakers taking different attitudes, and sometimes, I think, coming up with different answers. But now I'd like to zero in on some problems that affect my own constituency. I've already mentioned the shortage of available acreage land. But in my constituency that shortage is extreme. In two communities, Jasper and Grande Cache, you just can't buy an acreage — in Jasper because it would be part of the national park and we all know what the federal government think of that idea. And in Grande Cache no freehold land is available outside the town limits except that land given to the Indian co-operatives. There is a caveat on that land that it cannot be sold except back to the provincial government. In those two communities there is no problem because there is no land.

When we come to Edson and Hinton we get into a situation where land is available. But in those two communities, in addition to the normal restrictions of

zoning and planning requirements, there is a restriction on the land available because they sit in the middle of the greenbelt, where most of the land is provincial and not available under any circumstances: for farming, private ownership, or rural acreages. Indeed, within the last three months it has reached the stage around Hinton — and I was rather interested to hear the figure of \$1,000 an acre mentioned by the hon. member from Calgary — that the price of land for acreages has passed \$7,000 per acre. That is for scrub land with no agricultural capability. Acreages around Hinton and Edson, because of the provincial planning commission restrictions, must be in excess of 20 acres. You can imagine what that's going to do to the assessment when the value is \$7,000 per acre. In other words the provincial government's restrictions are distorting the value of land, and therefore the assessment, in two ways.

Mr. Speaker, we have a further problem. The areas I've been mentioning around those two communities are both within Improvement District 14. For those of you who don't know the geography of the improvement districts of this province, Improvement District 14 extends from Evansburg at the Pembina River to the B.C. boundary, some 200 miles. We now have a situation that within that one improvement district the value of land varies from less than \$200 an acre to over \$7,000 an acre. The mill rate is the same on those two parcels of land. So we have a taxation factor on that land that varies by 35 times.

I'd like to read the assessment on one parcel and one house. It belongs to two old age pensioners. The land assessment has gone from \$70 to \$8,850 to \$14,570 this year. The assessment on the improvements — and they have not been improved in the accepted meaning of that word in the interim — has gone from \$3,730 to \$5,230 to \$11,900. This means that over the last four years these two pensioners are looking at an assessment that has gone from \$3,800 to \$14,080 to \$20,750 to \$26,470. These people are rapidly heading for the situation the hon. Member for Clover Bar was describing. They are being taxed off land they just cannot afford to keep. In other words, in an improvement district like that we have to have, of necessity, some form of split mill rate. I shall no doubt be addressing remarks to the Minister of Municipal Affairs along that subject since he is our municipal authority.

Mr. Speaker, after the remarks I've made the hon. Member for Clover Bar may well see that I agree with the philosophy behind his motion. My real concern is that the Provincial-Municipal Finance Council, headed by our ex-town manager in Hinton — after leaving this Assembly Ross Ellis did become the town manager in Hinton, and we were very glad to have him and his knowledge and abilities. My concern is that this council has very thoroughly investigated the problem. I understand they had some 80 recommendations made to them. They spent three years on the subject. I really don't feel we can afford, for the benefit of these pensioners I mentioned and for other people, to wait a further three years while the whole problem is reinvestigated and reanalyzed. Presumably the same decisions will be arrived at. For this reason I would find it relatively easy to support the motion on the Order Paper by the Member for Highwood. But I really find it rather difficult to support the motion presented by the hon. Member for Clover Bar, which I feel would only add to the delays. We are not looking for prob-

lems. We are looking for answers.

Thank you.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Clover Bar had carried on the question period as long as he should have today, I wouldn't be here. [laughter]

Mr. Speaker, I agree there are glaring inequities in our taxation system as it is now. I'd just like to give a couple of concrete examples. The quarter down the road was taxed at \$52 for years and years and years. Then it was purchased within the last four years. The fellow built a log cabin — poplar logs, no less — and subdivided out 40 acres. His log cabin and 40 acres are now taxed at \$459. The 120 acres left are taxed at \$522, which makes the taxation on that quarter jump from \$50 to over \$900 in one year.

Similar to the hon. Member for Clover Bar and the hon. Member for Edson, I have sympathy for elderly people. An elderly couple at Drayton Valley subdivided the home out of their farm because they didn't want to farm any more. The tax on the quarter section had been around \$200. After subdivision, the taxes on the home, which had a beautiful yard, were \$1,200. They subsequently sold the acreage.

I think we have to look at the reason for taxation. The dictionary definition is: a charge of money imposed by an authority upon persons or property for public purposes, or a sum to defray expenses. The purpose of property taxation is to cover municipal costs. In rural municipalities, these costs include schools and school busing, policing, snowplowing, grading and servicing roads, and sometimes fire protection. I agree with the Member for Clover Bar that taxation should cover the amount and quality of service.

Our system assesses the value of your property to see how much you can afford to pay. This takes away from the universality of the whole concept and penalizes improvements made. With the \$200 Alberta property tax reduction plan, many quarter-section holdings pay absolutely no tax, while an acreage up the road may pay an exorbitant tax.

Mr. Speaker, the services provided are for the residences or the occupants. Therefore, in order to have equalization of taxes, possibly we should get back to the reason for them: services provided. If that's the case, taxes should be based on a fee for services. So each piece of property, regardless of size and providing it is a residence property, should have a base tax that would reflect the services provided. As far as the farm quarter in the bush or off the road, which has no services provided, maybe it should be charged \$10 tax for registration. The services are provided for the people, not for the land.

The Provincial-Municipal Finance Council has concluded a study and report, and Mr. Moore has informed the Legislature that it will be made public shortly. The report has 85 recommendations. The motion proposed by the Member for Clover Bar is very well intentioned but, in view of the report, I think it is redundant.

Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Briefly entering the debate, Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the impression left by the hon. Member for Clover Bar that somehow reports of select committees of this Assembly, under this government at any rate, have been put on the shelf to gather dust. As the hon. member is well aware, that is

not the case. It may have been the case in the government under which he served, but it is certainly not the case with respect to the government of the day.

DR. BUCK: Little boy blue comes back [inaudible] . . .

MR. HORSMAN: Having served with him on the committee with regard to trucking regulations, the hon. Member for Clover Bar and I appreciate the fact that most if not all those recommendations have now been effected.

Of course, in those days I really got to know the hon. Member for Clover Bar. Despite his oftentimes interjections in the House, I came to recognize that not all hon. opposition members have horns and cloven feet, Mr. Speaker. That certainly isn't true of the hon. Member for Clover Bar; he's a very nice fellow outside the House.

I want to assure the hon. member and members of this Assembly that when it is appropriate to proceed with select committees, the recommendations normally are carefully considered and brought into the policy of this government.

In view of the hour, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that we call it 4:30, so we may proceed to the next order.

[Motion carried]

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

Bill 205
The Crown Corporation and
Government Agency Disclosure Act

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I guess it's going to be my day. Now I know why the Premier appointed the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower to his portfolio: they needed someone to sit in a chair and do nothing but occupy space.

AN HON. MEMBER: Cheap shot.

DR. BUCK: Cheap shot. Well, we get them all the time from Horsman. Surely he can contribute something better than that. We'll probably hear from the minister responsible for whatever he's responsible for — Advanced Education.

In commencing debate on The Crown Corporation and Government Agency Disclosure Act, Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform members of the Assembly of some of the discussions that took place at the parliamentary conference in Quebec City last fall. A group of MNAs, MLAs, MPPs, and MPs were at the conference. In the discussions that arose, the concern of elected members was: do we as elected members really have any control over the purse strings?

The question of Crown corporations and government agencies came up in the discussion. In looking at the voluminous number of Crown agencies and corporations at the federal level, members who had had many years of experience as MPs felt that the government had sort of lost control. They didn't even know how many Crown agencies there were. These agencies were practically an entity unto themselves. They hardly ever had to answer to the elected people, or to answer to anyone. Their budgets came in. If the guidelines were 6 or 7 per cent, their budget went up the automatic 6 or 7 per cent, and on went the ball game. As members are aware, when the Auditor General spots the odd case where a horse has been on the payroll of the Canadian army, and some of these instances, this is really what we're talking about. Crown agencies and corporations should be responsible to us as elected representatives.

With that theme in mind, Mr. Speaker, The Crown Corporation and Government Agency Disclosure Act would set up a committee of the House. It would not get rid of the Public Accounts Committee, but it would call the Agricultural Development Corporation, the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, the Alberta Energy Company, Alberta Government Telephones, the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation, and others listed in the Bill.

We might even be able to get some government backbenchers on these committees. They might not get paid for them, but at least they'd be doing what they're elected to do: look after the interests of the taxpayers' dollars. You don't always have to have a little \$1,000 supernumerary to your MLA salary to do your job.

AN HON. MEMBER: Well, that makes one of us.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in commencing debate on this, we're trying to make these corporations accountable to the Legislature. Really what we're talking about is legislation brought into the British Columbia Legislature in the fall of 1977. Surprisingly, there was very little negative debate and it was then passed. Both sides of the House recognized the need for such legislation and put it through rather quickly. I have received information from our neighboring province that the committee is functioning very well and that the government and the opposition are both happy with the progress being made in looking at Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, after the little tussle the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower and I had here, it's interesting to see that sometimes legislators can get along and have a common ground. The common ground would be that we'd be looking at these Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I feel this legislation is important. I would try to present in a non-controversial manner, because nobody on the government side would ever accuse me of trying to make it controversial.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Never.

DR. BUCK: We must recognize that Crown corporations and agencies have grown like Topsy in recent years. It's very difficult to make them accountable. By this legislation, the necessity of these Crown corporations being accountable to this select standing committee of the Legislature would be by statute.

This committee will not be like our present Public Accounts Committee, because it has other areas to look at. It looks at the expenditures of the province. While there may be some argument that the Public Accounts Committee could take care of this, it is not a valid argument. It sits for two or three hours once or twice a week while the session is on. Maybe we'd like to zero in on a certain area, but we have limited time and therefore can't really go into depth on some of the public spending we would like to investigate on behalf of the public. We'd like to look at some of the departments in depth.

I emphasize that little advantage would be gained if this committee simply took the form of our present standing committee. That's not the intent. The committee would administer this study, and would be an ongoing committee called when the chairman or its members felt it should be called.

Sometimes we do put aside our political biases and have a common front. This is really the intent of setting up a committee such as this. We know that when we get into Public Accounts, there is a weighted committee which sometimes — well, some of us who try not to be partisan might think it is loaded on one side or the other, that it does have some prejudices and that maybe it tries to do a little stonewalling. That's part of the political process I guess we have to accept.

But Crown agencies and corporations really do not answer directly to this Legislature. They answer through the minister; that's true. But I'm sure, especially when we look at the proliferation in the federal House, some of these agencies are not answerable to anyone. Here the minister has to speak for them. Still it does not give legislators an opportunity to delve in depth and directly question the directors of these agencies.

Mr. Speaker, in many instances this select committee will have to hold meetings in camera, because if information is going to affect the competitive position of a corporation, certainly it should not be made public. This committee would have the power to ask certain questions which would be held in confidence. Then it is public knowledge, at least in that both sides of the Legislature are represented. We as elected people would know if the judgments used in making the decisions of some of these agencies were, as far as we were concerned, the proper judgments.

As I mentioned, this committee would be unique. It would function when the Legislature is not in session. In essence it would be a full-time watch dog which would prevent government and Crown agencies from growing out of control. Mr. Speaker, that really is the difference between the committee that would be set up and the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would only be right that I bring to the attention of new members an example of the value this type of legislation would play. Let's look at the not too ancient history of the Alberta Export Agency. This agency was scrutinized by the Public Accounts Committee in 1976, and part of its activity came under the purview of the Provincial Auditor of the day. The Public Accounts scrutiny can best be described as under very intense political circumstances, because the opposition members of that committee brought the question to the committee, and auditing had to be done. Consequently, the Export Agency was disbanded.

I think it would have served a real purpose to save

the government a lot of embarrassment, if this ongoing committee could have called agencies before it and found out what was going on in the Alberta Export Agency. Maybe an agency that I feel had a place in the system could have stayed in place, if some of the problems had been ironed out. This committee certainly could have found out if there was a problem and made some recommendations, and possibly that agency would still be in place to this day.

Another factor I feel is important, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, is that this committee on Crown corporations and government agencies will have a competent research staff and a substantial budget at its disposal. So not just members will meet, but it will have some people with expertise who've done some research. This research will give access to the corporate documents of each government corporation and agency, some of which are normally considered confidential. I realize all the information cannot reasonably be made public, but certainly most of it can and should be. In order to function properly the committee must have full access to documents which would normally be available to boards of directors. The committee would decide what documentation and information should be made public and what should remain confidential.

Mr. Speaker, with great respect, I'm sure the committee would not consider the salaries of principal officers of Crown corporations and government agencies as such confidential information, as we see with the Alberta Energy Company. Generally speaking, the success of the committee and its staff would rest largely on the willingness of the members to ensure reasoned and adequate investigation. The committee, rather than the government or the Executive Council, would decide what is in the public interest. And that's as it should be.

Mr. Speaker, briefly in conclusion, I believe it would be useful to stipulate that the committee not have members of Executive Council in its membership. They would all be members of the back bench, from both sides of the House. It would then be seen as a true committee of the Legislature, with a clear separation from Executive Council. This is not specified in the legislation, but could be accommodated with ease through a simple resolution or by declaration of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This is a clear and important stipulation in this legislation in British Columbia, which passed with all-party support in 1977. There is no way the committee will be influenced by Executive Council, because it will not have members of the Executive Council in its membership.

So, Mr. Speaker, I feel that this is an important Bill. I certainly welcome debate, and the support of members of the government.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak for the first time on a Bill in this spring sitting of the First Session of the 19th Legislature, I'd initially like to make a few comments. I'd like to pay my sincerest regards to the hon. Lieutenant-Governor, congratulate him on his top-rate service to the province and the people of Alberta, and wish him well, as I'm sure all of us do.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, for your first-rate performance in this Legislature, your service to constituents, and the reputation you have established across Canada. In particular, I'd like to offer

special congratulations to all new members of the Legislature for the quality of the speeches made so far. I would surely say that the expectations of constituents across this province must be very, very high, in view of the quality of those speeches. And I would like to thank my constituents most sincerely for allowing me to serve for a third term.

Before I get into the main topic of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments regarding the comments the hon. Member for Clover Bar just made. It's interesting that the hon. opposition member continues to refer to other jurisdictions. In this case he has mentioned British Columbia and the federal confusion. As we all know, the federal confusion will hopefully be resolved by the new federal government. I'm sure it will be cleaned up.

DR. BUCK: Within six months at least.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's also interesting to note that he says Public Accounts cannot handle the items he refers to in the Bill; namely, Crown agencies, and he mentioned the Export Agency. Yet we know very clearly that it was handled. Whether it was handled because the hon. opposition member raised it in Public Accounts is not relevant. The important thing is it was handled by Public Accounts, by opposition and government members. At that time it was chaired by the independent member, and we know it's now chaired by an opposition member. So I don't think those arguments are really relevant.

Mr. Speaker, to suggest that a committee handle this and follow its own direction without any control by this Legislature is somehow, for me at least, difficult to understand, because I've been in the Legislature long enough. Hon. members know that the ultimate authority is in the Legislature, and I would hope that all decisions ultimately come here and are made here.

DR. BUCK: Go to B.C. and see how it's working, Ken.

DR. PAPROSKI: Well, let's talk about British Columbia, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is hooked again on another province, another jurisdiction. I recall very well that the hon. member constantly refers to the United States, to Sweden, and so forth, as if they had a direct bearing on the province of Alberta — albeit that experience is important for us to relate to from time to time so that we can learn something. I think we should learn something from the experience in the federal jurisdiction, and I would hope that never happens. If it does happen, I would hope that this government will change its places too.

Let's talk about British Columbia for a moment. Premier Bennett himself indicated there was no prior mechanism to deal with Crown corporations. I am surprised that the hon. member believes there is no proper mechanism to deal with Crown corporations and government agencies in Alberta. I don't know the situation there clearly. But if as Premier he makes that statement, I would accept that, and I hope he would bring in this type of Bill or some other mechanism to deal with it.

DR. BUCK: Tell us about the Ag. Development Corporation, Ken.

DR. PAPROSKI: He felt clearly in his comments — and I read the report the hon. member provided for me, but I had it in advance — that there was no access to these Crown corporations. He also indicated Crown corporations and agencies were proliferating in B.C. very rapidly. I'm sure that probably applies to Alberta, as to all jurisdictions. It was complex; it was out of hand; it was difficult to deal with. The hon. Premier of that province felt the inability to deal with these corporations and government agencies. He had to do something, and he brought in the type of Bill proposed today by the hon. opposition member.

I would not for one minute like to leave any thought in anybody's mind, Mr. Speaker, that governments are not complex. There is a need for Crown corporations, agencies, various committees, and so forth to deal with the many complex problems of our society. In a general way, then, we're really speaking of assurance, accountability, and scrutiny by elected members. I suggest it has to be done by elected members of this Assembly. I'm sure the hon. opposition member doesn't disagree with that; nobody does. But if anything is to be done in this area, I feel it's a matter of providing more time and increased support staff for elected MLAs to do their job.

The hon. opposition member also made a brief comment, in the way he presented it, that he assumed there is in fact a lack of accountability in Alberta. I do not know that this is in fact the case, and I challenge him on that score. Hon. members will recall that not very long ago there was a question of direct accountability; I'm specifically referring to the Hospital Services Commission, when costs got out of hand. In spite of the fact that the Hospital Services Commission served its purpose for many, many years, this government took it upon itself to do away with that commission and bring accountability directly to the minister, with all the flak that entails.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, responding very briefly to his initial comments, the select committee he suggests is surely another duplication of the many, many committees we have.

Getting back in a very specific way to Bill 205, The Crown Corporation and Government Agency Disclosure Act, I believe the operative word here is "disclosure". I am sure hon. members know the meaning of that: to open, to view, to make known, to reveal. It implies that something is hidden intentionally, deliberately, or maybe unintentionally. The Act will presumably disclose those mysterious and secretive things we're not aware of in the agencies and Crown corporations. And the disclosers, a committee made up of elected representatives, will be a select standing committee of this Legislature. Another committee among many, many committees will serve and shall examine their directors, officers, management, administration, operation, and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, a number of points should be made at this juncture. I have no doubt that in his wisdom the hon. opposition Member for Clover Bar, having served in this Legislature probably as long as anyone here and certainly longer than I have, means well. He recognizes, as we all do, the complexity of our government and the various agencies. But if there is any change to be had, I suggest it's not another committee, unless that committee is an urgent need to search and find out something that can't be found out otherwise. I think the most important item is the time

required to serve and to evaluate, and the support staff that every member requires, which I mentioned before.

However, in this type of Bill there is an implication that there are items not now disclosed that can and will be disclosed. Therefore — I am sure not intentionally — the hon. opposition member casts a cloud on Crown corporations and government agencies which are doing a first-class job. I repeat, I don't think he's doing that intentionally. But there is a cloud and a discomfort immediately, because what I would think of is: we as a Crown corporation, working, doing our job, are going to be brought under political pressure because something has happened, when we've done nothing. Or maybe the hon. opposition member suggests by this Bill that information cannot be as effectively brought out or disclosed with our present system.

So the question is: is that true? Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with those suggestions. I would be the last one in this Legislature not to take up the challenge of a new, fresh initiative. I am sure every hon. member here would join me in such a fresh direction. But the hon. member is essentially asking this House, with its many committees and the system we have, to set forth an ongoing duplication of a system of scrutiny now in place which, I suggest, merely needs refinement, increased support, and probably more time by each member. I certainly would have difficulty opposing the Bill if this were not the case.

Let me demonstrate in point form, in order that hon. members, particularly the hon. Member for Clover Bar, will appreciate how Crown corporations and government agencies are in fact open to review and are known, certainly to us — or should be known to us — if we choose to review them. Some of these points, hon. members will recognize very quickly, are elementary and understood by many. But from time to time all of us forget some of them, or they can be taken for granted, which is even more dangerous.

We are in the middle of a democratic system, Mr. Speaker and hon. members, that is second to none in the world. We're part of that system, if you wish. Because we're part of that system we're in the eye of the hurricane, and it's very easy to forget where we are. But this democratic system which has been in operation for centuries — and I challenge anyone here to say that this system is not the best in the world — depends on its performers.

So the question is, who are the performers? I am stating here now, they're the citizens of Alberta who elected us, the members of this Legislature, and citizens who serve in Crown corporations and government agencies. These participants have proven over the years that the system works very, very well. And although the participants may change from time to time — a citizen at large, a housewife, a father, a young person, married or unmarried, an elected or appointed member — somehow that balance, fortunately for all of us, is always maintained and has proven to do well over the many years.

Getting to the point that serves well in keeping this system, keeping the Crown corporations and government agencies properly accountable, I would offer the following points for the hon. opposition member's digestion. Number one, we have elected MLAs who screen every avenue of government activities — if they don't, they will be answerable to the constituents of this province — by the question period we see every day, be

they written or oral questions; by motions for a return . . .

DR. BUCK: Can I take it you're not supporting me?

DR. PAPROSKI: If the hon. member were just a little more patient, he might find out what's going to happen. I know he can't stand the anticipation, or the outcome of this.

The other point is that an MLA may put a motion for a return, and that information is provided by the will of this Legislature, as we all know. I recall so vividly — and I have to remember this and remind people of the Legislature, especially the hon. opposition members — when a motion for a return required literally a cart full of material, this big and this high off the floor, to wheel into this Legislature to answer it.

DR. BUCK: That was Yurko.

DR. PAPROSKI: The opposition member has asked a question. The point was made at that time: does the hon. opposition member recognize how expensive this is? Is this necessary? And with minimal debate the answer was, we need it. It was provided.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did he read it?

DR. PAPROSKI: I suggest to hon. members that to this day I doubt that all that material has been read or digested.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we have another method of scrutinizing the Crown corporations: by resolution, which could not only provide information but . . .

DR. BUCK: You're really grasping at straws.

DR. PAPROSKI: We've had resolutions directing the government to bring in legislation, programs, reviews, and studies. He could even ask to disband or modify any corporation or any government agency if that information is not satisfactory. Similarly we have Bills, as we have today, to try to do something.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is ample opportunity for all members of the Legislature. If she or he is convincing enough, privately and in the Legislature, the will of the majority will direct this government to do the things that are necessary.

We have another avenue, Mr. Speaker: the minister. The minister is responsible for those Crown corporations and government agencies. He's accountable — not as the Bill suggests, a minimum of every three years the select committee will review this, or whenever they choose — the minister is accountable on a day to day basis, not only when the Legislature is sitting, but when it is not sitting. It maintains an ongoing scrutiny, not based merely on annual reports. The Bill suggests that the committee will review the annual reports, which are historical documents, and the damage has been caused, Mr. Speaker. The minister is responsible on a day to day basis, and each and every one of us here in this Assembly can ask questions on that Crown corporation.

Another point, Mr. Speaker. The Bill makes reference to a committee working on its own initiative, and not less than every three years. I mentioned that. I've suggested also that the MLAs can work on an ongo-

ing basis between sessions, as the minister can. Research funds have been provided to do the job. Maybe the hon. opposition member doesn't want to relate to this, but the research funds — as I understand, and I'd like to hear his comments when he closes the debate on this Bill — are greater than the research funds of the backbenchers.

DR. BUCK: You've got 40,000 civil servants.

DR. PAPROSKI: I'd suggest, Mr. Speaker, that those civil servants will respond to the opposition member, as to every elected member.

DR. BUCK: Plus how many deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers?

DR. PAPROSKI: To cast the kind of statement on civil servants that they don't respond to elected members, Mr. Speaker, disturbs me.

DR. BUCK: I didn't say that. Come on.

DR. PAPROSKI: Even for a moment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

AN HON. MEMBER: Cheap shot.

DR. PAPROSKI: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member is so sensitive, but what can we do. Maybe it's because he's pulling too many teeth recently.

DR. BUCK: I'm glad you're not my lawyer.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the opportunity is truly abundantly available for every member of the Legislature to seek out this information. If he doesn't obtain it he can raise a question here, and demand.

DR. BUCK: And get stonewalled.

DR. PAPROSKI: If the hon. member would learn how to ask the questions properly, I'm sure he won't be snowballed.

DR. BUCK: Tell us about the Ag. Development Corporation.

DR. PAPROSKI: There's another point to be made, Mr. Speaker. All these points are not to be taken lightly. The point is that the Progressive Conservative government of this province brought in spring and fall sessions. Remember, I was speaking on things that we assume and take for granted, Mr. Speaker. The spring and fall sessions allow each one of us, not once but twice and all through the sitting, to ask the questions that are necessary to bring out the deficiencies of this government — if there are deficiencies. The fact that we have this kind of system in place . . .

DR. BUCK: Hallelujah, brother.

DR. PAPROSKI: . . . allows the Crown corporations, agencies, ministers, and all other staff to be on their toes, and indeed be accountable. That's why there is such a good performance.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the system of availability of information, accountability, and scrutiny. What is the fifth point? A very important office. And for the office of the Ombudsman, I must give the hon. opposition member's party credit. No question. They brought it in, and I give full marks for that. We've supported it and will continue to support it. [applause] Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. opposition member recognizes that applause. We also recognize good direction from the opposition party when it comes forward, but not duplication and overlapping and something that is not necessary.

The Ombudsman and his office are not subject to pressure by any one MLA. He has acted in a very definitive and able way; we know this. He's brought justice with respect to the citizen vis-a-vis the Crown corporations or government agencies, and has disclosed, revealed, and reported to this Legislature. So we can all read the items and correct them for the following year, doing the same thing that the so-called select committee would do amongst the other things we're doing already.

When we continue on this point of select committees of the Legislature to deal with Crown corporations and government agencies, I suggest we in fact have such committees who are empowered to screen and scrutinize and do the things that the hon. member has already indicated. Let me further make the point regarding committees. We have a Standing Committee on Public Affairs made up of all members of this Legislature, which can be called to order at any time to deal with literally any matter. We have the Standing Committee on The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act made up of 15 government and opposition members who deal yearly with this fund and the funds used by Crown corporations and government agencies. It reports to this Legislature. We have the Alberta Opportunity Company, the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, and I believe the Alberta Energy Company flows through this committee — in addition to the other committees where it could flow.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a Committee on the Offices of the Auditor General and the Ombudsman. That is its title. It has nine opposition and government members who will deal with the administration of financing and report. Then of course we have Public Accounts with 32 government and opposition members chaired by an opposition member whose task is obvious. It scrutinizes Crown agencies, corporations, departments, administration performance, and so forth.

Now if the hon. member would like this committee to sit all year round, maybe that's what we should be doing. Maybe we're reaching that point, if the load and weight of government on all the members is so great that we feel we're losing control — and I'm not suggesting for a minute we are; we haven't — but if we anticipate that maybe increasing the lime in the Legislature, or having this particular committee or that committee sitting all year round might resolve that problem. But I do not believe the opposition member really wants that, because even in his Bill he states, it should meet at least every three years after the annual report of these Crown corporations, which would mean that the information he refers to in the legislation would be historical information only.

Mr. Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee sits spring and fall, as we know, because we brought in

fall as well as spring sittings. That means a total of almost four to five months a year depending how long the session lasts. But not a minimum of three years.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we have another committee. It's so elementary that maybe we've forgotten we're in the middle of this hurricane — the democratic system. What is the other committee? The hon. opposition member probably can't think about it himself. I was amazed when you write down these committees. It's the committee dealing with estimates. In the past week and a half or two, we've been dealing with estimates presented in this House, in subcommittees, in the library, up in the Carillon Room, and down in the cafeteria, sitting three or four hours in the evening — all to evaluate the departments, the Crown agencies and corporations, criticizing them, and hopefully bringing about change for the following year. And if there's not enough time, maybe we should just extend the Legislature.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the schedule of Crown corporations and agencies in this Bill — wherever that Bill is; after all that, I've lost it — I find there's ample opportunity not only to scrutinize, to review, to criticize, and bring about effective change, but we're doing this very well daily by estimates, by Public Accounts, by the special committees, and ongoing surveillance of the various MLAs.

Let me go on and review the various items the hon. opposition member has brought to attention that are not scrutinized by various committees. Mr. Speaker, here we have his schedule attached to the Bill. The Agricultural Development Corporation is under Tourism and Small Business, Public Accounts, and the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Three areas of attack besides an MLA himself. The Alberta Educational Communications Corporation will be handled through the estimates of the Executive Council and Public Accounts; the Alberta Energy Company through the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Public Accounts, and the Heritage Savings Trust Fund; AGT through the estimates of Utilities and Telephones, and Public Accounts. And I can go on and on. [laughter] I know the hon. members are happy that I stopped.

That was an example, and there are literally none of these that haven't two, three, or four areas of investigation, if not five, six, or more. The hon. opposition member can stand in this House and tell us that we want another select committee and to spend the money of this province just to sit down and to review things again. The hon. opposition member knows me very well, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] I'm not jesting on this. I am very, very serious. If the hon. opposition member could come up and give me some rationale, something to really hang our hats on, clearly I am confident we'll support it. But not this one.

Concluding, Mr. Speaker, disclosures and scrutiny by elected members individually and by committees are clearly available in Alberta. If there is a deficiency, I suggest that deficiency is only time and support staff. I know other provinces have provided this, maybe to some greater extent than we have. That should be reviewed, and maybe there'll be an opportunity some time in the next one, two, or three years to review that.

Number two, the management, administration, and operation are clearly controlled and accountable by the ministers, and the ministers to this House, and this House to each elected representative who represents constituents. The annual reports are there for scrutiny

and perusal.

Number three: Mr. Speaker, I've already said it, and I'll say it again: I have found nothing clear or discernible or rational in this Bill. Unless there is, I have great difficulty asking any member to support the proposals the hon. opposition member has brought forward in good faith. I'm sure he means well. But if we mean well, all we have to do is keep on setting up more committees. We'll have committees setting committees, and before you know it we'll have nothing to do but go into the House and sit at benches looking at and talking to each other.

Finally, I feel Crown corporations, government agencies, their functions, and government functions in general are properly scrutinized by MLAs, and no one committee will solve the problem.

So with these brief remarks, Mr. Speaker — not so brief, I suppose. [interjections] With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would ask hon. members to reserve judgment on this Bill.

MR. McCRAE: Until a few moments back, Mr. Speaker, I really hadn't intended to get into this debate. Then I was so enthused and encouraged by the concise and abbreviated dissection of the Bill by the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway that I knew there were more things to say, and I just felt I had to get up and say them.

The second reason, Mr. Speaker, is that I've been hearing a lot of strange noises from that corner of the House for the last 20 minutes or so. Not knowing where they were coming from, but having a suspicion, I thought it appropriate that I stand up, look over the foliage, and see where they were coming from.

DR. BUCK: You never could see the forest for the trees.

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I'm suitably impressed that they are coming from the sponsor of the Bill, the hon. member from Fort Saskatchewan. Just a few comments ...

AN HON. MEMBER: Where's he from?

DR. BUCK: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can at least get the right constituency. [interjections]

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected, and I apologize for any innuendoes about the hon. member's character. [laughter]

I know the time is late, but just a few remarks on character. I want to say how well Albertans have been served by the citizens, the volunteers who have served on the boards and agencies listed in this Bill. I think of the time and effort that hon. members go to in recommending names of persons who will contribute their very valuable time in serving on these boards and agencies. Some of their names were brought into question prior to the last election. I thought it was a very sorry day when their names were held up to some suggestion ...

DR. BUCK: You mean your bagmen?

MR. McCRAE: ... that what they were doing was not above repute.

DR. BUCK: Your bagmen in Crown agencies?

MR. McCRAE: These gentlemen have given their time, talents, and energies, to serve on these boards and agencies. I think Albertans generally should be extremely proud that we've been able to attract people of that nature to assist us in these endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advert to the references the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway made to the opportunities for examination of agencies, boards, and whatever in the House in question period and in Public Accounts. The hon. member is apparently under some confusion as to the Public Accounts Committee. My understanding is that that committee is autonomous. Although we meet only once a week on Wednesday morning during the session, as an autonomous committee we have the power to direct that we sit other days. We can sit year-round if we wish. The problem really is to get the attraction, the attention of the opposition members on that committee so that we can have debate.

I can see the hon. member suggesting that we have more and more committees. Fine. Our already heavily overworked members of this Assembly will be expected to produce the quorum and, although he called it a nonpartisan Bill, the hon. opposition members will be there to create a little ruckus now and then, and away they'll go. We'll be left doing the work of this committee, as we do with so many other committees.

DR. BUCK: Oh, you poor fellows.

MR. McCRAE: One other area of comment, Mr. Speaker. Another opportunity for review . . .

DR. BUCK: You get paid, too.

MR. McCRAE: . . . of some of the agencies and corporations listed here is the Heritage Trust Fund committee that, as the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway pointed out, sits in the fall — 15 members from both sides of the House — and does a very adequate, complete, comprehensive review of the state of affairs of the various organizations . . .

DR. BUCK: It's all government expense, Stu.

MR. McCRAE: . . . that come there.

One other comment, Mr. Speaker, to do with the Export Agency and its attendance before the Public Accounts Committee two years back. Yesterday in the Public Accounts Committee we heard reference to the amazing work of the opposition in having people brought before the Public Accounts Committee relative to the Export Agency, and then a subsequent change in government policy. Well, Mr. Speaker and gentlemen, that just wasn't the case. Government policy was changed in accordance with studies and assessments by cabinet and by caucus, by the direction of the government rather than what happened in this committee. Frankly, as a member of this committee, I was extremely disappointed in what happened in Public Accounts relative to the Export Agency. If members will recall . . .

DR. BUCK: Then why did you dissolve it?

MR. McCRAE: If members will recall, reputations were bandied about very loosely. I thought it was . . .

DR. BUCK: Why did you dissolve it?

MR. McCRAE: . . . a less than responsible position in which to find ourselves: with immunity we sit here and damage the reputations of others.

DR. BUCK: Why did you dissolve it, Stu?

MR. McCRAE: I was a little disappointed with some of the things that happened in that committee.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I would make one final comment at this time. For a party with some members who ran under a ticket of the less government the better, et cetera, in the last campaign I find it rather astonishing, as did the last speaker, to see this continuing request for more and more committees, more and more interference with what is happening on the street in the business world, which already is being well reviewed through the Public Accounts Committee, the Heritage Trust Fund Committee, and the Legislature at large in the estimates and during question period each day.

With those brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. BUCK: No.

[Motion carried]

Bill 201

The Alberta Family Institute Act

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I almost feel guilty in rising to speak on this Bill today, which is so serious in comparison to the almost mirthful debate which ensued with the previous Bill. Prior to adjournment today, however, I would like to comment with respect to The Alberta Family Institute Act.

In doing so I would like to answer three basic questions. First, are there problems with respect to the family unit in Alberta today? Second, what programs exist to deal with those difficulties and to research and study the problems? Three, why should we consider The Alberta Family Institute Act as one way of dealing with those particular difficulties?

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, by my third question I have implied the answer to the first, which is are there indeed a number of difficulties facing the family unit in the province of Alberta today? I'd like to outline for this Assembly some of the statistics which indicate that there is not only a problem, but a growing number of problems associated with the basis of our society, the family unit.

A few days ago I had discussions with officials of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, who outlined in some detail what currently exists with respect to suicide rates in the province of Alberta, and what kind of projections they see with respect to that problem in the future. I was alarmed to note that Alberta has the highest suicide rate in the country, and

that divorced individuals and young people in particular are committing suicide in greater numbers today than ever before. The projection that that will continue in years to come is even more frightening.

Two days ago I had the opportunity to attend a seminar at which a study was presented by Dr. Lyle Larson on problems associated with the family unit. It was completed on the request of the mayor of the city of Edmonton, and was titled Family Patterns and Services in Edmonton. That is probably our most current report with respect to what is taking place in the family unit in this province. I'd just like to outline a few of the conclusions and statistics Dr. Larson compiled at the request of the mayor of the city of Edmonton. While doing that, may I add I'd like very much to compliment the mayor of the city in which this Legislature is situated for initiating that kind of project.

In his research, Professor Larson found a 38 per cent increase in the divorce rate in Edmonton in the five years between 1971 and '76, and that Edmonton now has the highest divorce rate in a province that has the highest divorce rate across our nation. As well, Dr. Larson found twice as many single-parent families in Alberta than in any other province in this country. He indicated that that is a growing problem. This is verified by our Department of Social Services and Community Health, which says that 84 per cent of those single parents are female, and of those, two-thirds are on social service benefits today. In fact the report of the Department of Social Services and Community Health indicates that 39 per cent of all social service benefits today are paid to single-parent families headed by a female. It goes well over 40 per cent when you take into account other individuals; in other words, the male population.

Another rather frightening statistic brought up by Dr. Larson was that illegitimate births were up 36 per cent in that same five-year period. Amazing to me is the abortion rate in hospitals in the city of Edmonton. There's one abortion for every five conceptions. That's legal abortions. He estimates that there are actually two illegal abortions for every five conceptions taking place in the city of Edmonton. For me that was the most startling statistic to come out of his report, which is some 480 pages.

He also indicated, and I've had this verified by the department and other individuals, that per capita Alberta has more mental health problems associated with the family unit — and these statistics are derived from interviews with family help agencies — than any other province in the country.

Mr. Speaker, if I might be permitted a brief quotation from an article the former hon. Solicitor General of this Legislature wrote concerning the Bill I introduced two days ago:

We know that we utilize our larger number of hospital beds more often than [any other society], that we consume more alcohol than anywhere except the Yukon and that our high insurance premiums reflect ... appalling accident rates.

He goes on to outline a number of other problems associated with the family unit.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to go on much further to inform members of this House, or indeed remind them, that the family unit in the province of Alberta today faces difficulties not encountered in past years, and that rates with respect to that are higher here than any other place in the country, and are

growing. With that concern in mind, I have raised this topic today.

The second question is one that must immediately follow from that, that we must jump to when we see the problems there: what programs do we have to deal with those difficulties? What institutions do we have to study those problems; to research what is taking place? There is no doubt whatever that we have a mass of agencies and institutions designed to do just that. I'd like to give a few examples of agencies that help the family unit. This is just a small outline of some from one report: parenting agencies, seven in Edmonton and five in Calgary; family aid agencies, six in Edmonton and nine in Calgary; family counselling, 25 in Edmonton and 32 in Calgary; family education, two in Edmonton and two in Calgary; family planning and abortion, 11 in Edmonton and six in Calgary; unwed mother aid, three in Edmonton and three in Calgary; and single-parent clubs, five in Edmonton and one in Calgary. Obviously there is a mass of helping agencies available for the family unit.

In terms of research and planning, there's no doubt that if we go to any university in this province we'll find shelves of information with respect to the family unit: trends regarding it, and an assessment of problems facing it. We have a number of agencies across the country. The one that may seem closely associated with the Alberta family institute is the Vanier Institute of the Family, started in Ottawa in the Pearson years. It is funded with an endowment of just under \$6 million and operates with about a \$480,000 yearly budget. That institute studies trends with respect to the family unit. I'll give you a brief indication of some topics they deal with: contemporary family life styles, varieties of family life styles, learning and the family, and perspectives of learning. They held a seminar on the nature of the economy and the family, and dealt with satisfying personal community needs.

Mr. Speaker, after first asking is there a problem and, second, what exists, I reach my third point. With all these agencies, study groups, and research institutions, why do we require an Alberta family institute? We do for a couple of reasons. First, we as a government, and other governments and social groups throughout the province of Alberta, still make decisions based on the family unit without taking into account the ramifications of those actions directly on individual family members or on the family institution as it relates to Alberta. We still pass laws and create social directions without a detailed analysis of what is happening in those areas. We also begin developments and plan without really taking a look at what I call an impact study on the family unit. It is for that purpose I've introduced a Bill designed to initiate the Alberta family institute.

Mr. Speaker, to make it more clear, I'd like to give a couple of brief examples with respect to what the institute would deal with. That institute would take a look at a factory that hypothetically might be built in Edmonton and have 2,000 employees. At the request of that factory or the city of Edmonton it would determine, to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, whether day care was needed in that centre in order to keep single-parent families together, or if some kinds of social programs could be initiated. By that I mean activity kinds of things by the company in order to keep the family unit closer together. Surely it must be easily proven that a solid family unit will

create a good and positive employee who is perhaps more dependable than those who face family problems at home. That's a very small specific.

If we look at a development such as Fort McMurray — and a number of those are now springing up in the north — this family institute would be able to look at that community, determine what kind of direction should be taken in terms of planning, of social agencies to deal with difficulties, and of the location of industry compared to housing units, to find out whether we are indeed developing a community that will not be conducive to encouraging the family unit to stay together.

Those are two concrete examples of specific research the institute would do. It would have another function, Mr. Speaker: to bring together the information that now exists from the Vanier Institute, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, and other agencies, and meld that information to advise us on where we can go with respect to long-range planning in this House.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I could go on for some time with respect to other aspects of this. When it comes up again, I would like the opportunity to detail to this House the specifics of the Bill and what it should accomplish. But noting the clock, I would move to adjourn this debate and have an opportunity to bring those to this House at another time.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, this evening at 8 p.m., pursuant to Motion 12 passed earlier today, Subcommittee A will consider the estimates of the Department of Culture in Room 312. Subcommittee B will consider the estimates of Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation in the cafeteria.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House, in Committee of Supply, will deal with the reports of the subcommittees, followed by the other estimates in alphabetical order.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might have the permission of the House to revert to introduction of visitors before concluding.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, here in the members gallery, to observe the decorum with which we carry out our business, are four alderpersons from Edmonton city council: Alderman Paul Norris, Alderman Buck Olsen, Alderman Ron Hayter, and Alderwoman Olivia Butti. I'd ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

[At 5:30 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]