

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, October 11, 1979 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the response to Motion for a Return No. 102.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to 62(4) of The Workers' Compensation Act, I wish to table three copies of the actuarial evaluation of the board's pension accounts as of December 31, 1978.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table today the annual report of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation for the year ended December 31, 1978, and the first annual report of the Alberta Library Board. I do hope all members will take the opportunity to review this important report.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce slightly more than 40 fine young students from grades 11 and 12 in Strathcona Composite high school, a school located in the constituency of Edmonton Parkallen. My knowledge of that fine institution is that the students come from a number of parts of the city, the south side in particular.

I would like to welcome them on behalf of all members, and ask that they rise now and receive the customary welcome of the House.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Department of Economic Development**

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, the government of the province of Alberta has agreed to purchase 1,000 hopper cars to move grain from Alberta farms to market. The purchase, estimated to cost \$50 million, will be financed through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The purchase of the 1,000 hopper cars will take place over the next two to three years, with \$15 million to be expended in the 1980-81 fiscal year.

The Alberta government recognizes that Canada's grain handling and transportation system has proved to be inadequate for moving present, let alone future, volumes of grain production to market. This limitation in transportation capacity, Mr. Speaker, has significantly reduced producers' income through the imposition of restrictive quotas. On-farm stocks are growing, and producers are not maximizing the utilization of their land and equipment. Thus the Alberta government has decided to purchase the hopper cars to

assist in increasing the capacity and ability of the system to meet the urgent needs of moving more grain to market.

The purchase of additional hopper cars by Alberta represents another step to improve the marketing opportunities for Alberta producers. Alberta was and still is the principal catalyst in ensuring expansion of facilities at Prince Rupert and just recently announced the takeover of the three inland terminals in the province by a newly established company, Alberta Terminals Ltd. By purchasing the cars and ensuring that the car fleet presently serving Alberta will be increased by an additional 1,000 cars, the objectives of both Prince Rupert and Alberta Terminals Ltd. will be achieved. Mr. Speaker, it is the intent of the government to negotiate that a necessary portion of the car fleet will be dedicated to use by the inland terminals for solid or block train movement from these terminals to Prince Rupert and other west coast terminals.

By the purchase of the cars, the capacity of the system will obviously be increased. However, this does not ensure the cars will be used as efficiently as possible. Therefore, with this concern in mind, I will be meeting soon with the federal transport minister, the newly appointed grain coordinator, and Canadian Wheat Board officials to negotiate terms and conditions of Alberta's provision of additional hopper cars to ensure that, in addition to increasing capacity, steps are taken to allow for the most efficient utilization of the system as a whole. If the present and new rolling stock can be used more efficiently by reducing car cycle times, it will contribute millions of dollars per year in farm receipts to producers, a benefit which is of extreme importance to all Albertans.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Oil Pricing**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my first question of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and it's with regard to oil pricing. Could the minister indicate what discussions with the federal government are occurring at the present time with regard to oil pricing in 1980?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions with the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and indeed the Prime Minister, involving the Premier, my colleague the Provincial Treasurer, and me. They have covered a range of topics. We have not set a date for a next meeting, although I anticipate there would be additional meetings.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether proposals of a \$4 to \$6 per barrel increase during 1980 are part of the negotiations going on at the present time?

MR. LEITCH: There have been a number of speculative stories for a matter of months as to what the pricing regime might be during 1980 and thereafter. In my judgment, it would be very much to the detriment of the Alberta interest if I were, in or outside this Assembly, to outline in any detail the negotiating position of either the federal government or the prov-

ince. After all, Mr. Speaker, these negotiations are delicate, complex, and exceedingly important to Alberta. In any negotiation one must of necessity have a strategy, a tactic. I think it's clear to everyone that you can't have tactics or strategy if you're announcing your negotiating position publicly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A final supplementary to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether negotiations to establish the oil price for 1980 will be completed in 1979?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, over my lifetime I've been in a number of negotiations. I've never found it possible to tell anyone when the negotiations might be completed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. The new federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has been quoted on several occasions as indicating that the federal government is examining the proposition of a replacement cost for the price of energy. Is the government of Alberta in a position to advise the Assembly whether any more detailed information has been made available to Alberta by the federal government on how the federal government would see the computation of a replacement cost as a pricing formula?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the hon. member's question falls within that type of question I responded to earlier, saying that in my judgment it's very much against the interest of Albertans for us to be discussing in the Assembly the particulars of any matter that may be under negotiation at the moment.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier indicate if any discussions have been going on to make sure Alberta does not get tied into a continental oil policy, as has been suggested in certain sectors of the United States?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member can elaborate on that in relationship to Canada/U.S. relationships of energy, I may be able to answer. If the question is indirectly following the previous questions, I have some difficulty with it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in the discussion on oil pricing, I'm sure that the matter of pricing as it relates to the eastern market and the United States market... Have there not been any discussions as to a continental oil policy for all North America?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, by the rephrasing of the question the hon. member has brought it within the scope of the negotiations, so I would have to take the same view as the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources has.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources or the hon. Premier. Is either hon. gentleman able to advise the Assembly whether any further discussions have taken place and, if so, whether the government is able to advise the Assembly whether any progress has been

made on the proposition concerning a national energy bank advanced several times, I believe, by the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Prime Minister, and the hon. Member for Edmonton East in the House of Commons?

MR. LEITCH: Again, Mr. Speaker, I feel that question falls within the answer I gave to the earlier questions about matters currently under discussion or negotiation between the federal government and us.

Income Assistance for the Handicapped

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's with regard to the assured income for the severely handicapped program initiated on October 1 this year. Is it clear at this point in time whether the eligibility for the program is a needs test or a means test? I wonder if the minister could clarify that.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, when the Bill was introduced in the spring sitting of this session I indicated that there would be not an assets test but an income test for eligibility. That differs from social assistance in that there is both an assets and an income test. In addition to that, there is what's sometimes referred to as a needs test. We've indicated that with this program there will not be a needs test. In other words, the needs of a severely handicapped person might be \$270 per month. The program states that the maximum benefits one might receive at the present time are \$370 a month. If the income of that individual were less than the prescribed amount, \$1,200 per year, then the maximum benefit would flow to the individual — in other words, \$370. Whereas with the social assistance the needs test kicks in: you determine the needs of the individual.

| see by the look on your face, Mr. Speaker, that you're somewhat puzzled by my response. May I try again?

I first might use the scenario of a person receiving social assistance. Several things are brought into play: the income and needs of the individual as well as the assets. One of those three factors might curtail the amount of support that the person might receive. Under the program as approved by the Assembly in the spring, there will not be a needs or an assets test. There will be only an income test. In other words, although you may have a severely handicapped person living at home with parents, and by the needs of that person the amount of support would equal \$270, that will not be the case. The full \$370 would flow to that person, based on income, not on the needs or on assets.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In the determination — in using the income test — do the minister and the department consider the income of the spouse, whether male or female?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, June 26. I gave as an example the high and the low figures for both a single and a married person. If the hon. member would like, I'll ensure that that information is transmitted to his office

MRS. FYFE: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if that information could be made available to other members of the Assembly. I further wonder if the minister could advise if his office has received many complaints from handicapped people dependent upon a spouse for their income.

MR. BOGLE: The answer to the first question, Mr. Speaker, is yes. The information has been available since the order in council was passed, a week ago Tuesday I believe.

To the second question, as to whether or not objections have been received, the answer is no. I'd like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that this is by far the most generous program of its kind in Canada. For a couple, for instance, the low end of the scale is \$4,000; in other words, a spouse may earn up to \$4,000 before there is any deductibility, and the high cutoff point is \$9,778.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I'd like to go back to that basic \$370 a month and the \$1,200 maximum earnings. Is the minister in a position to outline to the Assembly the reasons for arriving at a figure of \$370 a month, in view of the high rents and other expenses that individuals have to face?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the questions which are coming at this point in time. I was somewhat disappointed that there was not more debate on the Bill when it was presented in the spring.

Certainly the response to that is that the \$370 equals the amount a senior citizen might receive under old age security from Ottawa as well as the assured income program for senior citizens in Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has there been any study to demonstrate the adequacy of the \$370 a month, in view of the added costs for the severely handicapped?

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, with respect to those people who are in facilities: the total amount of basic necessities, as I understand the regulation, is \$35 a month, or a little over a dollar a day. I would put to the minister the question: what reasoning led the government to the conclusion that a little over a dollar a day, beyond room and board, is adequate?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, in the regulations, which are available, you will note that the exempted institutions list facilities where a person is a ward of the province. In other words, their needs are currently being met by the province. In addition there is support for those individuals, to cover out-of-pocket expenses, that should not be related directly to this program. This program is intended to meet the needs of Albertans who are not wards of the government and are trying to support themselves on their own; they're living at home with their parents or other family members, or possibly friends.

It's a program that I'm extremely proud of, Mr. Speaker. I think we've come a long way in recognizing the needs of our severely handicapped residents and developing a program that's the envy of Canada.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister, with regard to the income test and consideration of the spouse's income. Is the income that's

considered the net income or the gross income of the spouse? Some situations have been brought to our attention where the financial responsibilities of the spouse are such that they leave very little to look after exceptional costs of the handicapped.

MR. BOGLE: It's always difficult, Mr. Speaker, trying to determine what limitations should be placed on a program. That's an issue my colleagues in government caucus wrestled with for some time, as did my predecessor. We've come up with what we think is an equitable formula. One of the reasons we wanted the dollar amounts to be in the regulations is so they might be adjusted on a basis to meet needs.

I want to reserve final comment on whether it's net or gross income; I believe it's net income. I'd like to take that aspect of the question as notice, and I'll look into it.

Utilities Company Ownership

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones and ask whether the government has taken any steps to communicate an expression of concern to the officials of International Utilities, the holding company that controls Alberta Power, Canadian Western Natural Gas, Northwestern Utilities, and Canadian Utilities, concerning that holding company's decision to amend its international charter to restrict non-American ownership to a maximum of 35 per cent.

MR. SHABEN: No, Mr. Speaker, we have not.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the very sizable business done by all four of these major utilities in the province of Alberta, can the minister outline to the Assembly what consultation took place between the government of Alberta on one hand and International Utilities on the other before the amendment of the charter took place?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, consultation with my office did not take place with respect to the question raised by the hon. member. However, members of the Assembly should be aware that all of the utilities in the province are regulated by the Public Utilities Board in terms of rate setting and return on investment. The matter of the charter of the company in question is not within the jurisdiction of the province of Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. In view of the size of International Utilities' business activities in the province of Alberta through the four subsidiary companies I made reference to, is it the view of the government that it is satisfactory to put a quota on the amount of investment allowed Albertans in the holding company that controls four of the major utilities in Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER: I would have to draw to the hon. member's attention that he is outright and very plainly asking for an opinion, and of course an exchange of opinions takes place in debate, not in the question period.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, then I'll put the question in a totally parliamentary sense. Can the minister advise whether his office received any indication of this change by International Utilities and whether the government intends to make any representation to International Utilities on this discrimination against other than Americans in the ownership of that company?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I believe the question in part is fully speculative, in the notion that discrimination is involved. I believe the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones has covered part of the question, except I would note that in fact the utilities in Alberta are fully regulated by the Public Utilities Board, and that is the rate-setting mechanism for utilities in the province of Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Was any notice given by the company that controls four of the major utilities that in fact they were going to change their company's charter, which would limit the ability of Alberta investors to invest in that concern?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I can't say whether I received that notice. I would have to check to make absolutely sure whether notice did come. But I would state that the innuendo in the member's question perhaps takes us down the road of suggesting what the policies of some other agency may have been. I don't think that's really fair for this House.

Interest Rates

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Minister, in light of the bank rate increase and its possible detrimental effect on a rapidly growing province such as Alberta, has the minister expressed his concern to the federal government, and has the minister in any way suggested that the federal government would have greater flexibility in its bank rate adjustment were it to permit the export of additional Alberta natural gas?

MR. JOHNSTON: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, about a month ago I did have an opportunity, with a couple of my colleagues, to meet with Senator de Cotret. As you know, Senator de Cotret is the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the chairman of the Board of Economic Development Ministers.

DR. BUCK: Non-elected.

MR. JOHNSTON: At that meeting, Mr. Speaker, among a range of issues we discussed was monetary management and the role the federal government and the central bank were playing in the monetary system of our country and our province. We did have a chat on certain monetary policies: their view, how the federal government saw them articulated with provincial policies, and the particular Alberta role in expanding the rate of growth of our province.

I can't say specifically that I related the question of monetary policy and the export of natural gas, as the Member for Edmonton Whitemud has suggested and

as the Premier suggested yesterday. But I did certainly underscore the importance of maintaining a positive balance of payments in favor of Canada and that at the heart of much of the economic malaise we are facing across Canada was the balance of payments question. Outside of that, I drew to the minister's attention the serious implications of a rapidly rising rate of interest on small business in Alberta and challenged him to find other ways in which we could stimulate the economy to generate the kinds of real economic growth which are necessary across Canada.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that a parliamentary finance committee is set up to deal with this matter, I wonder if the minister or the Provincial Treasurer would indicate to the House whether they're prepared to make representation regarding the high interest rates.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware, and I appreciate the hon. member's bringing to the attention of the House, that in fact the federal Commons has appointed the finance committee with responsibility to hear the question of interest rates. I think it's important we note that. However, it is generally a policy of our government not to appear before committees of the federal House, particularly in ministers' cases. I imagine the representation they would get from federal members elected in the province of Alberta would probably carry the argument to a great extent.

Water Pollution

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. It comes from the concern with the high level of pollution in our rivers. Can the minister tell the House what steps his department is taking to monitor the situation and clean up the water in our rivers?

DR. BUCK: Action Jack, they call him.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we have a serious problem this year with respect to some of our river flows, because the majority are flowing below normal. We also have another problem: our population in Alberta is starting to grow at an ever-increasing rate. When you have those two kinds of conflicts, you have a problem with disposing of some of the waste products that occur because of it.

At the present time, we in Environment are monitoring the problems of pollution, particularly with regard to the two major cities. We are in close communication with the two cities in regard to their facilities, and I think we'll continue to press for upgrading of sewage and waste-water facilities in hopes that some of the pollution will be relieved. I think once the rivers reach their normal flow we will have a better chance to assess just how serious and how continuous the problem is going to be.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In particular, it's the concern with the deterioration of the water quality on the Bow River below Calgary. What is the minister doing to control the effect of the city of Calgary's sewage treatment on communities downstream?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, at the present time the city of Calgary has an expanding program with regard to the Fish Creek sewage facility. Hopefully that facility will be going on stream, if I may use that cliché, toward the end of this year. We are quite satisfied that the new facility, with its mechanical equipment, will be able to solve some of the problem occurring in that area.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I understand they're required to put a \$1 million sewage treatment system in the town of Bassano. According to some provincial authorities who have taken tests on the water, the water going out of the sewage facilities in Bassano is much purer than the water coming out of Calgary. Could the minister tell the House what steps have been taken to ensure that his department's standards are maintained and enforced equally upon the larger cities compared to the smaller centres?

MR. COOKSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, lately the water in the city of Edmonton hasn't tasted so hot either. However, I don't mind drinking it. It has been treated.

I think the member from Brooks makes the suggestion about the quality of water at the two different points. That perhaps is debatable. What we do in Environment is monitor and set standards for coliform — fecal coliform in particular, bacteria content. If you're talking specifically about that, my information is that other than under exceptional circumstances, the city of Calgary is well within the requirements laid down by the Department of Environment.

If you're talking about some of the other factors such as the elements, nitrogen and phosphates, those areas are being monitored. At present no facilities are in place to handle or reduce these elements in the water. They are not necessarily detrimental to the water for drinking purposes, as they are detrimental in terms of providing nutrients for plant growth within the water stream. That's an area we are addressing ourselves to at the present time.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister indicated in the spring session that a study was under way in regard to pollution of our rivers. Could the minister indicate what stage this study is at and when it will be completed?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, a complete study of the whole South Saskatchewan River basin is going on at the present time. It's a major study to determine the total flow of water daily through the year; the total requirements, that is to say, in terms of population, in terms of competition for domestic use, industrial use, and agricultural irrigation use. That study will require several years for completion. In addition, we have specialists working on more specific problems such as the nitrogen and particularly the phosphorus problem. I'm hoping that by sometime this fall I should have an interim report from my people as to just how serious the phosphorus/phosphate problem is, and perhaps some recommendations as to where we should go from there.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question to the minister. Given the fact that in its recent report on the Oldman River basin the Environment Council of Al-

berta very clearly stated that the condition of the Bow River was totally unsatisfactory, and given the fact that even the expanded facilities at Fish Creek as well as the existing Bonnybrook facilities will not deal in any manner with the excessive levels of phosphorus, could the minister advise the House what specific steps he is taking to try to shorten the time frame with respect to the study of the South Saskatchewan basin, to ensure that we can take some remedial measures in the immediate future rather than five years down the road?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, the problem of handling phosphate overloading of the rivers cannot necessarily be pinned down to the problems of human population. It also has to do with the use of fertilizer on lands through which these rivers flow.

To handle phosphate, if you're dealing specifically with the problem that may be attributable to Calgary, at least three processes have to be put into stage. One of them is the use of alum, along with other methods. By the way, these are now used to some degree in eastern Canada around the Great Lakes and other concentrated areas.

I would hope that sometime this fall I will have an interim report from my people as to whether we can pin down specifically, or as close as possible, the source of the phosphate problem. Once we have this established, we will be assessing measures, perhaps not only with the problems of fertilizers on the land, but certainly with the problems of human populations, to determine the best recommendation to make to the city and to other sources of contaminant.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. The minister has been very casual about this whole concern for so long. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister. What immediate actions are being prepared or initiated by the minister to take care of some problems? This week I had a constituent phone and say he'd seen dead fish and green things floating by the Scandia bridge. That's down the Bow River a little way. I keep telling them, the minister is looking at an interim report. What can the minister do better than an interim report? There must be some immediate solutions rather than this ongoing casualness.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we'll take action as soon as we have an interim report that clearly delineates the problem. I think the Member for Bow Valley, even in his own operation, would be very hesitant to encourage a major investment if he wasn't sure what the results were going to be.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. They'll be calling him "Jack, Jack, the ducks don't quack; the water's too polluted", if he doesn't do something. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The major criticism I receive from constituents in villages and towns that have to upgrade their treatment facilities is that there doesn't seem to be liaison between your department, Mr. Minister, and the department . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Now that the hon. member has lapsed into prose, could he come directly to the question?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, if you want to learn a little poetry, we'll do that after hours.

To the hon. minister: it has to do with financing of treatment facilities. Can the minister indicate what liaison there is between his department and the Minister of Municipal Affairs? Because the criticism we receive is that the minister's department makes a recommendation and it has to be carried out, but the funding isn't there. Who is responsible for the funding?

MR. COOKSON: I have a little difficulty relating that to the original question, Mr. Speaker, but other than the fact that the Member for Clover Bar probably missed his calling, perhaps I can respond in this way. This department has spent approximately \$19 million this year on sewage and water facilities in the province. We probably have the most generous program of any province in Canada. [interjection]

We in Environment have established a formula for guaranteeing that we will pick up 90 per cent of the total cost for sewage and water facilities over the \$200 per capita. This program is in place. We have major allocations to it. All our municipalities are eligible with the exception of the majors, who don't qualify. I'm sure they're aware of the program. If the Member for Clover Bar is not aware of the program, I'll be very happy to send him position paper no. 5, under which the program operates.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Maybe the minister isn't fit to be in that department. You know if we've missed ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: Can the minister indicate — when a directive comes from the minister's department that a sewage treatment facility must be upgraded, and the municipality says that is not sufficient funding, where do the people turn then, Mr. Minister?

MR. COOKSON: If the hon. member is speaking about a specific case, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to look at it. We set down requirements in Environment. We establish the water and sewer programs. As I've suggested, it's probably one of the most generous programs in Canada. And we expect the municipalities to meet those requirements. These rigid requirements are one of the reasons we've established these programs.

We monitor all the effluent leaving the sewage disposal units. We set down the requirements for engineering. We issue permits for construction, and we issue permits for release of the effluent. Our indication is that if all those requirements are met the effluent is of extremely high calibre and non-contaminant. If the money ... As I say, if it's dealing with a specific case I'd be happy to have the Member for Clover Bar present that to me.

Disaster Services

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs in his capacity as the new head of Alberta Disaster Services. The question arises from a recent decision of Alberta Disaster Services to provide compensation to residents of the Ranchlands area of Calgary, for which

the government is to be commended. More specifically, my question is directed at a similar instance in the greater Forest Lawn area of Calgary, in both 1976 and 1977. Could the minister advise the House whether as a result of the Ranchlands decision a review has been conducted of the situation in Forest Lawn?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can. A review by Alberta Disaster Services of the situation that occurred there in 1976-77 is under way. I should say, however, that there is great difficulty in reaching a favorable decision in terms of providing compensation there, due to a number of factors: the length of time that has passed since the supposed disaster occurred, the difficulty with assessments and being sure that everyone is treated fairly in that regard. Secondly, I should mention that at the time of that particular incident the government policy with respect to providing disaster services, or assistance where disasters occurred, was not as fully developed as it is today.

I have some difficulty, as well, with the matter of retroactivity and extending a new program back in time. In my view that creates a precedent that would go across many different programs and give us difficulty. I can conclude, however, by saying that I'll have something more to say on the matter and try to finalize it within the next few weeks.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question to the minister with respect to your statement about the difficulty in assessing the damage. Was it not the case that a representative of Alberta Disaster Services went to the Forest Lawn area, made a study at that time, and kept records which would still be in the possession of Alberta Disaster Services?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to check. I'm not at all sure that that is the case, but I wouldn't mind inquiring into that and seeing to what extent there are accurate records.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A further supplementary question to the minister. Was the decision not to provide compensation not in fact based on a view that insurance was available, and that there may have been some negligence on the part of the city of Calgary?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, as far as I'm aware, those two factors were taken into consideration when the original decision was made. However, I believe other matters were involved as well. I would like to await the review that is being done before commenting on the total matters involved then, or the reasons for whatever decision is reached now, in terms of the precedent involved and so on.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A final supplementary question. Could the minister give the House some indication when we might expect further comment from him on this matter?

MR. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, when the Disaster Services group has completed its review and given further advice to me, which I expect to be within the next few weeks.

MR. SPEAKER: A further supplementary by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, followed by a final

supplementary by the hon. Member for Calgary McCall.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister, a supplementary for clarification. I'm not quite sure whether the minister indicated the review would relate to the specific examples brought to the attention of the House this afternoon by the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn, or whether, in fact, it would deal with the larger question of retroactivity. If we're going to look at Forest Lawn in 1976, the hon. minister had better be prepared to have various MLAs come to his office with similar proposals dealing with retroactivity.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has identified and expressed again one of the concerns which I expressed in an earlier answer.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Would not the fact that the MLA for that area made representations at that time have some effect on the retroactivity question?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member has achieved his purpose.

Hazardous Wastes

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Environment. Is the minister in a position to indicate if a committee has been established to look into the question of the disposal and breakdown of hazardous chemicals in Alberta?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we have established a committee of four outstanding Albertans. This committee will be bringing in recommendations with regard to hazardous chemicals. Hopefully at a later date, probably the spring of 1980, we'll be asking the Environment Council of Alberta to proceed with public hearings.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister been informed that the public meeting in Fort Saskatchewan wished to indicate to the minister that that plant not be built in that community?

MR. COOKSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister assure the Assembly that public hearings will be held in the Fort Saskatchewan area when the committee starts its studies and investigation?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that as notice.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. If my memory is correct, the minister indicated there will probably be hearings by the Environment Council of Alberta. Is it not the position of the government that there will be hearings on this question?

MR. COOKSON: Perhaps I should have put my adjective in a different place, Mr. Speaker. The "probable" was in terms of the time.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Can he indicate if he or people in his department have had contact with the experimental station in Ralston as to the breakdown of hazardous chemicals, as was done in that area about two years ago? Have there been any consultations between the minister's department and that federal ministry as to the disposal?

MR. COOKSON: There may have been. I certainly haven't been involved in any dialogue, Mr. Speaker.

While I'm on my feet, if I may just respond to the problem of hazardous chemicals. I'd like to say that I have a personal concern about waste products and what we would term chemicals that might be hazardous to health which are accumulating around the province. Because of that concern, I think we have to address ourselves pretty seriously to how we're going to cope with the problem. Through the management committee that will be bringing in recommendations, and through the hearings, I hope that this information will be broadly reviewed, and that we will be positive in terms of the concerns that I personally and, I know, many Albertans have about the dangers of these chemicals.

ACCESS Operations

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Education. Could the minister indicate whether the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, commonly known as ACCESS, has recently reversed its previous direction of locating major parts of its operation throughout Alberta communities and is now planning to centralize in the city of Edmonton?

MR. KING: No, Mr. Speaker, there has been no policy change by ACCESS touching on that question, at least in the last six months. The member may be alluding to a decision that was made 18 months ago, I believe, to close one operation in Calgary. The final consequences of that decision are being experienced right now in the Calgary situation. On the other hand, ACCESS has recently made the decision to begin certain activities in Calgary which were not previously conducted in that city.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. My understanding is that the total staff complement in the Calgary area has been reduced from somewhat over 60 to in the neighborhood of 40, and my information is that there aren't plans for a significant increase. Could the minister indicate if that's an incorrect understanding of the situation?

MR. SPEAKER: It would appear that the hon. member is seeking statistics, and the question period is really not a good vehicle for that.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, in that case perhaps I could reword my supplementary question. Could the hon. minister assure this House that ACCESS does not plan to centralize its operations primarily in Edmonton and will keep within those communities at least the degree of programs it currently has in outlying areas?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I find myself unable to give that commitment right at the moment and would like to take the question as notice.

Perhaps I could give some brief background. ACCESS is governed by a board of directors which operates at arm's length from the government of Alberta. The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower and I together are the Educational Communications Authority under whose aegis ACCESS operates. On behalf of the authority, my colleague the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower recently spoke to the board of directors of ACCESS and initiated with them a somewhat new relationship, perhaps akin to the operation of the board of governors of a university or college. We're hopeful that they will accept more responsibility in the development of policy for the corporation.

Therefore, while I do not believe that the member's understanding of their position is correct in light of the direction we gave to the board just a couple of weeks ago, I would like the opportunity to check that and to report to the House and to the member.

MR. SPEAKER: We've passed the time limit for the question period, but if the House agrees the Minister of Social Services and Community Health would like to supplement an answer.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Income Assistance for the Handicapped (continued)

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question was asked earlier by the hon. Member for Little Bow as to whether the income of a single person or a couple would be the gross or the net income, and I indicated that I thought it was the net income. That is accurate; we're looking at the take-home pay of either the individual or the couple.

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize to the hon. members who were not reached. It would appear that the scope of supplementaries will perhaps have to be curtailed a little further so that all members who wish to ask questions can be reached.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

203. Moved by Mr. Little:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to give consideration to augmenting and extending existing programs for the preventive counselling of young people in the community and the rehabilitation and correction of juvenile offenders in order to reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency in the province.

[Adjourned debate June 5: Dr. Carter]

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, I rise to speak with regard to [Motion] No. 203, and to refresh our memories I would like to

underline certain sections of that motion:

... that ... the government give consideration to augmenting and extending existing programs for the preventive counselling of young people in the community and the rehabilitation and correction of juvenile offenders in order to reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency in the province.

It's been a while since June 5, when we adjourned debate on this particular motion. At that time I had spoken briefly about at least three factors which were, to my way of speaking, influencing the matter of juvenile delinquency within this province. One of those factors was the sheer growth in population, the matter of anonymity which one is able to find by moving from a rural environment to the inner workings of a large metropolitan area. In the rural area you are all too evident in the public eye in the kind of behavior you carry on with, whereas in the inner cities you find that you are just another anonymous face in the crowd. This, of course, has been a factor with regard to our young people and those of us who are middle-aged or even older.

There has been a shift in terms of peer group pressures, and that takes us to the second area. I commented that as soon as your youngster goes off to school for the first time, you have lost a considerable degree of control over the development of that individual. Often-times the child is favorably influenced by members of the teaching profession. But it also occurs, in back alleys and pool halls on the way to and from school, that another kind of influence takes place with regard to the peer group of the young person. We also see that kind of pressure working with those of us who are middle-aged or older, because our value systems shift with regard to those with whom we associate.

The whole matter of the impact of the media: whether it be radio, press, or television, there's a subtle and often not so subtle influence upon the value systems which are to be found.

With regard to preventive counselling, as I've come to this Legislature I've found that one of the very interesting processes which takes place is the visiting by students [from] throughout the province as they come here to be influenced by this august Assembly. I know in speaking with members of the delegation from Saskatchewan who are here in the Speaker's Gallery today, that my first exposure, if you will, to the parliamentary association and to the parliamentary process was in the Legislature buildings in Regina, where I went to visit as part of a young school class.

In terms of preventative counselling, I would suggest that from time to time young people also be taken to visit the courtrooms of this province. I would suggest that a fair number, if not all of us in this province, no matter what our age, should go to those courtrooms to witness the judicial process, to witness the frustrations, the heartbreak that goes on. To reflect briefly on a previous occupation I had, working for an undertaker, I could also suggest — although I really suppose it is inappropriate — that a fair number of us ought to be present at autopsies, especially after a young person, or a person of any age, has been wiped out, has been mutilated, by a traffic accident as a result of alcohol or drug abuse.

As I have been privileged to act with regard to the Alberta Health Facilities Review Committee, and have gone into a number of hospitals and senior citizens'

homes in this province, I have once again been reminded of the toll in human life, the whole upset, if you will, in terms of the creative ability of individuals, as evidenced by traffic accidents. I was in Taber last weekend, two weeks before that in Bow Island, and both of those hospitals have young persons who have been victims of traffic accidents. If we were to visit hospitals — and I realize that would be an intrusion on privacy — we would see the impact of some forms of delinquency. It is a delinquency that is not caused simply by juveniles. Many of us in this province are guilty of not taking proper care of our neighbor, in the sense that we do keep foisting that extra drink on guests in our home before they take to the highways.

Nevertheless, with regard to preventative counselling, there are other areas where we should complement the great role of the volunteer in the province. All those organizations out there: Scouts, Girl Guides, Uncles at Large, boys' clubs, community associations in the ridings of every one of us. Tremendous work is done in sports and handicapped programs, and by coaches working with our young people in this province. Again, we as members of this Assembly should indeed give thanks to those persons for the great role they carry out within the fabric of this growing Alberta.

Oftentimes in this Assembly, I have noted somewhat disparaging remarks with regard to single parents. I believe we should really be cognizant of the fact that there are a tremendous number of single-parent families in this province, and that the vast majority of them perform an outstanding function in raising their children. We must not leap to the conclusion, because we have single-parent families, that those children are therefore necessarily going to be more prone to juvenile delinquency than the children of some of us in this Assembly.

Foster parents in this province — again, through my own experience and, I'm sure, in the experience of members in this Assembly — tremendous work is done by people who take on more children than they themselves have produced. Oftentimes they have taken on children who are regarded, if one can use the term, as rejects in society. Again, we should give the foster parents in this province full marks for the loving work they accomplish, especially with regard to these interesting children.

In the matter of juvenile delinquency, I'm not so certain from the wording of the motion what "young people" are defined as. Perhaps some members of the opposition in the House might come under the heading of young people, because I've been a bit concerned that some of the questions or responses that come up in question period might well come within the heading of juvenile delinquency. The whole matter of this motion, though, is a positive thrust, and I hope we will indeed vote in favor of this motion.

One final comment I would make is with regard to native persons in this province. Specifically, the matter of native education is one where perhaps the native people will allow us to work in fuller partnership with them, especially in the urban centres of the province. The whole matter of education is a basic need for all of us, but especially for our native people. I would hope that, within the various departments of this government, we would be able to give continued and greatly increased support to such interesting educational ventures as the Plains Indian Cultural Survival School in

Calgary.

This is a very interesting experiment. The group was organized last year, and the main thrust of their work was to reintroduce native students, varying in age from the early teens to the early twenties, to the school system, but to have them together in their own environment, taught by their own teachers, their own elders, with additional cultural enrichment, learning their own handicrafts and traditions. It is my understanding that the Plains Indian Cultural Survival School had such success last year that the enrolment has doubled.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the whole matter of the educational process is a vital area with regard to juvenile delinquency. Somehow we need to develop within our system more educational encouragement for those persons within the system who tend to drop out of high school, or even before high school. These persons somehow feel that the system is not challenging enough or insufficiently stimulating.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would urge that we vote in favor of this motion.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member for Calgary Millican has just drawn to our attention, it's been quite a time since June 5, and I think it would be reasonable to review and recap some portions of Motion No. 203. I would first of all like to thank all the members who took part in the debate at that time. It was well debated, and all points of view were extremely well presented. I think it would be reasonable first of all to define . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I was overlooking the fact that he had moved the motion and consequently his speaking now would close the debate. Is there any other member who wishes to speak before the debate is closed?

MR. LITTLE: I think it would be reasonable, first of all, to define some of the terms, particularly "juvenile" itself. For the purposes of this debate, a juvenile is understood to be a child as defined by the Juvenile Delinquents Act. In this Act, a "child" may be any boy or girl apparently or under the age of 16 years, or such other age as may be defined by law in any province. In other words, Mr. Speaker, different provinces have different definitions. For example, in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and the North West Territories, the statutory age limit for a juvenile is under 16 years; in Newfoundland and British Columbia, under 17; Quebec and Manitoba, 18; and Alberta, the only province with two ages, 16 for boys and 18 for girls.

First, I think it would be reasonable to consider whether the problem does exist. We have many, many sources indicating there is a problem. In a recent Stats Canada bulletin, "it is widely believed in Canada that the incidence of juveniles in conflict with the law is a matter which merits special attention". Of course, we have the criminal records of the country, which frequently are notoriously inaccurate through no fault of the record keepers but for many other reasons over which they have no control.

Another section of Stats Canada was quoted in the debate in the spring by the Minister of Culture:

Crime and Traffic Enforcement Statistics of 1976, tells about the involvement of juveniles in crimes

in terms of persons actually charged with certain offences. In 1976, 48.7 per cent of all such crimes in Canada were against property, and 22.9 per cent of those crimes were committed by juveniles.

So we have established that the problem does exist. Next, is it likely to stabilize or increase? The hon. Member for Calgary Millican defended the single-parent family, and rightly so. An extensive study conducted in the middle '70s — a very depressing and disturbing document outlining the tremendous increase in single-parent families in Canada — reports that no place is there any evidence that the single-parent family has a higher rate of juvenile delinquency. In fact, the profile by this department indicates that the most persistent juvenile offender has drug and/or alcohol problems, and comes from a broken home, but not necessarily a single-parent family. I believe that in Alberta we have both conditions: a very large incidence of single-parent families and of broken homes. We can also claim credit for a very high rate of alcohol, drugs, and family breakdown, which all seem to be contributing factors.

Next, we took a look at programs for the rehabilitation and counselling of juveniles, and the success rate. At that time I reported that Dr. Martinson of New York University had conducted a study dating from 1947 to 1965. He reported that in the case of adult rehabilitation programs, there was approximately the same recidivism rate for those who had enrolled in programs as those who had not.

I was quite depressed by this report, and sought information on juvenile programs. The only report we had in Canada was of a program conducted in Hamilton, Ontario, 1973-75. It reported an even more discouraging statistic: those who enrolled in programs had a higher recidivism rate than those who had not.

I recently came into possession of some very extensive research done in the United States by a Dr. Lundemann — I believe he is of Ohio State University — and Dr. Scarpitti of the University of Delaware. These two learned gentlemen researched over 1,000 programs for the rehabilitation of juveniles and found only 25 suitable. Indeed, they further report that from 1965 to 1974 in the United States, 6,500 programs were launched. Most were not useful. In fact, they blame the persons conducting them in most cases as being subjective or having a vested interest.

In the Kirby report, commissioned by this government, we have the statement:

At this time, it is by no means clear to what extent juvenile misbehavior can be prevented or controlled. Nevertheless, its consequences are so serious that the people of Alberta should willingly spend millions of dollars in the research necessary to seek better methods of prevention and control. Although the juvenile justice system can and does contribute to the prevention and control of juvenile delinquency, society must look to other agencies to play a fundamental role in coping with a problem of this magnitude.

As we all know, Mr. Kirby is a highly respected and knowledgeable jurist in this province. I think they keyed in on the principal problem, that we need more research to seek better methods of prevention and control.

As I said a moment ago, I was very discouraged by the results of many of these studies of rehabilitation programs. But just because there has been lack of

success in the past does not mean we can abandon the programs. We must continue. Early identification of these behavior patterns is essential to solution of the problem. If necessary, we should use every facility at our disposal: day care centres, early childhood programs. Indeed the whole education program of this province, if necessary, could be recruited to this end.

Although many studies have been conducted with rather discouraging results, a small percentage have been very excitingly successful. The most exciting one I've found in the province of Alberta is the Enviro program. Prevention is the key. We must pursue prevention in this particular program. It will pay off handsomely, not only in dollars but in saving human lives and contributing to human welfare.

[Motion carried]

211. Moved by Mr. Topolnisky:

Be it resolved that the government of Alberta give consideration to removing the requirement that municipally owned natural gas systems obtain Public Utilities Board approval for rate changes.

MR. TOPOLNISKY: Mr. Speaker, with The Rural Gas Act came many challenges to rural communities, some of which have been resolved and some of which are hopefully to be resolved in time. Utilities problems are always in the forefront. At the spring sittings we had several debates: one on water supply to rural communities, another on AGT extended flat rate calling. And I know that the REAs are now facing some challenges as well. Today our debate is on natural gas.

I want to review very briefly for hon. members two main systems that supply gas to rural areas: counties, towns, and villages. This government recommended that every effort be made to supply natural gas to as many as possible of the one-fifth of Albertans who did not enjoy the benefits of convenient fuel. This not only improved the quality of life in rural Alberta but facilitated diversification of the rural economy. Shortly after the introduction of the provincial rural gas program in 1973, many jurisdictions considered the plan with a view to introducing gas service to their general rural area.

In 1974 the Alberta rural gas program provided an alternative to the co-operative system of gas organization and ownership. This alternative was for the county, as a municipal body, to obtain franchise approval in its area of jurisdiction. Forthwith, some of the counties arranged to meet the various requirements to finance, own, and operate the local gas system in the name of the county. This is a very practical plan. Most of the initial ventures have been set up as co-operative associations with little or no regard for municipal boundaries.

The municipally owned system is one which pays for itself, just like water and sewer in towns and villages; that is, it is self-liquidating. The co-ops are managed and operated by an executive and directors, and are given a franchise area extending beyond their municipal boundaries and therefore reaching into other counties and municipal districts, often three or four counties combined. The municipally owned gas system has the advantage of a specific area. Its own county being already organized, they have an elected council, their boundaries are defined. County office space is used, county staff does the bookkeeping, and only one offic-

ial, the utilities officer, is hired.

There are approximately 78 gas co-ops in Alberta, operated by a board of directors, and some 22 municipally owned gas systems, operated usually by experienced councils elected for three years. For the purpose of the record, Mr. Speaker, the list of 22 consists of four counties: Athabasca, Smoky Lake, Thorhild, and Two Hills; 14 towns: Castor, Coleman, Coronation, Daysland, Devon, High Prairie, Manning, Redwater, Slave Lake, Sundre, Valleyview, Wainwright, Smoky Lake, and Lac La Biche; and four villages: Andrew, Chauvin, Thorhild, and Boyle.

The gas co-operative associations set their own price on natural gas. They can change the rate as required without going to the Public Utilities Board. On the other hand, the 22 municipally owned gas systems are under the PUB's jurisdiction. Should they require a change in gas rates, they are required to go through a hearing. The 78 co-operatives serve 32,000 members, and the 22 municipally owned gas systems serve 14,000 members. Seven of these 22 municipally owned systems are in the Redwater-Andrew constituency. Basically they give the same service. This is where the inequity lies, Mr. Speaker: to appear before the PUB with an adequate presentation of facts, when the county requires a change in rates for natural gas, calls for a great amount of preparation. A county requires the assistance of a consultant, a lawyer, and their own staff. This is a very expensive process. In addition, 70 copies of a voluminous document have to be printed, at the request of the PUB.

A county that owns and operates its own gas system in the Redwater-Andrew constituency was required to go through PUB hearings for determination of base rate, fixing reasonable rates, and approval of interim rates in the matter of rates for gas supplied and service rendered to be charged by the county that owns and operates the gas utility. One hearing cost the county approximately \$10,000, which reflects an increase of 18 to 20 cents per MCF on natural gas, related to the volume of gas sold to be paid by all customers, thus an unnecessary increase in the price of gas. Another hearing cost approximately \$15,000, which reflects about 25 cents in the cost of gas. Again it is unfair to have the municipal gas systems go through the PUB when they perform the same service as the gas co-ops, which are exempt.

These counties, towns, and villages, which operate their own gas systems, are usually run by experienced councils — I want to stress that — who already have the responsibility of running the business of the county or town. To use some of the arguments of the counties: every action, every change in the rates or structures, must be approved first by the board. They estimate that to process any change through the Public Utilities Board averages at least six months and consumes \$20,000 to \$30,000 in man-hour costs. The statistics, elaborate studies, background details, consultants' fees, lawyers' fees and, last but not least, accounting costs required to process and application for change through the board are staggering and so time consuming that the proposed changes are not worth the effort or cost involved.

The real end cost is to the ratepayer or the consumer, who is paying extremely high field costs due in large part to an administrative control mechanism which began with good intentions but has turned into an oppressive exercise. The estimated cost involved in

answering several questions put to the county by the Public Utilities Board was \$8,750. An ordinary rate review and study costs in the vicinity of \$10,000 to \$15,000. Add to this the probability of several subsequent hearings in regard to various complaints, and the total cost could reach a staggering \$30,000 to \$40,000 per annum.

The county had one rate hearing in May 1978, upon which the board made no decision until March 30, 1979. No decision has yet been reached on a second complaint hearing on May 30, 1979. If we assume that Public Utilities Board costs to the county are in the neighborhood of \$40,000 per year, then based on the county's present volume of gas consumed, the average cost per MCF is 23 cents. This represents 11 per cent of the gross revenue.

One anomaly which is hard to rationalize is the basic assumption that a municipally owned gas system is considered to be a private enterprise. We feel that the municipal system is as much, if not more, attuned to the public service as the gas co-op system. In addition, it is extremely difficult from a management point of view to properly operate and maintain a gas system which is subject to such expensive strict regulation and control. This inequity should be removed, Mr. Speaker.

The 78 co-ops serving 32,000 members do a good job serving rural Alberta with gas. The 22 municipally owned gas systems serving 14,000 members are performing the same duties and providing gas to their customers, and are capable of setting their rates without going through the elaborate, expensive process of the PUB. The municipally owned systems are small. They do not have the resources. They have to have a supply of natural gas. The co-op systems file their rates with the PUB. The municipally owned gas systems could also file their rates with the PUB, for their information.

Mr. Speaker, I consider these two gas systems to be in the same category and therefore treated in the same way. I urge hon. members to support this motion.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Member for Redwater-Andrew for bringing this matter to our attention this afternoon and to commend him on the research he did in bringing forth the details and the well-explained differences between our gas co-ops and our municipally operated gas distribution systems.

There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that as time has gone on there have been anomalies in how our regulatory bodies have affected different groups of people. We have to recognize that the Public Utilities Board was set up for a very good purpose. Recognizing that most of our utilities cannot operate on a competitive basis in service, for the simple inequity of trying to serve an area with duplicating systems, the Public Utilities Board became a necessary vehicle to judge the reasonable increases that had to be made by different utility companies from time to time. I think it's served the people of Alberta well in carrying out this process.

They have had to make very detailed accountings of their additional costs in order to justify an increase. But I think there's been a spillover, in carrying it to the extent of expecting the small gas distribution systems of the counties and some of the towns and villages of our province to have to go through the same process to justify rate increases. I think the member has spelled out well how we have both types of systems working in

almost overlapping areas. In my area, the rural gas co-ops only record their increases with the Public Utilities Board, while the towns and villages in my area have to go through the very expensive process of hearings for rate increases.

I'm sure the intent of the Public Utilities Board, to protect the public from unnecessary rate increases, in most cases has served the people well. But there's no doubt in my mind that where we have small, municipally operated gas distribution systems, the function is an unnecessary expense. Because of the small consumption of those municipally operated utilities, the relative cost for a PUB hearing creates an extremely high additional cost to the consumer. I think we should recognize this is an inequity when we consider the rural gas co-ops and the municipally operated systems working side by side, and give consideration that they should be treated on an equal basis.

In some areas it is very difficult for the small utility companies to prepare for these hearings. They do not have the expertise in their offices and consequently are forced to hire professional people to do the work for them. I think the member has brought before us this afternoon a very pertinent inequity in our system. I hope it gets consideration by other members and that we recognize there could be a change for the better in the use of our Public Utilities Board.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker I suppose this motion the Member for Redwater-Andrew has brought forward boils down to: does a municipally owned utility offer service at cost to the taxpayers, or is that utility used as an avenue to cross-subsidize other expenditures within that municipality? In other words, are some councils using their gas utilities or telephones systems to subsidize some projects they have undertaken?

With all due respect, I have to question the cost of appearing before the Public Utilities Board. Three or four years ago, we had the experience in our constituency where Superior asked for a rate application. I requested the Public Utilities Board to hold the hearings in Camrose. No one was going to be forced to drive to Edmonton or Calgary. At that time, 10 farmers and the villages of Rosalind, Strome, and Heisler, had part ownership in the line. The three villages prepared their own brief. The 10 farmers involved hired a local solicitor. That cost them \$300. They appeared before the board for that one-day hearing, and they got a reduction in rate.

The rather surprising costs involved normally go to accountants and lawyers. There is nothing wrong with a local group going before the Public Utilities Board. It's a good exercise for them to do some of their own homework and find out the exact costs. I don't think you have to run up that tremendous amount of expense.

Mr. Speaker, the part of this motion that worries me is that nine times out of ten the intentions of councils are very good, but what do you do in the case of an unwise council that has spent money foolishly in the past, a council that is in debt, or a council that has some grand dream of some palace they're building? What protection does the ratepayer have? We're seeing ratepayer's revolts all over. Look at that plebiscite in Calgary; I think they have a couple up here. I suggest the ratepayer should have the right to know what his natural gas actually costs, what he is paying for it,

and that it is not subsidizing some other project.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, in looking up the meaning of the word "utility" in the Oxford dictionary this afternoon, I noticed that it defines public utilities — gas, water, electricity, et cetera — provided for some or all the members of the community and regarded as so essential to the life of the community that they are subject to various forms of public control. Now if we take that basic definition of a utility as necessary to the community, whether it be water, sewer, electricity, gas, communications, there are basic principles of fairness that must be followed: fairness of rates that would provide for a reasonable profit that would accrue to whichever body is providing the service; profits that will cover the cost of operating the utility, distribution, replacement, administration charges, et cetera.

The Public Utilities Board has responded to this need within our province. It was appointed and given the responsibility to act as an agency that would ensure there is fairness in the market place for the provision of public utilities. If this becomes a penalty in the case of small communities, where the costs of making application to cover reasonable rate increases are prohibitive, then I think the purpose of the Public Utilities Board has gone beyond what we intended it to be.

The motion before us today is a concern for the provision of utilities within small communities. In a small community, where the cost may exceed the rate increases, obviously this is a ludicrous situation. On the other hand, if there are abuses in provision of utilities or provision of utility rates and there is no other counterbalance or controlling agency, we also have a concern.

In small communities perhaps the democratic process is the counterbalance. If the utility users are unhappy about the rates being charged or the type of service, maybe there is more access to the democratic decision-making process, which would be the local councils. And maybe they have more opportunity to effect change or replace the people who are making the decisions.

As the population grows, I think it becomes increasingly more difficult for the ratepayers or utility users to have that kind of input to the decision-making or the rates. So perhaps we should be looking at some kind of limit on population. Perhaps a municipality that has achieved city status would no longer be exempt from this type of limitation on the Public Utilities Board's authority. I'm not exactly sure what that limitation should be. Maybe it would be better to have a population limit. I think that should be considered.

One other consideration we should keep in mind is the municipality that is selling a utility beyond its boundaries. If there's no access by the utility users to their own elected officials, there has to be some authority for surrounding municipalities or residents within those municipalities to ensure that there is fairness. I think the decision of the Local Authorities Board with the Edmonton water surcharge, where it was deemed that the city of Edmonton was making profits in excess of what a normal utility would charge, was one of the most significant decisions in recent years, extremely significant for those purchasers who were locked into a system of purchasing a basic utility that should have been provided on a fair and open basis.

So in conclusion I would support this motion, as I

feel it is a penalty. But I would support it with concern that it be applied only to smaller municipalities and not to the larger ones, which makes it much more difficult to ensure that fairness for all residents is not affected.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, in participating in this motion, I would like to commend the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew for bringing this before the House. I'm quite sure that here is a real concern to the many municipalities mentioned. I know that the community in which he has resided is concerned with that. One of the county councils expressed their concern.

Mr. Speaker, less than 15 years ago there was such a shift of rural people to the urban areas. No doubt, many times it has been said it was because of the very small income these rural people were getting. To some extent this may be true, but far from true. When we look at the incomes of farm people today and compare them to what they were 15 and 20 years ago, there are only certain areas that there has been a significant increase. However, grains have not provided that yet — the cost of production.

I think the biggest problem in the urban shift was the quality of life in rural Alberta. In the urban centres, particularly the large ones, recreation was a very important part. The people were not getting the schools and many other services in rural Alberta, and I think this was one of the biggest reasons for the shift to the urban centres. A commitment of our government was to revitalize, and reverse this trend. That is why programs such as rural gas have come in.

I must commend the previous administration who brought the rural electrification associations into being in the late '40s. The intent of that administration was to bring clean light to rural people. It was not intended for what electricity is being used for today. From the start, probably two or three bulbs in the house was enough. The people stored their cream and meat and other things in ice wells or water wells. However, a change has come about. Today they require 25 KVAs to provide for their needs because of the many extra commodities that rural people are able to have.

Rural gas was another area. I'm glad that, in his wisdom, the former Minister of Utilities and Telephones saw a need to improve the quality of life by providing natural gas to rural Alberta. True enough, just a few years ago I myself did not have natural gas. It wasn't available. I was able to use propane. Five years prior to that, I didn't have propane; the coal and wood was satisfactory. But I find that today natural gas is a real luxury and a necessity for rural Alberta.

When I look at the costs and compare natural gas with propane, or even wood and coal, it is only about half the cost of the previous fossil fuels. There is an initial cost — regardless of whether it's \$2,000 or \$3,000 — that the rural people have to put in, but I'm sure that within 10 years this can be recovered by the great saving.

As the hon. member mentioned, rural gas co-ops are exempt from applying to the Public Utilities Board for rate increases, and the municipally owned utilities are very much the same, or identical to the rural gas co-ops. Take any village — the village of Andrew, where the hon. member resides, which has a population between 500 and 600 people. When they make application to the Public Utilities Board for an increase,

naturally there is a big cost. It has been brought to my attention that these costs range from \$8,000 to \$12,000. In a village of 500 or 600 people, that would mean 3 to 5 mills of taxation, if that's the way it's going to go. True enough, when they make their application and approval is given, they can absorb the costs by increasing the rate. Who has to pay for it? It is the individuals who are using the natural gas.

I believe that the municipal utility is very comparable to the natural gas co-op. I can't see any reason why there should be a separation. If this is going to continue, I know that in a few years it's going to become so costly that many are going to wonder whether they can continue with that, particularly over the last couple of years with increases in the cost of energy coming about two or three times a year. If the utility companies are going to be forced into making applications two or three times a year, and forced to pay from \$8,000 to \$12,000 each time, you can see where these communities are going to end.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to repeat what the previous members said, but I can see the real need for this resolution. Hopefully it will be passed, and I'm going to ask the hon. members to support it.

Thank you.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I hadn't intended to get involved this afternoon in the excellent resolution introduced by the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew. However, the points that have been raised by a number of members have prompted me to rise to my feet. First of all, I would like to commend the Member for Redwater-Andrew for his fine presentation and excellent research on the question.

I think members should be aware that the regulation of municipally owned gas utilities has not always been in place. The municipally owned utilities were given an opportunity either to opt for regulation under the Public Utilities Board, or remain outside the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Board. But that option was tied to whether or not the municipalities wanted to receive the benefit of the natural gas price protection plan. Naturally the municipally owned utility companies chose to obtain the benefits of the natural gas price protection plan. Thus it was necessary for them to move under the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Board.

In discussions with various municipalities — and they had been advised that they do have an opportunity to go before the Public Utilities Board informally, rather than in the structured manner that is required of the large investor-owned utilities companies. So there is a certain amount of flexibility in the method that the municipally owned gas utilities may pursue in proceeding with rate adjustments.

However, preparing for these meetings, either informal or formal, requires a considerable amount of work for the municipalities. It may be argued — and I believe the hon. Member for Camrose argued — that it's probably good business to urge the municipalities to have a sound accounting and bookkeeping system, in order to be well aware of their costs and be assured that citizens are assured of fair and equitable rates. However, I believe that is countered very well by the arguments presented by the Member for St. Albert, differentiating between a utility serving an area where voters have a say in the board of directors of that utility, which in fact the councils are, as opposed to customers

who have no say in the election of the board of directors or the council. So there is that difference.

There is the ultimate responsibility to the councils in the case of communities which mismanage a utility. The differentiation has been drawn by one of the members that perhaps a line should be drawn in terms of population size: whether smaller communities should be excluded because of the effect of regulation and the difficulty they have in meeting the regulations and providing the information to the Public Utilities Board, whereas larger municipally owned utilities should not be excluded.

It's really a very difficult question. Looking at a number of our other utilities, the city of Edmonton power system, for example, is partially regulated by the Public Utilities Board, yet the city of Edmonton benefits. The consumers of power in the city benefit from the natural gas price protection plan, yet they are not fully regulated as are the small municipally owned gas utilities.

I've listened with interest to the presentation of members in the Legislature. I would like members of the Assembly to have an opportunity to consider the debate and make further comments when this matter comes up for discussion later in the sitting.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: In view of the hour, may I move that we proceed to consideration of Private Members' Public Bills?

MR. SPEAKER: If it's a departure from the order, that would require unanimous consent of the House, since it's private members' day and the government therefore may not call the order of business.

Does the Assembly agree with the suggestion of the hon. Government House Leader?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

**Bill 204
An Act to Amend
The Willmore Wilderness Park Act**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 204. In briefly introducing the Bill for second reading, I'd like to discuss the purpose of the Bill, to briefly trace the history of Willmore Wilderness Park, to make a few comments on the problems in the town of Grande Cache — which has been one of the central focuses of much of the discussion on this matter — and finally to ask whether the Eastern Slopes policy is sufficiently adequate at the moment, thereby leading us to the conclusion that a change in the Act is not necessary.

Mr. Speaker, turning first of all to the purpose of Bill 204, the principle is very straightforward. It would

simply clarify the situation as far as the park is concerned and compel any change in the boundaries of the park to be made as a consequence of debate in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue that we should follow that course for a number of reasons. But before doing that, I think it might be worth taking a moment or two to review the history of Willmore Wilderness Park. It was established in 1959. Despite the fact that it contains approximately 1,500 square miles, which seems quite large, it's approximately 0.6 per cent of the geographical region of the province. It is an important habitat for the Rocky Mountain goat, the grizzly bear, and the woodland caribou. The park was reduced in size on two former occasions, 1963 and 1965.

The question of whether we should change the Act to compel a debate in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, is the basic principle at stake in Bill 204. I would argue that if we look at other places . . . I note, for example, that in the province of British Columbia changes in boundaries of their wilderness parks which are parallel to our Willmore Wilderness Park can be made only after debate in the British Columbia Legislature. There are a number of positive arguments for this sort of move, regardless of where people stand on whether there should be "more development" or whether boundaries should remain exactly as they are. The major reason for requiring legislative debate is that it forces those who would propose changing the boundaries to meet the test of public discussion. In my view, one important asset of a democratic system, Mr. Speaker, is that public business is done in the open, in the Legislature. If we're dealing with something as important as a change in a wilderness park such as Willmore, it's my submission that that change should be made by all members of the Legislature as a result of open discussion in this Assembly.

I should point out, as hon. members are probably already aware, that we've had petitions in support of this principle by the Alberta Wilderness Association as well as the Alberta Fish & Game Association. Last May some 35,000 signatures on petitions on this particular matter were presented to the government.

Mr. Speaker, if I can move from discussion of the principle, but relate it to a practical problem that, in my judgment, has to be assessed as we review the principle. That is the impact on the town of Grande Cache.

Some of the people who argue that we need to re-examine the boundaries of Willmore Wilderness Park frequently use the argument that the economy of Grande Cache is dangerously dependent on the coal industry, that we need to diversify the economy, and that tourism is obviously one important place to start. As a matter of fact that argument was first advanced in the fall of 1973, when the Crump commission report was tabled in this Legislature. Members may recall that in the spring of 1973, Superior Oil closed down the No. 9 mine in Grande Cache, and at that time the government appointed Mr. Crump to undertake an investigation of the reasons for that closure. Among his recommendations was the emphasis on tourism in Grande Cache as one method of ensuring long-term prosperity for the community.

Mr. Speaker, shortly after the Crump commission report, the Alberta government conducted a study which, to my knowledge, was not officially released, but I'll release it today. It's dated April 1974, by a firm

named Hospitality Systems Research Ltd. A number of recommendations were made, but I'd like to quote one that I think is relevant to our debate today:

Willmore Wilderness Provincial Park should attain full provincial park status, precluding development of recreation or natural resources, with the exception of a well-planned and well-maintained system of walking trails and primitive camping sites. No motorized vehicles should be allowed within the boundaries of the Park. Present natural resource leases and dispositions should be reclaimed by the provincial government.

So in fact the consultant's report in 1974 began to modify one of the recommendations of the Crump report.

Yesterday in the Legislature reference was made to the most recent consultants' report on the issue, *Tourism Alternatives for Grande Cache*, prepared by MTB Consultants Ltd., May 1979. It's probably fair to say that this report suggests there is room to expand tourism in Grande Cache; but I think it does make a number of important points. It suggests that tourism can never really be the basis for the community's prosperity; that there really isn't any substitute for diversification. Personally I think that is a reasonable argument.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the long-term economic future of the town of Grande Cache is going to be determined much more by the decision that this government makes on the Fox Creek and Berland blocks, and the kind of development that flows from that decision, than by any potential tourist development.

I'm not arguing that there isn't some room for tourism in Grande Cache, but there are limitations. For example, we've heard that Grande Cache would be an obvious centre for skiers around the world. The consultants suggest that the conditions at Mt. Russell lack a base adequate to attract the international market. It doesn't necessarily mean that there couldn't be local use or provincial use, but in terms of being any kind of international skiing centre, the consultants say, not too probable.

When we assess whether or not tourism is a route to go, one of the things we have to really ask ourselves is: how far are we prepared to commit public money to develop tourism in the town of Grande Cache? Without spending a lot of additional time on this consulting report, Mr. Speaker, some of the figures are worth underlining. A number of scenarios are outlined as to the estimated cost of developing tourism in Grande Cache over a period of time.

The first, a very modest development, would be about \$10.5 million. And if we as a province are looking at \$10.5 million, I don't really have any great difficulty with that. But when we go to some of the other suggestions — for example, paving the present forestry road to Grande Prairie, or rerouting that road through the town of Grande Cache, as has been suggested by the Grande Cache Chamber of Commerce — we suddenly find we are talking about substantial increases in investment. As a matter of fact, the maximum use of the tourist industry in Grande Cache — and this is the one that worries me most, because I think that's going to have the greatest impact on Willmore as a wilderness park — would lead, according to this consulting report, to a total investment of \$362 million.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can look at \$10 million as a reasonable investment. But I'm not so sure the people of Alberta would be willing to accept the proposition of a \$362 million investment, \$125 million on road costs alone. However much some people are pushing the idea of paving the road down to Grande Cache — even the present forestry road, which would be a less expensive proposition than a road directly routed through Grande Cache — as a northern MLA, I can only say that the attitude of people in my constituency is very much: that's a fine idea, but we have other roads that have to be completed first.

We have the Minister of Transportation telling the heritage trust fund committee that it's going to take something in the neighborhood of \$1.8 billion to refurbish the existing road system of the province. So before we get too enthusiastic about turning Grande Cache into a second Banff or Jasper, and putting public investment into that kind of infrastructure, I really think we have to evaluate the costs. I think we have to ask ourselves: is that the route people in the area want to go? Some people want to go that way; no doubt about that. But in my discussions with people in Grande Cache, I find their attitude very mixed. I've talked to several people in the Chamber of Commerce who argue very strongly in favor of substantial investment in tourist development, and who are not overly enthused about keeping the present boundaries of Willmore Wilderness Park. On the other hand, I've talked to people who argue the reverse very strongly.

At the moment the only reading I have on the situation in Grande Cache moment is that, at best, we have mixed public opinion, with probably a large number of people coming to the conclusion that the long-term economic future of a place like Grande Cache is going to be more related to the continued coal industry as well as the forestry industry, as opposed to making it a major tourist site.

But, Mr. Speaker, that really isn't basic to whether the Legislature should approve this Bill or not, because the Bill really says that before any boundary changes occur, they should be debated fully in the provincial legislature.

I want to make just one more brief comment, Mr. Speaker, before inviting rejoinders and comments by other members of the House. I suppose the question can be put: is it necessary to change The Willmore Wilderness Park Act in light of the Eastern Slopes policy? Well, I would say that while the Eastern Slopes policy is certainly an important step in the right direction — when it was announced several years ago I supported it — it's important to note that it does not preclude major tourist development from a prime protection zone. For example, I note a letter sent shortly before April by the former Minister of Business Development and Tourism. I won't take the time to read the letter, but to paraphrase it, the minister makes the point that notwithstanding the Eastern Slopes policy, there could be major tourist development. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we really can't have it both ways. If we're going to maintain Willmore truly as a wilderness area, in my judgment, we can't commit ourselves to massive tourist development.

In reading this report, I know the suggestion is even made that if we proceed with the highway through Grande Cache and north, at a very substantial expense, that will take pressure off Willmore Wilderness, and the pressure would then be on development

north of the town, of Grande Cache. Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that if we get into scenario number 6 in this consultants' report, there will be pressure, not only north, but south of Grande Cache. There will be enormous pressure on the wilderness area we now know as Willmore.

In closing my comments, Mr. Speaker, the principle contained in Bill 204 is very straightforward. It is that we have established a wilderness area that is now enshrined in legislation, and that before any change in the present boundaries of the wilderness area are made, there should be full and open debate in the Legislative Assembly. I think that basic principle underlines Bill 204, and I urge the members to support it.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview has rather eloquently introduced a Bill to amend The Willmore Wilderness Park Act, specifically to delete Clause 3(2). In case anybody doesn't know what that says, it is the power of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to either increase or decrease the size of the park.

I presume his concern is with the decrease in the size of the park, and he would have no particular objections to any increase. I can sympathize with his motives; I'm not completely convinced that I have much sympathy with the technique he is going to use for it. In particular, I don't think it would answer the problems that are going to face the Willmore park over the next five or six decades, and that is the time frame we have to look at when we're considering wilderness areas.

We have to consider why he feels it is necessary, at this time, to make this amendment to the Act. There are similar powers within The Provincial Parks Act — not quite identical wording, but similar powers. They have historically been used by this government to increase the number and the size of parks in the province, and not to decrease the size of those parks. I think if you're going to consider one part of one clause of Section 3, you also have to consider the next section, which makes reference to the description of the present boundaries of the park. A very interesting thing is stated in there:

[where these] townships or ranges ... are not surveyed [they] shall be deemed to be references to the boundaries of the sections, townships or ranges.

That means the present boundaries of Willmore park are not as yet surveyed. They are straight lines drawn on a map.

Originally, part of the eastern boundary of Jasper National Park was drawn in similar state. In fact, it came almost to the small acreage which I'm lucky enough to live on. Subsequently, the national parks commission, in their wisdom, decided that was not the way to have the boundaries of national parks. They changed the boundaries — in some places coming east of the original boundary, in some places west — to a geographic border, which made much more sense; namely, the crest of the first range of mountains. In future we may well have to do the same thing with the Willmore. Those of us who are lucky enough to have been there have a pretty good idea of where we are, but as more and more strangers visit the area it will be more difficult for them to know when they are inside and outside the park.

It is rather ironic that this has come out 20 years after the park was set up by the previous administration. At

that time, it was called just Wilderness Park. Originally it was set up under the aegis of Norman Willmore, after whom it is now named. As some of you may know, Norman was a bit of a wilderness buff himself. He used to fish a lot on a creek quite near the present boundaries of the park. I think it was a suitable memorial when it was decided, after his unfortunate death in an accident, that the park should be named after him.

As the hon. member has stated, the present size of the park is in the vicinity of 1,600 square miles, which is about half the size of Banff National Park, and a third the size of Jasper National Park. It is a considerable area, and fortunately abuts the north border of Jasper National Park. As you may be aware, national parks policy is that the northern part of that park be left as "wilderness area", with no further roadways or motorized access.

Willmore park is, to a large extent, an area of alpine meadows, mountains, and hills. The streams and rivers are unspoiled, and it's one of those wonderful places in this world where you can still gain the solitude which is found only in areas like that or on unspoiled seashores, in the widths of the oceans, or presumably in Canada's northland, which I have not as yet visited. For that reason alone, it's well worth saving for posterity. There is not a tremendous number of oases from modern civilization left. Certainly I would agree with the use of the park as in the original Act:

The Park is dedicated to the use of the people of Alberta for their benefit, education and enjoyment, ... by the management, conservation and protection of its natural resources and the preservation of its natural beauty, to be maintained for the enjoyment of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, there have been several investigations of that area over the years. Buck Crump's commission report, which the hon. member mentioned, spoke of Grande Cache as the access to that park. But Buck Crump specifically said — and I would like to mention this in view of the hon. member's remarks about the Crump report — that they considered the Willmore park to be outside their area of investigation. I know he himself felt that it should be left as a wilderness area. He was not suggesting it be the salvation of Grande Cache's economy, which at that time was in its first downturn.

The Eastern Slopes study has almost the entire park in Zone 1. To do anything in Zone 1 requires a lot of investigation and approval — admittedly not necessarily in this Legislature, but it cannot be done without investigation. The 1974 tourism study came to essentially the same conclusion: the Willmore's main asset was that it was a wilderness. Of course, the recent study into tourism has gone at some length into the subject of the Willmore area as an asset in any tourism potential that Grande Cache may have. Those of you who have visited it know full well that it does have tremendous potential.

Mr. Speaker, all these studies have confirmed that the Willmore is a unique area, and an extremely valuable asset to this province now, and with the pressure on such areas in the future, presumably a much more valuable asset. Unfortunately none of these investigations, commissions, and studies have given the answer to how to protect wilderness areas. It's a problem that has been gone into at considerable length by many studies in other jurisdictions.

First of all, we get onto the subject of what wilderness is. Is wilderness Maligne Lake, or is it Tonquin Valley, or is it the St. Elias Range in the Yukon? I looked it up in the dictionary. At first I had been having some difficulty in understanding why the hon. member was so interested in a park in my constituency. Wilderness is desert, uncultivated or uninhabited land or tract. And then it quotes: in the wilderness of political parties, and in brackets, with reference to Chapter 14 of Numbers. And I will quote the first part of that: "And your children shall wander in the wilderness for forty years". To avoid any question of privilege, I'll stay away from the rest of that particular verse.

The problem of wilderness is going to be a greater one in the future. Is wilderness an area completely devoid of any visits by *Homo sapiens*? Is it an area where the visitors are limited to five visitors per square mile a year? Or 50? Or 500? Is it compatible with our being there for hunting or fishing? We've many different kinds of wilderness.

In this particular province we have two: Willmore, with its own Act; and those three other areas with the beautiful names, Siffleur, White Goat, and Ghost River. Those three areas come under another much more restrictive Act — no hunting, no fishing, and no horses as well as the restrictions that apply to Willmore. So even in this province we currently have two levels of wilderness under our own jurisdiction in this legislature. The National Parks Act covers other areas outside our jurisdiction, although not outside our interest.

What, then, are the dangers to the Willmore Park? Essentially the problem will be more and more people. When I first came to this province I went to the Tonquin Valley. That particular weekend 11 people were there. The last time I went to Tonquin I had to book in on a waiting list, and in spite of those restrictions at least 250 people must have been in that valley. It still may be classified as a wilderness area of a national park, but those pressures are going to apply to the Willmore as a wilderness. Never mind any pressures upon it from any other factor. These numbers are going to snowball; presumably the recent study will attract people to go there.

I've been lucky enough to spend many a night out there, literally hearing wolves, seeing wolves crossing lakes and rivers. In fact on one occasion I climbed to the top of a hill near Kvass Creek. When I got to the top, about 12 feet beyond it was a large Rocky Mountain bighorn ram. And he had much more decoration on top of his head than I have on mine. It was an uncomfortable moment, as I didn't have a gun and I was afraid he was going to come toward me, but he decided to back off.

The recent study has suggested that inevitably these pressures are going to result in some changes in the Willmore. There is a possibility of a ski area at Mt. Russell, but it did suggest quite seriously that that not be put in until adequate snow studies were done. From what I know of the chinook conditions that exist in the Grande Cache area, I think the chances of a ski hill are not all that great. There was also mention of the provision of upgraded trails. This serves two purposes: it allows people to stay on the trails, which saves the areas round about; and also can help to divide horse traffic from hiking traffic. Those of you who have ever hiked down a horse trail know what I mean.

Within the national parks — who've been at this

longer than we have — their control over wilderness areas and hiking trails has got to be greater and greater this last two decades. In Jasper they are now talking about having to restrict the number of people on the north boundary trail. That's a two-week hike which starts at Celestine Lake and finishes at Mt. Robson in British Columbia. If people go on those trails in such numbers as they have done, inevitably they are going to spread over the Ancient Wall range into the Willmore, and we'll be looking at the same restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have shown that the biggest risk to the Willmore Wilderness Park is not the section of the Act to which the hon. member has addressed himself. It's us, as people, as individuals, and as numbers of people. In view of the correspondence I got during the election and in view of the fact that the present study was still going on at that time and had not been finished, I think I can assure the hon. member that there would be no greater ease for the Lieutenant Governor in Council and the cabinet to change the borders of [Willmore] Wilderness Park than there would be difficulty in introducing the same changes through this House, if they were going to decrease the size of the park. He's concerned about the openness of decision-making. I think I can assure him in all sincerity that if any decision was made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the discussion would be open in the extreme, whether the decision was made in cabinet or by introducing an amendment to the Act in this particular Legislature.

DR. BUCK: Open to whom?

DR. REID: The discussions would be open to everybody.

As you can well imagine, I am a bit of a wilderness nut myself. My concerns are really the possibility that my grandchildren will be able to see Willmore as it has been and as it still is. I really feel that the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview does nothing to satisfy those concerns. It's going to take a lot more work and a lot more thought to satisfy those concerns, and for that reason I feel I cannot support his amendment.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak against Bill No. 204. As my colleague Dr. Reid mentioned, the wilderness park is dedicated to the people of Alberta for their benefit, education, and enjoyment. Along these lines, we have people who are living in the Grande Cache area, particularly the people we sat with on the forestry caucus committee hearings. These people are very, very concerned, and compassion should go out for them. For this very reason, certainly as far as development is concerned, I really believe the present unstable condition of Grande Cache's economy necessitates a diversification, of any type. Its economic base is rather shaky at this time due to the possibility of losing its coal.

Although tourism currently plays a very minor role in the town's economy, a well co-ordinated tourist plan can utilize the natural resources of the area to assist the economy of Grande Cache, while simultaneously providing provincial and national tourist markets an opportunity to experience the wild land aspects of the region.

I don't see any reason for this Act to be amended. In

this case it states that any development should be consistent with the planning strategies embodied in the Eastern Slopes management policy. Planning should also be consistent with Alberta Forest Service goals for the region, both pertaining to their timber management and recreational program. So, really and truly, I don't see any problem.

Presently the facilities of Grande Cache are significantly underused. Business operations are suffering the consequences of reduced coal extraction, as I mentioned before. There are fewer jobs and lower take-home pay. Motels and service businesses are operating at 30 per cent of capacity. Housing stock is only 80 per cent occupied. To protect the capital investment of this town and maintain the existent service businesses, immediate economic stimulus is required.

This brings up the point of planning wilderness areas; I'd like to bring up Kananaskis Park at this time. You have 500,000 people in Calgary. What do you do? Do you tell them to go east? So these areas are under a great deal of strain and will continue to be under this strain. This is why I feel, as far as the Eastern Slopes management policy and the Lieutenant Governor in Council, that these things are certainly looked at in a very forthright manner, and decisions are made very prudently.

Thank you.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, being the member of the government who received the petition from the Wilderness Association, in which there were 34,500-odd names asking us to maintain Willmore Wilderness Park in its present state; and also having received many letters from individuals who have enjoyed the wilderness areas of Willmore, I feel I should make a few remarks at this time. I can't help but be impressed by the way people who have had the opportunity of visiting Willmore have sat down and expressed what an enjoyment it was to be able to go out in the wilderness areas and enjoy nature without any motorized vehicles, radios, TV's, or what-have-you.

Being a farmer, Mr. Speaker, I would like to express the size of the Willmore park in terms of acres. For those farmers present, it's approximately 1 million acres of wilderness area. It's a unique area in that it's not a true wilderness nor is it a park, because we do allow hunting and fishing as well as backpacking, trail riding, et cetera. If we refer to Section 4 of the Act:

The Park is dedicated to the use of the people of Alberta for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and shall, by the management, conservation and protection of its natural resources and by the preservation of its natural beauty, be maintained for the enjoyment of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is most important that we in this Legislature recognize that the wilderness park isn't just for us, but for our children and our children's children. And I refer to the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview:

- 3(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may
 - (a) increase the area of the Park by the addition of lands adjacent to it, or
 - (b) decrease the area of the Park by the withdrawal of lands from it.

Mr. Speaker, I've had representation asking to increase the size of the park. Some people wish the Kakwa was part of the wilderness area. Now does the hon. Member

for Spirit River-Fairview feel we should give no consideration to that aspect?

As well, Mr. Speaker, I think we should be aware that the protection of the park is covered by the regulations of The Forests Act, and the Act leaves the management of the park to the Executive Council and enables the cabinet to act quickly. It is important that the cabinet be able to act quickly.

We had an occasion when motorized vehicles were destroying the ecology of the park. I have a copy of the O.C., which was necessary in 1976: no person shall operate an off-highway vehicle or a motor vehicle on any land described in the appendix, without the permission of the minister. If we'd had to wait for the Legislature, there's a chance that extensive damage would have been done by the motorized vehicles which were destroying some of the ecology in the park.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I think it should be recognized that Willmore Wilderness Park is an important part of the Eastern Slopes and is covered by the Eastern Slopes policy. Furthermore, we should all be aware that the majority of the Willmore Wilderness Park is in the prime protection zone. For those of you who might have a copy the policy of resource management of the Eastern Slopes, I'll quote what the prime protection zone is:

This zone consists primarily of the high-elevation forests and steep, rocky slopes of the major mountain ranges in the Eastern Slopes. It protects the rugged mountain scenery for which the region is highly valued and is the zone which receives maximum amounts of precipitation and produces much of the streamflow of the Eastern Slopes ...

Land use will be strongly oriented toward dispersed "back-country" recreation activities such as hiking, fishing, hunting and other non-mechanized forms of recreation.

Mr. Speaker, we have this protection for the Willmore wilderness area under our Eastern Slopes policy. I can quote to you some of the permitted activities under the prime protection zone. We do agree to non-mechanized recreation, fishing, and hunting. There is some restriction on the uses of trails that are not motorized to "uses that may be compatible under certain circumstances and stricter than normal controls". We don't allow off-highway vehicle activity. We do allow restrictive primitive camping. There's no serviced camping and limited intensive recreation. We do allow scientific study. We do allow trapping. There's no logging, cultivation, or domestic grazing; and no petroleum and natural gas, mineral, or coal exploration and development. There are restricted transportation and utility corridors, and there is no commercial, industrial, or residential development.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion we have the Willmore wilderness area very well covered under Eastern Slopes policy. I see no need for the amendment and request that it be rejected.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, what we have heard from government members is a prime example of why this amendment should be passed. As a member of a former government that in '63 and '65 kept chipping away at the wilderness area — hon. minister, we did that as a government. But we're trying to indicate to the Legislature and to the people of this province that the Act should be amended so that we have full and open

discussion in the Legislature. For some reason the Tory backbenchers have been brainwashed into thinking that what goes on behind closed doors in caucus is a public forum that will express the wishes of the people of Alberta. And I say that's not so. I say that is not so, Mr. Speaker.

The Act, as it's set up now, should be the property of the Legislature. If we're going to make any changes to Willmore Wilderness Park, those changes should be made here, not behind closed doors. It's quite obvious this government doesn't listen until things come out into the public arena, and even then they don't listen very well. The arrogance shown by 74 members versus five just breeds more arrogance. You people have stopped listening, and the seeds of your own destruction are in that arrogant stance. You don't listen to the ordinary person in the ordinary walk of life.

MR. COOK: Point of order.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, is that hon. member trying to waste more of my time? I only have 20 minutes.

MR. COOK: The hon. member is not speaking to the topic; he's off on another tangent entirely, talking about the role and responsibility of the government caucus. It's an entirely different topic from this piece of legislation.

DR. BUCK: Does the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry even have a copy of the Bill before him?

MR. COOK: Yes, I have.

DR. BUCK: Well, read it.

Mr. Speaker, what the Bill indicates is that it should be the right of the Legislature, not the right of government caucus or Executive Council, to make a decision which can very radically change the intent of the legislation. As members of government, we know that pressures come upon you to try to solve a particular problem. In the consultants' report that was brought in in the middle of September by the hon. Minister of Tourism and Small Business, we are really trying to solve a particular problem. The people concerned, the 34,000 people who signed the petition, are trying to say that they want the wilderness park area to be inviolate. Let's lay it out, and quit chipping away at the thing.

When the hon. Member for Edson talked about wandering in the wilderness, I would like to bring to the hon. member's attention that the Conservative Party of Alberta was wandering in the wilderness for 66 years. It took them 66 years to gain control of the legislature. And heaven forbid that they stay in for 66 years, because we'd really be in trouble.

MR. STEWART: Walter, Walter, Walter.

DR. BUCK: But the point is very, very simple. The Legislature should control the wilderness area. That's fundamental; that's basic. It's not a precedent. They do it in the wilderness parks in the province to our west. No changes can be made until the issue is debated in the Legislature. I know that government members find it hard to swallow that some of these decisions should be made out here in public. They're getting so used to all these decisions being made behind closed

doors; they think that's the way a democracy should function. But it's not.

So, to the hatchet man in charge of hospitals — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister in charge of hospitals — let's lay it on the table. Let's bring this legislation to the Assembly so that the people of Alberta can at least have a forum to put public debate into any major changes, or even small changes, that could be made to Willmore Wilderness Park.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on second reading of Bill 204, an Act that I have in my hand, [interjection] the amendments are quite clear and concise. It says:

1. The Willmore Wilderness Park Act is amended by this Act.
2. Section 3(2) is repealed.
3. This Act comes into force on the day upon which it is assented to

It explains that 3(2) means:

The power to change the boundaries of Willmore Wilderness Park is removed from the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The ability to increase or decrease the boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, my remarks will indicate that I certainly don't support the Bill in any way, shape, or form. I guess I may sound just a little repetitive in that I think that within the policies of this government, and the Eastern Slopes management policy in particular, and also through the offices of the hon. minister responsible for lands and wildlife, we do have in place the mechanism to deal with any changes in the boundaries of that park or any future wilderness parks, and the responsibility for those changes, either future or now. I thought that I might take the major part of the study and give two definitions of "wilderness" as presented within this report, Mr. Speaker — a little different from my hon. colleague from Edson. Wilderness is a pristine environment managed for solitude and unconfined types of recreation. That was Jubenville in 1976. Or another one: a region which contains no permanent inhabitants, possesses no possibility of conveyance by any mechanical means, and is sufficiently spacious that a person in crossing it must have the experience of sleeping out.

The dominant attributes of such an area are: first, that it requires anyone who exists in it to depend exclusively on his own effort for survival; and, second, that it preserves as nearly as possible the primitive environment... trails and temporary shelters, which were common long before the advent of the white race, are entirely permissible

That was Hendee, Stanky, and Lucas, 1978.

So what are we really trying to effect? I think it should be pointed out that the Eastern Slopes policy is now in place relative to boundary changes, considering the area as the number one, prime area. That came into place after the boundary changes that were effected back in 1963 to 1965. I guess I'm having some difficulty defining the benefits of the amendment, as to whether it was presented to improve or possibly to block the ability to respond to change that may or may not be suggested now or in the future.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to use a hypothetical case as what possibly could be. Let's look at a request that some time in the future might see development of a suggested ski area. We've talked about one of the

recommendations in the MTB study that suggests Mt. Russell might be considered a ski area. It has identified, through that request, that it be looked at further. But let's look down the road to the point where, having looked at it, all the factors related to the possibility of a ski area suggest that it could take place: that there is in fact adequate snowfall; that there are slopes for good skiing, even to the point of possibly some international skiing; that the climate, the wind conditions, suggest that that development could take place, and that it could in fact help the Grande Cache area. Now let's assume at this point that the proposal is a viable one — again recognizing that I'm talking about a hypothetical case, Mr. Speaker — that that project would be able to go ahead and that it is within the boundaries of the present Willmore Wilderness Park, and that an area of some, for lack of a better term and for some point, 30 acres were to be removed from the Willmore.

I guess at this point I should mention to the hon. Member for Clover Bar that in recognition of the fact that a couple of areas were chipped away from the original one, the unfortunate part was that replacements weren't added to the park. The possibility was and still is there that we could add alternative pieces to the park, if that were the case. If it were properly explained to the people at the time that in the interests of the community — in this particular case Grande Cache — this hypothetical case may in fact be viable, and that we would look toward the development of that particular project in the interests not only of the community but of tourism, and that we would then work with the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife and the community involved to add a section to replace the piece that we have removed from that particular boundary . . . We could do that at any time, Mr. Speaker. So when we're talking about changes in the boundary, the present mechanism that's in place, primarily through the Eastern Slopes policy and through the minister responsible for lands and wildlife, could in fact see the changes necessary very openly discussed with the public at large.

For any purposes other than political, they would not necessarily have to be hashed and rehashed in a forum that may not in fact be apropos to helping the community. As I said a little while earlier, Mr. Speaker, I would have some concerns that it may not be a case of trying to help the community, but to hinder it.

The mover of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, referred to the consultants' report, and I'd like to refer to a couple of comments within that as well: that all future planning be consistent with the planning strategies as outlined by the Eastern Slopes policy. That wasn't only for the Willmore; that was for the entire region around Grande Cache. But when we're talking about the Willmore, they were suggesting that a detailed management plan be included as well, not limited to trail maintenance, signage, interpretive signs, separation

of horses and foot traffic wherever possible, and the establishment of primitive camping areas.

Now, the hon. Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife indicated that at present we have a number of activities going on in the Willmore wilderness area that involve hunting, fishing, hiking, and the like. The possibility of improving those existing opportunities is one of the things that we in the Department of Tourism and Small Business are looking at, in conjunction with the minister responsible for public lands as well as other departments affected.

So I really see no major reason to include this amendment in Bill 204. Thus, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues not to support second reading.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, in 1959 The Willmore Wilderness Park Act was brought in with lots of fanfare but very little protection. There never really has been any protection for the Willmore Wilderness Park as far as the Legislature is concerned.

I can't understand the hon. Member for Clover Bar saying that we should change it now. In 1959 the Act was brought in, and there was no protection then. In fact, there was no protection for the Willmore Wilderness Park until it was brought into the prime protection zone under the Eastern Slopes policy and The Forests Act.

In view of the time, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the motion to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: In light of the time and in recognition of the fact that this is private members' afternoon, I would move that we call it 5:30. Before doing so, I would indicate that tomorrow we resume debate on the motion which the Premier moved yesterday following question period.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Government House Leader wish to deal with the possibility of a sitting this evening?

MR. HORSMAN: The House will not sit this evening, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: But the announcement doesn't do it.

MR. HORSMAN: Then I would move that the House adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:24 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]