

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: Tuesday, October 16, 1979 2:30 p.m.

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 56****The Alberta Labour Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill, The Alberta Labour Amendment Act, 1979.

Bill 56 treats labor relations during the construction of large non-conventional oil production plants. The owner of such a project may apply to the cabinet for designation of that project as one to which certain labor relations conditions can apply. Should cabinet so designate, the contractor and trade unions may voluntarily negotiate a collective agreement which has as its main objective assuring labor relations stability during the construction of the project.

Mr. Speaker, by placing certain restrictions upon the parties to such an agreement this Bill recognizes the special economic circumstances which develop from such large projects. This Bill repeals the special labor relations provision of the Syncrude construction project.

[Leave granted; Bill 56 read a first time]

**Bill 46****The Irrigation Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill, The Irrigation Amendment Act, 1979. The main purpose of this Bill is to clarify wording in the present Irrigation Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 46 read a first time]

**Bill 58****The Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 58, The Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority Amendment Act, 1979. The principle of the Bill is to broaden the scope and parameters of the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority and to allow it to increase recovery of conventional crude oil through the use of enhanced recovery methods. It will permit the addition of two members to the board of the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority.

[Leave granted; Bill 58 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bills 46 and 58 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to file with the Legislature the certificates of variances covered under 4(7) and 4(8) of The Clean Air Act. These are the total variances issued to September 25, 1979.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you a group of grade 12 students from Hughenden Central high school, accompanied by their teacher Louie Johnson and Mr. Ron Anderson. I'd like them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to be able to introduce to you, sir, and to members of the Assembly a group of 35 grades 7 to 9 students from Brownfield in my constituency. I should point out that this area of the province was just recently added to my constituency, following redistribution for the last provincial election.

I would also like to indicate that this particular group of students was involved in a school bus accident during school bus safety week, and to point out the importance of school bus safety and the concern we have in this area. Two students of this group were unable to be here, one because the individual is still in hospital. The other is still recovering at home.

They are accompanied by their principal, their teacher, a parent, and their bus driver. I would ask them please to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly a grade 6 group from St. Bede school, in the public gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Bahry, Mrs. Forss, Mrs. Blouin, Mrs. Cutts, and their principal, Mr. MacKenzie. Would they please rise and accept the welcome of the House.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Department of Housing and Public Works**

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to announce some good news this afternoon . . .

DR. BUCK: Oh, good.

MR. CHAMBERS: . . . for senior citizens and families that rent self-contained accommodation from the province.

Effective November 1, 1979, we are reducing all monthly rents for senior citizens in our senior citizen self-contained housing program and for families in

our community housing program from the current 30 per cent of monthly income to 25 per cent.

DR. BUCK: Didn't we tell you that, Tom? We told you that in the spring.

MR. CHAMBERS: In addition, Mr. Speaker, families will receive an additional monthly rental reduction of \$5 per child, in recognition of the higher cost of living for larger families.

Mr. Speaker, this rental reduction is expected to help over 10,500 Alberta households, including 5,500 families and 5,100 senior citizens' households.

The cost to government of the reduced rate will be \$12.38 million over three years, about one-half of which is recovered from the federal government.

#### head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

##### Housing Committee Recommendations

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, in light of the good news announced by the Minister of Housing and Public Works, perhaps we could get some more good news from him today with regard to the joint HUDAC and departmental task force that finished its recommendations in June 1978. One of the 20 recommendations in that report was the \$300 million revolving fund for financing major trunk service facilities, which is now in place. My question to the minister: of the 20 recommendations in the report, what others has the minister been able to implement?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the recommendation on the revolving fund is, of course, a significant one. I might add that the early take-up has been substantial. We estimated the fund to average about \$50 million a year until the \$250 million to \$300 million revolving aspect was fully reached. If my memory serves me correctly, indications to date are that we have either approved or in the mill something in the order of \$18 million. So that's a substantial recommendation of that committee, and it appears it is going to be a very successful one.

It's been some time, of course, since I've looked at the entire list of the 20-odd recommendations, but a substantial number have been implemented and are being worked upon. Quite frankly, I think the work of the HUDAC and government and city committee was a very worth-while and very productive one.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister with regard to the recommendation concerning getting together the engineers and those people responsible for standards for utilities. One of the recommendations was that the association of professional engineers, geologists and people from the department get together and see if standards couldn't be changed somewhat, so that the criteria for utilities could be shifted so there would be more room for innovation. What progress has been made on that specific recommendation?

MR. CHAMBERS: I would have to take that as a notice, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to check and see what the current status is.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Another one of the major recommendations dealt with this question of research, especially of new construction techniques, and the possibility of Alberta's giving some leadership to the rest of Canada in this area. What progress has taken place in that particular area?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Housing and Public Works has actually had an innovative housing grant in place for some time. Several grants have been given for innovative work. I would have to check to be able to ascertain the total moneys at this point, but it is active and there have been a few applicants and recipients of the grant.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further question for the minister. What discussions have taken place with the minister of business development and tourism or the Minister of Economic Development regarding the possibility of government support of such research with the aims of reducing construction costs and increasing Alberta production of housing components, which is another of the recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the question relate to a provincial minister and a federal minister?

MR. R. CLARK: No . . . [inaudible].

MR. SPEAKER: Two provincial ministers would appear to be almost an intracabinet discussion, which ordinarily would not be a subject for the question period.

MR. R. CLARK: What we would like, Mr. Speaker, is some assurance of any discussions between the Minister of Housing and Public Works and his colleagues with regard to this recommendation of the report.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader did mention there were some 21 recommendations in there. I always like to be factual and candid, and to do that I would like the opportunity to check over each of those recommendations. Perhaps that might be a more appropriate question for the Order Paper but, regardless, I'd be happy to take it and check out the status of each of those 21 recommendations.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, just one last question to the minister. Another of the major recommendations was that an ongoing committee be established with the minister's department, people from the Housing Corporation, and people from HUDAC and also, I believe, the Urban Development Institute. Can the minister recall if any progress has been made on that recommendation, which was made in June '78, if my recollection is correct?

MR. CHAMBERS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the committee is ongoing. I am not sure what their meeting schedule is, but I know that they are meeting and that it is an ongoing relationship. I understand that the HUDAC people and government people feel it's quite productive

##### RCMP Manpower Shortage

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the

second question to the Solicitor General. What progress can the Solicitor General report to the Assembly in his discussions with his federal counterpart regarding making funds available for additional members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for Alberta?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, there has been no progress from the situation as it was described this spring. However, I have met with the federal Solicitor General and there has been past correspondence, of which the hon. member is aware. Beyond that, no decision has been taken by Ottawa and the Treasury Board.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly at least that his federal counterpart has indicated to him some kind of time line when some decision on additional funds might be in the hands of the minister? As the minister well knows, a number of communities in rural Alberta are getting to an extremely difficult situation.

MR. HARLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is true. However, the federal Solicitor General has not indicated any time line.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Having regard for the program that's been started on at least one of the reserves — I believe the Blood Reserve at Cardston — where the province is taking the initiative in putting up some of the funding for native police officers from that reserve to go to the RCMP training facilities in Regina, is the province considering a similar kind of assistance to Alberta municipalities which find themselves in a situation of either not being able to get RCMP officers or having their complement cut back severely?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the native police problem, as far as the training at Regina is concerned I believe the funding has come from the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. So it's not coming from provincial sources. I'm not too sure whether that changes the import of the question.

MR. R. CLARK: Has the government considered that kind of approach as a means of alleviating the present problem a number of communities face? Is the Alberta government contracting with the RCMP at Regina the training of some municipal police?

MR. HARLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, it may be a matter that would come in the negotiations, and certainly negotiations are under way. We'll have to see what transpires, keeping in mind that the negotiations are carried on by all the provinces that have RCMP contracts.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary question. Did the minister give any indication to his federal counterpart of a deadline after which the Alberta government or Alberta municipalities were going to have to go it alone? The question is a deadline as to when Alberta felt it was essential that we have some answer from the federal government: by the end of the year or ...

MR. HARLE: No, we haven't taken a position of a deadline at the present time. The contract is in place until March 1981. As I say, negotiations are under way. An indication was given that the province was prepared to negotiate a new contract. That is still our position.

#### Equal Job Opportunities

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. It concerns the consultant report released yesterday by the Human Rights Commission. What steps does the government propose to take to remedy the totally unacceptable situation where there is at least a \$3,000 difference between men and women, for people of the same qualifications doing essentially the same type of work?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to respond to the question from the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. I think if the member were able to read the study in detail, and not the precis, he would note that the consultants themselves had difficulty with this question.

The difference attributed to salary between men and women is not related to sex. There are many factors. One of the most significant factors that has been overlooked is the way in which we look at job level, the level of responsibility for the position. I think all of us here would agree that that is a very significant factor. One cannot look just at education, experience, time in the position, or time in the labor force. There are many factors, and that one missing makes it very difficult to make that judgment.

We have had a number of programs in place for a number of years. Those programs are aimed at providing opportunities for female staff to improve, to advance, to seek new opportunities.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The Human Rights Commission indicates that it supports 22 of the 32 recommendations made in the consultant's report. Is the minister in a position to outline to the Assembly today what timetable the government foresees to move on those recommendations endorsed by the Human Rights Commission?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult to answer that question in detail today. There are a number of recommendations. But I would say for the members of the Assembly that many of the recommendations — the majority, in fact — are already in place, as a commitment by this government not only to providing a service to the people of Alberta but to assuring the employees that they have equal opportunity, job enhancement, job enrichment, and job opportunities. Most of the recommendations which deal with those aspects of the report for which I am responsible have already been put into effect.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to outline to the Assembly this afternoon the view of the government with respect to affirmative action within the public service?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, probably it would depend on what one means by affirmative action. With respect to its employees this government believes that affirmative action is helping the individual employee, and prospective employee, to find that opportunity or position best suited for him or her. Within the department's purview of responsibility we have programs; for example, attitudinal workshops for all managers. We have programs for all female employees who seek to have job enrichment or job advancement. We provide educational leave; we provide leave without pay for job enrichment in other areas, based on the department's ability to provide that female, or that male, with time off. We have programs that ensure that questions are related to the job, and not to race, sex, age, or other forms of discrimination. We have these programs in place.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister in a position to outline to the Assembly the government's response to the recommendation that there be a specific office of equal opportunity, as opposed to the efforts that have been indicated to the House by the minister in the questions to date?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the member, are you referring to the recommendation dealing with government employees?

MR. NOTLEY: Yes.

MR. STEVENS: In that case, what we have done for about two and a half years is that each minister, through his or her deputy minister, has assigned a key department official to spearhead or act for that department in ensuring that all employees have the opportunities that the report is talking about. We have senior officials in each department who are responsible for carrying out the objectives of that department as they relate to female employees in the civil service or prospective employees. We also have a special career development and personnel planning unit in the personnel administration office to co-ordinate these activities.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In releasing the consultant's report, the Human Rights Commission indicated that there may well be a need for a similar study dealing with native and handicapped people. At this point in time, is the government in a position to indicate the government's support for and co-operation with such a further study, as it relates to the public service?

MR. STEVENS: As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, there are equal opportunities for all employees and prospective employees in this government. Beyond that, if the member is speaking about native employment *per se*, I would seek the advice of my colleague the Minister of Labour.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. First of all, in reviewing the study in detail, I wonder if the minister has in his department a mechanism in place to give consideration to the recommendations in the study that aren't presently in effect in the department. If there isn't such a mechanism, would there be consideration of putting one in place?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, to the member. We do have a personnel planning and career development unit. I'm very proud of that unit's activities. The unit was put in place in May 1977 — I might say with opposition from the opposition side. I think that unit has made tremendous efforts and strides toward ensuring that opportunities are available. I'm sure that unit will review the recommendations in detail and monitor any areas that need improvement. I'm sure we are all hopeful that every person who seeks employment or is now employed by Alberta has an equal opportunity for employment.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. It really flows from the minister's first answer. The consulting report really dealt with two examples of disparity. One was the overall figures which show that women earn, I believe, approximately \$7,000 less than men, which takes into account experience and education and what have you. But the other really dealt with the \$3,097 difference which, according to the consulting report, is not attributable to education and among other things is attributable to subtle discrimination.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. NOTLEY: My question to the minister is: what position is the government going to take with respect to that particular proposal, dealing with subtle discrimination?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I thought my answer was quite clear, that I felt the study itself was not able to identify the factors which may be remarked about in the summary, which is different from the study. A very significant factor is left out of the study; that is, job level. I thought my answer was quite clear on that.

It is a societal problem, not uncommon to Alberta, that many women enter some areas of the labor force. Many men seek to enter other sectors of the labor force. Our opportunities in education and opportunities for employment are available to all, and I hope that over a period of time we will find male secretaries seeking employment, or male nurses, or female building trades or maintenance supervisors. The opportunities are there, and the pay is the same for the job at its level, for the skills and other factors that are taken into consideration.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether he has information to indicate that women in the work force are not demanding artificial positive discrimination, but rather are asking for equal opportunity and equal salary for equal work.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, for the member. I really can't answer that question. I've not had representations. I have had information, though, from our own analysis that in fact all employees seek recognition and rewards for the jobs they are performing at the levels of experience, the suitability, and the requirements placed on that job by the various employers within our departments.

### Municipal Plebiscites

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The question relates to recent speculative reports that in the immediate future this government intends to enact legislation which would effectively prohibit municipal plebiscites. Can the minister assure the House that those reports are in fact inaccurate and that the government does not have any immediate plans to implement legislation which would render plebiscites absolutely impossible and prohibit them at the municipal level?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, all I can do is assure the House that it's not my intention to introduce into the Legislature this fall government legislation dealing with those sections of The Municipal Government Act that deal with plebiscites. However, yesterday we had an introduction of a private member's Bill that I think will serve as a very useful forum for debate in this Legislature, so that we might obtain the views of government members — and there may be some participation as well from opposition members — as to the usefulness of the present legislation and what avenues for change may be open to us.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question to the minister. Would it be fair to say, then, that there is no present government policy which would direct the implementation of legislation in the immediate or near future to prohibit plebiscites in our municipalities?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, no legislation has been presented to the Legislature as a government Bill, so I suppose the member is free to assume that therefore no policy has been enunciated.

But I would like to say that I think the matter is one of concern to all municipal governments and legislatures. In my view, the legislation as it stands does require some alteration, particularly with respect to the lack of a limit on the length of time which citizens might wait until proposing a petition that would strike out a by-law. I think it's unnecessary for us to continue to have legislation on the books that creates what could be, in some cases, a very considerable financial implication to a municipality when it's not necessary for that to occur.

So my own view, Mr. Speaker, is that we will be looking at amendments to that legislation in the spring of 1980, and that the options open to us are anywhere between what is proposed by the hon. Member for Stony Plain in his private member's Bill, and making some slight alterations to do with the time limit and the percentage of electors required.

### Nursing Education

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, to clarify the questions I've asked previously on the post-RN degree at the University of Alberta. Is the minister in a position to indicate if a formal agreement or commitment was made by the former minister of the government to expand the post-RN degree course at the University of Alberta?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is no.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, is the minister in a position to indicate if an oral commitment was made by the former minister or members of the present minister's department to funding for postsecondary degrees?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I cannot indicate what oral or verbal discussions may have taken place, but I would suggest that it is not wise for anyone to rely upon oral representations which are not subsequently reduced to writing.

DR. BUCK: I can believe that from this government, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: There's no question about that. Get it down in writing.

DR. BUCK: Sometimes even if you get it in writing it doesn't help, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Even in *Hansard* it makes no difference.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if there has been a meeting of the minister or members of his department with the University of Alberta to indicate if it is a high priority that the post-RN degree course at the University of Alberta go ahead? Is it a high priority of this government?

MR. HORSMAN: Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker, and that has been indicated by a letter I wrote to the University of Alberta.

### Trans-Canada Highway

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Transportation. Could the minister indicate whether his department is considering instituting a definite schedule for twinning the Trans-Canada Highway across Alberta?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, that would be subject to the budgeting process we're in now. Depending on the approach finally taken, we will schedule certain parts, but we haven't identified them at the moment.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the Department of Transportation monitoring the increase in traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway, and where priorities should be set for twinning No. 1?

MR. KROEGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

### Senior Citizens' Housing

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works. Could the minister please inform the Assembly what methods will be utilized to notify the citizens who will be affected of the change in the rental rates announced today?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the citizens involved would be notified in writing by the housing authorities or by the governing or responsible organization, wherever that may be.

MRS. EMBURY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to have the minister inform the Assembly exactly what actions prompted this reduction from 30 per cent to 25 per cent.

MR. R. CLARK: Strong representation from the opposition.

MR. CHAMBERS: To be very candid about it, Mr. Speaker, representations from all of our MLAs who . . .

DR. BUCK: What were you doing in the spring, Tom?

MR. R. CLARK: Where were you in the spring?

AN HON. MEMBER: Listening to the people.

AN HON. MEMBER: Obviously.

MR. CHAMBERS: . . . having listened to the people and the senior citizens in their area, and to the people in housing authorities [who] made these representations to me.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. minister. Realizing the importance of this program, I know that it's going to be well accepted, because I also had a lot of representation. Could the minister advise whether this is going to create a bigger demand? Looking at the popularity of the self-contained units and the present demands for more of them, I wonder whether with these benefits there will be a greater demand.

MR. SPEAKER: It's very doubtful whether the minister is required to give that kind of opinion or prophecy.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In addition to what the minister has indicated — why he made the changes — I wonder if he would indicate to the House whether the changes were made also because the rental rates were higher relative to other provinces.

MR. CHAMBERS: They may have appeared to be so, Mr. Speaker. However, if one took into account many of the other features we have in Alberta, such as the \$500 renters' credit and so forth, in effect they were not higher. They were among the most generous. Now they are indeed the most generous in the country.

DR. PAPROSKI: To be clear, Mr. Speaker, is the minister then saying it was lower before, now it's even lower? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville was recognized for a question and he said he asked a supplementary. Is there still a question?

#### **Loan to Newfoundland**

MR. BATIUK: I'll make one, Mr. Speaker. [laughter]  
Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the hon.

Provincial Treasurer, regarding the application from Newfoundland for, as I understand it, a \$50 million loan.

DR. BUCK: Didn't you discuss that in caucus, John?

MR. BATIUK: No. [laughter] Well, Mr. Speaker, seeing that the Member for Clover Bar is finished, I'll continue with my question.

Realizing that this request was part of a \$150 or \$160 million loan that the province was looking for, could the Provincial Treasurer advise whether it wouldn't be feasible to have the entire loan from the province of Alberta?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, discussions are still going on with respect to that matter. At an appropriate time I'll have an announcement to make, if there is one to be made.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Three Hills, followed by the hon. Member for Innisfail.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Innisfail has risen on a couple of occasions and been recognized as me, and I haven't had a question to ask. I'm hoping that we don't look enough alike that we'll be mixed up again. [laughter]

AN HON. MEMBER: He's got pants on.

#### **Dickson Dam**

MR. PENGELLY: I'll talk to you later.

Could the hon. Minister of Environment inform the House as to the progress of land purchases for the Dickson dam?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we're making really excellent progress in acquiring the acreage required for the Dickson dam. We still have to explore several areas. We're attempting to clear those from our files before construction commences.

MR. PENGELLY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the department begun any preliminary work toward construction at the site?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we can proceed in certain areas before acquiring the total land needed. We have issued some engineering work and surveys, and I think some preliminary work is being done for a diversion channel for the Red Deer River.

#### **Transmission Lines**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife is with regard to the ERCB hearings in Calgary presently studying the Langdon-Phillipps Pass 500 kv transmission line. I wonder if the minister could clarify whether the government has a public policy with regard to transmission lines on Crown lands, specifically in the foothills of southern Alberta?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, in answer to that question I would have to say we're awaiting the results of the

ERCB hearings. We recognize that some private landholders would like to see the line go on public land.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. At present, hon. minister, no stated public policy prohibits transmission on public lines. Is that accurate?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, as I stated, we are awaiting the hearings. We feel the recommendations of the ERCB will be given every consideration. At this time nothing says that they can't go on Crown land. We are saying that we will get a hearing report from the ERCB and at that time will discuss whether the corridor should go on Crown land or on private land, if that's the decision of the ERCB.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a further question for clarification. Is the minister indicating to the Assembly at this time that when the ERCB makes a recommendation, if the route chosen is through the foothills on Crown land, the government still has the right at that time to negate that recommendation or decision of the ERCB, and there is the possibility the government will do so?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, if the decision is that the line should go on public land, at that time we would subject it to the resource evaluation and planning committee to see what effect it would have if it were to go totally on public land. So we would be looking forward to the interdepartmental review of the proposed line.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Environment. At present does he have personnel at the ERCB hearings in Calgary? If those personnel are present, will they make any presentations on behalf of the government?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, it's normal procedure for the Department of Environment, through our officials, to make presentations and query the route of, in this case, a proposed power line.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a similar question to the Minister of Agriculture. Are Department of Agriculture personnel at the hearings, and will they also be making written or oral submissions?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Agriculture has an agrologist attending the hearings, representing both the department and the agricultural industry, and available, in this case, to the Department of Environment in their submissions at the hearings.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary, again to the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife. Has the minister any personnel at the hearings, and will those personnel be making a case at the hearings with regard to Crown lands?

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister that at present it is not clear at the hearings how the government stands on this position, and it's very difficult for some people making submissions.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I believe our representation is being carried forth through the Department of

Environment. However, I would like to take that question as notice and report.

#### Pacific Western Airlines

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Transportation with regard to his responsibilities for PWA. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly when a final decision will be made with regard to, I think the proper term is PWA'S final format? I ask the question because of comments made in the House by the former minister responsible for PWA that the government was looking at a number of options for the final PWA ownership package once the Canadian Transport Commission had finished its hearings with regard to Transair and so on.

MR. NOTLEY: Are you going to privatize it?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, we haven't come to a final decision on this because the final report still isn't in. I'd be glad to take the question as notice and report.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, if my memory serves me correctly, subject to checking the answer, the former Minister of Economic Development was asked that question in terms of a number of alternative options the government was considering and answered on the basis that the hon. leader raises in the House. Again subject to checking the record of *Hansard*, the question phrased today was more on the basis that if the Transair merger was completed, the government appeared to be moving in this direction. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you and members of the House that it is not the intention of the government to move in that direction. It is only one alternative among many we may consider in the intermediate to longer term.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to the Premier. Have the management, the PWA board, and the Premier discussed the possibility of PWA acquiring air lines outside the province of Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'd have no knowledge of that because the communication is entirely between the minister who has been responsible. I'll have to take it as notice, together with the Minister of Transportation, who has that as part of his current responsibility.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. While the Premier is doing that checking, I'd like to ask him also to check to see if PWA officials had discussions with officials of the U.S. government with regard to possible acquisition of an air line in the United States that is presently for sale.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I will take that as notice. After evaluation it may be that that is a matter of management as distinguished from policy. We will assess that.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Is the Premier aware of any discussions between the PWA board of directors and U.S. regulatory officials regarding the possibility of PWA being able to acquire

whole ownership or a minimum of 26 per cent ownership of any air line south of the border?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge of that sort of discussion.

**Nursing Education**  
(continued)

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower is a supplementary to the first question I asked. I believe approximately 30 or 40 students will be involved in the post-RN program that will be established in the University of Lethbridge. Can the minister indicate if the department has done an assessment of how many students would be interested in taking the post-RN course in Alberta?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the program at Lethbridge, I think I should make clear that in the first year of operation they are planning for 20 students. Of course they plan to move that up to, I believe, 36 in subsequent years. So in the two years following the RN degree, leading to the baccalaureate degree, they would bring that program up to numbers similar to the University of Alberta.

With regard to assessing the numbers of nursing graduates in the RN program who wish to go on now and obtain baccalaureate standing for their training, we are advised, primarily by discussions with the universities and with the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, that many, many nurses wish to move into that program if the services are available at Alberta universities. On the basis of those discussions, we feel the programming is well justified and well warranted, particularly with the new program at the University of Lethbridge. I might add, as I indicated in my earlier response, that the department places a very high priority on expanding the program at the University of Alberta.

However, we do feel that it's the university's responsibility — as I've asked the university to do — to assess very carefully their position with regard to the reallocation of their existing resources to existing programs that require expansion, before coming to government and asking the government to proceed with regard to expanding existing programs with additional funding.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In light of his previous answer that the government considered it a high priority to go ahead with the program, can the minister indicate what funding commitment has been made to the University of Alberta so the university can in actuality go ahead with the program?

MR. NOTLEY: None at all.

MR. HORSMAN: I've already indicated the answer to that, Mr. Speaker. The budget for the University of Alberta is very large. In a university with a wide offering of programs, some of which are no longer attracting student enrolment, we feel that the universities — boards of governors, administrations, and other components of the university — must carefully allocate the resources made available to the university by government, so it does not become our responsibility to

decide within this Assembly which programs should expand and which should decrease. That's the responsibility of the board of governors and other components of the universities as they make their allocations from the block funding we as a Legislative Assembly provide.

MRS. EMBURY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister please indicate if, when the University of Lethbridge proposal came forth, it contained an element that would indicate that there was enough qualified faculty to teach this program?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, of course we rely upon the universities to seek out and find properly qualified personnel to teach the courses. We are aware that the program at the University of Lethbridge will be prepared with care. We are making the funding available to the University of Lethbridge, and it will be their responsibility to ensure that the program meets the qualifications they set and expect. That includes obtaining qualified instructional staff.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, just so it's clear in my mind: no additional funds have been made available to the University of Alberta to enlarge the postgraduate RN program?

MR. HORSMAN: That is absolutely correct, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, flowing from this whole discussion about funds being made available. Mr. Minister, is it the intention of the government to table in the Assembly the paper presented by the assistant deputy minister, Dr. Bosetti, at the recent meeting with the members of the boards of governors of the universities, wherein I understand Dr. Bosetti said that if the institutions fail to make the necessary and very difficult decisions required to examine and readjust their directions, then government may have to take on that responsibility?

DR. BUCK: Freedom of the university, Peter.

MR. R. CLARK: Is the minister prepared to table the statement made by Dr. Bosetti, and is this an accurate assessment of the government's position?

MR. HORSMAN: No, Mr. Speaker. The paper presented by Dr. Bosetti to the most recent meeting of the boards of governors of the universities and colleges was a discussion paper. It contained many possible approaches to university and college funding and, in that respect, is only for discussion purposes. I might add that we received a very lively discussion on that paper. Therefore, since it does not in any way reflect government policy at this stage, I don't intend to file it in the Assembly so it might be misinterpreted by some as reflecting government policy.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. He seemed to be nodding yes, this is government policy. Can the Premier indicate to the Legislature if that's the way the government thinks about freedom of the universities?



MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, there are two separate questions. The hon. member was asking whether a document was to be tabled, and the hon. minister just answered. With regard to the policy matter, the hon. minister answered a very important policy position of this government.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary? We have slightly exceeded the time allotment for the question period.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, recognizing the importance of health delivery and health care in this province and, as we all recognize, the important role the nurses play, I wonder if the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care would indicate to the House whether he has made representation to the university or to the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower indicating the importance of this program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: And where the money's coming from.

MR. RUSSELL: No, I haven't, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, would the minister indicate to the House whether he will evaluate the issue, recognizing that medical care is under his auspices and that maybe representation should be made?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I have discussed the matter with some major hospital board members throughout the province to ascertain the validity of the position put forward by the AARN, but the proposition the hon. member is putting forward should, I think, properly come from my colleague the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower.

DR. PAPROSKI: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: We've already exceeded the time. Possibly the supplementary might survive until tomorrow.

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

112. Mr. Notley moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a list which gives, for each program and sub-program in the 1979-80 estimates, the estimated total payments under Object of Expenditure Code 730 — Grants to Business, with comparative forecast data for 1978-79.

[Motion carried]

113. Mr. Notley moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a list which gives, for each program and sub-program in the 1979-80 estimates, the estimated total payments under Object of Expendi-

ture Code 430 — Professional, Technical and Labour Service, with comparative forecast data for 1978-79.

[Motion carried]

### head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

205. Moved by Mr. R. Speaker:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta urge the government of Alberta to take all necessary action to provide appropriate, publicly funded education to all the children of this province, regardless of handicapping conditions, to assist them in attaining their full potential.

[Adjourned debate June 7: Dr. Buck]

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to hon. members of the Assembly that I'm sure, after the long summer holiday, the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower may not be quite as irritable as he was in the spring when I suggested that possibly the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower wasn't doing its job to provide teachers in special education. Now I see the minister in his benevolence is going ahead with a post-RN program. But he's not going to provide anybody with any money. So it should be a great program.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, I'm not going to go through the information I was laying before the Assembly in the spring session. I'm just going to indicate very briefly the concerns that I as a private member and we as a party have as to the decision on the Carriere girl from Chipman, as to the role the schools will have to play in educating specially handicapped children. I would like to say once again that after the court decision was made, in speaking to school boards in my area and other educators, people associated with education, the boards are certainly willing to do their bit. They know they have a responsibility. They will fulfil that responsibility. But there is an area in which we as legislators, and especially the hon. members across the way, will have to do their bit; that is, to provide the funding.

MR. NOTLEY: Agreed.

DR. BUCK: It's that plain and simple. That's exactly what it boils down to. So I would just like to direct the attention of the Assembly to the consideration of funding. It can't be denied that improved and extended special education will incur increased costs. The boards realize this. This, however, would be a questionable argument for continuing to deny handicapped children the right to education.

Mr. Speaker, my major concern lies not with increased costs, but rather with who will bear these necessary increases in the cost of education to these special children. For just as it's utterly unacceptable to continue denying education to selected Alberta children, so must we reject any implications that school boards, who traditionally have not been held responsible for the education of the handicapped, must now, take on that added responsibility without major changes in their financial status quo. Mr. Speaker, it boils down to the fact that funding will have to be made available.

I would like to familiarize members with the concept of excess cost funding. In essence, this approach would require school boards to meet the normal educational costs for all pupils — for example, school construction, teachers' salaries, classroom materials, and everyday equipment — with the department assuming all extraordinary costs associated exclusively with special education: the modifications required in the classrooms, adapted materials, equipment that will be required, and so on. This system seems eminently fair and readily workable. I'm sure the Minister of Education in his benevolence will understand that the school boards will greet that language with great enthusiasm. I commend to the members of the Assembly, and more particularly to the Minister of Education, that this is what will have to be done, and to a greater extent than it has been.

We do not deny that detailed preparation will be necessary before the right to education can be guaranteed to all Alberta children. The time frame allowed in my colleague's Bill is two years, a period that we believe ample, as the same process was accomplished for the entire United States in a matter of three years or thereabouts. So we feel the time frame suggested by the hon. Mr. Speaker is reasonable.

We deny any allegation that education in Alberta should be reserved for children with straight backs, strong constitutions — you know, the ordinary, run-of-the-mill type of person; in other words, children in our school system who really have a good head start on life. With his recent announcements on education versus schooling, the minister would seem desirous of placing precisely such a limitation on the role of his department. But, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that every democratic government has the responsibility, through providing education, of assisting every child to attain his full potential and thus become a participating member of our society.

A disability doesn't have to be a handicap. Unfortunately, however, through the indifferent or discriminatory treatment of its disabled citizens, the government, and we, have handicapped them. So, Mr. Speaker, the time is past due for the government to begin to reverse that process through affirming the universal right to appropriate education.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the Minister of Education: I know he has had direct representation from the Carriers, he has had representation from school boards and educators in this province that we are all willing to resolve the problem, but we need funding. So it will be with great interest that I look forward to the continuation of the debate.

At the same time we are looking at children who are handicapped, Mr. Minister, we must also look at children who have learning disabilities, because this area is almost as crippling as the people who have physical as well as mental handicaps.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words I would like to welcome debate from all sides of the Assembly. Thank you.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, today I wish to speak against Motion 205, presented by the hon. Member for Little Bow. I hastily wish to add that I'm not against the intent of the motion. But, given the budgets of the Department of Education, the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, and the Department of Social Services and Community Health, and given the

ever-increasing knowledge of the physiological and psychological potential of the handicapped, I believe we are providing public funds for special students so that they can develop to their potential.

In 1976 the hon. Member for Calgary Bow presented a motion to this Assembly that the government of Alberta "continue to place a high priority on education for the handicapped". The hon. member reviewed the background of these special needs — the progress up to 1976 — identified some new concerns, and suggested improvements.

We all know that historically the regular school system, which is composed of organization, instruction, and curriculum, was directed to the majority of students, students who have been considered average. Some of the students receive their education outside the regular school system.

In the past the responsibility for this education was shared by the home, the school system, and the provincial government through institutional care. As the understanding of individual differences evolved and individual concerns became evident, there was a variety of attempts to modify existing programs. The results were special opportunity and remedial classes and special resource centres. One of the first programs following the Worth report in 1972 was a funding program to assess children for learning disabilities and develop a program to improve their performance in schools.

Six years ago the early childhood service program was introduced, and this reduced the assessment of children down to the age of three and a half years. So from that time we have gradually seen the number of students in special programs increase. The needs are being met in more centres across this province, and continual grants have been developed to assist in qualifying teachers to meet these special needs.

[Mr. R. Speaker in the Chair]

It isn't that many years ago, Mr. Speaker, when baccalaureate degrees at the university were directed merely to a Baccalaureate of Education. Now we see degrees at the baccalaureate level in special education. The percentage positions of qualifying teachers has tripled since 1971. Also, innovative programs have been developed. In one of them a mobile unit has travelled throughout the province.

No one would deny that each and every child should have the opportunity to develop to their optimum potential. In fact today it is considered a right. However, many citizens in Alberta take the opposing view that education is also a privilege, because as parents they want a say in how the educational needs of their children are to be met. This certainly presents problems of how, where, when, and what the education should include, particularly when special needs are to be met.

Today many parents want to contribute to the best of their own ability, financially as well as meeting the emotional and physical needs of their children. Many parents have overcome great hurdles in the last few years to see that their children receive some type of education. As a member of the government, I support assisting the individual needs, given the opportunity and the availability of resources. Frankly, I believe we are aware of this responsibility and are meeting these needs.

In February 1979, the Hon. Julian Koziak announced a grant to provide funding for professional and sup-

port personnel. The new grant augmented by more than \$0.5 million the \$57 million provided annually for education of the handicapped. The purpose of the grant is to provide a broader and more personalized type of service. While this has always been a philosophy of this government, we must keep in mind that new knowledge is constantly being added through research in this area. Therefore, much more can be done by this grant system.

Funding was also announced for the Alberta School for the Deaf. This was to provide for two audiologists and four speech therapists. One hundred and four additional special education teacher positions will be made available, bringing the total to 1,650. This will serve approximately 25,000 children. Support to school boards was increased for isolated instances where students still must go outside the province for assessment and training.

In February 1979, the Hon. Julian Koziak also announced the decision to establish a two-member team to plan a facility for multi-handicapped deaf and blind children in Alberta. Their mandate is to consider all aspects of a comprehensive program, including the identification, assessment, referral, placement, training, and reassessment of pupils. This new program will be integrated with programs and facilities now operating.

In September 1979, the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower announced a five-year program that will provide \$4.5 million for education and training programs for both the handicapped and personnel working with and teaching them. The three main areas of focus under this new program are: special education required for teachers of handicapped children in the basic school system; training and education of workers and professionals involved in rehabilitation services for the handicapped; and long-term and ongoing vocational training for adults with mental, physical, and sensory handicaps, and learning disabilities.

With this approach, the government continues to seek ways to improve the quality and magnitude of the instruction, rehabilitation practice, and vocational training for Alberta's handicapped and disabled adults.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the members of the Assembly vote against this motion.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, in addressing myself to this motion I would like to reflect on a little history relating to the education system in Alberta. The development of education is, of course, much older than the province of Alberta itself. The education system in a formal sense, evolved through a number of stages. In the first decades of Alberta's history, education in the province was primarily general classroom instruction, with eventual evolution to facilities that would accommodate some children with special needs. Facilities such as Michener Centre in Red Deer accepted children who were not able to be educated in a formal sense at that time.

By 1969 there was still no mandate to accommodate the trainable mentally retarded. Long lists of children waited to be accommodated in Michener Centre and at the private schools that had been established by parent groups. With the Blair report in 1972 came a change in philosophy toward education of the mentally handicapped. There was a move toward a community development approach and more pressure for increasing

community services to support these children.

At this point I think it is pertinent to mention that concern has been increasing to provide education for all children, to develop their full potential. In this regard it is important to recognize the role the local school boards have played voluntarily in the provision of programs, not just for the so-called average but also for exceptional children, including the gifted, the sensory handicapped, the visually impaired, the emotionally disturbed, and the mentally handicapped.

For the most exceptional children, early detection of the child's capacities is critical. The preschool testing programs initiated during the last eight years have played a major role in assisting parents and authorities in early detection of educational needs. The late Dr. Jean Nelson of the Department of Social Services and Community Health pioneered preschool testing programs, which are now carried on by health units throughout Alberta. The Sturgeon Health Unit, on whose board I served for a number of years, was one of the first units to initiate this program.

Mr. Speaker, in addressing myself to the motion on the floor, I would consider that the largest concern I have is with the word "appropriate" — "... to provide appropriate, publicly funded education ...". With the wide range of need, one of the most difficult tasks is the provision of programs that are appropriate. Who decides what is appropriate? It is essential that we commence work on standards. While I agree with the sentiment of this motion, I believe the term "appropriate" has no legal meaning. In order to define appropriate education, it is necessary that we have standards, so evaluation can be carried on. I believe very strongly in evaluation in provision of any public program, to ensure that the programs achieve what they were designed to accomplish.

In addition to the development of standards, particularly for the handicapped child, is the need for adequate staff. In the past, postsecondary teacher training programs have not been able to provide trained staff. I commend the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower for his work in filling this void. I will not duplicate the comments made by the previous speaker in outlining the new \$4.5 million program announced this past summer. This new program unit grant will go a long way in carrying out the mandate to provide education for all children within this province.

As the government, I believe we are sincere in providing programs to meet the needs of all children in Alberta. But there's no doubt that the task is not complete. The accomplishment of our goals requires the co-operation of many affected groups, including parents, school boards, community support services, and senior government.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, while I can agree with the sentiment, I feel that the motion itself is not definitive enough in the word "appropriate", and is not what we should be trying to accomplish. I feel it is essential that we set standards within this province that will give us a mark that we can evaluate, an achievement that will be a practical goal we can strive to meet.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak to this motion. I want to commend the Member for Little Bow for bringing this motion forward for discussion. I think it's an important topic. The only reservation I have, if any, is that there seems to be a suggestion by

the existence of the motion that the government is not already nor has as an objective — I think it's fair to say the government presently has this as an objective — moving in the direction of universal accessibility for all handicapped children.

With respect to the motion, there is some unclarity I want to comment on and see if it can be resolved in further debate. We have the wording "publicly funded" in the motion. Does "publicly funded" refer to the school boards who have to raise taxes, or is that intended to mean the government of Alberta? Then we talk about the education of all children. Is the motion intended to be limited to education in the traditional sense, or are we also talking about training for children who are handicapped in a manner which precludes education in the normal sense but does permit training?

Mr. Speaker, I can support a broader principle that every child, regardless of handicap, who is a resident of Alberta, should be entitled to education or training to his or her potential within reasonable distance of his or her home, and that such training or education be fully borne at public expense. I can also accept that the increased cost — we're talking about increased costs only, not the total cost — should be borne by the government of Alberta rather than by any particular school board. I believe the principle I have just enunciated is the one this government is pursuing, and has in fact initiated programs in that direction.

I think it's important to realize that this kind of objective is more complicated than simply providing funds. Individuals must be educated and trained for such work. Institutions must be altered and new ones built. This government is aggressively pursuing these goals. On February 12, this government announced a program unit grant. The purpose of the unit grant is to pay to school boards part of the increased costs of the broader and more personalized service required by the multiple handicapped. This funding augments \$57 million already provided for the education of the handicapped.

Other measures announced at the same time were funding for 104 additional teaching positions, bringing the total to 1,650, notwithstanding that total enrolment has declined. As well, increased funding for children who must still leave the province was also provided, and I understand it is the intention of this government to reduce significantly the number of people who now have to leave the province for the purpose of education.

On September 28, 1979, the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower announced a \$4.5 million program for education and training both of the handicapped themselves and for the personnel working with and teaching them. Clearly this government is committed to funding and providing education and training for the handicapped and severely handicapped.

I suppose there is a question of whether these programs can be reasonably accelerated without wasting an undue amount of funds, which happens when you accelerate programs too quickly. I don't think it's unfair to say that since assuming office in 1971, this government had some catch-up to do in this area, and is moving as rapidly as possible. I do wish to say that it was somewhat to my surprise that my constituents — they don't have a lot of concerns in Edmonton Whitemud, but one of the concerns they did have and which I

heard most often was the education and training of the multiple handicapped, and that this initiative which the government is now taking will probably meet those needs. I would certainly be interested in hearing from my constituents in Edmonton Whitemud to what extent the programs initiated in 1979 fill their needs.

Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, while I had not intended to participate in the debate today, I was encouraged to do so by the ill-informed remarks of the hon. Member for Clover Bar, with respect to my position as a minister . . .

DR. BUCK: I just read the press release, so I'm up to date on it.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm indeed glad to hear that the hon. Member for Clover Bar is up to date on information with respect to the program announced by me at St. Paul, Alberta, on September 28, 1979. I do appreciate the fact that the hon. members who immediately preceded me in the debate made reference to this important program. I also think it's significant to note that the Premier, in the state of the province address, made reference to this new program in his opening remarks. Therefore, while it may take some time for matters of this nature to work their way into the consciousness of members of the opposition, I'm glad it has finally done so.

In any event, I think it significant to note that this is an example of where the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, supported by the government, is prepared to make extra funding available to universities throughout the province for the implementation of new programming, as opposed to expansion of programming in existing faculties which may be effected by quotas. That is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that we will always take the position that existing programming will not receive extra-special funding. But it will only be done when extra-special circumstances call for it.

I also want to indicate to the members of the Assembly, if I may, that the program announced was in response to a number of significant representations made to government from within the caucus, both from members who were with us in this House prior to the election on March 14 and members who were elected following the events of March 14. Therefore I want to thank all those members who made representations to both my predecessor and me with respect to this program.

I also want to pay particular tribute, if I may, to a special senate task force at the University of Alberta, which undertook a review of education of children with learning disabilities — I know that my colleague the Minister of Education has paid particular attention to the task force report as well — and to say it is very significant indeed that the senate of the university will undertake major studies of this nature. I suggest that by doing so they are placing a very real and useful focus on matters of major public concern.

When I spoke to the senate at St. Paul this September, it was the first meeting the senate had held in that community and the first time I had met with the senate as a body. I think it's important to note that in the formulation of their report, the senate relied upon the very wide expertise of public members of that body, and

indeed went further afield to seek out opinion throughout Alberta and beyond the borders of this province. I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank the senate task force for their participation on this important topic, and for the recommendations they have made, which have in part been recognized in the formulation of the policy I was pleased to announce during the latter part of September.

Now that the hon. members of the opposition are aware of the program, I am certain the program will receive the support not only of the government caucus, which was enthusiastically received, but I'm sure the same type of support will be forthcoming from all members of the opposition, both official and otherwise.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, it is possible that my hon. benchmate is still wrong on one point.

MR. NOTLEY: Only one point?

MR. KING: Having described the recent decision to the opposition, he made the statement that they are now aware of it. If description were enough to make them aware of it, they would have been aware when the news release was issued, when the Premier spoke last week, or when the story was in the newspaper. So I don't think he should assume that just because he has described the circumstances to them this afternoon for the fourth time, they are necessarily aware of it yet.

DR. BUCK: The trouble is we can't believe you half the time, David.

MR. KING: I wouldn't want you to believe me half the time. I would like you to believe me all the time.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to adjourn debate on this resolution in just a few moments, and I would like to explain why that is the case.

There are a number of developments, which I expect to occur particularly in the next three weeks or one month, that will influence the ultimate response I might make to the contents of this resolution. We might begin tomorrow morning with a meeting between MLAs and the provincial executive of the Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded. We might continue to a brief I expect to receive from them, as will all members of the Legislative Assembly, respecting some proposed changes to legislation. We could continue to receipt of the report, which is expected at the end of October, into the matter of a possible centre for sensory multi-handicapped students in the province. And there are others, all of which are going to occur, as I suggested, in a relatively short space of time. For that reason, I would not like this resolution to be voted on at the moment.

Nevertheless, among a number of issues that have been addressed, there is one to which I would like to reply. There would have been two, Mr. Speaker, except that I believe a number of my colleagues — the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud, the hon. Member for St. Albert, and the hon. Member for Calgary Foothills — have all given a very good description, first of all, of the intention of the government; secondly, of the programs which are currently under way in the govern-

ment; and thirdly, of the end we hope to reach via these programs. The description has been made more than adequately by my colleagues. I will not address myself further to the current programs of the government.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

However, there is the question of the legislation, a question not addressed as much today as it was on June 7, when this resolution was first debated in the Legislature. I would like to comment on the government's position with respect to certain provisions of The School Act. I would like the position of the government to be as clear as possible. If I could begin with Section 133 of The School Act:

Every child who has attained the age of six years at school opening date and who has not attained the age of 16 years is a pupil for the purposes of this Act and unless excused for any of the reasons mentioned in section 134 shall attend a school over which a board has control,

Section 136(1) of The School Act says:

A board shall

- (a) accept in its schools every pupil whose parents reside in its district or division, or
- (b) direct the pupil to a school in another district or [jurisdiction].

I think it is fundamentally clear that the basic premise of this government, of predecessor governments, and of the Alberta community, enshrined explicitly in the legislation, is the right of every child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend public schools in this province. One qualification is made. It says: unless excused pursuant to Section 134. I'd like to read Section 134, if I may:

A pupil is excused from attendance at school if

- (a) a Department of Education inspector or a Superintendent of Schools . . . certifies in writing that the pupil is under efficient instruction at home or elsewhere, or
- (b) [the pupil] is unable to attend by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause, or
- (c) he is absent on a day regarded as a holy day by the religious denomination to which [he] belongs, or
- (d) in a special case, the proper officer of a board, in consultation with the pupil's parent and upon the written recommendation of the school principal, excuses the pupil from attendance for such period as he may direct, or
- (e) he is attending a private school approved under The Department of Education Act, or
- (f) the board, after receiving the recommendation of a Department of Education inspector or a Superintendent of Schools . . . is of the opinion that no suitable program of instruction is offered in its school for a child [under 7 years of age or for a child] who is 15 years of age.

The only qualification that turns on the suitability of program applies to the child who is under 7 years of age or over 15 years of age. But in The School Act, for children between the ages of 7 and 15, the suitability of program is not an excuse from attendance at a public school in this province. The right of every pupil to access the resources of a public or separate school is, in the conviction of this government, assured to every child in the province by sections 133 and 136 of The

School Act.

It is true that the right to quality education is not assured to the handicapped. It is also true that the right to quality education is not assured by legislation to any child in this province. The definition of "quality" is first of all subjective and probably unique to each and every one of us, and the question of whether or not quality is delivered to any child in any school in this province, let alone to a handicapped child, is going to turn on the competence of the teacher, the concern of the community, and the resources of the parents, the community, and the province together. It is never going to depend for any child on what is written in the law of the province.

The mover of the motion seemed to suggest on June 7 — and I may have misinterpreted his remarks — that the opportunity under the Act to provide special education in special circumstances was either reprehensible or, in some way or another, a cop-out on the responsibility of the school jurisdiction or the Department of Education. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is not the case. Special education for special children with special needs, whatever they are, is neither reprehensible nor a cop-out. Under other circumstances, it is called differentiated teaching. For those we label "normal", it is a desirable characteristic of the teaching system that we recognize characteristics which are unique to each child; that we recognize the strengths and weaknesses, the abilities and inabilities of the child and teach in recognition of strengths or weaknesses, abilities or disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the position of this government is very clear. We believe that the legislation explicitly assures every child between the ages of 6 and 16 the right to education in the public schools or under the aegis of the public school boards in this province.

I had Mrs. Carriere in to visit me on Friday afternoon. I believe it is not breaching any confidence of that conversation to say she is concerned about whether or not the principle established in the court case which turned on her daughter's education is going to stand up over time. Mr. Speaker, I made an analogy for her that I would like to make to the House this afternoon. It reminds me of the persons case of 1929. [interjection] I only seem to be that old, Ray.

The community, which is Canada, believed almost universally that where the British North America Act made reference to persons being appointed to the Senate, "persons" was limited to men. The word "persons" did not include women in the view of the community at that time. The Privy Council of the United Kingdom, in its wisdom, said that that was not the case, that the Act said what it said and meant what it said, and that women as well as men were entitled to be appointed to the Senate of Canada.

No woman in Canada has since had to go back to the courts to re-establish that right. The community has not forgotten what the court said in that case. The right, having once been established by a judgment of the Privy Council, has never been qualified since.

I do not believe that the interpretation put on The School Act, as was done a year ago, is ever going to be called into question again. That is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are not other battles to be won, that under other circumstances other parents in this community may not be taking their child's education to court over some other issue. But it is my view, Mr.

Speaker, that there will not be a case again that touches on the question of whether or not a child in this province has a right to an education.

After the persons case in 1929, no one suggested that the British North America Act should be amended to read: persons, including women. And I don't believe that under the present circumstances it is necessary or appropriate that we should amend The School Act to say: every child between the ages of 6 and 16, including handicapped children, shall attend school. I don't believe that is necessary or appropriate in the circumstances.

A somewhat different argument has been made. I have been very interested to hear it, particularly from the Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded. I am open to the case they may make for the argument that it is not Section 133(1) which is of concern, but rather the qualifications listed in 134. If it is true that the qualifications pose problems or are being used by school boards to circumvent the clear intent of the Act, I am prepared to consider that case on its merits. But that, Mr. Speaker, was not the case made by the hon. Member for Little Bow nor by any of his colleagues. That is why I'm waiting to receive the brief from the Alberta Association for the Mentally Retarded, as well as perhaps any other interested groups.

Mr. Speaker, I can only say again, in conclusion, that I believe the letter of the law is clear. I believe the spirit of the law shines even more clearly than does the letter of the law. I believe that the position of this government relative to the statements of The School Act is entirely clear. I believe it is clear for most boards in this province and has been sincerely accepted as such, and that those boards are working as best they can, directing their best efforts toward compliance with the spirit of the law. For the boards that are not, I am quite willing to use other resources of the department or of the government to ensure compliance with the spirit of the law. But I would rather follow other courses first before I resort to what I believe would be a petty and constricting amendment to the law.

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

212. Moved by Mr. Purdy:

Be it resolved that this Legislative Assembly recommend that the government of Alberta give serious consideration to the development of standards for fire apparatus and equipment for municipalities, the development of training and planning manuals for interested municipalities, and a review of the Alberta building code policy on mandatory sprinkler systems and automatic fire detection systems in specific classifications of new buildings.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to present this motion to the Assembly.

I think it is appropriate that we bring this resolution before the Assembly since we just completed Fire Prevention Week in this province. Many of the members who were in this Assembly in '71 and '75 know that I have a special interest in this particular subject. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to impress upon everybody this after-

noon my very personal interest in fire prevention.

An unexpected fire has the power to cause serious community disruption and crippling financial disaster. I'm repeatedly fascinated by the attitude of Albertans towards the phenomenon of fire. It's a disaster akin to a car accident, that always seems to be happening to someone else but never to me.

I would like to suggest to members that the history behind fire prevention in public and industrial buildings describes to us a source of this "not me" attitude which, I might add, is a very irresponsible attitude. Thirty years ago there was an unspoken policy amongst property owners and business people to provide 24-hour watch on all buildings and machinery. This usually took the form of a custodian or night watchman. Somewhere along the line, the cost of having this done appeared to surpass the benefit. The service was done away with and the gates were simply locked at the end of the working day, leaving safety to the Lord's care. The dollar and cent value of protection outweighed the actual value of the property itself, which I fear is a very sad state of affairs but an apparent reality for business reasons.

Before I go into a thorough explanation of what we need to see happen in terms of fire prevention facilities, there is a need to discuss for a moment several of the social diseases, as I would like to call them, associated to fire disasters. In my mind there are two categories of disease: one that kills and one that maims. An illustration of the first might be the cause of a large fire within an industrial complex, sufficiently destructive to leave irreparable damage. Most of us view the burnt remains and shake our heads in sympathy. But what about the loss of jobs, the employees left without full wages, and the fact that the industry may never again be a member of that community? In Alberta we can hardly afford to lose a member of the secondary industry community because of the unpredictable fire damage that totally wipes out any chance of economic recovery. Actual human loss, is an obvious illustration that reminds us, after the fact, that we must consciously decide how much precaution we are willing to take in order to protect human life in the event of a fire.

The degree of fire loss and damage that acts to maim a person or community might be a rapid municipal tax loss. Presently, city planners enjoy zoning industrial areas. These areas are prime fire traps. The physical construction and the kinds of materials stored in these industrial parks lend themselves as targets for arsonists, in addition to simply being isolated areas.

Let us take a look at the fire in Grande Prairie last year at North Canadian Forest Industries. In spite of the severe financial loss to the company, the municipality was extremely lucky that the industrial park was located upwind and across a highway from the woodpile. In cases where fire damage affects the municipal tax base, each citizen would bear the burden of service reduction elsewhere in the community. Should fire damage a public rather than a private facility, the impact is even more direct because the municipality or the province will either totally replace the destroyed facility or improvise with a temporary facility until funds for replacement are available. Either way, the taxpayer will be financially responsible.

A third and less notable effect of fire damage and loss is reflected in the cost of fire insurance. With high losses, the cost of insurance increases and soon reaches the point where insurance is simply not affordable for

some potential investors. Unfortunately the same potential investors can least afford to go without insurance because they also can least afford the loss. So we have a situation where buildings and investment are jeopardized and delayed indefinitely.

There were some statistics in an article in *The Financial Post* last June, where the fire commission of the province of Alberta made a comment on the inability of business to recover and operate anew because they were not insured. In the provincial study carried out by the fire commissioner's office, out of 58 fires in 1978, which destroyed 59 buildings and led to losses of \$19.3 million, \$375,000 were uninsured buildings. Only 37 buildings were reconstructed, and between 300 and 362 people were put out of work.

Financially, though the losses run deeper, we identify a direct loss of about \$22,000 to municipalities for the first year following a fire, and \$14,000 in taxes. Welfare and unemployment costs every year thereafter that the business is out of operation. Someone has to pay for those losses, and it's the taxpayer of the community.

Based on a 10-year average, fire is expected to destroy more than \$0.5 million worth of businesses and kill about 800 Canadians this year. At the moment in this province approximately \$70 million is spent annually on fires, about \$35 per capita. I do not think this is a small amount to be ignored. Fire prevention supporters are never able to present a strong enough case for changes and progress until the service need can be demonstrated in terms of actual loss of life, and always as an after-the-fact reality.

I would like to impress on members of the Assembly the need to take leadership here and stop waiting for the latest statistics on death, casualties, fire insurance increases, job loss, and wages lost. I sincerely hope that respect for human life and property will return long before property values skyrocket, forcing individuals to seriously consider preparing for fire emergencies. The present policy of suppression, or fire-fighting as it's commonly called, must be immediately replaced by active, preventative measures.

Recommendations of prevention were clearly documented by the fire prevention branch as a result of the fire inquiry into the Olds disaster last year. I would like to comment on each recommendation in turn. Number one: detection and alerting systems are inadequate in many assembly buildings and buildings of other classes. I recommend that provisions may be made for automatic fire detection throughout the building, and that the alarm system be equipped with a method of automatically alerting the fire department in the event that a fire alarm is initiated.

Another recommendation is that the Alberta Building Code be amended to require complete sprinkler systems in all new classifications of buildings: assembly; institutional; mercantile; office; residential, excluding one- and two-family dwellings; industrial manufacturing; and industrial storage.

A major portion of fire losses occur in a small number of fire instances. For example, in 1972, 2 per cent of the fires cost 64 per cent of the loss. This includes gross cases of destruction due to delay in alerting fire departments. Fifty eight per cent of fires in buildings weren't detected because of absence of an employee between 6 o'clock in the evening and 6 o'clock in the morning. In 27 fires out of 31, 87 per cent, no person was on the premises at the time the fire

broke out. The total dollar value, because no one was in place and fire departments were not alerted, was in the neighborhood of \$6 million for the 31 fires. The total number of fires investigated was 50, for a \$12 million loss.

I think we should have installation of detection devices. We have statistics that they reduce that by 76 per cent. Installation of sprinkler protection can reduce loss by 86 per cent. In the period from 1964 to '76, insurance rates for protected buildings dropped 62 cents per \$1,000 coverage, as opposed to \$2.90 for unprotected buildings.

The Association of Municipal Districts and Counties requested that the government consider provision of a communication system, interconnecting all municipal buildings in the event of an emergency. The Alberta School Trustees' Association has established a committee to review losses in schools and is now looking towards providing an adequate alerting system in schools, where hundreds of children gather daily.

A fire department is of no effective use if there are no dependable alarm systems which allow for successful evacuation and alert. The cost of a sprinkler system installation can be offset by steel construction and innovative construction in conjunction with other systems; that is, the sprinkler system could be incorporated with the heating or cooling system of the building and the use of on/off heads as opposed to manually shut off heads.

In 1976 the province of Nova Scotia established regulations which exemplified the application of sprinkler areas in certain categories of buildings. The Nova Scotia regulations allow the leadership of the national Fire Protection Association Standard No. 13, which is a minimum standard for the installation of sprinkler systems for fire protection and for the character and adequacy of water supply to sprinkler systems. The purpose of this standard is to provide a reasonable degree of protection for life and property from fire through installation requirements based on sound engineering principles, test data, and field experiments.

We also say the building code should be amended to require that all new grain elevators and feed mills be constructed of non-combustible materials. The argument in favor of this is the benefit in preventing the fire from spreading. We know that grain elevators are composed of and contain highly combustible materials which lend themselves to complete susceptibility in the event of fire.

The training standards to be developed for municipalities that wish to develop and operate their own training programs. Today in our province training is 20 years behind what it should be because of the sophistication of buildings we have in place. In the rural part of the province, the sophistication of fire equipment and apparatus certainly hasn't kept up with the trend in building designs.

That apparatus standards be developed. Here I'm talking about standardization of apparatus design. On many occasions fire departments will be called to assist another fire department many miles away. The Olds fire was a clear example, and the one in Grande Prairie. At the one at the building products plant in the hamlet of Wabamun a couple of years ago, equipment was called in, and we found that you could not hook hoses from one truck to another. This was a real concern to the volunteer person out there. So I'm calling for

standardized equipment design across the province. It's certainly going to cost a few dollars to put this in place, but in view of the building losses and statistics I pointed out earlier, Mr. Speaker, it'll certainly weigh that dollar value.

The province set training standards because in disaster situations emergency financial assistance is available at the provincial level. We have the fire training school at Vermilion that is being operated in the summertime. I have to commend the people at the fire commissioner's office, who have done an excellent job of training people. But they can only handle so many, and in a lot of circumstances volunteer firemen cannot break away from their daily jobs. They cannot attend this fire training school in Vermilion and for training have to rely on someone within the department who has maybe gone to this school. Or at a call the fire commissioner's office — again, I commend the office — will send personnel to local fire departments to assist in any training problems they have.

The national Fire Protection Association training standards are presently being used as an objective for course development in the technical courses now provided in the Vermilion training school program. As I indicated earlier, we're getting more and more technical all the time because of the equipment we have, the sophisticated buildings, and so on. The Department of Advanced Education and Manpower has authorized Vermilion college to provide academic courses to support the technical programs presently available.

A need exists for preplanning in the event of a fire emergency. Regular inspection of equipment is necessary. We leave it to the fire departments to do this voluntarily, and I think the majority do a pretty good job. We also require an inspection of major buildings to note construction and exit and access routes necessary for emergency situations. This is where fire departments try to keep in touch with the construction of buildings.

We also must have a recognized communications system in existence at all times. We've tried that in the county of Parkland. We have nine fire stations throughout the county, so most of that rural area is protected. Through various fire departments we have tried to have one number throughout the county, and have been unsuccessful. We feel that the acreage owner who moves to an acreage someplace west of Edmonton would be better off phoning one number in the county dispatching office. A person could look at the map and dispatch the correct fire department. They may call in to Spruce Grove, and Spruce Grove will say, that's under Stony Plain. Or it could be under Winterburn or one of the other departments. So we're trying to get a comprehensive, one number telephone emergency system in place.

In conclusion, I would like to add that the fire protection branch is presently engaged in an extensive study of feasible communications networks for fire service. This study will cover, for example, the dispatching of equipment and centralizing alarm receipt locations across the province. An example of this now is the Waterloo-Kitchener region of Ontario, which includes satellite, volunteer-operated departments, which are being looked into in the course of the total study.

Members of the Assembly may be wondering what forms of support are presently provided by the province from our fire emergency service. Through Disaster Services there are two programs. One includes the



provision of 10 kits annually, at approximately \$1,500 per kit, on a permanent loan basis for emergency equipment. I see the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is responsible for Disaster Services, isn't in. But I'd like to see this upgraded, because 10 fire prevention kits don't go very far for the number of municipalities we have across the province that need this type of service. These very comprehensive kits have a lot of useful equipment that can be used at the time of a disaster.

The second program involves a dollar for dollar cost-sharing agreement with the municipality, up to \$2,500 per agreement for approving emergency preparedness. The former minister in charge of Disaster Services announced that they could use this in emergency preparedness or in a communications set-up. I don't know how many municipalities have applied for this grant, but it's there for the asking.

It's obvious that fire prevention is only a part of any local emergency plan and that the availability of moneys through the existing programs is on a priority basis. I'd like to suggest strongly to members of the Assembly that there is a gap in the service available for fire prevention and that the resolution before this House needs serious, immediate attention.

Thank you.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Member for Stony Plain for continuing his crusade on fire prevention in this province. I think a lot of us are fortunate to have gone through life without experiencing any undue circumstances within our families that bring to bear some of the pain and suffering fire has caused.

The thing I am most impressed with today in fire prevention in rural Alberta is the morale of the volunteers who have taken the opportunity to take the fire training program. I had the pleasure of going with the minister to a graduation night at the fire prevention training school and talking to the teachers and the people who have taken the training. I came away with a feeling that education is best carried on by somebody enthusiastic about what they're doing. There's no doubt in my mind that the volunteer fire-fighter in this province, given the opportunity, is probably one of the best morale boosters we have for our whole system.

With our geographic nature and thin population, no doubt our only practical fire prevention system has to be operated on a volunteer basis. But the information and training that can be made available to these people to take back to each fire department and the enthusiasm with which this is accepted in different fire departments I have checked out — I find our training program is going far beyond the dollars we're investing. The equipment they are taught to handle is being standardized at a practical rate. I think we have to realize that all small communities cannot suddenly abandon the fire equipment they have available to them. But I think the training program is bringing back to those stations in a practical way the knowledge that in order to be effective as a unit in a large fire, a certain number of modifications to existing equipment have to be made. I think the training manual being used at the station has been accepted. It is an international fire training association manual. It has been recommended by the provincial fire chiefs association, and I believe that the continual upgrading done by this larger organiza-

tion affords us the opportunity to keep abreast with the best manuals available, with the least conflict of information from one fire group to another.

I believe our building standards in Alberta need to be brought to the highest level. We are a fast-expanding province. We have industrial development growing at a major rate. If our fire codes are not standardized to the best we can conceivably afford, we will soon find ourselves building massive firetraps. There is no doubt about it. If we do not take preventive measures in the construction of large buildings adjacent to one another, we are building a potential fire hazard of a magnitude we would not want to consider.

I think this motion deserves the support of this Legislature. I think it needs the best exposure we can possibly give it. I hope the balance of the members will participate and get acquainted with what we have available and what the potentials are. There is certainly an opportunity to upgrade the standards of all our fire equipment throughout Alberta. The training school is doing its best; it's running a program of about 20 students on a weekly basis. It's a four-stage program, so students who cannot afford to be away from their jobs more than a week at a time can take the full course and break it over a period of time best suited to their own livelihood. When they come away from there, I think they're the greatest ambassadors we have for the training program. I'm sure they share the knowledge they take back to their stations with other volunteers who do not have the time or opportunity to take it. I think we do not really realize the benefits we are getting for the money we are spending on this phase of education.

So I urge members to support the motion. I think it's timely. With the right support, both morally and financially, we can have as good a fire-fighting system in Alberta as the rest of Canada or anywhere else in the world.

Thank you.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, first I would like to compliment the hon. Member for Stony Plain for introducing Motion 212. Secondly, I would like to address the motion in two distinct parts, as I read it. The first part:

...that the government of Alberta give serious consideration to: the development of standards for fire apparatus and equipment for municipalities, the development of training and planning manuals for interested municipalities...

I would like to address this primarily from the rural Alberta viewpoint. From what I can determine, rural fire protection appears in many forms. It varies from high quality to virtual non-existence. We have been fortunate in Bonnyville MD 87 to have a council that had enough foresight, about 16 years ago, to start developing a rural fire protection system. I would like to take a few minutes to share the way in which they developed that program.

They currently operate five fire trucks throughout the MD, in co-operation with the towns, the hamlets, and the one village located within their boundaries. In the towns of Grand Centre and Bonnyville, in addition to the town trucks the MD supplies an MD truck to back up the town area and to support the rural area and allow, I suppose, additional urban truck activity in the rural area. In both cases the towns provide the housing for the trucks, and the volunteer fire departments in the towns provide the manning.

One truck is located in the village of Glendon, and is housed and manned by the village. Each of the hamlets of Fort Kent and Ardmore are provided with a fire truck by the MD. The MD provides the housing, and local volunteer fire departments provide the manpower.

The deployment of the five trucks in the previously described way seems to provide very adequate fire protection for our rural area, with two exceptions. The first is the Indian reserves located within the general boundaries of the municipal district, namely the Cold Lake Reserve and the Kehiwin Reserve. Although the MD fire trucks will service the reserves on request, both the distance factor and the communication problems decrease the efficiency of service.

The second problem area is that of new jurisdictions known as summer villages. Two of these are within the MD of Bonnyville: Bonnyville Beach and the recently formed summer village of Pelican Narrows, both located on Moose Lake within five miles of the town of Bonnyville. The other day I asked an MD official if their trucks would respond to a fire call from a summer village. His answer was yes, we would drive out to the boundaries; we would stop and ensure that the fire didn't spread onto MD property.

Mr. Speaker, this outlines the strong feeling that exists, at least in our MD, toward summer villages. Their argument, and what caused them to be upset, is that they provided the initial roads for the development of these subdivisions, and as soon as there were sufficient people in the subdivisions they formed summer villages to get out from under the MD. They also argue that this occurs before they recoup their investment. If you analyse the situation, undoubtedly the prime reason for the creation of these villages is our inequitable and outdated rural taxation system. This means that in my constituency at least, rural fire protection is being hampered by the taxation system. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that I am touching on Motion 214. Hence I will save the rest of my comments on rural taxation until we debate that motion.

In summary, fire protection is provided by the taxation dollar throughout our rural district, equally to all residents. However, this service is not standardized. There is a tendency for the newer equipment to move into the larger centres, the older equipment to the smaller centres. If we're going to look at standardization, I think we have to be careful that we don't cut out an existing service. I am sure our MD would be very happy if behind our attempts at standardization came dollars to provide more modern equipment in our hamlets. If we're thinking on those lines, I'm very supportive of the concept of standardization.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address very briefly the second portion of the motion, which calls for a review of the Alberta Building Code policy on mandatory sprinkler systems and automatic fire detection systems in specific classifications of new buildings. I have a bit of concern here as to when we reach the point that we go too far in protection. I think it would be correct to say that the costs of many of our buildings have soared tremendously in recent years, mainly because of fire protection and safety regulations. The costs of our schools, hospitals, arenas, and community halls have gone up. I support reviewing the regulations; I'm not sure I support strengthening them. I think we have to strike a realistic, reasonable balance somewhere between safety and what we can afford. Life always has a

few risks; you can't remove them all.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would say that, with a couple of reservations, I support the motion.

Thank you.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Member for Stony Plain for bringing forward Motion No. [212]. It is a subject that has had far-reaching affects on many people and organizations throughout Alberta. I strongly believe in safety. In speaking for this motion, I would like to focus on three main areas: standards for fire equipment, training and planning manuals, and building codes.

Mr. Speaker, I believe standards should be developed for fire apparatus and equipment. This could include Canadian Standards Association testing and accreditation on all fire apparatus sold in the province. Presently equipment that does not meet Canadian Standards Association regulations is being sold. In the case of fire extinguishers, some are sold with the purchaser expecting to be able to have them recharged. Later, when they need recharging, the purchaser finds out that they cannot be serviced because the equipment did not meet CSA approval. It certainly creates a problem.

I believe repair and service centres that could be accredited and licensed should be established, so as to guarantee proper servicing and maintenance. This would ensure that all service centres throughout the province are of the same standard.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite our government to make it necessary to set up courses at NAIT or SAIT where service personnel could take training to learn proper maintenance and service procedures. A certificate could be issued to those passing the necessary course, and in time this would, of course, set a standard throughout the province for all fire equipment service centres. Through these training courses we could also develop training and planning manuals to aid school boards, municipalities, unorganized communities, and the public.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to point out to you that there are isolated communities where little or no fire equipment is available. The community of Wabasca presently has an old truck with a water tank mounted on it. It's a 500-gallon water tank that leaks. Really, how effective is this in the case of a fire? Fort Chipewyan has some very minor fire-fighting equipment. These are fair-sized communities that I believe will have to be assisted in some way, with better equipment and a training program to assist them with their fire-fighting capability.

There are also isolated communities such as Anzac, Fort McMurray — pardon me, Fort MacKay; I don't really believe we're isolated in Fort McMurray, Mr. Speaker — Janvier, Cadotte Lake, Little Buffalo, Chip Lake, Sandy Lake, and Conklin. These are all small service communities which have no fire equipment of any kind.

Every winter we hear of small children being burnt to death or family losses because of no warning devices or fire-fighting equipment. Mr. Speaker, I believe we should also be looking at a program similar to the announcement recently made by the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, where our government paid for installation of warning devices to ensure that people are warned early enough to get out of the home and hopefully to save lives in isolated communities, including schools and public buildings in those

communities. We could combine this with some trailer-mounted fire equipment, possibly 500- to 1,000-pound dry chemical apparatuses which would not be subject to cold temperatures. This need not be an expensive unit, but it would give these communities some fire-fighting capabilities and certainly would protect lives.

Other small centres in the more developed areas should also upgrade their fire-fighting capabilities and could rely on mutual fire agreements with larger centres. A program of advertising should be carried out to impress people to install early warning devices.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the fact about the building codes. I believe that the building code should be reviewed to see if we are not, in some cases, making regulations too rigid, especially on older buildings. I would point out an instance in one area where all the hollow-core doors in the schools had to be replaced. This was an expense of some \$150,000. It would seem to me that early warning devices are the priority. With early warning and fire drills, evacuation could be made before any of these doors would have been of any assistance. I also believe that the cost factor could be greatly reduced or minimized and put to more effective use in the implementation of early warning devices. They certainly should help to save lives.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the resolution brought forward by the Member for Stony Plain; and also ask the members of this Assembly to completely review the fire standards, regulations, and building codes as they pertain to early warning devices, and that consideration be given to support for some form of fire-fighting equipment for isolated communities. I certainly hope the hon. Member for Stony Plain receives the support of this Assembly and does not have to speak on it at another term.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to take part in this debate, I note the time on the clock. I have a little more time than I was accorded last night, so maybe I'll be able to finish my speech today.

Mr. Speaker, the motion before us about the standardization of fire equipment is a very important one indeed. As I canvassed the area I represent, I found great variance in the kind of equipment each area has. In the event of a large fire, there is a great deal of difficulty in hooking this equipment together. But much of this equipment is also tailored to what the responsible municipalities think is best for the situation; for example, grass fires more so than house fires, and these kinds of things.

In just a brief overview to give you an idea of the very different kinds of equipment, I might say that in ID 1 they have two fully equipped, standard fire trucks: one stationed in Medicine Hat and manned by the Medicine Hat fire department, and one stationed in Irvine and manned by a volunteer fire department. Negotiations are ongoing with the town of Redcliff toward some sort of agreement with them, probably similar to that of the other two major areas, the city and the town of Irvine.

The problem they have is people to run the equipment, Mr. Speaker. We have a very large area to cover. We have people throughout that area, but we do not have large enough groups of people in any one location to house and operate a fire truck. So those are some of the problems they find before them.

But the ID advisory council has decided that one of

their priorities is fire protection. I understand they have designated a portion of their \$500 per capita toward upgrading fire protection throughout the area. As I just said, Mr. Speaker, they have two fully equipped trucks in Hilda, Shuler, Seven Persons, places like that. They have smaller three-quarter ton, one-ton trucks equipped with tanks, and I'm not sure of the exact size. Some of these trucks have been there for a few years in an attempt to provide a fire protection service to the people in the area. I understand they also have an agreement with the people at Suffield for their assistance in fires that may occur in that area of the ID.

In the county of Forty Mile, Mr. Speaker, they have no protection in Bow Island or Foremost for the rural area. In Etzikom they have a three-ton truck in storage the county used to have; they've done some conversions on it to supply a service to that area. The same follows true for the Canada-Montana gas plant, where the county has a truck in storage. That is manned by the people at the plant. The Etzikom one is manned by the people in the hamlet.

It is of interest, Mr. Speaker, that a number of years ago the county did extensive work to see the council at Bow Island and people in the other areas about storing and operating a properly equipped fire truck. At the time there was also, I believe, either a circular or an advertisement in the paper about what people thought should be done for fire protection. In speaking to county officials, I find that 10 people answered that questionnaire in favor at that time. There was no comment from anybody else. They decided to leave the minimum protection as it was — in fact it has been added to, because I don't believe the Etzikom truck was in place at that time. There was no interest expressed by the people of the area.

Mr. Speaker, when we are into an area such as fire protection that is a municipal responsibility, they attempt to carry the responsibility out and get no reaction from people in the area. We have to think very seriously before we impose restrictions.

In the other portion of the MD of Taber that covers my constituency, Mr. Speaker, they have a share in a truck at Grassy Lake and a truck at Taber, run by the Taber fire department, that serves part of my constituency. The one at Grassy Lake is run by a volunteer fire department. Interestingly enough the portion of the MD, up to a short while ago, was not in the fire protection area. I believe they have a difference in their mill rate according to their fire protection area and non-fire protection area. A number of farmers got together, bought an older truck from another fire department, and attempted to provide service for the area. The fire chief for Grassy Lake informs me that now they are having problems providing the service because of the equipment at their disposal. Also, the area they protect is not large enough to provide a tax base to upgrade the equipment.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the problems in trying to provide a service throughout the rural part of the province, especially in the areas where the population is widespread. As we see by the illustration, there is a wide difference of opinion in the priority local officials put on fire protection and indeed in the pressure brought to bear on local officials for what the people feel is adequate fire protection.

Speaking to the second part of the resolution, which refers to the review of the building codes with reference to fire detection devices, sprinkler systems, and such, I

believe that part is very important indeed. I think some of the existing regulations need to be reviewed. Even on a regulation that seems very plain, different people seem to get many different views. That, Mr. Speaker, is probably part of our problem. I'm hoping that if the first portion of the resolution, toward standardization, proceeds, it can be written in plain ordinary language so there's only one interpretation and we don't end up, as we have in many regulations in the past, having 10 different ideas from exactly the same words.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I believe the resolution deserves very much consideration. We must keep in mind that we are delving into an area we previously said belongs to the responsibilities of the local municipality. In going into that area, be it just for the regulations or whatever, we have to keep in mind that we are setting ourselves up for the possible funding of all or part of the regulations we will set down.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Motion 212. I'd like to congratulate the Member for Stony Plain for presenting it. Originally I had not intended to speak on this motion. However, on further consideration of the importance to my constituency, I've decided I must speak.

This important motion deals with consideration of development of standards for fire-fighting apparatus and equipment, training and planning manuals, and with the review of the policy on mandatory sprinkler systems and automatic fire detection systems. Fires take their toll every year. In 1977, the total number of fires was 9,544. The loss was \$69,020,475, with 92 fatalities and 386 bodily injuries. In 1978, the total number of fires was 9,629, with loss of \$66,483,865 and 91 fatalities and 383 injuries.

Jurisdictional policy recently resulted in a tragedy in my constituency. The town of St. Paul has its fire-fighting equipment; the county of St. Paul doesn't. The town of Elk Point has fire-fighting equipment of its own. However, there's no mutual agreement between the towns of Elk Point and St. Paul to provide protection for the residents of the county, except in the area around St. Paul where county and town have an agreement. Recently a thriving abattoir in Elk Point was burned to the ground because of the policy of the municipal body. Elk Point had a policy, rightly so, that their vehicle would not leave the town boundaries, and it happened that this abattoir was within one mile of town. The facility burned to the ground without the assistance of that equipment. Because of the fire, a plebiscite was taken in that area. Because the ratepayers felt it would result in a high increase in taxation, they turned down the county's offer to purchase a fire truck to protect them. However, since that time the county has taken the initiative to purchase fire trucks to protect their areas, and have made mutual agreements with the towns of Elk Point and St. Paul and the hamlet of Mallaig to provide trucks and fire-fighting equipment.

It's imperative that we upgrade our fire-fighting capability by at least establishing minimum standards for apparatus and equipment. In upgrading these standards we must be prepared to provide more financial support to the municipal jurisdictions providing the fire protection. Once we provide support to the jurisdictions, we may have an opportunity to provide greater input on where this equipment is allowed to

go.

Firefighting, prevention, and equipment are important for the growth and development of our areas. The equipment available in our small communities in some ways limits the amount of growth the community can have. Because of the capabilities of the fire-fighting equipment, fire regulations limit the number of stories a building can be built. This is important when we're looking at growth. It's also important that the facilities be upgraded so that we have proper communication systems within our fire departments. The lack of two-way radios in our area makes it necessary to dispatch a fire truck and get in touch with it by means of a phone. So we must include communications as part of our policy.

This motion would ensure that municipalities would provide adequate protective clothing and breathing apparatus and that firefighters would use this equipment. We've come a long way from the time when I was a schoolchild living at home. When the fire alarm came everybody would run to the fire station and go in standard dress. But there are areas where people are still going to fires in that kind of clothing. We must ensure that they have the proper equipment and have oxygen available, and that they have the necessary equipment available for cardiac/pulmonary resuscitation. We must have the capability of training our firefighters to provide this.

A standard training manual must be adopted. Many municipalities do not have the resources or the experience to develop their own. These manuals are essential to help the small fire departments and fire chiefs train their volunteer firefighters.

Policies on automatic fire detection and sprinkler systems also need to be reviewed. Large warehouses without sprinklers are being developed. We also need to have a standard policy and procedure for testing our preventive devices. How many of us are aware of how to test whether our smoke detector is working? Is it good enough to have our wives burn something on the stove so the alarm goes off once in a while? That becomes very annoying in my house.

AN HON. MEMBER: It isn't just the wives, Charles.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members of this Assembly to support Motion 212 so we may ensure that our fire-fighting capabilities are enhanced.

Thank you.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to take part in this debate. Fire protection is taken for granted in urban areas where taxes cover the cost of such protection. In many rural areas fire protection is either insufficient or nonexistent. I hear that IDs have far better fire protection than some counties. It appears that there is a wide discrepancy in how counties view their role in fire protection. Some counties take very little responsibility; others provide fire-fighting equipment and the community is responsible for volunteer firefighters.

In rural hamlets where citizens do not have direct access to property tax some alternate method of providing funds for fire protection must be found. The most common form of providing this protection is fire co-ops. Memberships are sold and the co-ops own the equipment. Notwithstanding the fact that membership

in a co-op is open to everyone, extenuating circumstances sometimes make it impossible for all residents to join. Some co-ops will fight fires only for members. This poses a real problem when a neighbour has a fire and the equipment will not or cannot respond because of by-law constraints. The results of non-response are devastating to a community as well as to the family involved.

The other form of fire co-op has been set up by holding a plebiscite within a given area and voting to assess a mill rate to cover the cost of purchasing equipment. In this case all landowners are members by means of taxation. Locally this was done after the loss of four houses in a hamlet because of inadequate fire-fighting equipment. Of course the co-ops encounter problems with funding, especially with consideration to the high interest rates. I have had a number of rural areas requesting access to borrowing at low interest rates. These co-ops are operating on extremely tight budgets, and they had not anticipated the excessive interest.

The question of standards for fire apparatus is a concern for co-ops. If standards of water trucks are to be set, they may not be able to provide any protection. But if there is a standard set for hook-ups so that the fire departments can use their equipment in any community, then I believe they would support it.

Fire doesn't always happen to someone else. Rural people are well aware of their vulnerability. Any assistance or direction this government can give to provide protection will be welcome.

Thank you.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join in the debate on Motion No. 212. And it's with a bit of hesitation. Not that the motion itself isn't substantive and a good one, but what bothers me somewhat is the idea that we'd set standards perhaps too rigid for municipalities to pay for.

We have a custom in this province, and I'm sure across Canada, where fire trucks and fire equipment are sort of handed down from one larger jurisdiction to another, or one that has a little more... [interjections] Generation to generation. That's true. I wouldn't want standards set up that would force the legitimate efforts some of the smaller towns and hamlets are coming up with. Thirty years ago or so, when I went to school, our fire-fighting equipment was a pail of water in the summertime and snowballs in the wintertime. Certainly some of the centres and towns and houses have still got that type of equipment, and we know we have to progress.

In my district I believe only one house burned down in the years I can remember, and that was a bachelor's house. The bottom of the stove burned out. He had a big, roaring fire going, and it burned the house down. That was no one's fault but his own.

Maybe we were lucky, and I suppose we were. But we had a thing going in days gone by that was taken away from us by Alberta Government Telephones.

That was the old party line, the greatest alarm system ever devised. However, when AGT took over the mutuals, I often wondered why they didn't run an extra wire along with those other hundreds and thousands of wires they run through the country and put in an alarm system at that point. They could still do it. If the hon. Member for Stony Plain is correct in his figures, and I'm sure he is, when he says 58 per cent of fires are in unoccupied buildings when they start — I would imagine the most damage is in commercial buildings — then perhaps the hon. minister could look at having that done now. It's something we should look at.

In my home town we have the Vermilion fire training school. Without doubt this is one of the really good educational facilities we have in Alberta. It's renowned across western Canada, if not in North America.

Mr. Speaker, I know others want to speak to this resolution... [interjection] My hearing isn't that good on that side, Walter. Other members who would like to speak I'm sure can add something to the debate. For the record, I would just like to compliment the Minister of Labour and his department, in particular those officials and instructors who are looking after training at the Vermilion fire training school. I'm just so darned proud of those people who are involved with that school and how well they handle themselves and how hard they work. It's an example I wish all the public service could see and take part in. It's great.

I would have to say that I would support the motion with the reservation that if we are going to develop standards, we don't throw out the baby with the bath water, or have no water to put out the fire, or whatever. But, Mr. Speaker, we must put our money where our mouth is if we're going to come up with regulations, equipment, and this sort of thing. I certainly wish that could have been in this resolution.

Thank you.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Clover Bar adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, by way of reviewing the business of the House, there will be no sitting this evening. Tomorrow, following the question period, it is proposed to go to second reading of Bills on the Order Paper, starting with Bill No. 32, The Bread Repeal Act. The House will no doubt be treated to another loaf of the hon. minister's humor. Then it will proceed generally in the order of the Bills listed, with one or two exceptions. The first three Bills will not be dealt with in second reading tomorrow.

[At 5:22 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]

