

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, October 17, 1979 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 45****The Mental Health Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, The Mental Health Amendment Act, 1979. The purpose of this Bill is to permit disclosure of patient records to the Public Guardian upon the written consent of the patient if the information is relevant under The Dependent Adults Act. As well, it would remove from the legislation all reference to therapist or to the Therapists Registration Board.

[Leave granted; Bill 45 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the response to Motion for a Return No. 111/79.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce the Ozawa Modern Dance company, a group of talented young dancers from Hokkaido, Japan. During their stay in Alberta they will be giving a demonstration performance to the Alberta Ballet Company and watching one of their rehearsals, providing a pleasant opportunity for a cross-cultural exchange.

At this time I ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to introduce to you, sir, and to members of the Assembly a group of 16 students, parents, bus driver, and teacher Mr. John Kease, from the grade 6 class at Erskine in the Stettler constituency. They're seated in the members gallery. I ask that they please stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and the House 54 students from D. S. McKenzie junior high school in the constituency of Edmonton Whitemud. The students are accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Heather Chorley, Mrs. Louise Covey, Mrs. Frances Govia, and a parent, Mrs. Elsie Kuyt. I ask that you welcome these guests to this House.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the House, 25 students from the grade 9 class of Edith Rogers junior high school in the constituency of Edmonton Mill Woods. The member is away on government business, and he asked me to introduce them to you. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislature, 45 students from the Dewberry school. They are accompanied by their teacher Miss Larson, as well as Loretta Bowman and Donna Durnin. They are sitting in the public gallery, and at this time I ask that they stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Treasury**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today that the province of Alberta and Hydro Quebec have reached agreement in principle regarding a loan from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to that Quebec Crown corporation.

Mr. Speaker, this loan of \$200 million will be secured by debentures with a term of 25 years and an annual interest rate of 11 per cent. The debentures will be purchased by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund at a price of \$94.75, which will result in an 11.65 per cent yield to the fund. The loan will be fully guaranteed by the province of Quebec. We are advised that the proceeds of this borrowing will be applied to finance part of Hydro Quebec's construction program and its investment in the James Bay hydro-electric project.

The loan will be made from the Canada investment division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Together with the previous loans to the provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia, and to the Nova Scotia Power Corporation, this new loan brings the total loans from the Canada investment division of the fund to \$460 million. This loan represents increasing diversification of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund and is a sound commercial investment for the people of Alberta.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, in responding to the ministerial announcement regarding the \$200 million loan to Hydro Quebec, given the state of discussion regarding national unity and the national economic situation, we on this side of the House feel it's an appropriate loan and one we would endorse.

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

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. It centres on reports emanating from Toronto with regard to recent discussions between the province of Alberta and the federal government on the question of oil pricing.

I notice the absence today of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and I direct my question to the Premier. Can he indicate to the Assembly if, in fact, the

proposition put forward to Alberta by the government of Canada was to increase the consumer price of oil — gasoline, really, in the end — to \$1.30 per gallon, and what the response of the government of Alberta was?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I would refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the answers given by both me and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources on October 11, 1979.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, having regard for the fact that on that occasion the Premier indicated to the Assembly, in essence, that the negotiations were going on and the government wasn't prepared to discuss the matter in the Assembly, I put this question to the Premier. Is the Premier in a position to assure the Assembly that negotiations with the federal government are continuing? And on this very day is the Alberta Minister of Energy and Natural Resources meeting with the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Mr. Hnatyshyn, hopefully continuing the negotiations?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the negotiations are continuing. We don't propose to comment on them until they've either been completed or reached a stalemate. The discussions are ensuing today between the Alberta Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources as part of the process of those negotiations.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, are those discussions taking place in Alberta or Ottawa?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the discussions are taking place in Ottawa.

Pacific Western Airlines

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to either the Premier or the Minister of Transportation. It deals with the matter I raised in the House yesterday concerning discussions between either the Alberta government or officials of Pacific Western Airlines and Hughes Airwest with regard to the possibility of PWA acquiring control over Hughes Airwest. My question to the Minister of Transportation or the Premier is: is either hon. gentleman in a position to indicate to the Assembly at what level those discussions took place?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, responding for myself, I can affirm what I advised the House yesterday, that I had no knowledge of such discussions. If the Minister of Transportation has anything to add, perhaps he may.

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, no negotiations are under way at the present time. There were some suggestions that Hughes Airwest might be on the block. We have no negotiations nor are we contemplating any. There may have been some conversation prior to the situation yesterday, but as of now there isn't anything.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister, so the Assembly clearly understands the answer. The minister says there may have been negotiations previously. Can

he confirm that discussions went on between officials of the Alberta government or PWA and Hughes Airwest — or I guess it's the Summa Corporation — with regard to the possibility of PWA acquiring control of Hughes Airwest?

MR. KROEGER: No discussion with the Alberta government. There may have been discussion with the management of PWA, but nothing that I was aware of. It wasn't brought to my attention.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, would the minister confirm to the Assembly that there were discussions between senior management people of PWA and officials of Hughes Airwest with regard to the possibility of that taking place?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not in a position to say that there have been no discussions, because it is a self-operating Crown corporation. That's why I qualified it; to my knowledge no negotiation is going on. In a request of the chairman of the board for some comment, he said no, we're not negotiating, because it isn't negotiable.

MR. R. CLARK: To the hon. minister. I can appreciate the minister's saying no negotiations are going on. That was implied in the question I raised in the House yesterday, that the negotiations stopped when PWA found out that under U.S. federal legislation PWA would not be able to acquire a controlling interest in Hughes Airwest.

But my question to the minister is simply this: are there instructions to the management, the board of PWA, that before they would consider making an approach to Hughes Airwest ... Had PWA acquired Hughes Airwest, it would have been in the vicinity of at least a \$100 million investment. Surely there must be some discussions with some responsible Alberta ministers before PWA would even start those kinds of discussions?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, keeping in mind that I have had one meeting with the chairman of the board for the purposes of opening lines of communication, I am not at the moment prepared to comment beyond that point.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, recognizing that the minister has taken on these responsibilities very recently, can the minister assure this Assembly that from today PWA will advise the minister before it gets involved in this kind of discussion in the future?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. R. CLARK: Certainly the minister should know.

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't care to make any kind of commitment until I've had a little more time to discuss this matter with the chairman of the board.

MR. R. CLARK: Can the minister indicate to the Assembly when that kind of discussion is going to take place? [interjection]

Oh quiet, Cookson.

MR. NOTLEY: He wants a chance to speak.

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, that discussion will take place as soon as we can schedule a meeting that fits both the chairman of the board and me.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, can the Provincial Treasurer indicate to the Assembly if there have ever been any discussions with him with regard to the heritage fund or any funds of the province of Alberta being used to be a part or the whole of the acquisition of Hughes Airwest by PWA?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, there have not, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one supplementary question, if I may, to the hon. Minister of Transportation. This is for clarification. Do I take it from the minister's answer that there had already been a discussion with the chairman of the board of PWA and this matter had not come up, or that in fact there had been a discussion on the issue of whether PWA had carried on not negotiations but at least discussions of the possibility of acquiring Hughes Airwest?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, what I was trying to say was that I've had one session with the chairman of the board and there was no reference at all to any purchase of any air line. We simply had a discussion on the communications channels we could develop, how we would go about that, and didn't get into the operation of the corporation in any sense. This particular issue wasn't referred to, and I've only had the one meeting.

Cattle Mutilations

MR. MANDEVILLE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. With the growing problem of livestock mutilation, is it the intent of the minister to take any further steps to solve the mysterious killings of livestock?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, until I receive some reports from the people we've made available to aid the RCMP in their investigation, it will be difficult to take any further steps.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. A number of concerned Albertans have been putting up rewards to try to solve the mystery, or to bring it to a head. Has the Department of Agriculture done or will it do anything in this area, as far as rewards are concerned?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I guess rewards are not really in the line of Agriculture. We've offered the use of two veterinary laboratories plus the qualified staff of both to work in any way possible with either the federal veterinary clinics that are working or the labs that the RCMP are using. We've offered our services in any way possible. Until we receive some reports it's difficult to say what direction we could go to further our efforts. Indeed we are as concerned about the loss of livestock as I'm sure many individuals are, and we'll watch it closely.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Owing to the unusual circumstances, has there been any consideration to making any compensation to individuals who have lost livestock as a result of the disaster?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, until I have some reports we're only guessing that it would be unusual.

Government Pay Scales

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Is any consideration being given to flexibility in the wage and salary guidelines, in light of the concern, I think it's fair to say, expressed this morning by the Auditor General at the inability to attract accountants to his office, because of the salary schedules?

MR. HYNDMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe that is a matter which should probably be brought before the select legislative committee on the Ombudsman and the Auditor General, which was set up for that purpose.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the Provincial Treasurer or the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. Will there be any leeway in the wage guidelines to permit catch-up salaries where required, or to permit the public sector to compete with the private sector where wage rates are substantially higher and it's impossible to fill public positions?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, we're considering all aspects of that matter. No decision has been taken. We are looking for information and advice from all quarters before any final decision is taken.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. At this stage have any instructions gone out with respect to negotiations for the coming year which would allow for some flexibility within the guidelines to allow catch-up salaries or salaries which may be in excess of the guidelines, to compete with the private sector?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, no instructions have gone out at this time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to either minister. Has the government developed any position with respect to contracts for services as a method of either catching up or competing with the private sector beyond the guidelines?

By way of explanation, I would refer to a number of psychiatrists who have been employed by the government of Alberta on contract because the salary level of the public service would not allow the government to compete. Is this going to be a widespread move in the next year?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, we have a number of means of employing provincial employees, whether they are permanent, term, contract, or seasonal positions and so on. Contract positions may have a higher salary, wage, or fee, but other benefits are not included in that contract, such as pension benefits and other

benefits which are part of the bargaining process for our permanent employees.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either minister. Is the government in a position to outline to the Assembly whether the guideline principle will also be applied to service contracts?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, that's one of the items we're considering, and looking at all aspects of the matter over the weeks ahead.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Is the Provincial Treasurer in a position to assure the Assembly at this point that the guidelines will at least keep pace with inflation, in view of the fact that from August to August we had an 8.7 per cent increase in the consumer price index in the city of Edmonton? Will there be that assurance in determining the guidelines for the coming year?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, certainly we'll want to ensure that every effort is made to have the guidelines reflect the realities of Alberta and Canada in 1979 and '80.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either hon. gentleman. Will the guidelines ensure that there will not be an erosion of purchasing power and at least equal the inflation rate?

MR. SPEAKER: It would appear to be the same question the member asked a moment ago.

MR. NOTLEY: With great respect, Mr. Speaker, the question wasn't answered, and I'm putting it again.

Mr. Speaker, an additional question to either hon. gentleman. Is the government in a position to outline today whether the question of profits will be taken into account, or simply wage restraints?

MR. HYNDMAN: As I've indicated, Mr. Speaker, the guidelines are essentially following in principle what has occurred in the past. I don't think many would urge a return to the wage and price controls of the federal government of past years. We're in the position of looking at all the indicators: economic, inflationary, and other. They will certainly be taken into account — plus the indicators of this moment and this month — before any decision is taken.

Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, in reference to the official opening of the downtown treatment centre this afternoon, I would like to direct my question to the chairman of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. Very recently a judge's decision in B.C. was that narcotics charges come under the Criminal Code and that provincial legislation and compulsory programs are invalid.

Could the hon. Member for Calgary West advise what the real purpose of the Edmonton treatment centre is?

MR. LOUGHEED: As much as I'm interested, Lethbridge West. [laughter]

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I meant Lethbridge West.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, in view of the controversy it's generating I'm inclined to refer it to the hon. Member for Calgary West.

I think it should be remembered that the enforcement of the laws, particularly with regard to laws of Canada, is administered by the Attorneys General of the province. However, I think the import of the member's question is with reference to the program of mandatory treatment of heroin addicts in the province of British Columbia. That legislation was recently overturned by the courts of British Columbia. I think it has significant implications for the rest of Canada.

All I can respond to the hon. member at this point is that the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission for some months has had a contingency plan in place in the event that those addicts, shall we say, in British Columbia may have come east as a result of the legislation. It has turned out to be somewhat unfounded in that the contingency plan wasn't required. I would add that the heroin situation is being monitored today by the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission.

MR. BATIUK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. member advise whether this treatment centre is going to treat only residents of the Edmonton area?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I believe members of the Assembly have been invited to drop by today's opening of the outpatient treatment centre of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission on 103 Street. I should point out that it's an outpatient facility, the major one in the province of Alberta. It operates on the basis of a voluntary entry process. Those who seek help or have been referred come in to receive counselling and referral to inpatient facilities.

MR. BATIUK: One more supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I received an invitation to attend this opening today. Speaking to my colleagues, none of them indicated that they had received an invitation. Can the hon. member advise me how come I was so privileged?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Speaker, it may be that certain people in the Assembly have made observations about the habits of the Member for Vegreville. As it's a public institution, all members of the Assembly are certainly more than welcome to the grand opening today and this evening at 103 Street.

MR. BATIUK: Another supplementary, Mr. Speaker. With his visits there, could the member advise whether he has seen any beneficial effects of the centre?

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the two hon. members could continue this friendly conversation without taking up the time of the Assembly.

MR. BATIUK: May I have one more final supplementary, Mr. Speaker? There is a statement here that refreshments will be served. Could the hon. member advise what the contents of those refreshments are?

MR. SPEAKER: I wonder if the hon. member might lapse into a refreshing brevity.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I wonder if the hon. member and chairman of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission would indicate to the House whether the methadone treatment for heroin addicts will be continued in this facility?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the methadone treatment program, which is unique to this part of Canada as an innovative program adopted several years ago, is currently handled by the west-end treatment centre in Edmonton. I would add that members of the public who go into the facility being opened today — that is, the outpatient treatment centre of the downtown facility — would be referred to the methadone treatment program.

DR. PAPROSKI: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. member would also indicate to the House whether any new priority innovative programs have been established since the hon. member took his position.

MR. GOGO: With respect, Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission I chair the board of commissioners. We are constantly looking at new programs, particularly in light of the fact that alcoholism is becoming an extremely significant health problem in the province of Alberta. I would simply mention that I hope that in the near future there will be statements from the commission with regard to innovative policies being sent out.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the chairman of AADAC. Could the hon. member indicate whether one of the areas being reviewed at the present time is the advertising of liquor on television?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the commission has looked at and is continuing to look at many policy areas, one being the role of the advertising media with so-called life-style advertising. Although I am not in a position to advise the House today of any definitive recommendation — that is, no policy has been adopted by the commission for public consumption, as it were — at this point it's an area being actively looked at by the commission.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. member. I appreciate the answer. Is the investigation going on at the present time done on a more formal basis by having some professional questionnaire group or investigative group observing what is happening — doing examinations in the community and reporting to the commission — or is it just on a judgmental basis by the members of the commission?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, really both. We've conducted surveys using hired people outside the commission, as well as in-house activities. I would point out to members of the House, to indicate the significance of the question raised by the Member for Little Bow, that as recently as two years ago the federal program termed Dialogue on Drinking committed about \$600,000 to this very thing in terms of awareness. At the same time the industry was spending \$52 million. So I would think the member's question on the role of

advertising in the consumption of alcohol is extremely important.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the hon. member. Can the reports that have been finalized, or the surveys that have taken place up to this point, be made available to members of the Legislature for their examination and consideration?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, with respect, and in the fact that I'm still relatively new at the job, I would like to accept that question as notice and clear it with the people I represent.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that the British Columbia government is challenging the decision of rejection of the involuntary program for heroin addicts, I wonder if the minister would indicate what contingency plan the Alberta government had in place?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would hope we're not pursuing a red herring. I made the statement, accurately, that we had a contingency plan in place. With respect, contingency plans of the nature of monitoring the travel of heroin addicts across Canada involve, of necessity, those people involved with enforcing the law on one hand, and on the other, the people within the regions of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission in monitoring known addicts arriving within the community. There was no perceptible increase in these people — and this monitoring would involve the modes of transportation and so on. I don't think I could add anything other than that.

Loan to Quebec

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Provincial Treasurer, in light of the announcement he made today. I start off by asking: when were negotiations for the loan to Hydro Quebec first started, at whose initiation, and how was the interest rate determined?

MR. HYNDMAN: A few days ago, Mr. Speaker. Probably the Premier's statement to the select committee on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, in which he indicated a modification of policy, was one of the stimuli for the meeting and for the approach by the borrower.

The second question related to the interest rate. That is the commercial interest rate in Canada in respect of that kind of loan.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Provincial Treasurer. In light of the answer to the supplementary question, had there been discussions with the province of Quebec with regard to this loan prior to the Premier's announcing the welcome change, I might say, in the government policy as to loans to the province of Quebec?

MR. HYNDMAN: There were no discussions personally with me prior to September 4 or 5, when the Premier met with the government of Quebec.

Water Pollution

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to

direct this question to the hon. Minister of Environment. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether the department and the city of Edmonton officials have discovered the source of the chlorinated phenols in the North Saskatchewan River system?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we're awaiting a report which my officials hope to make available within a few days.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is he in a position to outline to the Assembly why there has been quite a long time period involved? I believe the first concern about the odor in the river was expressed 10 or 11 days ago. Has there been any assessment by the department of the time frame to investigate pollution of this nature?

MR. COOKSON: Not really, Mr. Speaker. I think the lesson has been learned from this, that storm sewer outlets are a source of contamination. The city has learned something from this also: that they themselves have to monitor a little more closely the possibility of pollution sources from storm sewers.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is he in a position to outline to the House whether the government foresees any changes as far as the Department of Environment is concerned, or whether it's satisfied that the procedures adopted by the city of Edmonton are sufficient?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I think that the city itself is sufficiently concerned that they will be upgrading the monitoring from storm sewers. Although it's a costly investment to attempt to do this, I think they'll be more concerned; because as the city grows, some storm sewers have outlets into the river above the inlets for water use within the city.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. What assessment has the department been able to undertake of the concerns by at least several experts who have been reported as indicating that a slightly different combination could have been hazardous to health in the Edmonton region? Has there been any independent assessment of the views of those people who have some expertise in the area who have expressed concern?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I have a little trouble with the question. Is the Member for Spirit River-Fairview referring to a combination of chemicals that may create a more serious problem than an individual chemical?

MR. NOTLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The question really relates to the combination. There have been reports that a slightly different combination of phenols could have been hazardous to health, and even carcinogenic. Has there been any appraisal of those concerns by the Department of Environment? Because it certainly does have a bearing on the whole issue of monitoring.

MR. COOKSON: I think that will be part of the report we'll be receiving from the department on this issue. It's probably a hypothetical thing, in that you're pro-

jecting something that may happen in the future. But certainly it's something we can be concerned about.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question to the minister. In light of the minister's tabling with the House yesterday data with respect to air quality in the province of Alberta, and given the concern about the quality of water in both the North Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan systems, will the minister be tabling with this House, in the near future, data with respect to water quality in the province of Alberta?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we in Environment monitor the water systems throughout the province at all times. The various municipalities or urban centres also monitor. To my knowledge, this is always public information that can be obtained from either the cities and towns involved or the Department of Environment.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. More specifically to the minister, is there not a similar tradition of tabling with this Assembly data and certificates of variance — if that's the correct term to use — with respect to water quality, in the same way there is a tradition of filing that data, those certificates of variance, on a regular basis, with respect to water quality?

MR. COOKSON: A good question from the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn. I think it's been an acceptable practice to file with the Legislature certificates of variance on air quality. That commitment was made prior to my becoming Minister of Environment.

With regard to the other point of tabling in terms of water quality, I could take that as notice and give it some thought.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. If my memory serves me right, it's probably in The Environment Statutes Amendment Act, 1976.

With respect to the report the minister alluded to, being compiled by the department at this stage, is the minister in any position to indicate to the Assembly when he expects that report to be completed and whether the report will specify the source of the contaminants?

MR. COOKSON: I think I've answered the time frame, Mr. Speaker. It will be dealing specifically with the problem in Edmonton. Yes, it will attempt to determine — well, the source is from the storm sewer itself — where the source is upstream of the storm sewer. I think the people in the city of Edmonton are trying to determine that at present.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the Assembly to understand that the city of Edmonton, not the Department of Environment, is going to determine where the problem lies, beyond the storm sewers? Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether any preliminary information on the source of the contaminants has been obtained from the city of Edmonton?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, the storm sewers belong to the city of Edmonton. The city of Edmonton is undertaking the responsibility of finding the source

which is passing through the storm sewers. Naturally they are extremely interested, as we are, in attempting to track down the problem in this particular case. That's really the situation at this point.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. While these are city of Edmonton storm sewers, the pollutants didn't stem from the sewers but from some other source. The province has the power to prosecute. In view of the power of the province to prosecute under The Clean Water Act, is there going to be any independent evaluation by the Department of Environment of the source of the contaminants?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't think you can call it an independent evaluation or location of the source. We work closely and jointly with the city on these problems.

University Programs

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might address my question to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. The University of Alberta recently filed a request with the minister's office to receive additional funding for the Faculty of Business Administration and Commerce. By way of background, the business community requested that the University of Alberta upgrade its program. Students are being turned away, and now there's a shortage of trained business graduates.

Has the minister met recently with faculty representatives in the university? Secondly, is he going to consider a special funding grant, not just block funding and shifting the load to the university?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the University of Alberta has made a request for increased funding to accommodate, I believe, an additional 300 students in the program in that particular faculty. In response, I have requested information on why the university cut back 500 students on their own enrolment in the program compared to three years ago in the same program. That information has not yet been supplied.

Further, I have not met with the faculty, nor is it my intention to meet with individual faculties at various universities to discuss the allocation of resources by the boards of governors within the institutions. I think that would be quite unusual, and I don't intend to pursue that course of action.

MR. HIEBERT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower has been queried on the expansion of several programs at the University of Alberta. Could he advise the House if his department has any ongoing review or research of programs or faculties with declining enrolments?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of course we are advised of enrolments within the various faculties. But once again, the question of either declining or increasing enrolment must be dealt with by the proper university authorities in the allocation of block funding available to them. Of course, new programming is a different matter, and an extensive review process is involved in those discussions.

MR. COOK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister suggesting that faculty who have tenure, for example, in the departments of history or home economics, should be teaching business administration? Is the minister suggesting that faculty members in a discipline with declining enrolments should be shifted to areas of study with increasing enrolments?

MR. HORSMAN: That's a matter of concern, not only for the University of Alberta, but indeed universities in all of Alberta, Canada, and North America. It's a very difficult question.

It is my belief and the policy of this government to ensure that sufficient funds are made available to institutions on a block basis to accommodate growth in new programming and otherwise on a block basis with some compensation provided annually for cost increases. Other than that, the role of the board of governors, in consultation with other components of the universities, is to make those adjustments with respect to faculties with either declining or increasing enrolments. I believe that's a proper function. It has been established that way for many years in The Universities Act of the province of Alberta.

Hazardous Wastes

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Environment regarding the hazardous wastes management committee. I don't know if the minister indicated anything about that topic today. Has the minister received an interim report from that committee to help assure that the human environment is protected?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we have established the hazardous wastes management committee with certain terms of reference. They are now in process of putting together recommendations which I in turn will pass on to the Environment Council of Alberta. However, we don't intend to receive the report from the management committee until about the first of 1980.

Pacific Western Airlines (continued)

MR. R. CLARK: I'd like to go back to the Minister of Transportation on the question I asked about PWA and its attempts to acquire additional air lines outside Canada. What is the policy of the government of Alberta with regard to PWA acquiring interest in air line companies outside Canada?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that we have a policy, because I haven't been involved in a discussion of this nature. At the moment I wouldn't really want to comment on anything beyond this, because I simply have no information on any moves made in the past. The suggestion that we've been negotiating — when I say "we", the provincial government has not. The second "we" that I represent, specifically PWA, may have been. The board may have been in discussion. But I've had no meeting with the chairman of the board or anyone else who could make that kind of comment for me.

I guess that's going away a bit from the direct question, Mr. Speaker. But I'm not at all prepared to say that we have a policy of this kind, because I've not

been involved in any discussions that relate to purchase of assets in the way of air lines outside the province or country.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then a supplementary question to the Acting Premier, who on this occasion would be the Provincial Treasurer. I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer, who has been a member of the government's priority committee in the inner sanctum, if in fact he could indicate to the Assembly the policy of the Alberta government with regard to PWA considering acquisition of an air line outside the country.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Transportation has covered that amply, especially when one considers the answers which have been given by the former Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Transportation in previous legislatures, from 1975 to 1979.

In fact, bearing in mind the color of the aircraft of the air line which the hon. gentleman suggested, I think he's drawing a yellow herring across the floor of the Assembly. [laughter]

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the possibility of the Provincial Treasurer stepping on a yellow banana, I would ask him this: does the Alberta government have any policy with regard to PWA acquiring additional air lines within Canada, having regard for the fact that at least one may be up for resale by the federal government?

AN HON. MEMBER: Speculations.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think that's highly speculative. I think it's been very clear, if hon. members look back to the original reasons and rationale for the acquisition of Pacific Western Airlines. Subsequently, of course, that air line did acquire the air line to the east of us, Transair, and in my personal knowledge certainly no initiatives beyond that are contemplated.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Economic Development. Recognizing that the Alberta government is pursuing an aggressive direction regarding the stability of the economic picture in Alberta because of transportation and the need for transportation, does the minister agree that the department explores any reasonable avenue to meet this end, including transportation?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. In addition to having exhausted the time for the question period, perhaps the hon. member could explore the extent of the minister's agreements or disagreements outside the Assembly.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, the question is . . . Is the question period over? I'll pursue the question tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 32 The Bread Repeal Act

MR. KOZIAK: Just half a loaf today. I'll refrain from the puns, although I was tempted to interrupt the answers given with respect to Hughes Airwest with an answer: yes — yes, yes, yes — yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. [laughter]

At the popular request of all my colleagues to get back to The Bread Act, I will do just that, Mr. Speaker, and move second reading of Bill 32, The Bread Repeal Act.

In doing so, I should point out that The Bread Act deals with a number of areas. It probably would be of interest to hon. members that those areas include the contents of bread so as to protect consumers from noxious, unwholesome, deleterious, or adulterant material, et cetera. That is one concept the present Bread Act contains.

Another deals with the weight of the bread, in the normal concept of not having a consumer misled in terms of the product he is purchasing. A third provision restricts bakers to selling loaves of bread in specified sizes. Particularly, Section 4 of The Bread Act deals with 20 as a minimum or 20.5 as a maximum weight for standard bread, or any multiplies thereof, which would mean 40- or 41-ounce loaves or I suppose, 60- or 61.5-ounce loaves, and so on. In the case of fancy bread, a 9-ounce minimum or a 9.5-ounce maximum, with multiples of that as suggested in Subsection (b), and again with fruit bread, of 16-ounce minimums and 16.5-ounce maximums.

If we take a careful look at what The Bread Act does in terms of other existing legislation that regulates the baking industry, we'll find that really that's all this piece of legislation accomplishes. It restricts the bakers of this province to baking and offering for sale a standard size, regardless of whether or not a consumer might want a 14-ounce loaf of bread, an 8-ounce loaf of bread, or what have you, regardless of the needs of a particular consumer having regard to the lack of freezing capacity or the size of the family unit. A 20-ounce loaf of bread may not in fact be an appropriate purchase for that consumer.

The other areas that deal with the contents of a loaf of bread, to ensure that consumers aren't adversely physically and medically affected by what they eat, are more adequately dealt with by substantial federal legislation. I have with me a copy of the Food and Drugs Act and the regulations thereunder. The provisions relative to bread are substantially more clearly defined than under the old act we have here. Further, existing legislation at the federal level, the Weights and Measures Act and the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, again more thoroughly deals with the other aspects of the law that the piece of Alberta legislation attempts to deal with.

In fine, Mr. Speaker, the only conclusion I could reach as to the necessity of this act was that of regulating for the sole purpose of restricting the size of a loaf, to the detriment, I think, of consumers in this province.

I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 32, The

Bread Repeal Act, not only in terms of the removal of this legislation from the record of this Assembly, but also as an example of deregulation that I would like to pursue as a philosophy in the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Of course that doesn't mean that laws should be repealed or not passed, or that regulations should be repealed or not proclaimed simply to follow that philosophy. But I think we should look very carefully at what comes before us in terms of demands for legislation and regulation. The most important thing that we as legislators do is done in this Assembly, in the laws we pass. We have to give careful consideration to those laws. We should also reflect on those laws that were passed by us and our predecessors in previous legislative assemblies to see if in fact laws passed on those occasions are still current and relevant to the situation we face today. That will be one of the very important areas I will pursue during my stewardship of the portfolio I now have responsibility for.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all hon. members to support second reading of Bill 32.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't have any difficulty in accepting legislation that would repeal redundant legislation that is already out of date because of either other provincial statutes that deal with the matter more adequately or, for that matter, federal statutes. With respect to the size of loaves of bread, frankly I don't really think there is a great problem in omitting any statutory or regulatory function on that item.

I think though, Mr. Speaker, I would be a little more concerned about Section 3 of The Bread Act. As the minister pointed out, clearly it does pose an obligation on the government of Alberta to protect the consumer in terms of the quality of the product which is on the market. I would have no objection to voting in favor of this particular piece of legislation, providing we are assured that we have adequate safeguards in federal legislation. The minister referred to present legislation. I guess as a matter of question more than anything else, when he concludes debate perhaps he might outline the role that he sees the department in Alberta playing in protecting the consumer, or whether we would simply be leaving that up to officials under the federal department.

It seems to me it's one thing to repeal legislation that we judge to be redundant, but in repealing that legislation we have to look at the bottom line. Mr. Speaker, if the bottom line is that we are still going to have consumer protection in terms of the quality of bread sold in this province, I'm quite prepared to vote in favor of the Bill. But if there is going to be any lessening of that, or if we find we are going to be leaving it up to a federal department which may or may not have the same powers as we set out in this legislation, I think we have to know that before accepting the principle.

So those are the very brief comments I have on this piece of legislation.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I too must say I will support this little piece of legislation. I only was sorry that the minister didn't say that if the loaves are smaller, there will be less loafing. I can well agree that maybe this should be left, that a loaf of bread not necessarily be 20 ounces. I only hope this will not give

the benefit to the baker. If the bread gets any smaller in weight, I hope the price will come totally. I have watched that very closely with oil. About a year ago you could have bought a quart of oil for \$1.09; it was advertised. When the litre came, it went down 2 cents, but in a short time it was already \$1.15. Now, in less than a year's time I have to use 5 litres of oil where I used 4 quarts before. The total cost is so much more.

I only hope this would not be a benefit to the baker, only. True enough maybe a 10-ounce loaf is big enough where there are only one or two persons in the family, and so forth. I can see that, but I hope it wouldn't be abused.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KOZIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the contributions of both hon. members to the debate on second reading of Bill 32. Perhaps I can respond first to the concerns of the hon. Member for Vegreville.

I think we must appreciate that under this Act the price of bread was never controlled. So even if you had 20- or 20.5-ounce bread, the variations in price across the province may be substantial. The hon. member's concern is that it won't change with the reduction in size. We've had examples of that even with milk, which is controlled under the Public Utilities Board. The change from quart to litre was accompanied by a volume price increase, and that's a controlled food. We must appreciate that we live in times when, with gold soaring to \$400 U.S. an ounce, things are a little unstable. The price of commodities is rising. We'll see that, hopefully, for our farmers in terms of the fairly good quality crop of wheat that I understand is going to be harvested this year. Ultimately that may well reflect in the price of bread. I think these are things we have to live with.

I'm interested as well in the comments the hon. member made about oil. Without control or regulation, we're now seeing, at least through advertisements — and I hope the advertisements are borne out by results — oil that does not need to be changed every 1,000 miles as it used to be at one time. If we can see the vehicles we drive requiring an oil change every 15,000 miles, that is a substantial reduction in the cost of operation of a motor vehicle, and the time that you and I as consumers would have to spend in servicing our vehicles, because time is money. I'm glad the hon. member raised that.

The two areas the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview raised are very interesting as well. We had a meeting of the ministers of consumer and corporate affairs — that isn't quite accurate across the nation, as the titles vary from province to province. Not all ministers responsible for consumer affairs necessarily have corporate responsibilities; some would have fisheries mixed in and things like that. There isn't a standard loaf that applies to the ministries across the province.

But we did discuss the role of the provincial and federal governments in the area of consumer law and found that one of our concerns is disentanglement, if one might use that phrase. Both provincial and federal governments are involved in thrashing around on the same issue, leaving others open. From an efficiency point of view, we would hope to be able to disentangle

ourselves from areas where both of us are involved and use our resources to serve the consumers of the nation more efficiently.

I would look upon this piece of legislation as just that: disentanglement. I say that because the federal government has legislated the Food and Drugs Act, I understand under the powers of the British North America Act dealing with criminal law, peace, order, and good government. Looking at the federal Food and Drugs Act, Section 4 under Part 1 deals with food in general, not just bread. The provisions read:

No persons shall sell an article of food that

- (a) has upon it any poisonous or harmful substance;
- (b) is unfit for human consumption;
- (c) consists in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, disgusting, rotten, decomposed or diseased animal or vegetable substance;
- (d) is adulterated; or
- (e) was manufactured, prepared, preserved, packaged or stored under insanitary conditions.

So in fact Section 4 of that Act goes further than The Bread Act in many respects. Under the federal Act the penalty provisions are much stiffer than under The Bread Act, which goes back into antiquity in this province.

Under that same federal piece of legislation there are substantial regulations that deal with what bread can contain. So I'm more than satisfied that consumers' health is adequately protected by this piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a second time]

Bill 33

The Revised Statutes 1980 Act

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, in rising to move second reading of Bill 33, The Revised Statutes 1980 Act, I'd just like to make some very brief comments for members of the Legislature. This is a very important Act, although I don't think there are very many points here that members will contest.

There have been approximately four reviews: in 1922, 1942, 1955, and 1970. I understand this is the fifth review. Revision really only means an updating of the language, and allows legal sanction to consolidate the statutes as they are printed. As I indicated on first reading, it:

- (a) shall consolidate and revise the Revised Statutes of Alberta 1970 and the public Acts of Alberta enacted after December 31, 1970 and on or before December 31, 1980, and
- (b) may consolidate and revise any public Acts of Alberta enacted before December 31, 1970 and not repealed on or before December 31, 1980.

I think there should be no difficulty in interpreting Section 2(a). If any members have difficulty interpreting (b), may I just elaborate for a minute. It's saying that the Chief Legislative Counsel can omit Acts if they are not of general interest. In other words, they're omitting them from the statutes, but the Acts will still remain as separate Acts. The Chief Legislative Counsel can also bring in the statutes if they are now of general interest but were not of general interest before those dates.

The third point I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, is in reference to Section 3. In the performance of his duties under this Act, the Chief Legislative Counsel shall follow certain rules and may do the number of items mentioned. I think the only one that needs some clarification, and as a matter of fact is new in the Act, is Section 3(d). It will actually allow rewriting of amendments to suit the Revised Statutes 1980 if the amendments were, in fact, not proclaimed until after December 30, 1980. Then hon. members would have a legitimate question: what happens if they are revised at that time but obviously can't be consolidated because the Revised Statutes are made? They will be placed into a supplement. That supplementary edition is a new item in the Act and follows very closely, I believe, that of the federal Parliament.

In addition, if I may deviate for a minute, Mr. Speaker, there is the intention to have a loose-leaf binder of the statutes, although it's not in the Act, so that exactly this kind of point can be ongoing. We'll have statutes that are not consolidated, but at least all the amendments will be together and revised, of course, with the update of the language.

The final point, which is also new, Mr. Speaker, is Section 3(1). It's necessary for two reasons. First, you don't need the Legislature to change the forms and schedules. Secondly — and more important, I suggest — it's necessary to accommodate the typing into a computer which brings some degree of efficiency to this revision.

With those brief comments on this very important Act, I ask the Legislative Assembly to move second reading.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, while I intend to vote for second reading of Bill 33, I would ask the hon. member sponsoring this Bill to respond to several comments that have been brought to my attention concerning the index for the Revised Statutes of Alberta. The member may be aware that a number of legal librarians in the city of Edmonton have recently established an organization. One of their major concerns, as we revise the statutes of the provinces, is that we develop an index system based on subject, as opposed to the present arrangement. It's rather difficult, especially for someone not practicing law, to go into the library of the province of Alberta or a public library and even begin the process of tracking down the statutes. You have to know the name of the statute. Then after you obtain the statute you have to go year by year to determine what changes have been made to various statutes.

The legal librarians have pointed out to me that that's a rather complicated approach which, while it may drum up a little business for the legal fraternity, nevertheless makes the public statutes of Alberta a little more mystifying for the average citizen. They have suggested that a place to start might be to look at the index to the Revised Statutes of Newfoundland. In 1970, the provincial Legislature revised the statutes of that province. They have an index by subject matter, so a person can go into a library, look up the index on the basis of subject matter, and then is in a position to find very quickly the appropriate statute the individual is interested in examining.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member, when he concludes debate, to comment on the question of indexing. It seems to me that we're going to go through a

major process here of combining Acts that have been on the statute books for many years, looking at the legislation of the last few years, and improving the wording — all of these things members of this House, I'm sure, would support. But it does seem to me that the submission made by the law librarians is well worth taking into account when we go through that rather expensive process. Whether or not it needs to be inserted in the legislation perhaps is not as important as that when the process takes place we look very seriously at the question of a subject indexing system. I would refer the hon. member to the submission made by the law librarians as perhaps the place to start in terms of a way to deal with this proposal as we go through the process of combining the statutes.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone in this House is more surprised than I that I'm rising to speak on this particular piece of legislation, but I do so in response to the comments by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview with respect to indexing. As a member of this Assembly who's a member of the legal profession, I wish to assure the member that we take no particular joy in the lack of indexing. It doesn't contribute in any desired way to our revenues as practitioners of the law. In fact, I think the recommendation he has brought to this Assembly warrants very serious consideration and would be welcomed by members of my own profession as well as others associated with the review and investigation of the law.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member wish to conclude the debate, or are we ready for the question?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude the debate.

I certainly take with great seriousness those comments from the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview and the hon. member from the government side. I too have that difficulty, as I'm sure all members do. Clearly my understanding is that with modernization of the system in these Revised Statutes, there's going to be a considerable amount of improvement in the 1980 Revised Statutes. Responding to the hon. members, the loose-leaf portion, which is not in the Act, will certainly allow the amendments and the various Acts to be brought together on a continuous basis so there will be less difficulty.

But in either case, I don't think there'll be sophisticated indexing by topic as the hon. members have indicated. I will take it upon myself to bring this to the attention of the Chief Legislative Counsel and minister in charge, so maybe something could be incorporated, at least apart from the legislation. I think it can.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the members who spoke.

[Motion carried; Bill 33 read a second time]

Bill 36
The Municipal and School Administration
Amendment Act, 1979

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 36, The Municipal and School Administration Amendment Act, 1979. On the surface it would appear this Bill is quite routine and straightforward. It is straightforward. It's routine only in the sense that it

affects small numbers of our population, but it's extremely important to those who are involved.

The matter arises this way, Mr. Speaker. Some time ago we received a letter from the town of Devon indicating that its council had passed a resolution asking that we make amendments to The Municipal and School Administration Act to provide for the dissolution of what they referred to as an urban/county government. I don't believe that term is used in the Act, nevertheless it's one that fell into common use in describing a merged form of school and municipal administration in an urban area. I should point out that this has nothing whatever to do with The County Act and the system, as we know it, of education and municipal affairs being handled by a county government in a rural area under The County Act.

The situation is that The Municipal and School Administration Act, as it presently stands, allows a community to vote on and move into a system of a merged administration for municipal and school purposes. It further allows that four years down the road a vote be taken and the question put as to whether the citizens want to continue with that. After that question is put — and that's the case in Devon; it's been put at one time — there are no other provisions in the Act to ever undo what has been done.

It was my feeling that all we needed was a line in there saying that the minister may at any time dissolve the joint board, but legal advice tells me we have to do it in a manner that takes three or four pages. That is probably appropriate in that it would require the council by its own resolution or the electors by a petition equalling 5 per cent of them to request such a change.

So the Act before us simply makes amendments to allow for another vote. I should point out to the Assembly that it's not the government's intention in any way to interfere with what's occurring in Devon or other communities that may be involved in this kind of administration, but only to provide enabling legislation for them to make some changes their citizens deem to be appropriate.

[Motion carried; Bill 36 read a second time]

Bill 37
The Social Development
Amendment Act, 1979 (No. 2)

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 37, The Social Development Amendment Act, 1979 (No. 2). As I outlined on introduction, this Bill is to complete the package of legislation relating to the handicap benefit, and specifically to provide a top-up amount of a handicap benefit to handicapped persons who are eligible for and in receipt of a social allowance. In other words, if the needs of an individual who is currently receiving social assistance total \$550 per month, and that individual will qualify for the assured income for the severely handicapped program, he would receive the \$370 per month under that program. There would be a top-up of \$180, so his needs are still being met as they were prior to the introduction of the new assured income for the severely handicapped program. That top-up would equal \$180, so he'd be back to the \$550 he needs.

In addition, the amendment would allow the department to recover overpayments of social allowance of amounts not exceeding \$500, by deducting monthly

amounts not exceeding 10 per cent of the value of basic necessities from social allowance payments or handicap benefit payments.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one or two comments with regard to the Bill, specifically on Section 12(2), and Section 14. As I understand Section 12(2), the amendment lessens the penalty for non-disclosure of a material fact or for false representation, and makes the person in default of payment not exceeding \$500 not subject to any kind of discipline. My concern is that in fraud situations does this not take the teeth out of those kinds of cases? I feel that a number of people in the department pursue persons who make attempts to defraud the department. They find persons, and then all of a sudden the penalty is not very severe. I think these people say, oh well, so what; it won't hurt me if I cause fraud. They laugh about it to the staff, and I'm sure the staff can become very demoralized, at least I would if I was the person trying to pursue that person and had done a good job, and then in turn there's no teeth in the legislation to really penalize the person who has caused the fraud. I'd appreciate the minister's comments with regard to that kind of situation in his department.

Secondly, with regard to the amendment to Section 14, which provides for the recovery of overpayments up to but not over \$500 at an accelerated rate of payment, I have two concerns on which I would appreciate the minister's comments.

First, what about the loss of amounts over \$500? I'm sure there are many cases in the department where the losses are over \$500. At \$50 a month and 10 months, that can go by very quickly with the large department and the number of files that are there. Soon we've got an amount over \$500. I'm sure many of them are at least at \$1,000.

But even if that happens and there is a repayment up to the \$500, the department is now requiring a repayment at a more accelerated rate than the prior policy had been. In my examination of where the repayment would come from . . . The legislation indicates it will come from 10 per cent or less of the basic necessities. I understand that would mean from the rent, or the clothing and the food, or the personal allowance. The rent can't be reduced by the client, so most likely the first place that will be affected will be the food of that client. From my past experience, I understand most of the people on social allowance are already at a subsistence level. We're attacking them in a very vulnerable area, their food budget, an area that I think just isn't acceptable. I'd appreciate comments, and possibly reconsideration by the minister with regard to that fact.

One other comment on this area. Often the overpayment is not caused by the information the clients have given but by error by one of the personnel in the department. I've often thought that if that's where the fault lies, why should the client be penalized? With the accelerated rate of repayment, I think we penalize them even more. We place an unjust burden on many innocent clients in the field. I think the minister should reassess the legislation with that in mind.

In the present policy used in the department, I understand deductions are made regardless of the total amount owing. The rate is based on the personal allowance of \$15 per adult, plus 25 per cent of the earnings exemption. I'm sure that policy was implemented so that the basics of rent, food, and clothing

were not affected and the normal living conditions of that particular client and the family could carry on. But we're moving a step further so that now we're affecting their food budget, which I'm sure is under terrific pressure at the present time, and maybe leaving that flexible earning area untouched, plus the food budget being affected by this accelerated pressure for repayment.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few remarks with respect to the legislation before us, in two or three respects. One, I am very pleased that the hon. minister has brought forward the amendment removing the need for imprisonment of those who are receiving social assistance, when they are found to have received any excess amount and are being fined. It seems to me that the legislation that existed didn't really have very much logic in it, in imprisoning people who are already under a disadvantage insofar as financial situation is concerned. To imprison them for something they are not able to cope with does not — it seems to me two wrongs do not make a right — put them in a situation that leaves them perhaps on an equal footing with other citizens.

In various legislation I think we have other means by which to take such steps as may be necessary, other litigation and so on, to collect any fine that is due to be recovered into the public purse. If an individual is continuing to receive support or no longer has need for social assistance in a monetary way and has found employment, then of course there are means for recovery. This is where it's far more logical that recovery be made. Surely nothing is gained by imprisoning an individual who is just beginning to attempt to get ahead, so to speak, and out of the dilemma of the disadvantaged.

As well, I might return to the point that the legislation indicates that if there is receipt of overpayment as a result of error . . . The hon. Member for Little Bow quite rightly indicated that quite often the overpayment and the error results from within the department. Quite often the recipient is just not keeping close enough track and is not even aware that they are receiving more than they are entitled to. I think all these matters are very important to be taken into consideration.

I would like the hon. minister perhaps to give some examination to another area, if he has not already. That is with respect to the level of support being given under social assistance. I'm not suggesting that the hon. minister should propose that there be a flagrant increase that would encourage people not to work because they are able to receive sufficient support out of the public purse that they don't need to make any effort to be self-supporting. But from time to time representations are made to me, and I'm sure to many members in the Legislature, that it is extremely difficult for them to manage with the constantly, almost daily, changing costs the basic necessities, food and clothing. It is extremely difficult to try to cope with that. Once we've put a formula in place as to a level of support, that generally doesn't alter for a full year. It really does not reflect the reality of the day to day cost of living and necessary expenses out there in the public.

Another point that has been raised with me on many occasions by recipients who are receiving social assistance — not because they are not able to get a job or

because of lack of availability of work for them — but are not able to hold a job because of some handicap, a minor one perhaps. But industries, with the costs they face, are just not prepared to cope with allowing a lower standard of productivity within the workplace. So they're not able to have this work.

They're finding that the allowance we have calculated allows them absolutely no time or availability for social recreation, from time to time. Not that they should be able to go on a regular basis — every week, every other night, or whatever — for some social recreation, but to be able to do that at least on occasion. They indicate that the constraints on some of them are so tight.

I suppose the type of social worker they have has a great deal to do with how they calculate their budgets. Many of them have come to me listing their budgets and saying, I can't even have a little bit of social recreation once in a year, never mind once in two or three months. Surely that has to be part of an individual's real need for survival.

I think they have enough strikes against them that they have to be on social assistance, not because of laziness or not having the energy to get out of it but simply because they really don't have that many alternatives. I'd like the minister to perhaps take that into consideration when he is planning his future budget for the following year and thereafter, and really examine the allocations from that point of view.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker I'd like to address a few remarks to this Bill and deal with four separate issues.

I might just begin with the remarks the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood made, in terms of improving the basic social assistance program from time to time, or at least on a more regular basis, and allowing just a little bit of opportunity on occasion for recipients to be able to do more than just subsist.

Mr. Speaker, I know that abuse of welfare is a favorite topic of a lot of people. But when one looks at the case load in this province, one finds that a very small percentage — I believe it's in the neighborhood of five or six per cent of the case load — are what are called unemployed employables. The vast majority of the case load in Alberta are people who are handicapped in some respect, senior citizens, or women with dependent children.

That being the case, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the arguments the Member for Edmonton Norwood raised are appropriate. I often think of the difficulties people face now in a province where we have substantial economic activity. The boom that follows that kind of activity frequently leads to a situation where people have to live in an accommodation that is far from the motel accommodation we hear about so often. Much of the accommodation people on assistance have to find in a province like Alberta is certainly not the kind of place where, I'm sure, members of this House would like to raise their families.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that a more regular review is probably important, because the likelihood of substantial increases in rent and the necessary costs of life is, in my judgment, almost certain to increase very substantially as we look at the major projects on the drawing board in Alberta. I think we would be very lucky indeed if we didn't escape a rate of inflation that is somewhat above the national average. It strikes me

that the minister's department is going to have to be in a position to respond.

I would just make one additional observation on this item, Mr. Speaker. I'm not entirely sure I agree with the views of the Member for Edmonton Norwood in this respect, but I think the parallel move we should make, in addition to adjusting social assistance and allowing for more earning power, is to take a close look at the minimum wage in Alberta. For four years I had the privilege of sitting on a committee that advised the Minister of Labour on workers' compensation. For a number of years we used as a yardstick compensation rates that were based on the minimum wage. But for some time now there really hasn't been an increase in the minimum wage. I would argue that this government is going to have to look at bringing up the minimum wage — certainly comparable to other provinces in the country. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we are not at this stage. We have fallen behind.

I for one have supported, and will continue to support, moves in Alberta that will improve the climate for small business through tax incentives and what have you. But I think the trade-off that has to be made is that employees should not be subsidizing business operations, whether big, small, or in between, and that we should have a minimum wage which is reasonable and which I think would act as a parallel policy to certain adjustments in the social assistance program.

Mr. Speaker, the second point I'd like to deal with is the issue that was raised about the recovery of funds not exceeding \$500. I notice that the amendment talks about 10 per cent of the value of the basic necessities of that person or his dependant. So what we're really dealing with is a situation where, as the Member for Little Bow pointed out, there will be occasions — I certainly know of occasions in my constituency where overpayment has occurred through no fraud on the part of the client, but due to an error on the part of the department itself. Now, Mr. Speaker, a figure of 10 per cent, not only of the basic necessities of the individual client but the dependants, in my judgment is a rather more rigid approach than would be wise. I would ask the government to review that particular section between now and committee stage.

As far as the topping-off provision is concerned — up to a maximum now of \$550 — I certainly have no difficulty with that as it relates to the assured income for the physically handicapped, except that I would just add the comment I made a moment ago that we have to take a look at the basic social assistance program itself.

I want to conclude my remarks by dealing with the section that is going to eliminate "and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 90 days". Mr. Speaker, as I understand it — and I could be wrong — a clear case of fraud is punishable under the Criminal Code. So if somebody were to knowingly defraud the government of Alberta of literally thousands of dollars, or substantial amounts of money, action could be taken under the Criminal Code. In that sort of situation there is a remedy, and in my view it's unnecessary to have in legislation in this province a section which says, in default of payment up to 90 days in jail for \$500 or less. In the vast majority of cases in all likelihood it is an overpayment that has resulted from an error, or carelessness, as the Member for Edmonton Norwood pointed out, or perhaps a failure

to comprehend. Often we're dealing with people whose educational background is not very high. Perhaps it's an inability to understand. In most instances it's not really a case of deliberate, premeditated fraud. Where that does exist, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the Criminal Code sets out the provisions.

With those comments, I certainly intend to vote in favor of Bill No. 37. But it does seem to me that some of the observations made by the Member for Edmonton Norwood and the Member for Little Bow deserve consideration by the government before we complete the legislative process and go through committee stage and ultimately third reading.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the comments by my colleagues in the Assembly on the Act and the proposed amendments. I wonder if I might clarify some matters for the hon. members.

First, with regard to overpayment of amounts up to but not exceeding \$500, we're recommending in this legislation that the amount that might be deducted from basic necessities would not exceed 10 per cent. There's no such limit in the current legislation. We've followed that as a general practice. It was the feeling of the department, they presented their thoughts to me, I concurred and convinced our government caucus that in fact a limit should be placed on the ability that we as a department might re-collect.

While I'm on that point, I might add that if we were to look at the basic necessities — because those were referred to by the hon. Member for Little Bow — we'd find that social allowance in Alberta is divided into several categories. In the categories of rent and utilities they are among the highest, if not the highest, in the nation. In the other categories — food, clothing, other sundry allowances — we're in the middle category in the nation. I can bring the exact figures, Mr. Speaker, when we are in committee, if the hon. members would like them.

Where there's been an overpayment in excess of \$500 per month, we'll follow the same practise we have in the past; that is, there will be a repayment agreement. That's basically what we've done for any overpayments to date. The social worker sits down with the client and together they work out an acceptable repayment agreement. That would continue in the future.

On Section 12(2) of the Act, dealing with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 90 days, the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is on a very important point, and he's accurate. I think nothing more need be said about that other than that the section refers to the recipient of social assistance. We should not confuse that with a former spouse who has legal obligations to his former partner in marriage and their children. I assure you that under our maintenance and recovery program, we're pursuing those individuals as diligently as we can to ensure that there isn't a frauding of the system.

The number of people who fall into the category of receiving overpayments is very small. Yet as the Minister of Social Services and Community Health it's one of the more frustrating things I find. The general theme echoed by so many people in society today is that

there's widespread abuse in the system and that a neighbor or someone down the street is receiving help they don't really need, or defrauding the system in some way. Through my colleagues in this Assembly I ask those citizens to give me names and addresses. We want to know who is abusing the system. I assure you that we'll pursue the matter with all the strength we have, so the many people in need who are receiving social assistance can receive fair and just treatment without feeling any remorse in terms of the general attitude of society.

I'm not sure much more needs to be said at this time, Mr. Speaker. If I recall, there were no questions on the handicap top-up portion of the proposed legislation. If there are some specific details on that, I'm sure they'll come up in the Committee of the Whole.

[Motion carried; Bill 37 read a second time]

Bill 41

The Licensing of Trades and Businesses Amendment Act, 1979

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move Bill 41, The Licensing of Trades and Businesses Amendment Act, 1979. The purpose of the amendment is to provide regulations respecting bonding that may be prepared in such manner so that the amount of any bond required by any applicant or licensee may be discretionary. The Act presently restricts the ability of the minister to make regulations respecting bonding that would enable the minister to set a bond in amounts appropriate to the character, nature, and type of business. Bill 41 will make the Act and the regulations in tune with each other. The Act intends that members of the same class be treated equally with respect to bonding, and requires provisions to be established prescribing different bonds for different classes of business. This will be accomplished through this amendment.

Present legislation provides no flexibility in setting the amount of the bond. For example, a company selling vacuum cleaners may have two salesmen or 200 salesmen. This amendment will enable the department to respond more positively in evaluating and determining the amount of the bond that should be obtained.

This is an important amendment, and I urge members to support Bill 41.

[Motion carried; Bill 41 read a second time]

Bill 42

The Public Contributions Amendment Act, 1979

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill 42, The Public Contributions Amendment Act, 1979. The Public Contributions Act requires amendments to be more in line with current conditions. It was first introduced to this House in 1951. Since then it has been administered by the Department of Social Services and Community Health. During that time a total of 2,094 authorizations have been granted. The purpose of those authorizations was solicitation of funds for school and education, health, athletic and religious purposes, community betterment, and foreign aid. The gross receipts under The Public Contributions Act amounted to over \$236 million.

Six specific areas of the Act require amendment. The first requires an increase in exemptions from \$250 to \$1,000. Organizations wishing to require amounts less than \$1,000 will no longer be required to apply under the Act. Second, it provides the approving authorities, in addition to the minister, with the right to revoke or refuse an authorization in specific areas. It provides consistency of the type of financial statements filed under the Act. It increases the fines that may be levied and the period that prosecution may be commenced. It provides that a certificate, under the hand of the administrator, be admitted in evidence as proof whether a campaign was authorized. Finally, it provides that any person authorized by the minister may apply for an order restraining an organization from carrying on a campaign.

[Motion carried; Bill 42 read a second time]

Bill 48

The Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 1979 (No. 2)

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in moving second reading of Bill 48, The Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 1979 (No. 2). Nine items are proposed in this composite piece of legislation. I think I should speak briefly to the principle involved in each one. All the items are of importance. Of course, some are more significant than others in the sense of legislation.

First, a very brief amendment to The Assignments of Book Debts Act is meant to improve functioning of the system, or lead to that. The assignments of book debts registries take place in the registry office of the clerk of the court. What is proposed is that rather than have the clerk — now called the registrar — dealing with matters defined by statute, it would be more appropriate to define that procedure by regulation. The reason is that business practices change. In the whole area of this type of legislation, we are looking forward to significant overhauls within the next two to four years. For the time being in any event, it's most suitable if some of the administrative matters can be handled by regulation.

The Commissioners for Oaths Act amendment would note that, perhaps because of the very extensive use to which commissioners for oaths are put throughout the province, there have been fairly extensive difficulties with the way documents are completed. This amendment is intended to place a requirement upon people who act as a commissioner for oaths to deal with the form and the completion of the document in such a way that it achieves the commendable objective of being intelligible to anyone who may see the document after that. In other words, one of the provisions relates to the requirement to have the name printed as well as written, thereby identifying more clearly the commissioner who had to deal with the document. This is an important change, because many documents are very important to individual citizens and any number of transactions are often at some point in the hands of a commissioner for oaths who may not be legally trained. This is an important extension of that.

I might say the proposed amendment to the Evidence Act is meant to convenience parties before the court and to accommodate the requirements the court always has of meeting its difficult scheduling prob-

lems. It is proposed that a requirement that presently exists for calling in witnesses who give opinion evidence — often referred to as expert witnesses; medical specialists and the like who do not necessarily have any personal knowledge of the facts of the case but are being called in to give opinion evidence. To give the court a little more flexibility in the notice required to be provided in calling such a witness, this proposal would remove the requirement that leave of the court be obtained before the examination of expert witnesses. A trial judge observed to us that that would be a helpful change. On that basis, that's adopted, and I'm recommending it now to the Legislature.

Both items in the proposed Land Titles Act amendment have to do with some small modernization of the legislation and its intent. One is related specifically to the way the Land Titles Office is organized and structured and introduces the offices of inspector and assistant inspector of land titles. These duties are important ones in the overall structure of the land titles offices in Alberta, both of which have become much busier and more complex in their operations than was the case when the legislation was first passed. For that reason, these additional roles are seen to be important.

I referred to another one as a modernization; that is, the repeal of three sections that at present require certain giving of security bonds by employees of the Land Titles Office. My information is that it is rare to provide in legislation that one provincial employee may be treated in a more onerous way than another in respect to such matters, and that it's no longer considered necessary or fair that Land Titles Office employees be singled out for the requirement that security bonds must be provided. For that reason, repeal of those sections is proposed.

I might spend just a moment on a useful and important proposed change in The Mechanical Recording of Evidence Act, Mr. Speaker. Of course The Mechanical Recording of Evidence Act is the means by which evidence may be recorded and later preserved to make it admissible in subsequent proceedings, such as appeals. Without the legislation specifically providing for the mechanical recording of evidence, all such evidence would probably be declared hearsay. For that reason, every time a step is taken to change the way that is to be done, an amendment to the Act is required so that the evidence taken in that way won't be subject to any challenge.

Therefore, it's proposed here to authorize rerecording of evidence taken by mechanical means. At present, the evidence is taken in cassettes in the courtroom, and the existing legislation authorizes that. However, court administrators have found that there get to be a lot of cassettes, and they would like to make use of modern technology to rerecord it because of the length of time it should be stored. This will be a cost saving, albeit a modest one. In the current context of which government budget items are large and which are small, it will be a small saving, nevertheless a predictable and real one. It will enable two things: the reuse of the cassettes, which can't be done at present because they can't be erased or destroyed, and the use of multi-track tapes upon which a very large number of cassettes could be rerecorded, thereby effecting surprisingly significant reductions in the storage space required for court records. The result of all this is not only an anticipated cost saving, but it will be feasible to retain the evidence for up to 10 years, which is

longer than it is now retained and is an improvement in the system. That's another provision proposed in this amendment.

Under The Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act amendment, the changes fall into two different classifications. One is in regard to the movement of funds in and out of the fund, as may be required. Occasionally the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund reaches a point where it requires replenishment from the General Revenue Fund. We are simply proposing that the change be made administratively rather than by order in council in those cases where that's required. Whether it happens once a year or once every few years, nevertheless it's a situation that comes up. The fund clearly has to be in a position to meet its obligations, and its replenishment should be simplified.

The other one in The Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act relates to limitations on payment out of the fund. This acknowledges the principle that in these cases funds paid to people are in fact public moneys. I would draw to hon. members' attention that there are a number of restrictions in the existing legislation. Those appear in the explanatory notes on the Bill, indicating several situations in which the amount paid out may be reduced. It is proposed here that where the person has a legal right to recover the money from another source, it not be paid out of the fund. I might add that that does not affect payments a person may receive gratuitously. There is no effect on that in this amendment. Under this proposal, payments received to which the person is entitled will not be paid out of the funds of The Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act a second time.

One change in The Notaries Public Act is similar to the one in The Commissioners for Oaths Act, in that it has to do with the way notaries are required to complete documents for clarity and validity.

The other two items under that proposed amendment cover the way the form of the application to become a notary is dealt with. At present, the Act specifies it. The proposal is that, being purely a matter of administrative form, it should really be in the regulations. The result of removing it from the Act will be apparent to hon. members. The strictures presently in the Act would be removed, and whatever strictures there are upon the appointment of notaries public would then be reintroduced by way of regulation. The reference to the requirement in regard to a British subject is perhaps important enough to say that it's perhaps not necessary to reintroduce that provision into the regulations. That particular requirement, sometimes considered to be an archaic one, may not appear again.

I think the amount of the fine is also important enough to make reference to. The very small fine of \$10 that used to be provided for a notary public who did not conform with the Act is proposed to be raised to \$100. That provision would now apply in both The Commissioners for Oaths Act and The Notaries Public Act. Until now there was no provision for a fine in The Commissioners for Oaths Act, so I just refer to that.

The proposed amendment to The Provincial Court Act deals with the way the clerk is able to set cases down for trial. I just say to hon. members that the small debt provisions that come under the provincial court judges as to trial and as to documents being issued and the like by the clerk in the Queen's Bench, in what was formerly the district court, are designed to provide maximum simplicity so people can use the procedures

of the court without the intervention of a lawyer. That is certainly desirable, because on the whole the claims are not large enough to justify consulting a lawyer. Yet another change is proposed here to make it easier for the clerk to assist people in how they conduct their own proceedings through the small debt procedures. The change has to do with the way the clerk may set down the proceedings for a hearing.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on The Public Trustee Act amendments certain procedures under the legislation enable the public trustee to handle estates of people on a very summary or expedited basis, if those estates appear to him of minimal value. It is thought the figure in the Act should now be revised upward, and I think the changes account for a number of years of inflation and simply increase the limits that apply when the public trustee may use a summary procedure in dealing with the administration of an estate that is part of his responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, those are the explanations of principle that I think hon. members should have in regard to these items. Therefore, I move second reading of Bill 48.

[Motion carried; Bill 48 read a second time]

Bill 50

The Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 1979

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this afternoon to move second reading of Bill 50, The Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 1979.

The Bill contemplates a number of definition changes, Mr. Speaker, but hon. members should be aware of several sections. I would refer particularly to Section 8 on page 4 of the Bill that was provided to members. This section will allow the minister to consider extended care services basic services to Alberta senior citizens over 65. While it's perhaps not a substantial change in practice, it is in attitude. In effect we are recognizing that health care services, like eyeglasses and provision of prescription drugs, are basic services to senior citizens in the province of Alberta, not something extraordinary.

Secondly, Section 8 of the Bill prohibits double billing by physicians. Mr. Speaker, some physicians in the province of Alberta will bill both their client and the Health Care Insurance Commission in the hope of recovering payment from the patient faster than from the commission. It is not extra billing in the sense that they expect to have a higher return for performing a given service, but simply a means to extract payment from the patient and then reimburse that patient when the commission pays them. This provision would prohibit that.

Mr. Speaker, Section 27 on page 12 of the draft Bill is again an important one for senior citizens. In effect it gives an extra month's period of grace after a deceased's spouse would normally be required to pay premiums. This section would allow the spouse, an Albertan who was the prime registrant for a family, to recover from the period of grief.

Those are the main provisions of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, that I think hon. members should be aware of. If there are questions, I'd be happy to try to speak to them. If not, I'd like to move second reading.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to make one brief comment regarding this particular provision in the Bill dealing with senior citizens who are the only spouse in the family over 65 and receiving benefits, when the other spouse is under 65. Maybe the minister would take note, or the hon. member would convey to the minister, that as the Member for Edmonton Kingsway I have had very strong representation regarding this item: that families left behind, where the spouse is not a senior citizen and the children of course receive benefits, are cut off rather abruptly.

I'm pleased to note that now there is 30 days' grace. But, Mr. Speaker, I hope consideration would be given to continuing the extended health benefits and all the benefits provided for the families left behind — the spouse who is not a senior citizen and the children — for an indefinite period of time until that spouse becomes 65, if that spouse, I would recommend, is at least 60, so that they're not cut off. I think this poses a very severe hardship. I have difficulty with the philosophy that the other spouse, being under 65, is abruptly cut off from all those benefits intended for the family and the other spouse. As an arbitrary judgment I'm making 60 the age for the other spouse. But 62 or 63 would also be acceptable to me. But 30 days, or one or two months after the senior citizen passes away, everything is cut off — it seems a little severe.

I just want to reiterate and reinforce to the hon. member that there is a lot of representation out there. A lot of people are left behind without the benefits enjoyed under the senior citizen program, which has been an excellent program and which I'm sure we all support. Maybe some consideration should be given in the near future to providing those benefits to the family that's left behind.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I'd be very pleased to convey those remarks to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I'll do that this afternoon. If there is any further discussion, I'm sure there will be more opportunity for members to review this Bill and consider the remarks for Committee of the Whole.

[Motion carried; Bill 50 read a second time]

Bill 49
The Cultural Development
Amendment Act, 1979

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move second reading of Bill No. 49, The Cultural Development Amendment Act, 1979.

This Act will describe the authority of the minister in general rather than in particular words. At the moment, Alberta Culture is continually having legal difficulties carrying out the projects assigned to it, because the section is framed so restrictively. It is very difficult to write a particularized section that will encompass all the matters that Alberta Culture is now involved in or in the future may be involved in.

It also allows the minister to delegate her powers under any Act under her administration, other than the

power to make regulations. Now, the power of the minister to delegate is too restrictive.

It also adds a section to empower the minister to enter into contracts on matters relating to the cultural development of Alberta. At the moment there is no power for the minister to enter into contracts. A good example of this is the 75th Anniversary.

It also empowers the Lieutenant Governor in Council to authorize the minister to prescribe conditions under which prizes for various competitions can be awarded. At present there are too many different types of competitions for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to prescribe the conditions under which prizes may be awarded.

[Motion carried; Bill 49 read a second time]

Bill 53
The Department of Education
Amendment Act, 1979

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 53, The Department of Education Amendment Act, 1979.

I believe the contents of the Act are quite straightforward. I enunciated them by and large at first reading. I'll repeat them only very briefly.

The intention of the Act is, first, to change the definition of a board to assure conformity With the definition used in other legislation administered by the Department of Education.

Secondly, the purpose is to provide a new definition of "private school". As a result of what is referred to as the Holdeman Mennonite case, we have a category of private school operating in the province, the type four private school, which currently is not covered by the existing definition of a private school.

The third intention is to provide some sanction, at the discretion of the minister, in situations where a person is appointed to inquire into certain activities of school boards. It has been drawn to our attention that while the minister has the power to appoint an investigator, there is no sanction in cases where individuals or organizations might fail to co-operate with the investigator in an inquiry.

Finally, the Act is amended to make it clear that in situations where a public trustee is appointed, the members of the board in that district or division would cease to hold office. We want to ensure that there are not two bodies, one the official trustee and the other the board, purporting to represent or to exercise the responsibilities of the jurisdiction.

[Motion carried; Bill 53 read a second time]

Bill 55
The Sale of Chattels by
Public Auction Amendment Act, 1979

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 55, The Sale of Chattels by Public Auction Amendment Act, 1979.

This Bill will update the existing Act so that it will more adequately safeguard the public. Six items will be added. The first makes provision for an administrator to administer the Act. Second is the bond as the only form of security. This is an important addition to the Act. An appeal procedure is set up for the auctioneers.

There is also authority to review records of an auctioneer or auction company. The fifth item is a trust account. Under the Act now, an auction company must put all moneys received into a trust account. That's one very important part of the new Act, as it will protect the public to a far greater degree. The last point is an increase in fines for contravention of the Act. The fines under the old Act were \$10 minimum and, I think, \$200 maximum. Now they have been increased to \$100 minimum and \$1,000 maximum.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 55 read a second time]

Bill 40
The Partition and Sale Act

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I'm on the verge of offering hon. members a bonus they didn't expect in this afternoon's business. Although Bill No. 40 has been called, I would like to indicate that the

hon. Leader of the Opposition indicated to me prior to the sitting this afternoon that it would accommodate him if the Bill were not proceeded with until he could be present. In light of the fact that his absence from the House was essential this afternoon, I agreed to that. The balance of what I should note for hon. members is, I believe, that because I had assumed both he and I would be speaking on that this afternoon, the Bill would complete the afternoon and perhaps not quite be completed. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we've dealt with the Bills that are available for hon. members this afternoon with respect to second reading.

With respect to tomorrow's business, I could just indicate that it's not proposed to sit Thursday evening. On that basis I move that we call it 5:30.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]