

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, October 18, 1979 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, in your gallery this afternoon is a distinguished visitor from Ottawa, M. Henri Chasse, the Assistant Clerk of the Queen's Privy Council in Ottawa. This distinguished gentleman is in town today to attend the investiture of the Hon. Frank Lynch-Staunton, the new Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta. I would ask M. Chasse to rise and receive a very warm welcome from this Alberta Legislative Assembly.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, some 75 seniors in the public and members galleries. They are from Central Manor and Central Village, located in the constituency of Edmonton Kingsway, and are accompanied by Mrs. L. Albiston and Mr. Osterhouse.

Mr. Speaker, I've had opportunity to meet with these people on many occasions before, during, and after the last election. They have asked me to thank members for the rent reduction announced the other day and the many positive programs. In turn, I thank them for helping make this province a better place for all of us to live. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

Culture

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, today marks a significant event in the history of this province. Fifty years ago on this date the women of Canada were legally declared persons and thus became eligible to sit in the Senate of Canada.

This landmark achievement was the result of 13 years of diligent work by five Alberta women, all recognized by the Alberta government as important in their own right. Judge Emily Murphy was the first woman police magistrate in the British Empire. Louise McKinney was a member of this Legislature from 1917 to 1921, the first woman to be elected to any legislature in Canada or the British Empire. Irene Parlby served as minister without portfolio in the Alberta cabinet from 1921 to 1935 and was the second woman in the British Empire to serve as a cabinet minister. Henrietta Muir Edwards was a member of the Alberta government advisory committee on health. As a legal expert serv-

ing as convener of laws for the National Council of Women for many years, she assisted in the preparation of the persons case for representation to the Privy Council of England. Nellie McClung was a member of the Legislature between 1921 and 1926, the first woman on the board of governors of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and in 1939 Canada's sole woman representative to the League of Nations.

I am indeed proud to recognize the accomplishment of these five courageous women from this province who achieved legal personhood for all Canadian women.

You will be receiving on your desk a booklet put out by the Women's Bureau, called *Women Are Persons*.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Assembly, I just want to add to the ministerial statement that we're delighted as well in the upward trend of women being represented in this Assembly, and we know it will continue.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Energy Negotiations

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. Perhaps before doing that I might commend the minister responsible for the ministerial announcement today. I too hope the trend toward more women members of the Assembly continues. I would be somewhat less than honest, though, if I didn't say that I hope the trend continues on this side of the House also. With great respect to the gentlemen members, it's very refreshing to look across to the other side of the House. Nevertheless we would appreciate some of that fine assistance on this side.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on a more serious nature. Yesterday in question period when I asked the Premier to comment on the negotiations in Ottawa, I believe the Premier used the terms that the Alberta government would be making no statement on negotiations between the federal government and Alberta either until negotiations had been successfully completed or a stalemate had been reached. I'd like to ask the Premier: since yesterday have we moved closer to successful negotiations or closer to a stalemate?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, all I can helpfully tell the House on that matter is that the negotiations are proceeding. I cannot assist him in terms of his analysis as to the stage of negotiations relative to the question.

On a lighter note, I do want to point out to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that I'm sure he's aware that we also have a very delightful lady on that side of the House.

MR. R. CLARK: On a serious note, to the hon. Member for St. Albert. On occasions like that I am pleased to be corrected by the Premier; on other occasions, not so.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. In the course of negotiations that have been going on for some time in Ottawa, has the Alberta government been involved in negotiations between Imperial Oil, the federal government, and the Alsands consortium with regard to the third and fourth oil sands plants? Discussions are going on between Alberta and the companies, and I

assume between the federal government and the Alberta government.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, there are no current negotiations or discussions between the Alberta government and the federal government, and Alsands and the Cold Lake projects.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Have there been discussions between the Alberta government and the federal government with regard to oil sands projects three and four?

MR. LOUGHEED: No, Mr. Speaker, not in a specific sense with regard to commercial terms.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Have there been discussions between the federal government and the province of Alberta on matters other than commercial terms?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, with regard to that question, there's nothing I can helpfully assist the House with that does not come within the orbit of the negotiations I referred to yesterday as forming part of an energy package.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Is the Premier in a position to indicate to the Assembly if it's still the position of the government of Alberta that the third and fourth oil sands plants, meaning Cold Lake and Alsands, in the judgment of the Alberta government should not go ahead on a schedule that would demand skilled manpower from Alberta with the peaks being at the same time?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I cannot respond to that question at this time, pending the conclusion of the negotiations referred to.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one last area. Hopefully we might get some insight into this area. In the course of the present negotiations in Ottawa, has the Alberta government been given any indication by the federal government of when Ottawa expects, first, to receive the report and, second, to make a decision on additional gas exports from Canada to the United States?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no information on that particular question that can be helpful to the House.

Grain Terminals

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Economic Development with regard to the \$7 million special warrant that authorizes an equity investment in Alberta Terminals Ltd., which would provide for the acquisition, upgrading, and operation of three Canadian government grain elevators in Lethbridge, Calgary, and Edmonton. Can the minister indicate to the House what portion of the \$7 million will be used for the actual acquisition of the elevators?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I believe that's \$5 million.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is it the intention of the Alberta government to have the three elevators run through Alberta Terminals Ltd. as a Crown corporation, or is Alberta Terminals Ltd. rather a short-term arrangement until other approaches are looked at?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, it will be an interim agency.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. How long is interim? Are we looking at one year, five years? What is the intention of the government after this interim period?

MR. NOTLEY: Like PWA.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I don't think I can give a precise time frame to that answer. There are some other considerations that we'll need to ... [inaudible]

DR. BUCK: Ask the Premier, then.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the government no target? Are we looking at one year? Are we looking at five years while this interim arrangement would be in place? I ask the question because we have been given much the same answer as far as PWA is concerned.

MR. PLANCHE: Well, Mr. Speaker, the problem is that it isn't the same kind of item as PWA. There are no profits to be made. Until it becomes an operating part of the whole chain of grain distribution, nothing definitive can be added to what I've already said, unless the Minister of Agriculture would like to supplement that.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, to supplement in a very small way my colleague's remarks, it's the intent, and certainly the hope, that the inland terminal system will fit in with the total movement of grain for this province and western Canada, and indeed with Transport Canada. As was stated, it's very difficult to set a target, a time factor, because with the present total review of the grain handling system and the transportation system in Canada, the role of the inland terminals may change somewhat to fit any changes that are forecast for the total handling system for Canada itself, of which we hope our terminals will form a part. So the time factor would certainly have to be flexible.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to either of the hon. ministers. Has the government made a policy decision regarding the use of these terminals, and expanding these terminals so cleaning is done here in Alberta?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, until we can establish the certainty of car supply and of access through terminals to vessels, it will be our intention to spend enough money to make these operative and useful. Future expansion will depend on how it fits within the total chain of grain transportation.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. So there's no misunderstanding, then no decision has been made by the Alberta government to use these three recently acquired terminals as a place to start the

cleaning of grain in the province of Alberta, and possibly move in the direction of unit trains both to Prince Rupert and to Vancouver?

MR. PLANCHE: The upgrading part of the allocation of \$7 million will include facilities for dust control, and one thing and another. But in terms of cleaning and spending a lot of money on them, again it isn't our intention to get involved in having one part of the chain more sophisticated than the balance. In other words, it's going to be a continuous system, so all segments of the system operate at an optimum rather than being out of balance one with another. So it won't be our intention to spend money on any segment until all the segments are in place.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister then give us some sort of time frame when the government expects to have — to use the minister's term — the segments in place?

MR. PLANCHE: Again, Mr. Speaker, the problem is one of availability of rail cars and access to salt water. Prince Rupert will be part of it; bringing a grain hopper fleet up to some 20,000 cars will hopefully be part of it. A variety of infrastructure changes at tide-water will need to take effect before the whole system is moving as we feel it should.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister saying, in essence, that the province of Alberta spent \$5 million and they don't know what they're going to do with these facilities? [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the minister, was there any policy in place when the government bought the terminals?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I guess the problem is that the people now in government recognize that a 1930 system may not work in 1980. We had an opportunity to buy some terminals that were for sale. It was fortuitous, because they will become a part of a total grain transportation system. It's our intention to make them a part of that system, and that will be the time frame.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister, with regard to the comment about a 1930 system and moving into the 1980s. What we're trying to ascertain from the Minister of Economic Development or the Minister of Agriculture, or anyone else on the front bench of the government, is: what concrete plans does the government have to upgrade these facilities to get them ready for the 1980s? Because one of the great problems of the whole system is that everybody waits for everybody else.

DR. BUCK: You just spent \$5 million and you don't know what you're going to do with it, Planche.

MR. R. CLARK: What concrete plans do you have?

MR. NOTLEY: What 1980 improvements do you have?

MR. PLANCHE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll go through this one more time. We bought the terminals because they were for sale. The terminals will be upgraded to the use . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: What use?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Unit trains.

MR. PLANCHE: They'll be brought up to a level of proficiency that will complement the number of grain cars presently in place. As the opportunity to use block or unit trains develops, then we will further upgrade the elevators. But, Mr. Speaker, surely it's clear to the members across the way that until it's needed there's no sense having one part of a system far in advance of another, and simply spending money.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister. Has the government given any thought to looking at these facilities so a shipment of, say, one variety of grain can be available, so it can be sent on a unit train to the west coast? Has that system been looked at?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I don't pretend to be an expert in grain, but there is a problem with the number of grades that are specified in Canada versus the number specified in the U.S. The number of grades is a concern of ours, and that is part of the logistics problem of loading. If we have some 30 grades of grain, and we have to shunt cars all over to fill them with a specific grade, and we're competing with someone who has half a dozen and doesn't have to do that, it doesn't seem logical to us. It's something we're just going to have to pick our way through.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, may I supplement the question? There appears to be a misunderstanding that the inland terminals are sitting idle waiting for someone to make some moves. The inland terminals in this province are indeed being utilized, are capable of cleaning, and are cleaning all the grain being handled there. The unit involved in the city of Edmonton is handling almost all the rapeseed that is handled through this province, and part of the Saskatchewan rapeseed crop. The only facilities that are not being used, and hopefully won't have to be used, are the driers. They have a rather limited drying capacity, but are not being used because the grain we're handling certainly is in its dry state.

The interest in terminals for specific use by various growers is certainly a future capability. The soft white spring wheat, which is based in the Lethbridge area, could utilize the terminal, perhaps in total.

The forecast for the use of the inland terminals, as was stated by my colleague, is rather unlimited for us as a province. The main factor we should realize is that they should not become storage elevators, but a portion should be there to receive whatever benefits are necessary. If it happens to be cleaning . . . But the answer is throughput and the opportunity for the collection of unit trains. We certainly hope that the forecast for them will fall into place, indeed with some changes, if they are necessary, to meet the change, if there are changes, in the federal system of handling grain. We have the flexibility and the purpose.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker. Can he indicate what discussions have taken place with his federal counterpart, or the Canadian Wheat Board, to go from say

20-odd grades down to the six that the Minister of Economic Development was alluding to? What discussions to lower the number of varieties of grains have been going on, so that we can get some continuity, to market six varieties instead of 23?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in late summer I had the opportunity to discuss with the federal minister, in a very broad way, some of the problems we saw in the movement of grain. We have not yet made any representations to either the Canadian Wheat Board or the transportation department responsible for whatever changes.

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

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, has the Alberta government formally offered to the Wheat Board and to the terminal operators in Vancouver the possibility of Alberta's taking the initiative of developing and helping to implement the unit train concept from the three terminal operations here?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, Alberta has made several initiative moves in the grain handling system, the inland terminals of course being one of them. We have not yet made any application to the Canadian Wheat Board in that manner.

Meat Packing Industry

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Labour. It concerns this morning's layoff notices to 120 workers at Canada Packers. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly what the reasons are for this rather substantial layoff of workers at the Canada Packers plant?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I could do that. However, it does relate to the packing plant industry as such, and I think my colleague the Minister of Agriculture may have a more precise response than I. It does involve the adjustment and, at the time of the effective layoff, it involves some additional employment by the same company in other centres within Alberta.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to supplement the reply by my colleague. Canada Packers, and indeed all packers in western Canada, have been in the past, for the present, and some I'm sure even in the future, faced with a review of the facilities for the handling of livestock that exist in western Canada. They're faced with an upgrading of plants that are in many cases a fair age. They're faced with a change in technology of the handling and processing of meats. They're also faced with a business point of view: they have to look at the plants, the areas, and production in making those decisions as to the upgrading or changes in their operation in various parts of this province, and indeed in western Canada.

Canada Packers — we're now talking about cattle slaughter in the province of Alberta — have carried that out in Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer, and indeed in Edmonton. Being faced with some of those decisions some time ago, they have over the last two years had an upgrading program in Lethbridge, Calgary, and Red Deer. The announcement made this morning

is a corporate decision. They have now upgraded the three existing plants to the degree that they can meet the changes in technology and the changes in beef handling. They are closing the killing floor for beef in Edmonton and will be doing the total slaughter in Red Deer, Calgary, and Lethbridge.

As far as the livestock industry is concerned, the only change to the city of Edmonton will be the physical plant itself, the cattle kill being located not in Edmonton but in the three upgraded plants. The buyers remain the same; the operation for the producer to Canada Packers in Edmonton remains the same. They'll be dealing with the same people, and there should be no change in the handling of the livestock.

We've always recognized the fact that whenever an industry has to make these decisions there are, unfortunately, some numbers of people who will be displaced. In the case of Canada Packers, their total labor force in the city of Edmonton is somewhat over 700. About 30 of those displaced because of the change in the livestock handling will be offered the opportunity to go to the other plants.

From the producer's point of view no change will be available from the city of Edmonton and Canada Packers. They will continue with the program they have, other than that the cattle kill will be moved to one or all of the other three areas in the province.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either minister. What formal consultation, if any, took place between Canada Packers and the government of Alberta prior to the layoff notices going out this morning?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to advise the hon. member that there were discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and with the Department of Labour. In that respect, I'd like to commend the company for having performed as a good corporate citizen should and in accordance with the expectations of the government.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. Is he able to assure the House that there will be no increase in shipping charges to producers in northern Alberta because of the closure of the killing facilities at Edmonton, and in fact the cattle will have to be shipped to Red Deer, Calgary, or Lethbridge?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, Canada Packers informed me that the buying in the city of Edmonton would be as usual, and I can't see any change there. If it's going to be as usual it shouldn't affect it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Do we have the assurance that, notwithstanding where the buying is — that the designation will now be the killing facilities 100 miles, 200 miles, possibly 300 miles further south — there will be no increase in shipping charges to producers in northern Alberta?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it's an open, competitive market. It's my understanding they will be buying on the same market base as the rest in Edmonton. They feel that the buying will be as it was. I don't have a written guarantee, but it just sounds feasible to me that

if they're to be competitive, the option of buying cattle in the city of Edmonton or in the Edmonton district at a lesser price than the other competitors — that they wouldn't be buying too many head.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture, flowing specifically from the question of competitive buying. What review by the government of Alberta, either by the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Economic Development, has taken place concerning the general picture of the packing industry in the city of Edmonton? We've had the closure of Burns. We had the movement of the cattle-killing facility at Canada Packers this morning, and there have been a number of rumors about the future prospects of Gainers'.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: what specific discussions have taken place with packers in the Edmonton area, and can either minister assure the Assembly that in fact there will not be further closures?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I can't guarantee that there will not be further closures. But in regard to the packing industry as it pertains not only to Edmonton but indeed to the province of Alberta, we in Agriculture, working together with my colleague, have an ongoing study with the packers at the present time in doing an evaluation, first of all, of the availability from the producers' point of view of a service in each particular area within the province, and those areas where we're aware of the upgrading and those areas that we feel may, in the future, require some upgrading. To date we have been working very closely with the packers.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. What specific discussions have taken place with Gainers' concerning the future plans of that firm?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the committee that I mentioned certainly has been working with Gainers'. I personally have not had the opportunity to meet with them, although I have met with, I think, two-thirds of all the other packers within the province, and perhaps will have the opportunity to meet with Gainers' themselves very shortly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister in a position to assure the Assembly, from the discussions the committee he alluded to has held with Gainers', that should the present plant be phased out in order to develop high-rises, Gainers' will build another plant in the Edmonton area?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Agriculture recognizes its responsibilities to the producers of this province, and indeed that would be one of the aspects we would watch and safeguard.

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

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture. Is the minister in a position to assure the Assembly that in fact the management of Gainers' has given an indication to the government of

Alberta that there will be a continuing investment in the packing industry by Gainers' in the city of Edmonton, which takes on more importance now in view of the move by Canada Packers this morning and the decision of Burns last spring?

MR. SCHMIDT: I can't give that assurance, Mr. Speaker.

Highway 16 West

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the Solicitor General. With your permission, I'd like a preamble for this very serious problem evident on Highway 16 west of Edmonton to the B.C. boundary.

In view of the fact that impaired driving convictions and 24-hour suspensions have increased from 598 in 1977 to 710 for the first nine months of this year, and only 24 RCMP officers are available to patrol this section of highway, will the Solicitor General be increasing the number of members, therefore attempting to have more patrols and check stops along this highway?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, it's a matter that I could raise with the commanding officer of K Division. I know he is very responsive to needs of the communities in Alberta within the limits of his budget.

MR. PURDY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the conversation the minister will have with the commanding officer of K Division, and in view of the fact that over 4 per cent of the drivers picked up in the province for impaired driving are off Highway No. 16, west of Edmonton — and that doesn't include the municipal boundaries along the highway — will the Solicitor General consider discussing with the commanding officer the transfer of members to that area from other areas of the province where the impaired driving percentage is not that evident?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I think I should point out that the case loads and volume demands upon the RCMP are measured as closely as possible, and adjustments are made. However, I would point out that there are increasing demands all across the province, and I think the RCMP must take into account demands from a total point of view and be able to meet them as best they can.

DR. REID: A supplementary to the answers of the Solicitor General. To the Minister of Transportation: in view of the fact that fatalities on Highway 16 have increased from 24 per year in 1977-1978 to a total of 33 in the first nine months of this year, and to my personal knowledge a further seven this month, is any consideration being given to continuing the process of twinning the highway, which has been in abeyance for the last four years?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, having driven route 16 west and having tried to identify the relationship between the condition of the road and the way the accidents occur, it's difficult to make any specific comment on the two, because they don't seem to relate. I see nothing particularly wrong in the locations where these accidents occurred. Of course they've been multiple, and the numbers have gone up very rapidly.

Apart from that, though, we certainly are looking at the possibility of twinning, particularly in areas where conditions are most severe.

DR. REID: A supplementary to the Minister of Transportation. In view of the fact that, as he says, the increase has been due largely to head-on, multiple-fatality accidents, is any consideration being given to increasing the program? In particular, was any consideration given to expending the funds on twinning that were spent on increasing the number of lanes between Stony Plain and Spruce Grove?

MR. KROEGER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that was the point I was trying to make. If we were to go with a program of twinning, they probably wouldn't relate to the specific areas where this occurred. The one that had six deaths last spring was on the McLeod River bridge. The width there is 44 feet, the same as it is on both approaches, so we couldn't make any specific change there to alleviate the problem. In other words, accidents seem to occur in places that don't really relate to the condition of the road. I think we have to maintain the development of twinning and widening in hot spots such as the Spruce Grove area, because that's where the traffic counts are.

MR. PURDY: A supplementary to the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister any plans in place to alleviate the serious problems occurring on Highway No. 16, especially from Stony Plain to Edmonton, on holiday weekends when traffic congestion is very severe? In fact, representation has been made to me that it's taken people an hour to drive the 25 kilometres from Stony Plain to Edmonton.

MR. KROEGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, as much as I dislike helicopters, I have gone to the extreme of hanging over that area and watching traffic flows. The difficulty with solutions is that even if we were to try to expend the money, starting today, the turnaround time before you can solve it is fairly long. We're coping with it on a day to day basis; for instance, to the degree that when the lights were installed in Spruce Grove and we experienced a serious slowdown with the flow, we actually went in and manually operated them to speed up the time involved. There isn't any magic in what we can do.

MRS. FYFE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister advise whether his department plans to complete secondary Highway 635, which would take a fair degree of pressure off Highway 16 west to the recreational areas?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, we're just approaching the point where we are going to designate the areas we will be responding to. At the moment I wouldn't be able to say that would be one of them.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Transportation. Can he indicate if there have been any discussions with his federal counterpart on the concept of making this the second Trans-Canada Highway and therefore getting the federal government involved in the twinning of Highway 16 west?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, at a meeting in Regina about four weeks ago with all my counterparts — regardless of what they call them in different provinces — a decision was taken to approach the federal government on cost sharing on the major highways across Canada. We were suggesting something in the order of fifty-fifty between the provinces and the federal government. One interesting thing we ran into was that some eastern provinces said, that won't help us because we're there now; we'd like a ninety-ten split.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In light of the fact ...

MR. SPEAKER: Followed by a final supplementary by the hon. Member for Lethbridge West.

DR. BUCK: In these discussions, Mr. Minister, in light of the fact that a rather prominent Canadian is a Member of Parliament, this may be an opportune time to pursue the question of twinning in that area.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Solicitor General on the question raised by the Member for Stony Plain. Inasmuch as it would appear that perhaps many impaired drivers are driving that highway and in view of the fact that the Solicitor General indicates that perhaps resources are not adequate, has the the Solicitor General given consideration to implementing along Highway 16 other programs, such as awareness programs on the driving habits of Albertans, signs and so on?

MR. HARLE: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't catch the word. Awareness programs?

MR. GOGO: Awareness programs, Mr. Speaker. For example, the Alberta Motor Association currently has an awareness program under way on major highways in Alberta to make Albertans aware that other people may be drinking and that they should be driving defensively.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, a considerable amount of work is done. I know the hon. member, as chairman of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, is also interested in this particular problem. A number of programs and defensive driving courses are available. Of course, those involved with impaired driving charges have to take defensive driving courses to get their licences back.

Income Assistance for the Handicapped

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my question with respect to the recently announced program of assured income for the handicapped to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. My question arises from representations made to me by constituents who allege that present advertising in the province may inadvertently be somewhat misleading in that it doesn't appear to indicate that an income test, specifically a spousal income test, is involved in qualifying for income assistance.

Can the minister advise this House whether the present advertising campaign does make clear that this

test is required before one becomes eligible for that assistance?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'll be pleased to review that matter and report to the hon. member at the earliest opportunity.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary to the minister. In the course of the minister's investigation, could he also determine whether, in addition to making mention of an income test, some specific parameters could be laid out in the advertising? I am informed that the department's representatives are presently processing many applications where there is virtually no chance of assistance whatsoever. These people are applying simply because they don't know what the parameters are.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest followed by ...

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, if I could, I presume the minister is giving that assurance. I'd like to follow with one further supplementary, if I might.

Could the minister advise the House whether the figure of 14,000 used in respect of the program represents the number of people the program is expected to benefit, taking into account such matters as income and spousal income, or does that number simply represent the number of handicapped persons in the province of Alberta?

MR. BOGLE: The hon. member's former assumption is accurate.

Highway 3

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Transportation. With regard to any discussions he may have with the federal government regarding a second Trans-Canada Highway, could the hon. minister give assurance to the Assembly that, given that the annual meeting of the Crowsnest Highway 3 Association will be held in Lethbridge this weekend, Highway 3 will be given equal consideration regarding federal participation in any major considerations of a second Trans-Canada Highway?

MR. NOTLEY: Also the woods and water route.

MR. KROEGER: I heard that, Mr. Speaker.

Prisons

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the hon. Solicitor General. Can he indicate the status of the new Edmonton Remand Centre as it applies to Fort Saskatchewan? Has that started to alleviate the crowding problems in the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution?

MR. HARLE: The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. They are gradually placing inmates in the new remand centre. That should be completed toward the end of the month.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the hon. Solicitor General indicate if the staff from Fort Saskatchewan, or a

portion, of them, will be transferred to the Edmonton Remand Centre?

MR. HARLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, a number of correctional officers were in training at the Fort Saskatchewan correctional centre specifically for the new Remand Centre. Staff will be transferred as cells in the Remand Centre are made use of. The total number of staff at the Fort Saskatchewan correctional centre will be gradually reduced.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if the female section of the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution will still be maintained, or has that status changed?

MR. HARLE: At the moment it will be. However, the general thought is that the facilities in the Edmonton Remand Centre are better. The opportunity will be there. I should indicate that a decision has to be made on the entire future role of the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution, because once we've made the complete move I think we have to determine whether to upgrade that facility or commence work on a new one.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a point of clarification to the hon. minister. Is he indicating that the Remand Centre will be used as an incarceration centre, not as a remand centre?

MR. HARLE: No, Mr. Speaker. The Remand Centre is basically a remand centre. However, the facilities there are somewhat better than at Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution.

Many times, particularly with the female inmate population, there are those who should be transferred to the federal institution. Of course there's only one, at Kingston. Submissions have been made to the federal Solicitor General to consider another female federal institution, hopefully for Alberta.

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

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Solicitor General. Has the minister received any complaints from families visiting inmates in Fort Saskatchewan that they are having difficulty trying to ... For example, when the weather is bad you have to line up to visit inmates. Has that been brought to the minister's attention?

MR. HARLE: Yes. Again, I think that situation will resolve itself as the population in the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution is reduced and more inmates are located in the Remand Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for the question period has expired. But if the Assembly would agree, perhaps we could recognize the hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek, whom I should have recognized sooner.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Television Systems

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Associate Minister of Telephones. I understand that at a recent federal/provincial confer-

ence on communications, federal representatives advanced a position paper relating to the subject of a national pay TV scheme. I wonder if the minister could advise the Assembly as to the position taken by the Alberta government on this important communications matter.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I've just returned from a federal/provincial communication ministers' conference in Toronto. The topic of pay TV was one of the items on the agenda. I might add that I was accompanied by the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods. The federal government indicated that they would like to see some form of national pay TV system, using our country's satellite system.

Now, a lot of people say, what is pay TV? We all pay for our TV. In Alberta we have pay TV in some hotels — the closed-circuit systems. Pay TV generally is thought of as television offerings, usually by cable, where they charge per channel or per program.

The federal government is proposing that the CRTC have hearings on the satellite distribution of television programming and pay TV in Canada. They would invite submissions from the industry and the public. Once those submissions were in and a report ready, the federal minister would return to the provincial ministers across the country for further discussion.

I might add that in Alberta we have made some steps in the area of pay TV with regard to the Public Utilities Board having an inquiry at the present time into the area of local non-broadcast telecommunications services. Pay television is one of the items on that particular agenda. Certainly in Alberta we feel that we have some jurisdiction in that area. We'll be awaiting the outcome of that report before making our policy in that regard.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the time for questions has elapsed. May I be permitted a brief supplementary?

MR. SPEAKER: If the Assembly agrees. I wouldn't want to presume on the indulgence of the Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I understand that at this same federal/provincial conference a position paper was tabled that perhaps has not only important communications implications but important constitutional implications. It was advanced by representatives from the government of Ontario, and relates to the subject of the delegation to the provinces of jurisdiction over cable TV. Could the minister advise the Assembly as to the position adopted by the Alberta government on this equally important communications and constitutional question?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, cable distribution has been one of four items on the constitutional agenda under the heading of communications, along with radio frequency spectrum, telecommunications carriers — which include AGT — and radio and TV broadcasting. Ontario has requested the federal government to delegate regulatory authority over cable television to that particular province or any other province that would like to have the authority.

I think the whole area of cable TV can be broken into

two areas: broadcasting and non-broadcasting components. The non-broadcasting area — again, the Public Utilities Board in Alberta is considering those aspects of it in its hearing. Its hearing, by the way, will be resuming April 14 next year. In the area of non-broadcasting, Ontario really is asking the federal government for something that we in Alberta feel we have jurisdiction in. This is why we asked the Public Utilities Board to have these hearings in the first place — or the inquiry, I should call it. It's not really a hearing; it's an inquiry, where the parties involved are participants rather than interveners.

So once again, in the area of cable distribution, we want to await the results of that inquiry before coming up with a provincial policy.

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize to hon. members who were not reached. There may have to be some further restraint on supplementaries; even on important topics like agriculture.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motion for a Return No. 114 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

220. Moved by Mr. R. Clark.

Be it resolved that the government develop a comprehensive set of policies and programs for economic development in the province of Alberta to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) anticipation of the energy needs of Alberta and Canada during the 1980s and establishment of an oil sands policy to enable rational planning and orderly construction of oil sands developments;
- (2) provision of opportunities for individuals and corporations in Alberta and other Canadian provinces to invest in major energy developments in Alberta;
- (3) anticipation of Alberta's manpower needs for the 1980s and planning of education, training, and apprenticeship programs to meet those needs.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity, in the one hour allocated this afternoon, to put forward this resolution from the official opposition. In the course of my comments I'd like to cover three areas. First of all, I'd like to spend a few moments dealing with a very quick overview of the history of tar sands development in Alberta. Secondly, I'd like to comment with regard to why we feel it's essential that there be the oil sands policy outlined in item (1) on the agenda. Thirdly, I'd like to make some very brief comments with regard to what I think could be some of the ingredients of an oil sands policy for the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I hope to conclude

these remarks in something close to 10 to 15 minutes. That would provide a number of members from the government side of the House to express their points of view on what we regard as a serious area. It's really part of the whole question of, I suppose one can say, an economic development strategy for Alberta. But specifically this resolution tries to zero in on the need for some sort of overall policy as far as oil sands development is concerned.

We in this province, all of us know, are extremely fortunate because the oil sands of Alberta are, if not the largest, certainly among the largest known oil reserves in the world. Mr. Speaker, we're in the situation of the Great Canadian Oil Sands plant having really been the pioneer in the 1960s. If one were to give credit to one individual there, J. Howard Pugh from Sun Oil was one of those who made that project possible. Then, in the early part of the '70s, about '74 or '75, the Syncrude plant came along. If one were to pick out one individual there who did more pioneering than anyone else in Canada as far as oil sands are concerned, one would have to look to the late Frank Spragins.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that we're now on the verge of plants three and four being very seriously considered by the government and, at least from where I view the events and negotiations taking place, a very great likelihood that the Cold Lake plant will go ahead, I would expect, in the latter part of this year or certainly next year, and that the Alsands plant would go ahead not long after that; also recognizing that as Canadians, as a nation, we're committed to the idea of self-sufficiency in energy, hopefully by the end of the 1980s, it seems to me that a very persuasive case can be made that now is the time, as we leave the '70s and embark upon the 1980s, for a comprehensive oil sands policy for the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't a new idea. I would remind members of the Assembly of the Speech from the Throne in 1973: "During this Second Session ... my government will ... present a new Oil Sands Development Policy." Then on December 3, 1973, the then Member of the Legislative Assembly for Lac La Biche-McMurray, Dr. Dan Bouvier, questioned the Premier with regard to oil sands policy. The Premier said:

There is no question in our minds that we as a government have a responsibility to develop a policy with regard to oil sands development ... We will present that policy to this Legislature ... I would anticipate that we would be aiming for the spring of 1974 for such a policy.

Mr. Speaker, in 1974 this comment was included in the Speech from the Throne:

The accelerated development of the Alberta oil sands will be reflected in a "Statement of Guidelines" for future projects; it will include ownership and environmental provisions.

Then, Mr. Speaker, following 1974 the government seemed to change its position somewhat. In my review of *Hansard*, in 1975 the attitude of the government seemed to be: well, until we had a second plant in operation in the tar sands the government couldn't develop a tar sands policy. If one goes back and checks *Hansard*, one will find that in 1976 in the Assembly, the then Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Mr. Getty seemed to adopt a plant-by-plant approach, that we would use a catch-as-catch-can approach on how future plants would be developed. Since that time, that position has been repeated in the Legislative Assembly

by both the Premier and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, it's with that view in mind that we raise the question today and put to members of the government in the course of this resolution that here is a government that was very keen on an oil sands policy in 1973-74 and the early part of '75. The initial argument the government used for not developing that policy at that time was that we had to have a second plant on stream. I say to members of the government now: that second plant is on stream, and now is the time, in our judgment, when we have to be looking very seriously at the development of an oil sands policy which, first of all, says to the people of Alberta what they can expect from their duly elected provincial government as far as the basic guidelines, the criteria for future oil sands development, are concerned. But equally important, Mr. Speaker, it also says to other Canadians, to other provinces and to the federal government, what the broad, general guidelines of the Alberta government are with regard to oil sands plants number three, number four, and others which would come along down the line.

Mr. Speaker, without trying to prejudice their reaction to this proposal we have before them, I know some members in the Assembly are going to say that such an approach simply isn't possible. I say three things to members who say that. First of all, this Assembly has been promised an oil sands policy by this government as far back as '73, on at least three different occasions. Secondly, this government developed a coal development policy for Alberta, which has been in place since 1976 and has, I think, made a contribution to the development of the coal industry in the province.

Mr. Speaker, why do we need this policy now, in addition to simply living up to the commitments that have been made in the Assembly? When Albertans sit back and look at the economic growth in this province, when members of this government, when people in business in this province look to the economic growth of this province, the very least we can do in this Assembly is have a statement of overall general policy on oil sands development. Because as we move into the 1980s, more and more of our economy in this province is going to become increasingly tied to future oil sands development. The former Minister of Environment and Minister of Housing and Public Works, Mr. Yurko, now a member of the House of Commons in Ottawa, was talking at one time in the middle '70s about oil sands plants in the northern part of the province coming on stream every two years.

Mr. Speaker, there's going to be conflicting pressure. There's going to be pressure on this government, perhaps from the federal government, certainly from the government of Ontario and individuals and groups outside Alberta, to move very quickly with regard to future oil sands plants. That's one pressure this Assembly is going to feel. Another pressure is going to be from Albertans who are going to be concerned, and rightfully so, about the pace of development and the economic impact that's going to have on other projects within Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the fairest way to handle this pressure, both from within Alberta and from outside, is to have an oil sands policy which addresses one of the questions of right of development of projects, not setting down which year, which month, plants will go ahead, but some broad, general

plan the government would follow, would adhere to, would be committed to when it comes to future tar sands developments.

Mr. Speaker, it's also important for the business community in this province, which has to tool up and then kind of rein back, tool up again, and rein back. It's equally important for our educational institutions in the province. When one looks at one of the reports done by one of the many consulting firms which consult with the government with regard to tar sands plant projects, for the Cold Lake project itself — if the project gets going even on a limited magnitude in 1980, according to the work done by Resources Management Consultants (Alberta) Ltd., table 3.1, in the year 1984 we'll be looking at something close to 13,000 jobs in the study area. Surely it isn't good enough simply to say we're going to look at a plant-by-plant approach to these projects, when we're looking at a manpower-demand figure like that in the Cold Lake area in 1984.

Mr. Speaker, one more argument why I think it's essential that we move on an oil sands policy as part of an overall economic development strategy now: it seems to me that whether or not we want to admit it in this Assembly, there's going to be increased pressure from the federal government, from the government of the province of Ontario, and perhaps other sources, on the question of tar sands ownership. If we have in place a tar sands policy which addresses the questions of rate of development and of the investment make-up of future tar sands plants, then I think Alberta's position with regard to control of the resource and with regard to taking a responsible role within our desire for national self-sufficiency can be very, very easily defended.

Not trying to place one argument over the other, Mr. Speaker, simply allow me to say this: from the standpoint of Alberta's being able to deal with other provinces and the federal government on the question of rate of tar sands development in the future, unless we have a tar sands policy that at least addresses the issue of the rate of development, the opportunities there will be for Canadians to invest in those projects — at least those two things as a basic minimum — then I think we will not be in the strongest possible position as far as future negotiations are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, the third portion of my remarks deals with some ingredients that I believe should be included in a tar sands policy as part of an overall economic development package. I've already mentioned the question of rate of development. Let me simply make the point once again that I know there are going to be conflicting pressures here: pressures from outside Alberta to move more quickly, pressures from inside Alberta not to move so fast. But we can't simply wring our hands and close our eyes and say we're not going to deal with that. We're in a stronger position if we deal with that question. It may be that we'll end up having to be someplace in between, as to what many of us would consider the ideal rate from the standpoint of Alberta's economy but also recognizing that we have some Canadian responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, a second area that would have to be part of a reasonable tar sands policy deals with the appropriate principles for financing. What are the appropriate routes for the provincial government as far as financing is concerned? What should be the opportunities for individual Albertans to invest in these proj-

ects? We have two models to date in Alberta: one, the GCOS approach and, secondly, the Alberta Energy Company approach.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, within this question of appropriate principles for financing, shouldn't we in Alberta be prepared to make it possible for other Canadians to invest in the next plant that comes along? What about other members of the Canadian financial community? During the course of this session, we've already heard reference made to foreign investment. There's no magic to the suggestion. But one idea that, I would say, at the very least intrigues us is the possibility, as some ballpark targets, of at least 20 per cent of the investment coming from Alberta, at least another 30 per cent coming from the rest of Canada: that those be minimums and that individual Albertans and Canadians have a chance to participate directly. That's a second area that would have to be covered in an oil sands policy.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, in such a reasoned policy there would have to be reference to environmental protection, and to the provision of infrastructure and social services. Any member who has been to the Cold Lake-Grand Centre-Bonnyville area, regardless of where he sits in the House, would have to say we have done a lousy job as far as preparing that area for the influx of the next plant.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in a well-reasoned position paper we should be saying to firms that want to go ahead with tar sands plants, this is going to be the scheme for regulation. We should be saying definitively that Alberta materials and Alberta employment would receive priority, and materials and personnel from outside the province would be the second priority. And, Mr. Speaker, any kind of reasoned tar sands policy would have to include a commitment to manpower training that would enable us not to always be playing catch-up in these kinds of projects.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks by simply saying that in '73, '74, and the early part of '75, we were promised a tar sands policy by this government. Then the government made the point that we couldn't move until we got the second plant on stream. The second plant is now on stream. Add to that the pressure from the rest of Canada in looking at Alberta and saying, look, Alberta has got to move its tar sands development along more quickly. The response Alberta should have to that is, look, this is the broad, general tar sands policy for Alberta; these are the broad, general guidelines that future plants have to fit within. I think that kind of policy would be welcomed by Albertans and by our fellow Canadians, and would say to the industry, the investment community, and all who are interested that these are the broad, general guidelines that future tar sands plants would follow. Mr. Speaker, I think that would strengthen our total control over future tar sands plants development.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a few comments to the resolution we have before us this afternoon. Looking back over the last number of years, as the Leader of the Opposition has already pointed out, all sorts of comments have been made in *Hansard* about the need for a provincial oil sands policy. That, of course, has been subsequently contradicted by the former Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, who seemed to be looking at a somewhat different approach of examining each oil sands plant on its own merits.

one by one.

But I look back, Mr. Speaker, to the debate that both preceded and succeeded the announcement of Syncrude in the fall of 1973. At that time we had two major reports before the government of Alberta. One was a report compiled by Alberta civil servants, who argued for a very measured pace of development, approximately one plant every four years; argued that these plants should be constructed essentially under Canadian ownership; and emphasized some of the environmental problems which would develop, as well as some of the social problems associated with massive oil sands development. The other report was the Levy report, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in the fall of 1973. Basically, Mr. Levy argued very strongly that if Alberta was to move ahead with oil sands development, it would have to do so in a very big way and very rapidly.

I recall in 1973 and 1974 that the then minister of energy Mr. Dickie, the Premier, and from time to time the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs Mr. Getty, argued that Alberta would have to really pick up its pace of development; that we couldn't afford to take a measured pace, because were we not to move boldly and quickly the Americans would get way ahead of us because they had the oil shales in Colorado. We had the big scare that the oil shales were going to be developed overnight and would be more competitive than the oil sands. Therefore the Levy report was basically the one the government seemed to favor at that juncture. Well, Mr. Speaker, in 1974 the government actually got to the point where a draft oil sands policy had been developed. One day I received in a plain brown envelope a copy of that particular policy. But it was never announced in this House and, I think it's fair to say, never acted upon. Because after the 1975 election we saw a slightly different approach to oil sands development, which the Leader of the Opposition has correctly characterized as a plant-by-plant review.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the specifics of this resolution, I would say that at this juncture we should have an overall oil sands policy for the province of Alberta. If we're going to deal with other Canadian provinces and with the government of Canada, it strikes me as a common sense position that we set out some fairly clear-cut guidelines that have been debated in this Legislative Assembly. I want to offer my observations on what those guidelines should be.

In addition to the arguments that have been presented for dealing with a federal government which apparently now has some very clear views on what should happen to any increase in the price of oil — and not all those views would coincide with members of this Legislature — in addition to that issue of federal/provincial debate, which is a reasonable one and an argument for such a policy, there are other aspects of diversification in Alberta. A year ago the watchdog committee on the heritage trust fund unanimously, on one of those rare occasions when we can agree unanimously, proposed a recommendation to the government that one of the areas where we could certainly upgrade industry and opportunities for industrial expansion was in the manufacturing of items which will go into oil sands plants. The Premier mentioned it in his state of the province address and, as I say, it was a formal recommendation as well from the trust fund last year.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons for an oil sands policy is that if you want to develop industries in this province and elsewhere in western Canada that can get into the business of supplying equipment for oil sands projects in the years ahead, they need to have some idea of where we're going. Are we going beyond two or four plants? Are we looking at something over a period of five years, 10 years, 20 years? As a matter of fact, all the arguments over highway expansion that took place in the Legislature on other occasions, and even in the heritage trust fund committee this year, of contractors not knowing where they sit, can just as correctly be applied to any effort on our part to develop branch industries, or feeder industries if you like, in the province of Alberta; tertiary industries which would be based on providing the components, equipment, parts, what have you, in the oil sands construction business. So that's another area.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned this question of the communities involved. Again, no stronger case could be made for an oil sands policy than the need to have planning so we can avoid some of the chaotic problems which characterized Fort McMurray between 1968 and 1978, not just during the period of Syncrude but during the period of GCOS expansion as well, although less severe during that period of time. When we see in the Cold Lake-Grande Centre-Bonnyville area, problems that are being manfully attacked by local government people — although I don't think aided very well by this provincial government — surely one of the advantages of a long-term policy, Mr. Speaker, is that we can begin to plan sensibly ahead of time.

We won't get ourselves into the situation we found in 1974 when the then Minister of Municipal Affairs came into the Legislature and said, things are in such a mess in Fort McMurray that we have to have Bill 55 passed. And we establish a commissioner who has extraordinary power. With the consent of the cabinet, he can set aside statutes passed by this Legislature. With the consent of the cabinet, we can override local government officials. You know, we had quite a debate. As I recall, in 1974 that was the major issue of that session of the House. And it was triggered because clearly there hadn't been any planning.

Surely most members of this House, regardless of where they sit, do not want to pass legislation like Bill 55. I can't imagine members of this House saying, we're proud of that sort of legislation. Even in 1974 the arguments were based on: we have no choice. I remember the now Minister of Education arguing that point over and over again. He said, how are we going to get these kids to school, and how are we going to get people living in homes? We've got to have this commissioner with the power we're granting him. Well, I would argue that one of the advantages of a long-term oil sands policy is that we don't have to get into that box, or hopefully not.

Mr. Speaker, what should be the components of an oil sands policy as I see it? The first question that has to be addressed is the pace of development. I don't agree with some of those people. I notice that one of the former Liberal cabinet ministers of a few years back was suggesting that we bring all sorts of people over from Korea, I believe it was, and we would have literally one plant after another. We have the con approach which, in my view, would be equally catastrophic to both the ecology and the economic climate of this

province.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that we have to opt for a very moderate rate of construction, which provides the maximum opportunity to build up other industries that over a period of time can supply parts and equipment. I don't believe we should be pushed by other provinces or by the government of Canada into a major crash program of oil sands construction. Because when we look at projects of \$3 billion in the case of Syncrude, and we're now looking at a minimum of \$6 billion for Alsands and \$5 billion for the Cold Lake venture, it's just not possible to wheel these off one a year or one every 18 months, as Mr. Levy suggested back in 1973. If we did, we would have such a whirlwind of inflation in this province that it would be simply impossible to do anything other than watch the expansion of the oil sands region. As far as other businessmen, other people, other types of industries in the province are concerned, we would in fact be kissing good-bye to the survival of most of them, let alone the orderly expansion.

So I would say, Mr. Speaker, very clearly we have to be tough as a province and say, yes, development of the oil sands, development of the heavy oils, but on a phased, orderly basis — I don't want to use the term "conservative", but perhaps I could use the term "cautious" — and not let some of the eager beavers suggest that 1990 is the date for energy self-sufficiency and, by George, we'll achieve that goal regardless of the consequences to the environment and the economy of the province of Alberta.

The second question obviously relates to making sure there are maximum opportunities not only for Albertans to work in the plants, but for Alberta industries to supply goods and services. When I look at the manpower requirements, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work of Native Outreach. I think Native Outreach has done some excellent work in this province, making it possible for a lot of native Albertans to participate in jobs they wouldn't otherwise have an opportunity to take. Clearly, when we examine the manpower requirements of further oil sands plants, opportunities for people of native ancestry in Alberta should be a very important aspect to consider.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this question of who, in fact, is going to do the investing. I suppose in a sense that's coupled with the elusive negotiations that are occurring. I'm not sure whether they are still friendly negotiations, whether it's still Merv and Joe, or whether it has now become Mr. Clark and Mr. Leitch, or whether it's even that cordial at this stage. But the fact is that there does appear to be a good deal of speculation about some form of national energy bank. I happen to think that if the price of oil rises Alberta, as the owner of the resource, should be able to retain ownership of the money. But we have to be prepared to invest in energy self-sufficiency. That doesn't mean simply investing and losing ownership of the funds. I think it's a case of investing in Canada. But, as I've said before, the money should remain ours.

Now, the resolution talks about oil sands development, and obviously that means part of the energy bank is going to be funnelled back into oil sands development. But I would say too, Mr. Speaker, that if we're going to be serious about the energy needs of Canada, we'll have to look beyond just the oil sands. We're going to have to look at frontier exploration in

northern Canada and offshore exploration off Newfoundland. We're going to have to look seriously at alternative energy. We're going to have to look seriously at doing the sort of thing all members in this House applauded yesterday when we made a loan of \$200 million to Hydro Quebec, because we have provincial agencies in the energy field as well. As we look at the energy requirements of Canada, it's not just the energy requirements from a fossil fuels base, but the total energy needs of the country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say that in all likelihood a national energy bank is going to be established. I would submit that we as Albertans should be prepared to loan substantial amounts of the money we obtain from price increases to a national energy bank. Presumably a substantial portion of that money would be reinvested in the development of the oil sands, but by no means all of it. Nor should it all be invested back into the oil sands because, as I've said before, other types of energy development should take place on a parallel basis, and will need capital funding in order to move forward.

I would just add one comment on this point, Mr. Speaker. One of the ways in which the federal government may decide to develop and administer its energy bank is through Petro-Canada. I see no particular objection to the government of Alberta making loans available through the energy bank to Petro-Canada. I would be surprised if members of this government would object either. Because if we're going to loan money to a Crown corporation in Quebec, and properly so, then I don't see any objection to loaning money to a Crown corporation owned by the people of Canada.

In conclusion, it's very important to underline that, regardless of all the details of an oil sands policy — and I'm sure there are going to be some significant differences in the components of an oil sands policy: when we get down to looking, at commercial terms, I'm sure there will be differences between the views I would represent and the views of the government members; when it comes to whether we should be funnelling this money through Canadian-controlled corporations, as the civil servants' report suggested in 1973, or largely through joint ventures controlled by international companies, as we have in the case of the Syncrude project, there will be major differences. But I would suggest that whether or not one can resolve those differences — and that's highly unlikely — is really beside the point. The thrust behind the motion we have today is the need to lay on the table an oil sands policy so the federal government and people in the industry know the guidelines we set in Alberta, so the citizens of Alberta have some idea where we're going and can make their input known, and so we can begin to do some of the long-term planning that will allow us to avoid the extra social cost that occurred in Fort McMurray as a consequence of failure to plan the Syncrude venture.

Surely we can learn from the mistakes of the past, Mr. Speaker. These mistakes lead me to the conclusion that some sense of orderly planning is long overdue in this process. The resolution calls upon the government to move in that direction. I think it's a reasonable resolution, worthy of support by members of this Assembly.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, I found Motion No. 220 very

interesting. I have to agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that economic development is a very serious area, and I assure you that members of this government would concur in that as well.

On looking at this motion I see there are two parts to it: the motion and the objectives. I'd like to discuss the motion in rather general terms. I'm sure my other colleagues will outline the various programs that exist in regard to economic development.

In order to frame my remarks, I'd like to get some understanding of the words "economic development". "Development", in my mind, deals with moving from where we are today to another position which is more satisfactory. "Economic" refers to all those activities we undertake, using the resources available, to satisfy the needs and desires of our society. Having defined those two terms, what remains of the resolution is that we have a comprehensive set of policies and programs for this economic development.

The question we have to address ourselves to is: is there in place a comprehensive set of policies and programs? I'd like to discuss that in terms of the past 10 years, the major part of the '70s, and in terms of the 1980s. I'm a little concerned about the relationship of the motion to the objectives. I wonder if the objectives stated here do not come first, rather than the comprehensive set of policies and programs for economic development. To illustrate, I'd like to give you an example.

If I were to consider building a factory to manufacture hats for the city of Edmonton, the first thing I would do is stand on a street corner and count how many people there are in the city of Edmonton. That way I'd have an idea of how many hats ought to be produced. The next thing I'd do is count the number of people wearing hats. Following that, I'd make some observations as to what kind of hats are being worn, toques or whatever. Having developed that type of information, I could set about planning my factory to produce those hats. The point I'm trying to make is that there has to be a demonstrated demand and need before the planning process can begin.

So when we get into discussion of anticipation of energy needs — the establishment of an oil sands policy, provision of opportunities to invest in major energy developments in Alberta, anticipation of Alberta's manpower needs — that demand into the 1980s has to be identified and amply quantified for orderly planning to take place.

Given the energy situation in Canada today, I submit that it's very difficult to do that type of planning, to come up with a comprehensive set of policies and programs, in particular for tar sands development.

I submit that we, as Albertans and as Canadians, have to develop tar sands, heavy oil sands, and heavy oils as the need arises. As there's a demand in Canada, as the opportunity is there, we have to take advantage of it while it's there or lose it. I believe that our attitude ought to be to focus on the opportunities, not on the problems. It's easy to come up with problems.

The best example is the Wright brothers. I can just imagine the scene when they were trying to get their airplane off the ground. I can see a lot of farmers standing around on the fence. [interjections] Not only farmers, but everybody, saying, shucks, Wilbur, that thing will never fly. I don't like to see people standing around saying, this won't work. I like to see people take a concept, pursue and develop it, and see it

through to fruition.

That's the way I think we ought to be with the tar sands. If there's an opportunity for those tar sands to be developed and a need by Canadians for the products, we ought to go about developing them to fill that need and meet that responsibility as Albertans and Canadians.

[Mrs. Chichak in the Chair]

So the question here is, where do you go from those objectives to get down to your comprehensive set of policies and programs? I think this government does have a comprehensive set of policies and programs, and that that can best be demonstrated by giving consideration to petrochemical development in this province since 1970.

Prior to that time Alberta had all the natural resources, the feedstocks available for petrochemical development. But petrochemical development didn't take place. Small scale plants were developed to satisfy local needs, but most of the natural resources, the feedstocks for those petrochemicals, were shipped out of the province.

A good example of that is the feedstock was contained in natural gas. Prior to now, natural gas has been shipped out of the province with all those properties or other qualities inherent in the natural gas used as feedstock for petrochemical products. Natural gas was sold on an MCF or 1,000 BTU basis. The gas was comprised of not only methane, which was the major portion of the transmission stream, but also ethane, propane, and butane. Things like ethane, propane, and butane were all shipped out of the province. And they all represented an economic loss to the province at the time and, more importantly, an opportunity for the future lost for Albertans.

I think we are all now aware of the importance of this world-scale petrochemical development that will be coming on stream in the next year or two at Joffre. The magnitude of that petrochemical complex is such that its production of ethylene will give Alberta almost 30 per cent of the total Canadian production, over a billion pounds a year, and 400 to 600 million pounds of butadiene, propylene, and other by-products that will ensure value-added to Albertans for their natural resources.

For each one of those things, for each step taken in developing that ethane — for example, ethylene — for each job created in the development and processing of that natural gas, in the next step, four more jobs are created in Alberta; in the next step, 26 more jobs are created in Alberta; in the next step, 46 more jobs are created; and in the final step, over a 1,000 jobs are created for Albertans. These are all jobs that Albertans are going to have in the 1980s, that they didn't have in the 1960s because these raw materials were being shipped out of the country through the pipeline.

Now the question I ask myself is, how did that happen? It didn't happen by itself; it didn't happen in a vacuum. It happened because there is a set of sound, comprehensive, economic development policies for Alberta and it was this government that implemented those policies over the 1970s. Albertans are going to see those policies come to fruition and enjoy the benefits of those policies in the 1980s.

The 1980s was the subject of a speech given the other day by the hon. Leader of the Opposition in response to

a motion by the Premier. His question is, what do we see happening for us in the 1980s? I'd like to relate that question to this motion: "... policies and programs for economic development ...", and to agriculture and transportation in Alberta.

About 15 to 20 years ago experts around the world were forecasting a world energy crisis. At that time governments paid little attention to those forecasts; that is, they paid little attention till the energy crisis occurred. Now it's the number one priority on all governments' lists. In regard to agriculture, in regard to world food requirements, we are in the same position today that the energy industry was in 15 to 20 years ago. World food experts are forecasting a world food crisis. They say that if we think the energy crisis was severe and had deleterious impact on our lifestyles, wait till the world food crisis.

What is our government doing in that regard? Our government has always supported and encouraged innovation and pioneering techniques in agriculture. But I want to direct my comments to the transportation of agricultural products. What are we doing for the 1980s? First of all, we've announced that we're going to be involved in the development of grain terminals, Prince Rupert. Second, there was a very exciting announcement by the Minister of Economic Development last week, that Alberta is going to purchase 1,000 grain hopper cars and deliver those cars to the west coast; and third, the announcement that this government will be purchasing three inland grain terminals. All these things are important, needed improvements in the transportation system for grain handling. They're not going to change the system overnight. The system is senile now. It's an anachronism, and it just cannot do the job for Canadians.

The company for which I work ships sulphur overseas. Just last month we shipped half a shipload of sulphur out of the port of Vancouver. That ship sat around Vancouver for two weeks and then went down to Portland, Oregon, and picked up some grain for overseas shipment. The question I had to ask was, why wasn't that grain coming from Alberta? The overseas purchasers in southeast Asia simply said, you fellows don't have the ability to deliver. That's all there is to it.

Mme. Speaker, I submit that the planning this government is doing in regard to grain transportation will ensure that as we get into the 1980s, Alberta businessmen and agricultural producers don't meet with that kind of comment again. They won't hear remarks that you fellows just can't make your commitments. With the help of the planning, policies, and programs for economic development that this government has, particularly in agriculture, we'll make those commitments in the 1980s.

In the last month and a half I've had an opportunity to work closely with the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview and the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I've gotten to know them quite well. Even though we have said a few things we normally might not say under other circumstances, we still are on a first-name basis. I've come to respect the hon. Leader of the Opposition a great deal. I think his motives are indeed sincere and without malice. The only departures we have are philosophical, but that is to be understood.

I support the policies and programs of this government. I have supported them over the last 10 years and support them into the future. I don't say I support everything they have done, nor will I support every-

thing they will do. For example, I've made comments in the past about PWA. I opposed that on principle at the time. However, since then, from a practical point of view the purchase of PWA has been beneficial for Albertans. It's profitable and serves the interests of Albertans.

I think the important thing about Alberta ownership of PWA is that those making decisions in regard to that air line have Alberta as a point of reference. When they're making their decisions, it's in regard to benefit to Albertans. I see a problem with our petroleum industry and other industries dominated by multinational companies. When they operate in our province, their decisions aren't based solely on benefits that will accrue to Albertans. Their decisions are based on the benefits that will accrue to their corporate entities.

A good example is the sale of sulphur. There's a highly respected international trade magazine called *Sulphur*. You can look in it and see a full-page advertisement: buy Canadian sulphur, bright Canadian sulphur produced in the Canadian west by Canadians working 24 hours on a Canadian clock, shipped through the Canadian Rockies, through Canadian terminals, and things of this nature. If you want to buy some of this sulphur, phone Amoco Canada Ltd. in Chicago. That bothers me. It bothers me because of my pride in being an Albertan and a Canadian. It also bothers me as a businessman, because they're making decisions relative to something other than what is best for Alberta and Canada.

Somebody reading that magazine in India might say, this looks like a good idea; I'll buy some of that Canadian sulphur. They call Amoco in Chicago and say, fellows, send me some of that sulphur. Amoco says, we'll send it you, they hang up. The next thing you know, that sulphur isn't shipped from Alberta to India but from the United States. The Indians don't know the difference between Canadian and American sulphur. Sulphur is sulphur. But there's a lost Canadian sale. I think this is a good illustration of the different reference points multinational companies have relative to companies that operate and have their directorship and ownership in Alberta and Canada.

I got off on that tangent by talking about PWA, saying that it's worked out practically. I kind of flew off on that one.

I'd like to address the role of government in planning and setting up policies and programs for economic development. On principle, I disagreed with the PWA purchase at the time. Since then, after seeing the operation of that company and the operation of other multinational companies in Alberta and Canada, particularly in terms of megaprojects, I've changed my mind. I think the role of government in business and economic activity has changed a great deal. It was fine at the turn of the century when we had a one-horse town and could say government had to stay out of business and activities. But a time came when it wasn't a one-horse town anymore. There were two horses, and those poor things bumped heads at an intersection. Somebody had to come along and set up a stop sign. Who set up the stop sign? The government. You got more horses, and you had to get more stop signs. Things developed to the point where you had to have some government involvement in economic development, policies, and programs.

We have to realize that our resources are limited. We have a great deal of ability and ambition in Alberta,

but there are only over 2 million of us. We can do only so much, and we have to do those things together. There has to be a concerted, co-ordinated, and collective effort. I think that collective effort has to come through the leadership of this government. My attitude to government involvement over the last 10 years has basically changed, because I think we have that leadership from this government.

In regard to these objectives specifically, the "anticipation of energy needs" — I assume that is in regard to forecasting energy needs. There's a great deal of energy forecasting by many reputable firms, organizations, agencies, and government departments in Canada. "Provision of opportunities ... to invest in major energy developments in Alberta." Albertans are afforded the opportunity to invest in these major developments in Alberta. Albertans have participated through the stock market, purchasing shares of private investors, and through the Alberta Energy Company.

Regarding the policies suggested by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and those by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, which closely parallel those of the hon. Leader of the Opposition: we ought to regulate the rate of development, but at the same time temper that rate with our responsibility to Canada and our need to balance the development of the Alberta economy. I think those are worth-while objectives. But, again, we can't lose the opportunity to develop these oil sands now while the opportunity exists, while we have that responsibility to other Canadians.

Earlier in Alberta's history, a government was faced with a similar situation. It wasn't tar sands; it was coal. Coal was king from the turn of the century to 1925. At that time the government's stated policy discouraged development of coal production in Alberta, even though there was a huge demand for it. The reason was that we ought not do it now; we ought to save it for some future time. That coal is still in Alberta. We have enough coal here to last Canada and North America hundreds of years. If we lose the opportunity to develop the tar sands now, that opportunity may not be there in future because people who need those products will go elsewhere and develop something else.

Principles of financing, environmental protection, social services, infrastructure — I would submit at this time that the government does a great deal regarding environmental protection, social services, and infrastructure.

I think there is an adequate policy in Alberta. This government does have a comprehensive set of policies and programs for economic development. I think it can be summed up very neatly; that is, development as required, on terms beneficial to Albertans. Ample proof that this government has those policies and programs can be found in the rapid economic growth this province has experienced, and that is forecast for the future. It can be found in the fact that Albertans enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world today — not in just in Canada, not just in North America, but in the entire world. Those things didn't happen by themselves. They happened because of the sound policies of this government and because of the hard work of Albertans, and we should all be proud of that.

I also think there's proof that Alberta and this government has a set of policies and programs in the

expectations Albertans have for the future. Albertans are looking with great ...

MME. SPEAKER: I regret to interrupt the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, but the time for debate of this item has now expired, pursuant to the provisions of temporary Standing Order No. 8. We'll accordingly go to the next matter on the Order Paper.

DR. BUCK: Mme. Speaker, in light of the importance of this resolution ...

MR. SINDLINGER: Mme. Speaker, may I adjourn debate on this subject?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. NOTLEY: Just a minute. There's a point of order.

DR. BUCK: On a point of order, Mme. Speaker. In light of the fact that my bill is up next, and in light of the fact that this is a very, very important issue, I would be very pleased to let the debate continue this afternoon. I'm sure many hon. members, on the government side and the opposition side, feel that this debate merits their consideration.

MR. NOTLEY: Agreed.

MME. SPEAKER: It would require unanimous consent of the House to continue. Does the House wish to continue debate on this item or to adjourn and continue with the next item. Do we have unanimous consent?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MME. SPEAKER: Hon. member, I'm sorry we don't have unanimous consent. Therefore we'll proceed with the next order.

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

**Bill 211
An Act Respecting the Right
of the Public to Information
Concerning the Public Business**

DR. BUCK: Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Now that we have a Tory government in Ottawa and their cousins the Tory government here in Alberta and in light of the fact that we are bringing legislation into the federal House for the right to information, I'm sure the government here will not only go along with the proposition that we need a right to information Act but will most likely pass one. I'm sure the Progressive Conservative backbenchers especially will be almost unanimous in their support for this Bill this afternoon. There has to be some consistency. Surely if you're a federal Tory, you must be closely related to a provincial Tory. The two things should go along.

MR. NOTLEY: Only when it comes to appointments, Walt.

MR. R. CLARK: Only political patronage.

DR. BUCK: Yes, I suppose there is consistency only as the patronage system applies.

Mme. Speaker, we ask ourselves the question, is the legislation required in Alberta? Do we need a right to information Act, as we have before us, Bill 211? I say to hon. members of the Assembly, we absolutely do need such legislation. Often voters and citizens have been led a bit astray by governments. They are fed up with secrecy in government, this government especially. Day after day you hear the criticism, I hope wrongly, that this government is arrogant. I would never, ever want to accuse this government of arrogance.

MR. NOTLEY: Humility themselves.

DR. BUCK: But this question of accessibility applies to all levels of government, not only here but elsewhere. It's a fact that Mr. Baldwin, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Peace River, waged the campaign in Ottawa for a number of years. The Member for Spirit River-Fairview and I have carried on the campaign in this Legislature, in the effort to make this government more honest, responsive, and open, and to make government the servant rather than master of the citizens we serve.

In light of the fact that the federal government has committed itself to a public right to information Bill sponsored by the aforementioned MP, Mr. Baldwin, I'm sure the present Tory government in Alberta will support that move. Mind you, there may not be that consistency, because it seems a federal Conservative is different from a provincial Conservative. While the federal government is campaigning for more right to information legislation, this government seems to think it doesn't require that. In their minority situation of 74 versus 5, I suppose they feel they have all the knowledge and all the answers.

But in dealing with the people of this province, with municipal people and other citizens who have to interact daily with governments and government ministers, the question is always asked: how come it's so difficult to get information from this government? A good example that I think I should bring to the attention of the rookie members of the Tory caucus was when we presented a motion for a return on Levy Consultants to the golden boy, the former minister the hon. Don Getty. It came back three times because we didn't have the "Ltd." in the right place. Talk about stonewalling. Talk about a government that is open and responsive and willing to divulge information. There was a classic example of a government not wanting to give a report ...

AN HON. MEMBER: You should have done your homework.

DR. BUCK: ... not a government where taxpayers' funds were used to provide information to the government to make a decision. The government tried not to make that information available to the general public through members of this Assembly. To me, that is not open government. So we see this government saying that freedom of information is not required in

this Legislature.

Then we look at the code of ethics.

MR. NOTLEY: Ha, what code of ethics?

DR. BUCK: This government says it doesn't require a code of ethics, because they know what ethical practice is. I suppose if they know, maybe the rest of us aren't that brilliant. Maybe something should be written to help us other members of the Assembly who are not as well informed as the government members are, so at least we would know what this so-called code of ethics is. It's unfortunate that only the government members are so brilliant that they feel there should not be a code of ethics and a right to information Act.

What has been the historical position of the Alberta Conservative government regarding the freedom of information legislation? Let's talk about a recent example, a position taken by the hon. Attorney General at the August convention of the Canadian Bar Association in Calgary. At that time the hon. Attorney General completely rebuffed the Bar Association's call for freedom of information legislation, saying the proponents of such legislation would have to prove their case before anything would be done. Talk about who is serving whom. There is a classic example. He also indicated that decisions made in other jurisdictions regarding freedom of information would have no bearing on what might occur in Alberta.

Going back further in political history, here are some interesting quotes from the budget debate of 1972:

The next subject I would like to deal with is public participation or open government. We are committed to this approach. The nature of our society in 1972 in Alberta demands it. We need to be better informed in terms of the public. We need to assure that the public is better informed, so that they can better understand some of the difficult decisions we have to make. And more important, as I've said on a number of occasions we need to assure that government is more responsive to the public view and to the public's feelings.

These quotes come from the Premier of Alberta. Of course he placed a couple of caveats on that statement, as any good, responsible politician should. You always have to waffle a little. One dealt with the need for some confidentiality in negotiations between governments and with industry. You can't argue with that. There are instances where an agency or private corporation you're dealing with may be put at a definite disadvantage if information is released to its competitors.

However, the Premier added:

... we feel it is our responsibility ... when they have been completed, to report to the public on a full basis of what occurred. But that is after the discussions have concluded.

I say that's a rather interesting statement when one considers the secrecy which still surrounds the negotiations into the Syncrude transaction and the question of the government purchase of PWA.

It was very interesting, Mme. Speaker, when the hon. Member for Vegreville said, no, we didn't discuss that in caucus. I thought everything was discussed in caucus so the hon. backbenchers could know what's going on in this government. In the last campaign we heard so much rhetoric about the action that goes on in caucus: we have so much input. Then the hon.

Member for Vegreville gets up in this Legislature and admits that doesn't happen.

MR. NOTLEY: Lets the cat out of the bag.

DR. BUCK: That doesn't happen. I would like to say to the hon. backbenchers that I sat in a government caucus of 55 members ...

MR. BATIUK: Mme. Speaker, on a point of order ...

DR. BUCK: It had better be a point of order, because I don't want any ...

MR. BATIUK: With great admiration for the hon. Member for Clover Bar, if this was discussed in caucus, there would be no necessity to ask a question. As far as before the election, Mme. Speaker, whether it was all our political party — we have involvement. But if the decision was made in caucus, we wouldn't need the Legislature. The reason for this is to give the opposition a chance to have their say.

DR. BUCK: I'm not sure exactly what that statement meant.

AN HON. MEMBER: You're not supposed to.

DR. BUCK: That is probably about the best bit of stick-handling I've heard since the hon. Dr. Hohol left this Assembly.

But the point is that many decisions are made by cabinet. And cabinet has that responsibility, but that information should be made available. It's basically that simple. I know we will get many speeches on how you can present motions for returns and oral questions, but that information should be made available to the public. We need that type of legislation.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

It was very interesting to find out, when Pacific Western Airlines was purchased ... To this day I'm sure the largest percentage of Tory backbenchers doesn't know why that decision was made. They talk about being Conservatives and supporters of the competitive, free enterprise system. It will be interesting to find out how much input they had when that decision was made, why it was made, and on what basis.

Mr. Speaker, there are other reasonable requests, where we need freedom of information legislation. Let's look at the recent decision made by the provincial cabinet and the investment committee to make Heritage Savings Trust Fund money available to big business at a \$1 million minimum. You know, we're always worried about looking after the little business people in this province ...

MR. BATIUK: The Alberta Opportunity Company.

DR. BUCK: That's right. The hon. Member for Vegreville says, the Alberta Opportunity Company.

MR. BATIUK: The Ag. Development Corporation.

DR. BUCK: But I would like to say to that hon. member that when you talk to small businessmen in this province, when you start talking to me and to

those little businessmen about a \$1 million loan, they say, that's not what we're looking for; we are looking at the \$20,000, \$30,000, and \$50,000 loans. Let's say to the hon. Member for Vegreville, go to the Alberta Opportunity Company or to some of the government agencies and find out what this government's doing for the small businessman in the development of a variety of petrochemical products in this province. The hon. Member for Vegreville will find that this government is doing practically nothing to get some of these small industries off the ground.

Mr. Speaker, we've always said that the Heritage Savings Trust Fund should be under the control of this Legislature. Time after time I have said to Mr. Clark the official Leader of the Opposition that I will not sit on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee to rehash the spending of funds that have already been spent. To me, it's a mockery of the system and a prostitution of myself as a member of this Assembly to sit in judgment after the decision has been made. I have told my leader I will not sit on that committee; I am on that committee in name only. I think members of this Assembly should be making decisions in this Assembly before the fact, not after.

Mr. Speaker, I know this Bill will have some input from the government and the government backbenchers. I know they will tell us this is not required. But surely, if they hold the same color of card in the federal party as they hold in the provincial party, this would be very inconsistent with that stand.

MR. BRADLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. Member for Clover Bar could explain to us whether the federal Social Credit Party is the same as the provincial Social Credit Party here in Alberta.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I think that possibly that was a rather weak point of order, number one. Secondly, we are talking about parties in power and about government policies at the provincial and federal levels.

The point I'm trying to make to the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest — and I'm sure he has a little problem with that — is that there should be some consistency if you are a Tory provincially or a Tory federally.

MR. BRADLEY: Speaking to the point of order, Mr. Speaker ...

DR. BUCK: There isn't any point of order, Mr. Speaker. When there is no point of order ...

MR. BRADLEY: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker ...

DR. BUCK: I don't think the hon. member has any ...

MR. SPEAKER: If the topic on which the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest wishes to raise a point of order is the same one he mentioned before, I would say he is cultivating barren soil.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I'm sure we're as consistent in terms of our policies as the federal Social Credit wing ... [interjections]

DR. BUCK: It's not a point of order and the hon. member should be ruled out of order.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that has been brought before many legislatures in the United States is consistent. Right to information legislation is becoming very timely. So I would like to say to the hon. members across the way that, because of the stand of one of their colleagues in the federal House and the federal government's projection of bringing in this type of legislation, I am sure the members on the government side will greet and support this Bill with great enthusiasm.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't too sure what the comments regarding small business and the Alberta Opportunity Company had to do with a freedom of information Bill, but to say that this government has done nothing ... I would like to say that in 1978-79 we lent \$27.2 million to small businesses in Alberta. I think that is something.

I guess there's some advantage in bringing up Bills that have been discussed previously. It certainly cuts down the amount of research the person bringing in the Bill has to do. In looking through *Hansard*, I notice that it has been brought up previously.

But I do think it is a serious issue. I think we all must decide in conscience what is best for the people of Alberta whom we represent. When we enter this Legislature we take an oath of office in which we swear to uphold the laws of our land and carry out the duties to the best of our abilities.

Right now a great deal of information is available to any interested citizen of Alberta. The proceedings of this Assembly are recorded on television and in *Hansard*, and cabinet decisions are made public on the morning following the regular meetings. Mr. Speaker, there are many examples of government information that is not necessarily in the best interest of the individual. That is also a very important concern; for example, individuals requiring social assistance or medical reports, to name only two.

The basis of our democracy rests on the premise that individuals are elected to serve and represent the residents within that specific jurisdiction. Those elected persons are responsible for their decisions and the policies of that government. The implications and repercussions of these policies are most often not able to be assessed until some time in the future.

As politicians we should be sensitive to so-called political pressure, and I would say we usually are. It's imperative that these reactions be based on an evaluation of what is best for the entire province. It is important that we make decisions based not on the pressure of just a few who are vocal or the few who you know may be able to get to you easily, but try to take input from a variety of different sources to make informed and conscientious decisions. We must be most cautious that the catch phrase "freedom of information" does not become a pressure that will penalize many people in Alberta. I am as concerned as any other person in this Assembly that we be responsive and responsible. But, as an elected person with experience at two levels of government in trying to make judgments that are fair to all, I have always been troubled by the balance between representing the majority and representing the interests of a few.

If all information relating to business of the province were made public, we would simply sit in this

Legislative Assembly for 12 months of the year and debate each item as it came up. Slowly, our government process would grind down. I believe very strongly in the democratic process and in the delegation of responsibility to a few who can take the time necessary to be informed, evaluate information, and make decisions that are responsible to the people of Alberta. I do not believe it is in the best interest to pass legislation that tries to pigeonhole information that may or may not be in the best interest.

In reading Bill 211, I notice in Section 4 — I would like to give a couple of examples of where I feel this doesn't even make sense: "where the information on record is so trivial in public interest that the cost to provide or [to] make the record available is not in the public interest." This section would not apply. Who is going to make that decision about whether information is trivial? A person coming to government may feel that some piece of information is important to him. Does a public servant say, this is trivial? Who makes these decisions? This is what I greatly fear about passing legislation that tries to pigeonhole or legislate what is really basic common sense.

Where the information on record is private in that it relates to the private affairs of any person or organization and, upon a balance between private and public interest, it is not in the public interest to provide the record or to make available ...

The hon. Member for Clover Bar mentioned that information relating to negotiations should be public. Yet, specifically in his Bill, information on a balance between private and public interest would not apply.

I think we have freedom of information in our process; as responsible legislators we provide all relevant information. Mr. Speaker, I believe that all reasonable information is available now to every individual who requests information. As a government, we are responsible to the electors of this province; and we are evaluated at election time.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak on this Bill, may I say that I have spoken on this topic about four times, in one form or another. I believe this is the fifth time, and the variation is probably the sixth time.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that off and on we have had this Bill in one form or another, by the New Democratic Party Member for Spirit River-Fairview as well as the Social Credit member now. It really begs the question of whether those two parties are getting into bed. If they're not, I'm asking the question of the House, what are they doing? Are they trying to seek out information, holding hands and saying, we'll find out the information and maybe ask ourselves what really went wrong in the past few elections? Maybe that's what they're doing. Mr. Speaker, if there was any question of the government being open, it should be dispelled very quickly by the results of the 1971, 1975, and 1979 elections.

I've listened to the hon. member who introduced the Bill. I believe it's complimentary to him that the title certainly merits a pat on the back. But in all those times, I haven't heard one example from him, not one example, in all those times, where he did not receive information. So I'm saying to hon. members of the House that it's an honest effort by the opposition member, but it's inappropriate and unnecessary in Alberta. It's sincere; it's an attempt to do something and awaken us about obtaining public information about

public business. It sounds good. But I'm suggesting that this is done very, very well in Alberta. Therefore, as sincere as it is, I believe the sincerity is a narrow, political reason, and that's all.

Mr. Speaker, he always relates to the hon. member who is a very respected member not only in Alberta but in the federal House, Hon. Baldwin, whose mission was to bring in a freedom of information Bill. He tries to draw an analogy between that respected hon. member and himself. Well, I suggest that on this issue it's just like day and night, not only on the freedom of information issue itself — because it doesn't apply here, as I see it — but if we examine the circumstances, they are so radically different.

The hon. member always comes back to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, that was established and voted on by the people of Alberta in 1975 after two years of exposure and open debate. At that time the public elected this particular government. Even in the last election, Mr. Speaker, this was again raised as a major issue, and we know the results of the 1979 election. I can't believe that that is the best example he could give of lack of open government. In fact, we know that the Heritage Savings Trust Fund has a select committee which I understand is being reviewed right now and will be reporting to this House for debate.

The hon. member forgets very quickly that there's an Appropriation Act which this Legislature can vote on and turn off the tap. We can cancel it. It's very open. If he's not happy with what is happening via the Heritage Savings Trust Fund for the people of Alberta — the many investments for housing, medical research, irrigation, resources, the Alberta Opportunity Company, the Agricultural Development Corporation, and support for small and large business — Mr. Speaker, I challenge him to get up in this House when that Act comes up and say, I don't want 30 per cent of the resources flowing into this fund.

DR. BUCK: On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is putting words into my mouth that I have not put on record in this Assembly. He is saying I do not support that. I have not said that. I support the things that are good for the people of this province. I am making the issue that the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is not invested or controlled by the Legislature. I have never said that the programs coming out of that were not good, and I would like the member to withdraw that statement, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the hon. member, clearly I am indicating to this House that it's open for him to stop the flow.

DR. BUCK: After the money's spent?

DR. PAPROSKI: Not at all. Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know ... Again, he has not studied this Bill and this fund enough. He can bring in a members' resolution and get passage of this House to stop a particular program or bring in a program.

DR. BUCK: What nonsense!

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, he says that's nonsense. I suggest that maybe he should read the rules governing this particular Act. I'm saying to him that the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is open by way of the

select committee, which will bring in a variety of items. He can get up and make his commentary and vote against it if he wishes. I challenge him to do that if he's not happy with some items.

DR. BUCK: I challenge you to have your puppet strings cut.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I notice the hon. member is upset. I regret that, because actually I do respect the individual in every way, but he's misdirected when it comes to an item such as this particular Bill.

Mr. Speaker, if I may go on, he speaks of lack of openness in this government. We have the budget review by all members, every year on each item. We have established a very special system on a trial basis. And when I see some of the opposition members' performance, to dig in on a very detailed basis on those subcommittees on the budget, I begin to wonder. But in either case, that is openness. It's not only open to the members on a detailed basis, but it's open to the media. Questions can be asked and every little detail — for senior citizens, for day care, for workers' compensation, for any item — can be scrutinized.

Mr. Speaker, he speaks of lack of openness and forgets that all parliaments are not the same. We have here a Legislature where we have motions for returns. When they are worded properly and are very implicit and explicit ... He cites the example that the government didn't respond because they were worded improperly. Mr. Speaker, surely the responsibility is on the opposition member's shoulders to be sure that that motion for return is worded properly, so the hon. ministers can come back to the House and give him precisely the information he requires. I remember very well many occasions over the years when the hon. ministers had to get up and request that the wording be changed in order that the response could be given.

To give another example of openness of this government, Mr. Speaker ... There are many more than I'm going to cite within the time frame allowed. The hon. member somehow likes to eliminate those, not even speak of them, and cite other jurisdictions. He forgets that other jurisdictions are not necessarily the same as Alberta. I am amazed that he hasn't cited the U.S.S.R.; it's really closed there. Maybe we should cite them as an example of bad things to come.

How about public accounts? MLAs from both sides of the House examine and cross-examine any minister and call any departmental head if they wish to criticize or debate. Mr. Speaker, I've indicated before that opposition members have done this effectively. Open to the public, the media, to every MLA and every citizen. On many occasions the opposition members have scored. Indeed they should, because that is exactly the type of forum we have. If the opposition members bring up solid, good criticism and show the reason for change, indeed change should be made. And it has been made and will continue to be made.

Mr. Speaker, what about cabinet tours? Does the hon. opposition member not believe that this is a very important item, where cabinet committees go out to various parts of the community and talk to community members on an open basis, not in a situation guarded by the pillars of the Legislature but right out in the community on main street, with the MLAs, to directly inform people.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the United States, this is not

the federal forum, this is not Sweden — it's amazing that he didn't bring up Sweden this time — and it's certainly not the U.S.S.R. I suggest we have open government here. I suggest that the hon. Ged Baldwin's Bill is certainly cribbed under the understanding of what happens in the United States and Sweden, and with the understanding of what has happened over the years under the federal Liberal government.

I'm suggesting that here in Alberta it's not necessary. I realize that the federal Conservative government is bringing in a Bill to improve the intolerable situation that existed for many years under the previous administration. Frankly, if I were there — and, I suggest, most of us, if we were there would bring in that kind of Bill. The situation there has been prevalent for so many years that I don't think there is any other solution unless they bring in very solid new guidelines and rules. Mr. Speaker, yes, we are open. The federal PC government took up a machine that was closed and had an intolerable situation behind it that had to be changed.

I've indicated that we have many opportunities to demonstrate openness. As we see every afternoon, Mr. Speaker, one of the most common is the question period. On any issue we can ask any question whatsoever. The hon. member doesn't realize that in the United States of America the ministers are not questioned daily and routinely; similarly in Sweden. Under their form of government, which is not parliamentary, this is not done. I think in those jurisdictions freedom of information is indeed a very vital and important item. How else can citizens get information?

When we get back to the federal sphere, Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition member doesn't realize that many times during the office of the federal Liberal Party, the MPs could not obtain information. Even when they were going out of the country, they could not obtain statistics and details they needed for their mission. Yet, in some way that information was available in another country. They could more quickly obtain that information on Canada from another country than from their own jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, if that happened in Alberta, I would support this Bill. There are many other reasons. I say the title is laudable; the hon. opposition member has the right title, An Act Respecting the Right of the Public to Information Concerning the Public Business. I'm suggesting the title is the only thing that is laudable in this Bill, because we have an open government and open information.

Mr. Speaker, let me go on and set a few examples. I know other hon. members want to speak on this Bill, so I won't go through every item. I mentioned the motion for return. I recall very vividly, Mr. Speaker, when the hon. opposition members repeatedly asked for information. The minister would stand up and say, that will take a lot of work and is very costly, but if you really need it we'll give it to you. On one occasion a cart full of information came in — literally a cart. He speaks about PWA. I remember on another occasion when, after repeated questions and everything was tabled, the hon. opposition members demanded more information. The minister then in charge of PWA brought in information that was stacked this high from the floor. It was presented to the opposition members, and not a question was asked on the information given to them.

AN HON. MEMBER: They never read it.

DR. PAPROSKI: They probably didn't read it. Mr. Speaker, not to speak of the resolutions we have, which are, again, very open: The resolutions can criticize and direct the government, bring in programs, and even ask for more information. We have this in the Legislature. The hon. Member for St. Albert mentioned the spring and fall sessions, *Hansard*, and television. Again, very open.

Mr. Speaker, maybe we should be reminding the opposition members that spring and fall sittings were brought in by this government. The purpose behind spring and fall sittings was not merely to get the Members of the Legislature into the House. It was for the simple purpose that people out there could respond to Bills, policies and programs between spring and fall, and between fall and the next spring. Wherever there's a contentious or difficult Bill, or where a Bill crosses many groups and requires input, that Bill is always held over between spring and fall or fall and spring, or even longer, as the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act was — for two years. Then we got re-elected, and it was debated again in the '79 election.

Mr. Speaker, we have something very, special here in this Legislature. For this one I give credit to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the Social Credit Party. That is the Ombudsman. He's a capable person, and under his Act he can extract any information from any department or any minister, with severe penalty if that information doesn't come forward. Mr. Speaker, here's another example of openness. We concur; we have supported this particular office with greatest respect.

Mr. Speaker, I've read this Bill over, and it's certainly a copy of the previous Bill, maybe with some slight modifications in some words. As I read on, the greatest concern I have in this particular Bill is the suggestion that individuals — be they citizens, MLAs, or opposition members, particularly where it's citizens — should receive information that is non-conclusive and not complete, just in the formulative stage.

When I read in Section 2(a), "'public business' includes any activity ...", I just shudder. What that would do to researchers, departmental workers, or any individual. Mr. Speaker, that information is half the information. It's in the formulative stages. Surely the citizens out there don't want that; they want the policies and programs and directions that were taken, not to keep that secret. That cannot and should not be kept secret. Once that decision is made, it should be open — as it is.

But to suggest "any activity" would certainly be threatening to individuals who are working in a department. They'd say, all I have to do is think, or write down something on a piece of paper, a little note, and it might be public. That would essentially stifle the essence of government.

We're not going to speak of the costs and the quantity of information that might have to be issued as a result of this. Frankly, I think the cost is not an issue. If there were more information necessary to distribute around this province to the citizens of Alberta, I think it should be done in a most efficient way. Cost should not be an issue. But I agree with him that it should not be frivolous or something that can't be shown to be necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I won't go through all the other items. There are many more. I want to leave some opportunity

for other members to say something on this. I'm convinced that at this time in Alberta this Bill is correct by its title but not necessary by its contents. It's being done, in fact. I think we could develop the arguments even further and in more detail if we wanted to. Frankly, I believe the MLA has the greatest responsibility here — and this has not been mentioned. He can dig and extract information as he sees fit.

I think the hon. opposition member has lost the argument completely when he can't cite one example where information was not given to him. I hope in his closing debate that he does cite a few examples, because that's what I would expect the public to hear. If he can't cite examples maybe he should withdraw this Bill, if he could.

I think the information is available to the public unless it involves private, non-governmental individuals, where the rights and privacy of the individual have to be protected; or of course where the item is before the courts; and any information during policy and program formulation. I think that information should be confidential because it's necessary to think it out before a definitive policy is brought out. People shouldn't have to misunderstand that the program will or will not come forward that way.

After contemplation over this particular Bill, if there are any improvements since the initial time I heard about this in 1976, I would say, maybe, this government should set up a central office. All the information will be dispersed from that area. A citizen can go in and say, I want information on this policy or this program and so forth. If it's available, it should be handed to him.

Finally, if we can demonstrate a deficiency in the openness of this government — and I think that is possible if we dig hard enough, but I can't see it at this time — maybe we should review, and set out new guidelines regarding what openness really means in 1980 onwards. At this time I'm satisfied we're doing a good job.

Thank you.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member who just spoke allow two short questions? The first question to the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway: is it not true that if a minister stands in his place, he does not have to answer an oral question from members of this Assembly?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, that is true. It rarely happens, and if it happens it's obvious that the minister has not that information in his hand. Not only that; he suffers the wrath of the citizens of Alberta if he continues to do that when he has the information. The hon. member knows that.

DR. BUCK: And secondly, to the hon. member for Edmonton Kingsway: is it not true now that before any information from any department is made available, especially to members of the opposition, that information must go through the minister?

DR. PAPROSKI: I can't respond to that, Mr. Speaker. I don't know.

DR. BUCK: Then you'd better find out.

MR. McCRAE: If the hon. Member for Clover Bar is finished with his cross-examination of the last witness, I would like to venture a few remarks on this very interesting topic.

Mr. Speaker, I've been very interested in this item. We've read a lot about it in the press. We've had the hon. federal member for Peace River talking about this issue for some 12 years, and a number of other federal members have also responded, indicating that they thought it was a very important and necessary bit of legislation. Having responsibility for government records here in Alberta and being aware of the growing volume of those records, I've been tremendously interested in the debate that would come up today.

I've always found a debate sparked by the hon. Member for Clover Bar illuminating — not necessarily instructive always, but certainly illuminating. I think the initial debate today — not the last two representations, but the first intervention by the sponsoring party — fell into that category. Frankly, I was disappointed in the presentation, in that I don't think he gave any good, solid arguments why we need the Bill. I would think there must be some better arguments in favor of the Bill than we've heard today. The hon. Member for St. Albert mentioned that in doing her research she discovered that this issue had been debated some four times earlier, and that reduced the research she had to do. I can appreciate that point of view. I think the arguments against were very well put in the previous debates.

Unfortunately, the sponsor fell into the same trap and reduced his arguments to a bare minimum. The main arguments seem to be that there should be consistency between the federal government and this provincial Legislature, because at this time they are both conservative governments. That may well be a good argument in certain areas, Mr. Speaker, but to date we have not yet seen the federal Bill. We're told it is forthcoming. We don't know what the shape or form or substance of it will be, so we can't conjecture here as to whether we should be following it. As to whether we should be consistent with our federal counterparts, I guess you might say, in response to the question from the Pincher Creek member to the sponsoring member as to whether there was a consistency between the federal and provincial Social Credit Parties, at least we know there has been consistency at the polls.

Mr. Speaker, I also read the debate from the previous periods when this or a similar Bill was brought forward and was particularly impressed by the remarks of the member from the constituency of Calgary Buffalo. He was referring or relating to a remark from the opposite side that there's been a tendency towards secrecy of information on the part of our government. By way of example as to anything but secrecy, he mentioned the Department of Environment and the vast number of publications and paper and studies they presented to the House.

I wonder now, as I see our new minister in his seat. This last six months we have not had that volume of presentations or papers or briefs from the hon. Minister of Environment. Frankly, I don't know whether he's hiding something or whether we should congratulate him.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's not doing anything.

MR. McCRAE: He's doing a good deal, but he's not proliferating a paper war, anyway.

We were in Public Accounts yesterday, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General, who was with us, made reference to something like seven million entries through the Treasury, the financial areas of government, in the past year. That gives you some idea of the tremendous increase in the volume of paper or information that is available to government.

I have a document here. I won't go through it, but it gives an indication of what goes on in the Terrace Building, where the data processing centre is. In 1962 a machine, a 1070 IBM as it was then called, was first introduced for financial reporting. Today, we have several million dollars worth of machinery down there; we have something like 120 billion characters and twenty-two megabytes — just innumerable information. All government information goes down there.

One of our major concerns is confidentiality of that information; not a proliferation of it, not getting it out to the public, but assuring that what needs to be confidential is kept confidential.

Mr. Speaker, I've been here six years. Each week I get a lot of letters and phone calls. I go door to door a couple of times a year — not the whole constituency but part of it. Every weekend I'm in the riding meeting dozens of people. And in all that time no one has yet written me, phoned me, or stopped me on the street, or in casual conversation said, what we need is a freedom of information Bill.

It may well be different on the federal scene. There's been a suspicion for years that the bureaucracy was in control down there. I don't know whether it is or isn't, or whether it was or wasn't, but I suspect it may have been. It may be more appropriate down there to have a so-called freedom of information Bill.

I haven't heard the case for it in Alberta. I've not heard it from my constituents or the business people I bump into, and I most assuredly did not hear it today in argument from the member opposite. Frankly, although I'm not persuaded we need a Bill, I thought there would have been some better indications of the need for it than came through from the Member for Clover Bar.

I guess we should ask ourselves: who wants it; what information isn't getting through? Again, I didn't hear that. I don't really think the citizen out there is asking for that information. In this as in many other areas I think, frankly, we do a reasonably good job of disseminating information.

The two previous speakers from Kingsway and St. Albert pointed out how the MLAs respond to their constituents and to the public and how cabinet tours, question periods in the House, notice of motion opportunities, and the debates we have all give the members opposite, and on both sides naturally, ample opportunity to enquire of government as to what is going on, as to pieces of information they haven't yet had or become aware of. That is ample opportunity for gaining information. If we're talking about a Bill for the opposition, there's a fundamental flaw in all the Bills that have been referred here today, in terms of the opposition getting at information they think government has and that they would like to put their hands on. Mr. Speaker, I don't think the hon. sponsor is concerned with the public when he brings forward this Bill. If it is in fact the opposition, let me refer to the Bill in a little detail. Section 4(b) deals with exclu-

sions. It says information will not need to be provided:

- 4(b) That is privileged as having been made in the course of an investigation or inquiry in the administration of the law or in the [course] of obtaining or giving legal advice.

I remember last year and the year before, and I'm sure it will happen this year: the hon. members will have motions on the Order Paper for legal opinions or briefings we've had, in the area of seeking legal advice on constitutional positions or whatever. I don't think he can be serious. If we were to pass his Bill, automatically those types of information which they're continually asking for would be excluded.

There's a second exclusionary clause in the Bill, Mr. Speaker. It's Section 4(d): "[where the] information on record is so trivial in public interest that the cost to provide it or to make the record available is not in the public interest". I can think of instances where, in response to notices of motion from members opposite, we have brought into this Assembly reams and reams of paper that cost thousands and thousands of dollars, and hours and hours to produce. When it's delivered, I'm sure, no one looks at it; no one does anything with it. So a lot of their claims or requests for information would be precluded under the triviality section.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the members have a substantial research allowance. I would assume that in due course they undertake or contract out a lot of research studies, and so on. I've often wondered what happens to those studies. Do they become part of government records? Perhaps the public would be interested in them. Should we request that they be filed here for us and for the general public?

I leave that thought with the hon. member. When we come back to this issue, I hope he'll respond to that in closing the debate: what volume of reports they have, what becomes of them, of what worth they are, and so on. I'm truly interested in that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make brief reference to the province of New Brunswick, which apparently has passed a freedom of information Bill. It is heralded in some quarters, by the Canadian Bar Association and other speakers from time to time, as being an example of where we should be going. Their Bill has not yet been promulgated, but in my opinion the exceptions would so negate the purpose of the Bill that, if the Bill were to be honored in the Assembly, one would get far less information than we in this Assembly offer to the public. I won't go through the items in detail, but I would be happy to furnish a copy of the Bill to anyone interested.

Similarly with the Nova Scotia legislation; in both cases the exceptions are almost identical and would allow the government the opportunity of denying to the Legislature almost every bit of meaningful information. I've had discussions with members of the Legislature from each of those jurisdictions, and neither is very happy with the type of information they have.

I notice the hour of closing is fast approaching, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make one or two very quick remarks before adjourning debate. One is that I'm not against this in principle. There has to be some merit in a title such as this. But I don't think the case has been made, here or elsewhere, for this type of Bill. Frankly, I'd like to see what type of Bill the federal people bring in, assess the information, and get some experience of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick situations. We have

reference to the United States situation. It's a fundamentally different ball game there, where the executive and the elected areas are totally separated. Maybe they need it there. I don't know.

Mr. Speaker, I say a case has not been made today for support of the Bill. I would like to make more remarks, but in view of the time I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the House will not sit this evening. By way of advising the Assembly as to business tomorrow, it is proposed to proceed with continuation of second readings, including Bill 40.

[At 5:32 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

