

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Wednesday, October 24, 1979 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 47****The Mobile Equipment Licensing Repeal Act**

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 47, The Mobile Equipment Licensing Repeal Act. This Bill is designed to repeal the legislation which provides for a property tax on mobile equipment, and on approval by this Legislature will be effective on January 1, 1980.

[Leave granted; Bill 47 read a first time]

Bill 69**The Motor Transport Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce Bill 69, The Motor Transport Amendment Act, 1979. This is a modification of a Bill that went into force in 1977. Having operated for approximately two years, it requires some updating.

Essentially, there are three parts of major interest: first, to expand the authority to cities, towns, and villages as related to The Highway Traffic Act and The Municipal Government Act; the second has to do with extraprovincial insurance as it relates to transport crossing the province; and the third section has to do with the proceeds of fines levied within and accruing to municipalities.

[Leave granted; Bill 69 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file copies of a letter I referred to yesterday, dated in June, and sent by Mr. Purdy, the hon. Member for Stony Plain, to Mr. Eastcott, the chairman of the citizens' advisory committee on gaming, constituting the terms of reference of that committee.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1978-1979 annual report of Alberta Culture.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a number of students from the Alberta Vocational Centre, which is in the constituency of Edmonton Centre. They are seated in the members gallery with their group leader Faith Fernalld. I would ask

that they stand and receive the traditional House welcome.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 13 grade 12 students from Holden school in my constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Burden. They are seated in the members gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 50 students from Lorne Akins junior high school in St. Albert. They are accompanied by their teachers Julie Zard and Dick Grind. Although I introduced this group yesterday, they are really here today. I would ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Culture**

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, the flags on your desk today are in recognition of United Nations Day in Canada. This day has attained special significance in Alberta, as children in schools throughout the province will be using today for study and reflection on the theme of International Year of the Child.

International Year of the Child was proclaimed by the United Nations as a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations delegations of the rights of the child. Our government was pleased to be among the first to recognize the year, and participate in its funding through the Alberta Committee, Year of the Child. One hundred and fifteen projects, from Fort Chipewyan in the north to Warner in the south, are under way.

The United Nations has received exceptional international recognition for the year, and has managed to focus the attention of the world on children. Their potential, and the problems confronting them, have been the subjects of study throughout the world.

In Alberta, we recognize that the future of our province rests, more than anywhere else, in the hands of our children. We are happy to participate with the United Nations, United Nations international children's emergency funding, and the people of Canada in pointing out the significant position children hold in Alberta society. As the International Year of the Child officially draws to its close at the end of 1979, this government remains committed to the idea of improving the environment for the growth of children; a commitment that does not end with the year.

We are honored today to have Dr. Audrey Griffiths with us. She is seated in the Speaker's gallery. Dr. Griffiths and members of her committee are to be commended for the many long hours they have devoted to children in our province in this past year, and the excellent job they have achieved.

The International Year of the Child flags have flown over this House since May 25, when they were raised by the Premier and the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Today we are pleased to highlight the commitment of Albertans by recognizing United Nations Day.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Beny Collection

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister responsible for Culture. It flows from the answer the minister gave at the end of question period yesterday with regard to the Roloff Beny collection. The minister indicated in the news release of September 20 that the government had acquired the Roloff Beny collection. Has the collection in fact been acquired by the government of Alberta, or not?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I had sent a message to Mr. Speaker asking for an opportunity to supplement the answer I gave yesterday.

Negotiations have been finalized with Mr. Beny. The contract is waiting to be signed. I would like to point out and clarify — and I think it's very important for us to be aware — that we are entering an area where we will be purchasing collections of great value and acquiring and receiving collections of an outstanding nature.

I would like to point out at this time that the total price we will spend on the Beny collection will amount to \$545,000 over a three-year period. The first phase, which is what we have been talking about for the last two days, is \$229,000. A further amount will be spent in 1980, and the final instalment in 1981.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The same government release that came out on September 20 indicating that the department had finalized its negotiations at that time — apparently that didn't take place until between yesterday afternoon and this afternoon — indicated that the collections would be available for viewing by Albertans next year. Is that the accurate part of the announcement made on September 20?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, due to the vastness of the collection, it will take at least a year to catalogue and a further time to have it packed. I would be very hesitant to say that it will be here within a year.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. A portion of the special warrant that was passed was some \$23,000 under Code 430, the code for contracting the services of professional and technical people. What use was made of that \$23,000 in the overall appraisal of the Beny collection?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, that \$23,000 was spent for the expert advice given by two people who were reviewing the collection, a lady in Florence and a chap from the Provincial Archives, Mr. Ridge. Included in that \$23,000, of course, is some of the cataloguing.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is the minister in a position to table with the Assembly the two reports she received — one by Mr. Ridge, the other by the lady from Florence, Italy — which led to the purchase being finalized?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I would have to get clearance from the lady from Florence. I was

going to say it's Mrs. Davis; at the moment I cannot recall her name. As soon as I receive clearance that I can do this, I will certainly table her report.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Mme. Minister, the public of Alberta has paid for that report. It then becomes the property of the government and the people of Alberta.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. NOTLEY: Don't get so upset.

MR. R. CLARK: The supplementary question to the minister asks her to reconsider her position. The public of Alberta paid for that report. The report should be in the hands of the minister. Why shouldn't the people of Alberta have the benefit of that report?

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. leader wishes to lay the basis for a debate, which he has already started, perhaps he could put a motion for a return on the Order Paper.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I know that would help bail out the minister.

My question to the minister: will she reconsider her decision and give a commitment to the Assembly right now that that report will be tabled here in the Assembly so anyone interested can have a look at it?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, could we use a motion for a return, and I will table that.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Do I take that as a commitment from the minister that if we go the route of a motion for a return ... [interjections]

The minister just said that we'll table that. Does that mean a commitment from the minister, or is she going to get instructions from the Government House Leader?

AN HON. MEMBER: [Inaudible] motion for a return and see what happens.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I will consider that for tabling.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Had the minister personally reviewed the report prior to entering into the three-year contract for the photographs in question?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, we certainly did. I speak very highly of the collection. I think we in Alberta are very, very fortunate to have the experience and the opportunity to acquire a collection of this nature.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I won't argue with that, and I have no question with regard to that. Did the minister personally examine the recommendation and the reports prepared by the lady from Florence and Mr. Ridge from the Archives prior to the signing of any contract for the acquisition of these photographs?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: I certainly did, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WEISS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister responsible for Culture please advise the Assembly of the approximate appraised value of the collection?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: The appraised value was approximately \$750,000, well over the \$545,000.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In view of what has just been said, could the minister clarify the nature of the collection we're acquiring?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Beny collection, as the contract states, is mainly 62,000 color transparencies and negatives, 22,000 black and white negatives, 80 boxes of prints, 54 diaries, and numerous files, paste-ups, correspondence, and proofs connected with Mr. Beny's collection as a photographer.

MR. COOK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise the House as well on the contractual obligations of Mr. Beny? For example, will the government of Alberta have to pay out of pocket any further expenses for the itemization of the expenses?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, the contract reads \$545,000 for the entire collection, travelling costs, cataloguing, and shipment. That will be the final price.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A final supplementary to the minister. Does that mean that after three years Alberta will have the total collection, without exception, of Mr. Beny's photographs and other related material?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, what I stated previously is the total commitment Mr. Beny has made to us at the moment.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Could the minister indicate if Mr. Beny's personal photography collection is included in what the government has acquired?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, if they are included in the 62,000 negatives and the color prints, they will be.

Judicial Reform

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Attorney General. It deals with comments made by the Premier in his state of the province remarks on October 10. On that occasion, reference was made to good progress as to the Kirby Board of Review.

Will the Attorney General inform the House what the status is of the remaining recommendations from Kirby 2? And five years after receiving the first Kirby report, have we now reached the facilities, quality, and staff levels recommended by the Board of Review for the provincial court system?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader's question relates to the report generally known as Kirby 2. I would have to check, but I believe the reference in the debate on October 10 was meant to be an update in regard to Kirby 3 and Kirby 4, which are also of

considerable importance, of course.

However, with respect to Kirby 2, I think the hon. leader would know that very significant changes have been made in the provincial court system as a result of the recommendations of Mr. Justice Kirby. Although I guess we're prepared to go through it, I think it would not be a helpful exercise to look and see if each and every recommendation has been carried out. I don't think that that would happen in many cases where recommendations are made to anyone. Many of the most important ones were acted upon quickly. If there are ones that checking would show have not been acted upon, there would be a reason in each case.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. It isn't my intention to go through each of the recommendations, but it's certainly my understanding that there's been a considerable problem in retaining senior Crown counsel. Would the Attorney General indicate what steps have been taken to overcome this specific problem?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to give a precise answer in a matter like that. One of the problems, of course, in recruiting senior staff who happen to be lawyers is that the private sector has a certain amount of appeal to experienced practitioners, and over a period of years the government does develop experienced practitioners. Naturally some of them move along to private practice.

I think, though, that although the workload is heavy for the senior Crown counsel, we are served at the present time by a very able group of experienced Crown counsel of whom we are very proud. Undoubtedly there are still some vacancies we would like to fill in the authorized numbers of senior Crown counsel, but I couldn't say the precise number at the present time without checking.

MR. R. CLARK: A further supplementary question to the Attorney General — not questioning the quality of Crown counsel; that isn't a question as far as we're concerned. We think that Crown counsel serves the province well.

The supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, deals with the magnitude of the vacancy and the impact that this has on court cases stacking up in the provincial court system. What steps has the province taken to acquire, hopefully on a longer term basis, senior Crown counsel?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the recruiting process is the normal one. We believe that the number of authorized positions for senior Crown counsel is adequate, given the fact that they are busy and work hard — but that's expected and they expect that. As to the vacancies, I would have to repeat that I am sure there are some we would like to fill.

I don't think the present situation is the cause of any particular backlog of prosecutions. I would suggest to the hon. leader that the term "backlog" may not even be appropriate in respect of prosecutions, because the fact is that they proceed quite expeditiously through the judicial system. There are many reasons for delays in the court, only one of which could ever have to do with the matter raised by the hon. member. I need not, of course, go into other reasons for delays in court proceedings. But the hon. leader's question had

to do with the steps that we've taken. We're taking normal recruiting procedures and filling positions as we're able to do so.

MR. R. CLARK: Then just one last supplementary question to the Attorney General. Really then, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the usual recruiting practice followed by the Attorney General's Department and through the public service, no extra steps have been taken by the Attorney General's Department to attract or retain senior Crown counsel?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I began by indicating that we have a number of senior Crown counsel of considerable ability and experience who are serving the role well, and that the normal procedures for attracting and bringing professionals into government service are adequate in the circumstances. The suggestion that something unusual should be done is not a useful one.

Electricity Supply

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, if I may, I'd like to address my question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Perhaps he will be relieved to know it's not on oil and gas this time.

When you were hosting representatives from the western provinces here a couple of weeks ago, the Speaker of the House from Manitoba in his speech offered Alberta the benefits of Manitoba's excess electric power. I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, if there have been any formal negotiations or discussions in that area?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I think that question might more appropriately be answered by my colleague the Minister of Utilities and Telephones.

MR. SHABEN: Yes, there have been a number of discussions, Mr. Speaker. Incidentally, I enjoyed the remarks of the hon. Speaker from Manitoba that evening, because we have been working on this since early this year. I had discussions in Vancouver with the ministers from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Since then I have met with the minister from Manitoba, the Hon. Donald Craik, as well as the Hon. Jack Messer from Saskatchewan, in regard to this question.

In the spring sitting I reported to the Assembly that we were examining closely the implications to Alberta of a western electric grid or obtaining electric energy from Manitoba. Our government is working as quickly as we can to determine whether or not it would be in the interest of our citizens. I hope to be able to advise the members of the Assembly as soon as possible. It's a very important question in that we could better use this renewable resource in western Canada among the four western provinces.

MR. OMAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, really with two questions. Would Manitoba's excess electrical power not be available for export to the United States?

Secondly, if I understand correctly, it certainly should be possible to develop considerable hydro-electric facilities in northern Alberta. Would it not be better for Alberta, perhaps with the assistance of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, to develop its own electricity, possibly even to the point of export? That would help

Canada's balance of payments and develop our own system rather than depending on Manitoba's.

MR. SHABEN: The hon. member has made a number of useful suggestions, all of which are being considered in our planning process. Mr. Speaker, in looking at the next 30 years in terms of electrical energy needs for the province of Alberta, we are looking at the hydro potential on the Slave River and on the Peace River at Dunvegan, at the potential for thermal electric energy within the province, and at the potential for surplus energy from Manitoba.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might supplement the hon. [minister's] answer to one aspect of the question of the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill. That related to the question of the security of supply with regard to the province of Manitoba. Although the hon. minister has raised many aspects with regard to the technical feasibility of the project and projects available to us in terms of northern Canada, on behalf of the government of Alberta I take the view that arrangements can be worked out with the government of Manitoba with regard to fully reliable supplies of electric energy for our needs here. We can hardly take any different position if we're providing natural gas to them. It seems to us that in a situation where we are providing a natural gas resource to a province, we should be prepared to rely upon them in terms of secure supply for electric energy. But that's not to go to the issue of the economic feasibility of the question.

MR. NOTLEY: Is the Minister of Utilities and Telephones in a position to outline to the Assembly the time line that the government is working on, (a) to ascertain the feasibility of a western power grid and the importation, if you like, of Manitoba power, and (b) consideration of Dunvegan in light of the present review of the Slave project? Will there be any consideration of the one before the other report is finished?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked about three different sources of electric energy. We now have, committed and in place, the electric energy requirements until 1986. In looking at the three that the hon. member mentioned, the planning process is going on to co-ordinate the long-term requirements as best we can.

In response to the question about a time line, the government would like to make a decision as quickly as possible with respect to a western grid or the importation of electric energy from Manitoba. I can't give the hon. member a definite time line, but we're moving as quickly as possible in order that the planning of other projects can proceed.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, if I may, a supplementary question for clarification. This relates to the whole question of whether construction should proceed on the Peace. A report on the Peace has been completed; a report on the Slave is in the process of being completed.

Will there be any consideration of the Dunvegan project before completion of the report on the Slave, or will the government in fact be waiting to examine the two options when that report is completed?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, we have work to do on both projects. In two years we expect to complete preliminary examination of the potential at Mountain Rapids on the Slave River, as well as the possibility of downstream icing as a result of a Dunvegan dam. That work is going on. It would be impossible for me to identify or 'prioritize' times on either of those projects.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary to the minister. My question arises out of the claim by some solicitors for interveners in an ERCB hearing, to the effect that transmission of energy from one province to another would require the consent of the federal government. Could the minister advise the House whether such consent would be required before proceeding with that?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and learned member is asking a legal question.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pose not a legal question but a supplementary question. It really flows from the time line the government is looking at with regard to making a decision as to whether we would accept the Manitoba offer, if reasonable grounds can be worked out or not.

My supplementary question to the minister is: has the government made a decision not to approve any other projects in Alberta until a decision is made on the Manitoba offer?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, nothing is being delayed as a result of our examination of the potential for importing Manitoba hydro. There are applications before the ERCB. As I indicated to the earlier question, we would like to make a decision as quickly as possible with respect to importing power from Manitoba, in order to prevent any uncertainty with the electric industry in the province.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise the House whether the government intends to obtain the consent of the federal government before proceeding with such a transmission proposal?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, in the course of discussions that have been going on among the respective ministers of other provinces the jurisdictional question has arisen, and we are reviewing it at this time. I'm unable to answer the hon. member's question.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, just one supplementary point on that matter. At the last first ministers' conference on the economy, or the one prior to that, it was certainly my understanding that the general consensus was the encouragement of electric grids throughout various regions of Canada.

MR. COOK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Followed by a final supplementary by the hon. Member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

MR. COOK: I wonder if the minister can advise the House as to factors he will be taking into consideration to assess the relative merits of a grid and projects like the Dunvegan one. In particular I'm concerned

about environmental factors. Will the minister be considering the fact that plants like the Genesee plant might have adverse environmental impact on Alberta?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, it would appear that we're getting into a subject which is going to require a very substantial and lengthy answer, possibly even a report. Perhaps that information could be sought elsewhere, especially in view of the fact that a number of members still want to ask their first question.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, not being aware, I was going to ask the question of the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn, but he covered that very well by himself. Thank you.

Electricity Supply — Lethbridge

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones concerning electrical energy. Some time ago a decision was reached by the ERCB about a supply of energy to the city of Lethbridge. We now have a resolution from that city council asking the government to proceed to implement that decision.

Could I ask the minister what action has been taken by the government to assure security of supply to the city of Lethbridge?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the concerns expressed by the Member for Lethbridge West. The member is correct in that the Energy Resources Conservation Board approved the construction of a 240 kilovolt line from Janet to Lethbridge. Subsequent to approval by the Energy Resources Conservation Board, litigation was commenced, and approval of that line is now hung up in the courts.

In working with the utility companies, we have attempted to bolster the assurance of supply to Lethbridge by improving the capacity of the Calgary-Fort Macleod line as well as activating a section of the line from Blackie to Lethbridge with higher capacity transformers and capacitors. However, there is concern that if the Macleod line should go out during a peak period, there could be a shortage of power in Lethbridge. We're certainly concerned about it, but it is in front of the courts. At this stage it would be difficult for the government to intervene, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of his response, could the minister advise whether or not there is a contingency plan in place in the event that there's a serious breakdown in the Calgary-Macleod transmission line this winter?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, that was the reason for bolstering the Calgary-Fort Macleod line and activating a portion of the line that will eventually be upgraded to 240 kilovolts if necessary approvals are obtained. The shortage of power in the worst circumstances would be in the neighborhood of 30 to 40 kilovolts. The method of assisting the people of Lethbridge would be as quick a notice as possible, but in a situation like this very little could be done. It could result in brownouts.

MR. GOGO: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, for what it's worth. I would certainly urge the Minister of Utilities and Telephones to speed up discussions with Manitoba on the possibility of importing power.

MR. SPEAKER: It would be difficult to add a question mark to that.

Transmission Lines

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, this question is also directed to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones. In light of the answer the minister gave yesterday to my question on energy transmission, I wonder if there has been any consideration of the terms of reference of the committee that was under discussion. Will those terms of reference be made public?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, yes, I think it would be useful for members of the Assembly to be aware of the range of the subject that the committee of officials will be examining. I will participate the next time the hon. member's motion comes up for discussion and attempt to provide the members of the Assembly with the range of this examination of the entire question of transmission lines. I think the question is appropriate in view of the concern of the hon. Member for Lethbridge West about transmission lines.

Beny Collection (continued)

MR. NOTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct this to the hon. Minister responsible for Culture. It's a clarification of the questions posed on Monday, October 22.

Will it be the intention of the government to use the best available technology to preserve the color prints and negatives of Mr. Roloff Beny?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Yes, it will, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. What steps has the government taken to assess the costs of using the best possible technology to preserve these slides and, in particular, the negatives and prints, in view of the position of a number of people in the field, including the person in charge of photography for the Glenbow institute, that we're looking at a minimum of \$150 a picture or between \$9 million and \$12 million to achieve this objective?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, we have storage material on hand that will be able to keep the negatives in the condition that they have to be kept in. In case some of the negatives are beginning to fade, one can always use the negatives to take prints from so that we will always have an update.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Will it be the intention of the government to spend whatever money is necessary to maintain the quality of the negatives themselves? I've been given to understand that we're looking at a substantial amount of money. Will that money have to be allocated by the government in future budgets? Has the government taken that into account?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I think the negatives we are acquiring are in good shape at the moment. As I've said, if the negatives start to fade we have on hand the material and apparatus to take slides of these pictures or negatives and keep them at a par that could be shown not only in Alberta but throughout North America, so that we can all have the opportunity of viewing this collection.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister information at this time to advise the House on what the costs would be? Has there been any overall assessment of the required costs, in view of the fact that the negatives have a life span of, I believe — well, there's some debate on that, but at least a very limited life span?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, the lifetime of negatives is over and around 50 years. As I have already stated, we can take pictures from these negatives.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister.

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

MR. NOTLEY: It relates to some difference of opinion over how long the negatives will last. The figure of 50 years is using the best possible technology, which is \$150 a picture times 60,000 — a lot of dollars.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If the hon. member has a question, would he please come to it, briefly. We're running out of time, and part of it is due to some fairly long preambles in the questions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, my question is simply this. Has the government any assessment of the total costs of keeping this collection in top form, in addition to the \$550,000 of obtaining it?

MR. CRAWFORD: It's been answered.

Hospital Construction — Lethbridge

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care is with regard to the Lethbridge general and St. Michael's hospitals. Could the minister advise the Assembly whether consideration is being given to building a new hospital in the city of Lethbridge?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker. A number of alternatives are open. I think the scheme presently under consideration is well known; that is, upgrading and adding to the two hospitals. I've had a number of requests to have that decision reassessed in view of current building costs. I'm meeting with representatives of the two boards to get their views on the matter.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Would a target date for a final decision on that matter be 1980?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, 1980 is a long way away. I hope I can decide something before then, Mr. Speaker.

Chicken Imports

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. Does the minister's department have any statistics that would indicate what effect the import of cheap, American chickens is having on Alberta markets?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I would have to take the question as notice, if you wish to provide the total report. I have no indications at this time that cheap chicken has provided any problems in the province of Alberta; no comments from the consumer, I'm sure.

Weather Modification

MR. L. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Agriculture. It has to do with weather modification.

Five years ago the Alberta government entered into a five-year testing program on weather modification in central Alberta. I understand that the five years is now up. Has the department done any evaluation of this program, and will the minister advise the Assembly whether the program will be continued?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, if my memory is correct, a cloud-seeding in mid-September brought to a close a five-year program that had been extended for one year. So the program of weather modification, based in Red Deer, has been running for that period of time and has majored in hail suppression. The close of the program itself has brought a recommendation and the evaluation reports, which we are waiting to be printed so that I can present them to the Assembly. The future of the weather modification program, of course, is dependent upon the review and the results of the report submitted to us. That decision has not been made at this time.

MR. L. CLARK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the importance of this program to the rural people of the hail area in central Alberta, I wonder if there's any plan to expand it.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in the evaluation of the program to date, it's purely experimental. Five or six years is a very short time to make an assessment of an experimental nature. Indeed, when we do the review, which has been started, one has to look at whether the program — if it were to continue — should continue in its present form. There are other areas of weather modification that should and could be looked at. At this time I would say that every aspect of weather modification is being looked at and will be considered when we do the total evaluation.

MR. R. CLARK: A supplementary question to the minister. Has the minister had an opportunity to sit down with the advisory board that has been very actively involved in helping run the program in central Alberta — out of Penhold, I believe — for the past five or six years? Is the minister in a position to indicate to the Assembly whether the board has recommended to the minister that the program should continue?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, this fall I had the opportunity to spend a full day with the board at one of their meetings, to sit down and discuss with them the

program as it has been run over the years, and to hear each and every individual view and those of the board collectively, and the recommendations they have.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Did the board recommend to the minister the continuation of the program?

MR. SCHMIDT: Definitely, Mr. Speaker. The board is of course interested in seeing the weather modification program carried forward and suggested other areas one could look at and consider in broadening the program.

Vegreville Research Centre

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question either to the Minister of Housing and Public Works or to the Minister of Environment. The opening of the Vegreville research laboratory centre was aimed for the month of November. I wonder whether the ministers could advise whether the completion of this centre is on schedule.

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, the construction of the new Vegreville environmental research centre is perhaps not quite on target, but making good progress. We have already employed a number of staff. But since the Department of Housing and Public Works is actually constructing the building, I'd like to refer that to the Minister of Housing and Public Works.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the last report I have had is that the overall construction of the Vegreville lab is actually ahead of schedule and under budget. The first wing should be ready to turn over to the Department of Environment any day now. Succeeding wings will be coming on in succession as planned. I think that in the next few months, possibly as early as January, all four wings will be turned over to the department.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either minister. A number of families have relocated to Vegreville for employment that was intended early in November. Should there be any delay, would these families who have already relocated be given preference over those who still have to locate?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I would refer that to my colleague. However, I would say again that in terms of construction the overall project is ahead of schedule, and all four wings will be completed prior to the scheduled date.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the hon. minister. Could he advise the exact number who will be employed when the centre is completed?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, on completion we expect that the research centre, which is going to be one of the outstanding centres for environmental research in western Canada, if not all of Canada, will employ a total staff in the area of 230, including scientists.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I have received certain messages from His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor which, on behalf of the hon. Provincial Treasurer, I now transmit to you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[Members of the House stood]

MR. SPEAKER: The Lieutenant-Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund for the 12 months ending March 31, 1981, for the purpose of making investments pursuant to Section 6(1)(a) of The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act in projects which will provide long-term economic or social benefits to the people of Alberta, but which will not by their nature yield a return to the trust fund, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant-Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain additional sums, not otherwise provided for, required from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund for the 12 months ending March 31, 1980, for the purpose of making investments pursuant to Section 6(1)(a) of The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act in projects which will provide long-term economic or social benefits to the people of Alberta, but which will not by their nature yield a return to the trust fund, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 34

The Teachers' Retirement Fund Amendment Act, 1979

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to move second reading of Bill 34, The Teachers' Retirement Fund Amendment Act, 1979.

As I indicated during first reading of Bill 34, this Act proposes a number of amendments designed to do two things: first, to update sections of the Teachers' Retirement Fund, and second, to allow more flexibility to certain sections for individuals subscribing to the fund. I'd like to go briefly through each of the six changes proposed and indicate the purpose for which these are being requested.

The first suggested change is that Section 2 be amended by repealing (d)(ii) and substituting a section which basically just amends the definition of "private school". The purpose of this, Mr. Speaker, is that the current definition of a private school in the Act deals with the operator of an early childhood services program approved under regulations of The Department of Education Act since 1975. That section was included and is now out of date. The regulations mentioned are no longer adhered to, and the regulations that now deal with those schools are those standard grant sections of the department Acts. So that merely brings that section of the Act up to date.

The second change, Mr. Speaker, is similar in na-

ture. It amends the definition of "school boards" to update the Act to be in keeping with names used by Lloydminster boards and other sections. It's in keeping with the Lloydminster Charter, which was ratified by both the Saskatchewan and Alberta governments.

The third change recommended in this Act is a little more significant. Its intent is to add after Section 16(2):

Notwithstanding subsection (1), a teacher who is 65 years of age or over at the commencement of a school year need not contribute to the Fund if he receives the permission of the Board in writing not to so contribute.

Mr. Speaker, currently teachers employed who are over 65 years of age are required to contribute to the fund, even though they are reimbursed. This apparently has caused some difficulty with those wishing to subscribe to the registered retirement savings plan. This change will merely ensure that that money need not be deducted. Therefore, no one subscribing to the registered retirement savings plan will be penalized because of that particular section.

The fourth change to the Act allows a teacher who has made contributions to the Teachers' Retirement Fund over the years to transfer the funds contributed to the universities academic pension plan, if he chooses. At the moment there are a number of teachers who did not choose to transfer those funds, primarily because the universities academic pension plan was not in operation at that time. This will now allow them the flexibility to transfer those funds, should they choose to do so.

The fifth change in the Act amends Section 24(8) by striking out "Alberta Colleges Commission" and substituting "Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower". The Act presently indicates that the fund shall be approved by the Alberta Colleges Commission. That is no longer in existence, Mr. Speaker, so this again merely brings that section up to date and gives the minister that authority which he has been exercising.

Mr. Speaker, the final change in The Teachers' Retirement Fund Amendment Act, 1979, will allow the board of the Teachers' Retirement Fund to adjust a teacher's normal pension plan in accordance with the contributions that that teacher has made over the years. There has been at least one case in which the federal government has not required that a teacher contribute to the Canada pension plan, and this has caused difficulties in the overall calculation of the teacher's pension benefits. So this section will merely allow the board to take the full contributions into account when calculating the correct amount of the pension.

Mr. Speaker, those are the six changes proposed by the Act. I ask this House to support those changes on second reading.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a second time]

Bill 39

The Private Vocational Schools Act

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure this afternoon of introducing for second reading The Private Vocational Schools Act.

This will replace an existing Act known as the private trade schools Act which, in one form or another, has been in effect in Alberta since 1930. In addition to renaming an existing statute, this legislation will

achieve the following objectives: first, to redefine "trade schools" to include all vocationally related schools, which will thus extend the present protection to the public beyond trade schools and make for a consistent regulation of private career schools in the postsecondary system; secondly, to establish an administrator of the Act and to allow for delegation of authority clearly to allow departmental personnel to perform administrative functions presently assigned to the minister; thirdly, to provide greater consumer protection for Albertans through a system of inspections, orders, stop orders, and court orders, to help prevent unscrupulous or less than satisfactory operators from continuing to operate; fourthly, to create an advisory body to the minister with clearly defined powers, with an appeal capacity which will provide some measure of protection to the operators from the arbitrary exercise of authority on the part of departmental officials, with a final appeal to the court, which is not presently available.

I wish to point out, Mr. Speaker, that in renaming the Act, the term "vocational schools" will really reflect the nature of the schools, and will also eliminate any confusion that may exist with respect to trades as defined under The Manpower Development Act. Finally, the Act will generally update the legislation to make it current as we move into the 1980s.

In presenting this legislation, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that at the present time more than 80 private trade schools are in operation in Alberta. By way of information, there are 14 offering beauty culture, 12 offering business education, four offering truck driver training, five offering air training, eight in tax accounting, eight in life-skills training, and the remainder offering various other types of programs through correspondence and residential instruction in Alberta.

For hon. members who are interested, I have a loose-leaf publication entitled Private Trade Schools Registered in Alberta, which briefly sets out a description of each school, the fees charged, the duration of the course, and the nature of the courses offered. If hon. members are interested, these may be obtained from my office or from the trade school administration of the field service division of the department, in the Devonian Building. Looking through this, Mr. Speaker, I think it's quite clear that a very wide variety of courses are offered privately in the province of Alberta. I understand many of these schools are providing service to large numbers of Albertans.

So I think it's useful to restate the position of the government in this area. We support the operation of such private schools. But, while our operations will not unduly interfere with the operation of such schools, we wish to continue to ensure, through my department and this legislation, that students who register in these schools will receive value for what they pay, and that the value is acknowledged by future employers of such students. By this new legislation, we hope to assist in achieving objectives which will make sure that both the schools and their operators, and the students, benefit.

As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, the legislation is a complete new Act. I think it is useful to point out that the Act will come into force on proclamation. In the meantime, new regulations have been passed under the existing Act, hopefully to provide a transition period for the operators of trade schools, and to try to incorpo-

rate some of the provisions we are looking at in the new legislation.

Hopefully, in the period between now and the proclamation and during the time the regulations recently passed are in operation, it will be possible, through discussions with the operators and students who wish to make representation to the department, to find out if there are any problems associated with the new regulations and their method of operation, and any problems anyone might foresee with the operation of the new legislation. In other words, we are open to suggestions for improvement, and we look forward to receiving that information when and if it is provided to us. If other members of the Assembly, either during the debate on second reading or during committee study of the legislation, are in a position to offer constructive suggestions, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly my intention to carefully review those in order that we might reach the ultimate objective of ensuring the continued operation of private vocational schools in the province, serving and adequately training students for participation in the work force of the province of Alberta as we move into the 1980s.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks with respect to Bill 39. I think it is a welcome piece of legislation. It enables a broadening of facilities and programs for a whole host of new vocations, trades, and jobs which are in the market place but for which there has not been provision in the province for education or preparation for these many vocations. Because there was a lack of such programs in the province, many people had to travel to other parts of Canada or internationally. Yet there was a real demand for their particular services. So I think this welcome piece of legislation will enable the government to set some guidelines and standards, and monitor to make sure that any new programs, courses offered, or educational facilities through the private sector will have some standards and then, of course, some recognition.

If he has not already done so, I would like the hon. minister to consider broadening the scope of this legislation. He may perhaps reflect on this matter in closing the debate. I foresee that many students taking courses through private school programs will, in all probability, need financial assistance. In the past I received complaints on many occasions that young people were not able to have the benefit of certain programs because they were not able to meet the financial burden. Because a facility was not provided to recognize certain programs or determine certain standards and regulations, they were not able to avail themselves of training in these programs. I hope the hon. minister has taken into consideration that by approval of various new private school or correspondence programs, if Albertans require assistance, they will be able to apply for loans enabling them to take advantage of new programs in a whole host of new areas of service provided to Albertans and in the communities.

I would like to say again that this is a welcome piece of legislation. I hope that in the initial stages the department people will have a fairly broad interpretation of the legislation, until experience has proven itself to where we draw some very restrictive guidelines, if that indeed becomes a necessity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

(*reversion*)

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 40 grade 6 students from Eckville. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. John Walker, Dwight Fraser, Vi Wells, and Alice Coverdale. I would ask them to rise and receive the accord of the House.

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**

(**Second Reading**)

Bill 39

The Private Vocational Schools Act

(*continued*)

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a few brief comments with regard to this Bill. Might I say to the minister: in essence, with this legislation as with the previous legislation, the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, charged with responsibility for this Bill, really becomes the person who can either give blood — give life or take away life from private trade schools. I'm sure the minister is under no illusion that with the powers that were in the former Act, and basically with the powers in this Act, there's constantly a need to retain a balance between those private institutions that are meeting a legitimate need ... I'm sure the minister is well aware that pressure will come from public educational institutions to take on some programs which have been successfully handled by these kinds of private operations in the past.

I rise in my place today simply to say to the minister, there are wide powers in this Act and, ultimately, the minister becomes the person who can make a decision whether a school will continue to function. I recognize, Mr. Minister, that those powers were in the previous Act. But at a time like this I think it's appropriate to recognize that, from the formal education system, from the agencies in the minister's department, there will be pressure to take on some of the programs that have been successfully pioneered by private groups. If the minister isn't conscious of that, we could see the end of private technical training. It has gone down considerably over a period of several years.

I simply want to have that on record for future reference for the minister.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take under advisement some concerns of the hon. members who have spoken. I might deal in committee with the specific raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood; I think it would be useful to do that at that time.

As to financial assistance available for students, a number of financial assistance programs are available, of course, through the governments of Canada and Alberta with regard to obtaining vocational training. There is the question as to whether student loan plans operated by either government will be applicable in these cases. So those are matters that I think are useful to raise. I will try to deal with that more fully when I deal with the Bill in committee.

I would like to respond, if I may, to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I suppose there are really two ways of taking life, I think the term was — or blood, as the case may be — away from private institutions. One is to move in through the regulatory process set out in the legislation to withdraw licensing or accreditation of such schools. On that point I think it's important to underline that in the legislation we are establishing an appeals committee which would give the opportunity for operators who feel that their operations have not been adequately judged to appeal the refusal, cancellation, or suspension of their licences. Beyond that, as I indicated, after an appeal by an advisory council there is an appeal to the courts, which was not in the previous legislation. I think that is important to understand. People who are operating private vocational schools are not subject to arbitrary departmental or bureaucratic decisions without any chance of having them reviewed outside the general operation or administration of the legislation.

I think the Leader of the Opposition has touched upon a second method of drawing blood away from such institutions: to have the public institutions move into the field and begin offering courses which had been successfully initiated by private institutions. For the record, as I indicated in my opening remarks, we do believe that there is a very valid and useful role to be played by private vocational schools in the province. During my tenure of office, I will be very careful indeed to do what I can to prevent drawing the blood off by having the public institutions, subsidized by the public purse, moving into the same fields in direct competition.

I wish to assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition and other members of the Assembly, as I am sure they are all aware, I do believe very strongly in the private enterprise sector in this province. For the record, since the hon. Leader of the Opposition wanted to get something on the record, I'm pleased to assure members of the Assembly once again that we will be very careful indeed not to drive private enterprise out of business by government moving in unnecessarily.

[Motion carried; Bill 39 read a second time]

Bill 56

The Alberta Labour Amendment Act, 1979

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, in addressing second reading of Bill No. 56, I'd like to begin by indicating to hon. members that Bill No. 56 deals with a portion of the construction industry. Perhaps more correctly I should say, may deal with, because it is enabling legislation; it is not in any way mandatory legislation that must be observed. For its operation, it requires agreement on the part of the parties and a desire to make it work.

To begin with, Mr. Speaker, we should clearly identify the range of construction which could be impacted

by this legislation. That is quite clearly laid out in the first few sections of the Bill, and I could express it this way: it deals with the construction of non-conventional oil sands production projects. "Non-conventional" is intended to cover any kind of oil sands extraction project and, the way the Bill is framed, could indeed deal with very heavy oils which might be pumped, but with great difficulty, and would have to have a special form of upgrading.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill effectively replaces the former Bill 52, I think it was called, with which some members of the Assembly would be familiar. However, we have a major change in that, to be effective, the Bill must have an application from the owners of a project to the cabinet for a designation. The owner is suggested to be the applicant because we expect there may be a desire to know what kinds of facts and processes may govern the labor relations at an early stage in the development of some of these projects. That is, of course, to provide the assurance to the owner from a number of points of view. It is also different in that because the cabinet will be able to designate, the cabinet will also be able to judge, on the basis of public interest, which projects warrant the use of this type of legislation.

It would be our intention, Mr. Speaker, that an application for designation flowing from this legislation would not be well received unless it were of a nature which could be influenced by external events; in other words, situations outside Alberta which might impact the labor relations in Alberta in a way beyond the control of either the trade unions or the contractors within the province. What we are, in fact, trying to do through this is evaluate specific potential applications for this legislation in construction, then determine when those projects may have an abnormal influence on the traditional or present collective bargaining situation.

Perhaps I can use a hypothetical illustration to indicate the situation. If we have a project which is large, first in terms of dollars and manpower and, secondly, in terms of the number of years over which the construction must proceed, we would have a situation which would obviously be fairly unique. In addition to that uniqueness of size, we would have the uniqueness that events could occur in energy-related projects outside North America, for instance, which might put a different tone on the perceived need for those projects. I speak of events in Saudi Arabia or other centres of the world which might cause us to have a different view of the urgency or necessity for such a project as is contemplated by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the process following an application by the owner is intended to include a review by cabinet of the factors I have just indicated. Following, before, or at the same time as that occurred, there would be discussions by the Minister of Labour with various parties in the industry, so there would be some expression of opinion from the parties who feel they would be affected in some way by the application of this legislation.

It is likely that a tentative or preliminary indication would then be given to the owner that approval or designation would be granted, subject to a set of conditions. Some of those conditions are identified in the legislation, but I might review just a couple. First, we would want to be satisfied that the owner-applicant had a clearly defined labor relations program, a

thorough thinking through of the labor relations and manpower planning program.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we would want to know as soon as possible who would be the principal contractor and, following that, exactly which project is contemplated to be included under this special designation order. It is our view that some of these large projects may be different from some of the more neatly defined projects we've had in the past. I speak of projects which may be a combination of the traditional oil well drilling process plus mining, or oil well drilling plus upgrading of an unusual nature.

It is also possible, and quite likely, that there will be more off-site preparation and construction of modules for these plants than we have ever witnessed before. I think Syncrude presented us with good experience in that respect. From all the assessments I've seen, they had some valuable new experience which we believe could be applied to other construction projects. So we will need to know the exact parameters of the project that is going to be subject to this legislation, if the project is designated. Mr. Speaker, that is a matter on which only the applicant can advise government, after the applicant consults with the various parties in the construction industry. But that is crucially important to avoid misunderstandings, confusion, and differences of opinion after the project commences. So we want to be sure that those parameters are well and truly identified in the ultimate designation order.

Mr. Speaker, another qualification would require satisfying before a designation order would be granted; that is, that there be a clear expression of what events will constitute the termination of the project. This is a matter which, in hindsight, appears not to have been addressed in the Syncrude situation, but it is something which could be addressed by the parties. We believe it is within their competence to address and, again, should be addressed in the interests of clarity and certainty within the industry. So when certain events occur, the special site agreements would automatically be terminated.

Mr. Speaker, subject to those things, the cabinet could then agree to designate a project on the basis I have described. Now, what flows if a project is so designated?

First of all, I want to assure all members that, consistent with the objective I have stated, the objective and aim is to normalize the industry as much as possible, including the activity at the collective bargaining table, in the presence of these large projects. With that objective, it follows that we would expect in this legislation, and have so expressed, that there would be a minimum of changes of the conditions of the local agreements. Therefore, all the monetary items would be picked up from the local agreements.

Mr. Speaker, again with the objective of normalizing the construction industry in the face of these large projects, in the event of a breakdown in negotiations or a work stoppage in negotiations in a construction trade, we have provided that on the call or service of notice of a strike vote, at the point in time strike notice is served, those employees then on-site in one of these special project areas would be precluded from voting on that strike. In other words, they would not be participants in the outcome of the decision to strike or not to strike.

There's a very good reason for that, Mr. Speaker. The industry generally views that it would be unfair

for a group of employees to vote for a strike when they know they won't be striking. So it has been decided that we should completely eliminate that portion of a trade which is on a site at the time a strike vote is taken.

Mr. Speaker, again with the objective of trying to interfere as little as possible with the regular construction industry with these large projects, we have provided in the legislation that, from the date of announcement of a strike vote, the employers cannot increase the numbers of a given trade who are on-site. That is irrespective of whatever the manpower planning scheme allowed for. They would not be able to increase the manpower over that which was on-site on the day the strike vote was announced.

Mr. Speaker, I keep referring to the day the strike vote was announced. That happens to be a date which is within the control of government, and which would not normally be known ahead of time by either the employer or the employees. So it seemed to be as neutral a date as we could provide.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that our objective with this legislation is, as nearly as possible, to normalize the industry in the face of large projects. It is clear beyond question that when and if we have very large construction projects such as are under discussion at the moment, there will be some impact upon the construction industry. We cannot expect otherwise, because we may have 3,000 workmen on one construction site, and that implies there will be a significant number of other employees downstream from the site in supportive positions. So we are looking at an economic picture which shows a lot of activity in the construction industry.

Activity in the construction industry, as in any industry, is healthy and produces opportunities. It also produces some stresses and strains. There have been suggestions that the situation we went through with the construction of the Syncrude project produced an opportunity for unusual and abnormal wage gains, and that some of these were attributable to the legislation of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like very briefly to suggest to hon. members that if they have a concern in this matter, they review, as I have done, the hourly union wage rates in different locations in Canada at different times. I looked at the hourly union wage rates in Edmonton, Vancouver, and Toronto for three major trade groups — electricians, plumbers, and carpenters — at three different points in time: 1970, 1975, and 1979. Of the three locations, Edmonton generally had the lowest wage rates in all three trades in 1970.

Now we in this House know that of all the locations in Canada, Alberta was the one thriving area in the construction industry through the '70s, especially '73-79. What happened as a consequence of that activity and while we had Bill 52 in place, Mr. Speaker? Well, in Edmonton each trade moved from the lowest wage rate to the middle range. In 1979 Toronto remains with the highest hourly wage rate for electricians, plumbers, and carpenters. Vancouver is lower than Edmonton now, but not very much, a matter of some cents in each of the trades. So tradesmen in Alberta — especially in northern Alberta, the Edmonton area — are now paid more relative to Vancouver tradesmen than was the case in 1970. But I say to all hon. members that that would be expected, given the fact that Vancouver had not as much economic activity by far, and that during this period our economy at some points

was considered to be under stress from overheating. So I think the case is that nothing unusual happened to wage rates over this intervening nine years that we would not have expected, given the economic conditions which prevailed over this time frame.

Mr. Speaker, there have been suggestions that there was an unusual amount of strike activity during this period. This suggestion has been made publicly and privately to quite a few hon. members, I believe, by the Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association. That body secured the services of some university staff and assigned to them the responsibility to research that question. The Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association was kind enough to provide the research results to me, and I believe they have been indicated in letters to hon. members. The research suggests that there is an insufficient amount of data to come to any conclusion on that particular suggestion. I would think that that would be the case, Mr. Speaker, because it isn't so much the legislation that produces strikes as it is the attitudes of people involved in the negotiations. Without getting into the question of fewer or more strikes, I don't think there's any evidence that the legislation then in place for Syncrude was a contributing factor in the number of strikes.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a couple of other questions, particularly to put the legislation in an historical context. Beginning in the late 1960s and early '70s, Alberta's construction industry legislation moved from a situation wherein local unions negotiated with construction companies in a given area. We had many, many sets of negotiations and different rates, depending upon where one moved, to attempt to produce some rationalizing and to remove some of the chaos which a lot of observers of the industry, not just in Alberta but in many other places in Canada, believed existed. So we moved to a registration system wherein employer organizations became somewhat like trade unions. They were registered to deal with a trade, and the employers in that trade depended upon the geographic area involved.

As a consequence of that change, that direction, we have moved to a system wherein certified bargaining units of construction trade unions now negotiate with registered employer associations. What this legislation quite obviously does is allow for an agreement to be negotiated for a special project which, if you will, overrides the registration approach to labor relations in the construction industry. But it overrides it only to the extent that I've indicated, Mr. Speaker; in that any site agreements would have to pick up the conditions of the negotiations between the registered employers' organization and the certified bargaining units that would be involved.

Mr. Speaker, a very important aspect of the approach that has been taken has been the effort to remove and to clarify the confusion and the uncertainty which, in my view, existed in the industry. Hon. members who were here back in '73-74 will remember that the government encouraged the parties involved in the construction of the Syncrude plant to negotiate without any special legislation. I think one may add that there was quite a bit of frustration as a consequence of that exercise. As we were then dealing with a construction project, the return on which was anything but bright, the financing of which was in doubt, eventually a commitment was made that we would try to assure the opportunity for stable labor relations over the life of the project.

That happened quickly and the parties had to move

First of all, the legislation came in after the project had begun. So the legislation was imposed, if you will, on a situation in which the parties had been striving for agreement and had been unable to get agreement, and there was considerable frustration. Because of the short time frame in which we had to move at that time, there was no opportunity for the industry to arrive at a thorough and fair understanding of the legislation and to work out their arrangements between themselves, in the industry, with respect to a number of matters. So in my view, Mr. Speaker, there was not the kind of positive attitude which I hope we can produce today through this legislation.

I believe very strongly that legislation, for labor relations to be effective, must be produced in time for the parties to have the opportunity to come to a full comprehension of the legalities and the subtleties of it, and to work out those formal and informal structures and arrangements they need in order to make it work successfully.

That is why, to some questions about the possibility of delay in this legislation, I have indicated I do not favor such a delay. If we are to give the parties time to study the legislation, time to become familiar with it and time to learn how to work with it and structure their organizations accordingly, that legislation should be in place before the next round of collective bargaining in the construction industry, which will begin in January, February of 1980. Whether or not any company owners apply for this legislation is another question, but at least it should be out there, it should be known, and it shouldn't be brought in at a time when the industry is negotiating.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of assisting the parties to understand the legislation, we have gone through a very extensive consultative process. For the information of hon. members, perhaps I should say that in April I communicated with quite a number of parties to the effect that I was considering whether such legislation was necessary, whether we needed in future special legislation to deal with the labor relations of these large construction projects.

I invited all interested parties to address two issues. First, in their view, was it needed for whatever interests they had — each one has a different interest — and if so, to indicate the form it might take. Mr. Speaker, that consultation went on for a very long time, longer than I wished, but it enabled me to have some vacation this summer. Second, the procedure was committed to on my part that, following the responses from this first round of consultation, I would make a decision, then communicate the general concept of the legislation and invite some detailed elaboration on that concept from all interested parties. That procedure has been followed, and I think has produced the very good legislation before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that I'm about to go into overtime. Rather than do that, I think I could terminate at this point, and take my next shot during the closing of second reading.

But I should point out, Mr. Speaker, if I have the consent of the House to do so ...

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you.

Hon. members should note the two elements of the

legislation that have to do with the transitional sections of the Bill. They will have two effects. One, on this legislation's coming into effect, the special site agreements dealing with the Syncrude project will automatically terminate. That has been agreed upon by the parties concerned.

Second, Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, one other project commenced under this legislation since the beginning of 1979. We have checked with the parties to that particular agreement and have determined that, as is stated in the Bill, by December 31, 1981, that special agreement will no longer be necessary.

So the transitional provisions provide that the Syncrude site agreement ends fairly promptly with the passage of this legislation, and that the other special site agreement will terminate no later than December 31, 1981.

Mr. Speaker, with that introduction, I move second reading of Bill 56.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, in taking part in second reading of Bill 56, I would say at the outset that I'm always somewhat suspicious when I hear the government talk about a session that's going to be very quiet with no major, controversial legislation.

Then, Mr. Speaker, in the minister's very nice way today, he has brought in this piece of legislation, which in essence says: rather than go the route we have in the past when we brought in special legislation to deal with the labor problems on the Syncrude plant, then had public discussion here in the Legislature, and guaranteed the public there would be open discussion for at least a few days, while the legislation went through the various stages in the Assembly; rather than go that route on the next tar sands plant — be it Cold Lake, Alsands, or whatever other megaprojects come along — a route which guarantees public debate before the decision is made, in essence we're being asked here today in Bill 56 to give the cabinet the power to use their judgment, behind closed doors, to designate future tar sands projects.

Mr. Speaker, I listened in vain for some justification of why that approach had to be taken by the minister in this legislation. Of course, I'd be the last one who'd want to be unkind to the minister, but if the minister came close to any justification there ... He said we had to have the legislation in place in time.

Mr. Speaker, this Assembly has sat as many as 100 days a year. When these kinds of projects appear on the drawing board, it's something like two to three years from the time the plans start until the go-ahead is granted and construction starts. Now let's not try to kid anyone that there isn't time to bring legislation for the Cold Lake plant before the Legislative Assembly this fall session, or for the Alsands plant next spring or fall session.

But instead of going that route, the government is opting for the cabinet's making the decision on whether the projects will be designated. Just in principle, I don't believe that to be proper, accurate, or right. Mr. Speaker, to the members of the Assembly, regardless of where they sit, I think we're really being asked here this afternoon to abdicate the responsibility the Legislature has for approving special legislation for the individual tar sands projects that come along. We're being asked to abdicate that responsibility to the cabinet and the Minister of Labour.

I think members should clearly recognize what we're

being asked to do here today. It isn't like we're going to have to deal each session with two or three pieces of specific legislation for each project. When the Syncrude agreement came before the House, a number of questions were asked about the approach the government used.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that today we're really seeing an *ad hoc* approach to the government's plant-by-plant policy for tar sands development in Alberta. This goes back to the debate we had in the House last Thursday when we called for an oil sands policy for Alberta. Certainly part of such a policy should be a definitive statement on this whole area of labor and construction relations.

Mr. Speaker, we have no oil sands policy. In light of having no oil sands policy, we're being asked today for this Legislature to give away the opportunity to approve special legislation for megaprojects in heavy oils.

The one experience we've had to date is the Syncrude agreement, which came through this House. I don't think it took more than a week at the most for the discussion and the Bill to go through the House on that occasion. But here we are today being asked to say, well, the Legislature doesn't need to consider that approach any more; we're going to entrust that responsibility to the cabinet. I think that's wrong in principle. Certainly it's wrong in light of having no oil sands policy in this province. There's a total absence in that area. And now the Legislature is being asked to abdicate its responsibility as far as the Labour Act is concerned.

I think the reasoned approach, Mr. Speaker, would be for the government to bring forward special legislation dealing with construction labor relations problems in the Cold Lake project. Frankly, I expected such legislation to be presented at this fall session, or certainly at the latest at the spring session in 1980. I expected that the same approach would be followed as far as the Alsands project was concerned. I think it's an error. I think it's wrong that in his very quiet way, the minister is really asking us to give him and the cabinet *carte blanche* approval to designate any tar sands project which comes along in the future, to go outside the Labour Act as it presently stands. I think that's wrong in principle, and the members of the House shouldn't approve it.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the minister talked at some length about wage rates that developed during the course of the Syncrude plant. I suspect the minister and I were looking at somewhat the same figures. But I would point out to the hon. minister, on both the question of wage rates and the question of strikes, during a portion of the Syncrude project we had wage and price controls in Canada. I think that has some impact on the figures the minister presented to the House and certainly on negotiations between the various unions and the construction industry.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that groups in the province feel keenly that this legislation will have an adverse effect on projects outside the oil sands industry. I am sure the Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association has made a presentation to members of the government side of the House and put its case. In his concluding remarks on second reading, I hope the minister will deal with some of the concerns the Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association raised. I'm sure they raised them with the government in the

preliminary discussions the minister must have had with them prior to his arriving at the conclusion he has made.

Mr. Speaker, a third problem is that with this legislation in place, both the contractor and the unions know very well that if they don't come to an agreement for the life of the contract, the easy way out is to come to the government — for the contractor to make an application to the government and the government or the cabinet to then make a decision as to whether or not they will designate a project. It seems to me that that eats away at what should be responsible bargaining between the two parties. Even before they start negotiations they know that the cabinet has the way set out for them in legislation, as to what steps the companies should take to make application to the cabinet so the cabinet can make the decision to designate the project — all done behind closed doors and not in light of public discussion in the Legislature at all. My initial reaction is that that's going to make the negotiations between management and labor pretty superficial. It's just a matter of going through the motions and then getting to the designation stage.

Mr. Speaker, the fourth point is that I believe a legitimate fear is raised by many small contractors in the province as to the impact this kind of legislation can have. I recognize the minister pointed out that the report from some members of the academic community in fact said: it's too early; we can't make a definite conclusion yet with regard to labor management as a result of the Syncrude project. But remember that in all likelihood this next project will not have wage and price controls. In the course of the building of this plant there's going to be pressure from a second plant and a possibility of the pipeline coming down through Alberta. At least three megaprojects may be at various stages in the course of construction of the first plant the cabinet designates.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister and his colleagues should look very carefully at the impact on the small construction operator or the small businessman, whom all of us in this Assembly say a great deal in favor of but — I think sometimes the small businessman feels — we do very little for.

I simply conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by saying that in principle I think it's wrong to take the designation out of the hands of the Legislative Assembly and into the cabinet's hands. That's the approach one would expect from a government that has no stated oil sands policy, a plant-by-plant, *ad hoc* approach. We're seeing an *ad hoc* approach being used as opposed to at least forcing the cabinet, through the responsible minister, to come to the Legislature and justify legislation in public before it's passed. I think in principle that's wrong.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to address a few comments to Bill 56, first of all I'd like to deal with the question of the overall impact on the cost of construction in the province. I really doubt that there is going to be other than substantial inflation of the general cost of construction, whether or not we pass a Bill like Bill 56.

Mr. Speaker, I recall one of the position papers prepared for the former Minister of Labour, Dr. Hohol, that dealt with this question of growth in the province and warned the government that, if a number of major projects proceed, there will be implications on the con-

struction industry and we're going to have a certain amount of inflation associated with these projects.

Mr. Speaker, as I look at the megaprojects on the horizon in Alberta — the Cold Lake project, which undoubtedly is going to be started soon; the Alsands plant, which no doubt will take place in the next short while; and also the very real possibility of the pipeline that the hon. Leader of the Opposition alluded to — it seems to me that notwithstanding any effort on our part to deal with an overall piece of labor legislation, the impact of these projects proceeding more or less at the same time is that we're going to see rising labor costs, rising costs of material, rising management fees, and substantial inflation beyond the national average.

I would just say that we shouldn't be too sanguine about the results in the Syncrude experiment. There were other reasons why that didn't occur; one of the most important was that we had one major plant. I've heard members of the government suggest that somehow we're going to be able to stage all these projects and keep all the balls bouncing in the air at the right time. Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish the Minister of Labour well. But I suspect that when we get into all three plants, as well as other activity, we're going to find a substantial impact on the general price indices in the province — and I say price as well as labor. To those people concerned about the impact Bill 56 is going to have on the small contractor, I would say the much bigger impact is going to be the pace of megaprojects. The amount of legislative protection that can cushion the effect of massive projects of this nature on smaller contractors is limited.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to deal with several points the Leader of the Opposition raised, and several additional concerns that have been brought to my attention. I should just say that I want to keep my remarks on second reading quite brief. When we get into committee stage we'll have an opportunity to question the minister, and I have in mind a number of specific questions, particularly relating to the consultative process.

The second point that strikes me as worth looking at from the question of principle is whether we should be passing a Bill like Bill 56 where we in fact say to the minister, we are consigning all oil sands plants to the cabinet — very considerable power. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that we say to the government: when the Cold Lake project proceeds, we want a piece of legislation dealing with labor relations on that project; when the Alsands project proceeds, we want legislation dealing with the Alsands project; when other major mega-investments occur, we want legislation that will deal with those projects.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that is not an unreasonable proposition to argue and advance in this Assembly. Were we faced with literally scores of projects, I suppose one could argue that we really need some kind of encompassing legislation. While I suspect the government is going to find they've got all three running too close together for our own economic good, that doesn't mean it wouldn't be possible nevertheless to examine the merits of the legislation issue by issue.

The minister may recall the debate that took place in 1973; I supported the amendment at that time. I don't think there's any question we're going to have to work out an on-site, no-strike, no-lockout agreement if we're proceeding with a \$5 billion or \$6 billion in-

vestment. No question about that at all. But the question that has been raised in this House is whether we should be passing Bill 56 and allowing the cabinet to deal with the project ahead of us as well as others, or whether we should be saying to the minister: come back next time you have a project so we can review the pluses and minuses of any amendments in the Labour Act relative to that project.

Mr. Speaker, the third point I'd like to raise is that I think we have to realize we are saying here that there is a good deal of compulsion. Both unions and contractors are being forced into the overall agreement. In other words, as I understand Bill 56 — and I could be wrong — they don't all have to agree but the cabinet can designate whether they agree or not. So the suggestion that we have this very comfortable little situation where everybody sits around and agrees, and we're not going to have any action until that is taken, is not correct. In fact the legislation provides some very considerable teeth that affect the collective bargaining process. In my judgment, we have to be aware of that and not dismiss it lightly when we address the principle of this Bill.

I would say we are not without some very considerable power now, Mr. Minister, in dealing with the question of strikes. First of all, I don't think there's any evidence that the construction and trade unions wouldn't agree to no-strike contracts. I think they have a good deal of interest in that kind of arrangement. Even so, when I look at the power the government, particularly the cabinet, now has under Section 163 of The Alberta Labour Act to terminate strikes which are not considered in the public interest — and I remember the go-around we had in the Legislature in the fall of 1975 over the changes in wording in the Labour Act — at this stage the government has very considerable power.

In summary, while I believe we have to look at the completion of a no-strike, no-lockout agreement as part of any orderly development of megaprojects, I would simply say three things. We should not mislead Albertans into thinking these projects will proceed without having an inflationary impact. I just do not believe that is possible, however well-meaning this government, the minister, and the principal contractors are. The fact of the matter, the bottom line, is that it will have very definite inflationary impact on the economy. The small contractor in Olds, Vulcan, or Fairview is going to face higher costs; the consumer is going to face higher costs. I don't think there is any way of avoiding that. We can pass legislation until hell freezes over; we're still not going to have any change in that particular position.

Mr. Speaker, the second point I want to reaffirm is that if we are going to move on labor legislation of this nature, it is going to alter what have become accepted rights on both sides. This legislation contains some considerable compulsion which we can't and shouldn't gloss over.

Finally, I would argue, as the Leader of the Opposition has, that if a legislated, on-site agreement has merit, then let us do that project by project rather than bringing in a Bill that has this kind of sweeping power.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak briefly today to Bill 56, The Alberta Labour Amendment Act. I think there's no question in this Assembly that legisla-

tion with regard to on-site agreements is necessary. That seems to be the general consensus. There seems to be some debate in the Assembly on the manner in which it is achieved.

I think that because of our natural resources in this province we as Albertans have a responsibility in terms of the national interest, with regard to energy self-sufficiency for this country down the road. I believe the nature of the projects which are coming on stream — it is necessary for us to have the flexibility this legislation will provide in designating those areas in which such agreements may be negotiated.

I'd like to stress that the legislation doesn't force any on-site agreement. It's enabling legislation; if the parties agree, it gives them the ability to enter into such agreements. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview tried to imply that the legislation has some degree of compulsion. I don't believe it's there. The designation can be made upon request of the parties concerned, particularly the project organizer.

MR. NOTLEY: Not all parties.

MR. BRADLEY: No, on behalf of one of the constructors of the project. The major investor in the project may make that request. In terms of giving that ability to negotiate such an agreement, agreement doesn't flow as a result of enabling legislation.

Some other matters have been raised regarding the Bill. I'd like to comment on some concerns of the construction industry and the smaller contractors. I believe their concerns have generally been dealt with in the Bill. With regard to the effect on other negotiations, there's provision in this legislation, which wasn't in the past legislation, that removes the ability of employees in the area of one of these on-site agreements to vote on a strike or to decide to accept a contract or not. I think that goes a long way to alleviate some concerns raised by the construction industry in other areas of the province.

The other concern is that these on-site agreement areas become strike havens. Again, provision in this legislation would limit the number of employees in a certain trade on the site from the time the strike vote is called. That would limit the employer from increasing the number of employees when a strike vote is taken in other areas with regard to that trade in another part of the province. I think that's a very important consideration of this legislation. It moves a great distance toward resolving that concern. In fact, I think it resolves the concern.

I have a great deal of sympathy for the impact of such legislation on our smaller contractors. I don't think we can stand in the Assembly and say that these projects — whether or not there was this legislation — would not have an effect on the overall Alberta economy. I think the question is whether legislation such as this would adversely impact upon the effect of such projects. I believe the safeguards in this legislation answer those concerns. Projects of this size are certainly going to have an impact on the economy of the province.

With regard to our smaller contractors and some of the concerns they may have and the spillover the projects would have on the economy of Alberta. I think when you put out the balance sheet and look at the positive and negative parts, the positive far outweighs the negative because the general economic climate of

the province is vastly improved. There's a lot of activity here, a lot of opportunity for our smaller contractors and fabricators to engage in the components of these projects. I know a number of boilers and different parts of the Syncrude project were manufactured throughout the province. So it's had a positive effect generally in terms of the economy of the province. It's brought new technology and new fabricating methods here, and I would submit has generally had a positive effect on smaller contracts in the province.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would say there's agreement that this legislation is necessary. In terms of having on-site agreements, I haven't found anyone here today say there shouldn't be these agreements. I think in terms of our commitment to Canada in terms of future energy self-sufficiency, we must proceed to bring in these projects at cost and without delay. It's very important to us down the road that these projects proceed in this manner. I believe we require the flexibility this legislation will allow for us to designate these sites as required to ensure future energy self-sufficiency for Canadians.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to comment very briefly on the principle of the Bill. As large projects come on stream, we would like to see them proceed without any work stoppage. But what concerns me very gravely is the very major trend and "thrust" — if I may use that old hackneyed Tory term — toward power resting more and more in the hands of the cabinet. It's becoming very frustrating to sit in this Legislature, because it seems that members of this Assembly play a very insignificant role in what's going on in the legislative process in this province.

MR. COOK: We're not the government, Walt.

MR. NOTLEY: That's true.

DR. BUCK: Not the government. I'd like to say to the rookie Member for Edmonton Glengarry that he is the government. Sometimes he can't seem to understand what the legislative process is all about, but his government is putting that kind of power in the hands of the cabinet.

This Bill and Bill 49 are prime examples of the government's thinking they have all the answers and all the wisdom and therefore need all the power. A government should be embarrassed to bring to this Assembly legislation like Bill 49 with its ramifications and this Bill, because it is really saying: the legislative process is not important; we have 73 and the independent Speaker, and we just do whatever we want. That is not right and not proper.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, this Assembly can be called at any time. If we have to have special legislation for special projects, we can bring it in. When the teachers' strike was settled, the Assembly was not called in; the cabinet did it. Is this Assembly significant to the people of Alberta, or is it an exercise in futility? Mr. Speaker, I say it is becoming more and more an exercise in futility.

I would like to say to some government backbenchers that it's just about time they started getting involved and waking up to what's happened to their government, because they are supposed to be representing their people. I am sad to say, Mr. Speaker, that I don't think they are. Why do our phones ring more

and more? Because the people of Alberta are telling us, our own PC MLAs don't listen. And if they do listen, they are not indicating that to their cabinet.

MR. HORSMAN: Nonsense.

DR. BUCK: Nonsense, the part-time Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower says.

MR. NOTLEY: He wants to have a statue erected to him. He wants a statue all his own.

DR. BUCK: That's okay, Mr. Minister. I'll come for the unveiling of your statue in Medicine Hat. If you're going to have a statue there, I'd be pleased to do that, when I'm the minister. We'll put up a monument for you, hon. minister, when you retire and we become the government. We'll put up a bronze statue for you as the former Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower.

MR. NOTLEY: Bronze is a little expensive. Get Roloff Beny to take a picture of him.

DR. BUCK: It is a serious matter. [laughter] Hon. members across the way can laugh. That's fine. That's their prerogative. They can take it in a light vein when they have an overwhelming majority. But, Mr. Speaker, that overwhelming majority breeds more and more arrogance. This government is displaying it more and more every day. And this legislation is another example of that arrogance. If we do believe in the legislative process, this legislation can come up as the projects proceed. The minister doesn't need these sweeping powers. The cabinet doesn't need these sweeping powers. For that matter, the five cabinet ministers who run this government should be glad to have the Legislature solve some of these problems.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am trying to make, especially to government members, is that by this type of action they are endangering more and more the democratic and parliamentary processes.

I would like to say to the hon. minister that the legislation, if required, can be done on a project-to-project basis. Mr. Minister, you are inviting problems being heaped upon your head; the responsibility should rest on members of the entire Legislature, not on the shoulders of the minister.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in the debate on the Bill, I would like to suggest that there are concerns with the proposed legislation, but they're based on discussions with people from the local construction industry. They're not based on closed-door attitudes or the whole question of futility, as has been suggested. I don't understand the remarks just made, because on one hand we were being asked to have an overwhelming or global oil sands policy to look after all things, yet here we're being cajoled into having project-by-project decisions with regard to special assignments.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame, shame.

MR. HIEBERT: The concern I would like to raise with regard to this Bill is a result of experience that came from the special agreements with regard to Syncrude.

Many of them did have reaching implications. It is also recognized by the local construction industry that they appreciate the need for labor stability, especially with the megaprojects. They have expressed concern with that realization. The concern seems to be the disadvantage they have been placed at with regard to the bargaining table, and the transfer of work stoppages or the resultant hidden costs to local projects.

To some degree, the proposed legislation exempts or shelters the principal contractor from the collective bargaining process at the local level. Yet, with the exception of some of the additional jobsite conditions in the no-strike, no-lockout clause, the principal contractor has essentially picked up the total package which has been negotiated already at the local level.

Furthermore, the local contractors are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to the bargaining table. There is little incentive to have the people accept reasonable terms because they rotate the people through the special project site. I don't know if the provision in the Act will preclude that in the future, because there is that strike-earning insulator and the strike at the local project, yet the individual does not suffer the consequences of his vote because he goes to work at the special site. That doesn't appear to be fair. Whether the provisions in this Act will prevent that from happening will be a matter of experience.

As a result of the entire concern, I think wage settlements are considered to have been higher than normal. The costs are sometimes absorbed by the investor, the small businessman, or the local contractor. That, in turn, is often passed on to the average Albertan.

With regard to statistics in terms of special designations, there is also the suggestion that there is a greater incidence of strikes, careless workmanship, excessive costs and waste, or acute inflation. I don't think it's our purpose to debate the statistics, because in many instances the experience they've had should be recognized.

My concern is whether all the alternatives have been explored, because I think it is a basic principle that intervention should always be a last resort as to what happens between labor and management. I think some of our labor/management legislation should be deployed, and we should be intervening only when a serious breakdown is imminent. Possibly the collective bargaining process could be streamlined to some extent. The number of man-hours incurred in terms of the attitudes people have in bringing about a conclusion to negotiations certainly should be explored. If the present collective arrangement is not working effectively, possibly we should look at overhauling it, because short-term or band-aid decisions sometimes lead only to further problems.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the minister to continue the dialogue, with all the parties, so new ground can be explored in this very sensitive area. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. HIEBERT: But it is important to recognize that while people from the local construction industry are concerned about the impact at the local level, they recognize there is certainly a need to have some stability with the megaprojects.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that some hon. members, especially in the opposition, appear not to fully understand the legislation that now exists in Division 7.1 of the current Alberta Labour Act. I think that's where I should start my observations.

The current provisions of The Alberta Labour Act identify a geographic area of the province in which the special provisions of Division 7.1 currently can apply; that is, where it is possible to have an override agreement providing for no-strike, no-lockout on a large project. That geographic area includes Alsands. It would not be necessary to change one comma in the existing legislation to have the proposed Alsands project have access to the special no-strike, no-lockout capacity. That should be clear.

Let me repeat, Mr. Speaker: we have specified by Bill 52, in Division 7.1, that there is a geographic area and within that area any construction project which conforms to the definition contained in the present legislation can proceed if it wishes. And one has. That should be important for members to know. The one that has is a project in total construction value of some \$160 million — by the time it's completed, I suppose it could be \$200 million — and it is going to be completed within two years. That is important to know, because it is evidence that the current legislation is not being well understood.

Mr. Speaker, a second point about which there is confusion and which needs clarification is the whole concept of designation. The designation is not the ordering that there shall be a no-strike, no-lockout agreement. Designation is a process by which the owner-applicant can apply to government to have his construction project designated as being able to make use of the legislation contained in Bill 56. That should be clear. There is no compulsion at all on the parties to arrive at a no-strike, no-lockout agreement. This approves the project as being a project which can come under this legislation, but it doesn't order that there shall be a no-strike, no-lockout agreement. It simply makes it possible for the parties to negotiate an agreement if they can.

Under the existing legislation, under the registration system which I mentioned — perhaps not very adequately — it is not possible to arrive at a long-term agreement unless it is negotiated for the whole industry, all 17 trades, for that general area of the province in which a project would take place. In practical terms, the fact is that as a rule these days we do not get agreements that last longer than two years. When we're talking about projects that have a long life, we are talking about projects which, in the normal course of events, cannot be completed within the time frame of a collective agreement.

Mr. Speaker, there was a considerable amount of discussion about abdication of responsibility. My hon. colleague from Clover Bar made his usual special speech in his inimitable way. I note that on this point it lost nothing from previous occasions on which he has made it.

DR. BUCK: One of these times you'll start listening to it.

MR. YOUNG: Don't be too hopeful, hon. member.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why change a good speech like that one, Walter.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for all members to understand that what I'm trying to achieve, and what I hope this legislation is going to do, is to provide some certainty and stability in the labor relations program for special large projects. I don't think it is possible to turn labor relations on and off, to *ad hoc*. My objective is to avoid 'ad hockery', as the hon. Leader of the Opposition charged this Bill does not do. On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that it does, because it lays out a situation which we think builds on the experience of the Syncrude project and which enables government to clearly differentiate between the smaller projects, the ones which cannot really impact the public interest the way the large projects can. I think that's important.

Having regard to the interests of the the smaller contractors and the general concerns, I think it is important that we have a system of labor relations that is going to be understood and is going to be buyable over a period of time. If we start bringing in special legislation for one project at a time, where is the certainty? How can the parties ever get used to understanding one another or understanding the legislation? Each time it will be something new and something different. And if I hear the hon. Leader of the Opposition correctly, it will be done at the last minute when there are problems in the industry. My objective and the objective of the industry is to avoid problems, to avoid work stoppages. Anybody can have a work stoppage, but it seems that in this day and age it takes some pretty rational people to avoid work stoppages. That's the objective of this exercise, and that's why we have this legislation which allows some discretion on the part of cabinet in terms of the particular projects as they come along.

I have to repeat a comment I made earlier, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned to get this legislation in place so the parties know about it, and it seems to me that good advance information and an opportunity to become familiar with it is absolutely essential. I don't think we can predict. Maybe if we took the route of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, we would regulate the economy: A goes now, B goes in six months, and C goes three months later than that. Maybe that's the kind of system . . .

DR. BUCK: When we decide, it will go ahead. When we decide, the next one goes ahead.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I believe owners and contractors have to have the opportunity to make some decisions in the context of the variables as they see them. What I'm hearing is that we should not do that; we should not permit that sort of thing. I'm suggesting that we should. I don't know, and I don't know if anyone in the Assembly knows, exactly what the status of some of these projects will be six months from now. I tried to stress that, Mr. Speaker, in saying that what we want to do is normalize the collective bargaining situation, free it from those unknown, uncertain impacts that can come about because of our energy situation. This whole Bill 56 is directed at the production of energy for Canada, and we should recognize that and

recognize the problems involved in producing energy for Canada these days.

DR. BUCK: That's a red herring.

MR. YOUNG: That's not at all a red herring, hon. member. It was discussed by the energy ministers in Calgary yesterday, and it's not a red herring. What happens if there is an interruption in the supply of offshore oil that Canada is now dependent on, and suddenly there's much greater urgency . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

DR. BUCK: Don't insult our intelligence.

MR. YOUNG: Well, hon. member, I wouldn't insult anything I wasn't sure about. [laughter]

Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to make the point that the purpose of this legislation is to try to recognize that there could be great pressures in the production of energy. And who knows, it may be deemed necessary in the national interest at some point to move much more quickly than we are contemplating now — all kinds of events like this. That's what I mentioned by the public interest. We have to recognize that.

Mr. Speaker, I hope I have corrected some of the misimpressions in terms of what the existing legislation is. It is not legislation which means that we have to come to the Assembly with a special decision on Alsands. It is not at all. Alsands should go ahead today without this legislation.

AN HON. MEMBER: They didn't know that.

MR. YOUNG: If we don't pass this legislation and if we leave Division 7.1 in place in the present Alberta Labour Act, Alsands can go ahead under . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Not in Cold Lake.

MR. YOUNG: Do you know that?

DR. BUCK: Peter told us.

MR. R. CLARK: Didn't he tell you?

MR. YOUNG: Well, I'm glad you're so well informed on that point.

DR. BUCK: You're on the outside of the cabinet, Les.

MR. R. CLARK: Just because you sit close to the middle, that doesn't mean you know what's going on.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think we are getting into a question and answer situation, which should be left to committee stage.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, maybe I should address some of the individual points that have been raised. A question has been raised, and it's a matter on which I would like there to be good clarification. I express appreciation to the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest and the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar. That is the matter of the impact of inflation, or economic activity these projects generate. Let's not

confuse increased economic activity generating from these projects with the suggestion that inflation is going to be generated by virtue of this legislation. That is an important distinction to make. I must note that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview at least has made that distinction. There is a very real distinction between the impact of true economic activity and imagined impact of a piece of legislation on economic activity.

There are pluses and minuses, as the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest noted. The pluses are more opportunity for all concerned. The minuses are that some people have to adjust their way of doing things and their operations because of the changes in priorities established through our economic system. But, Mr. Speaker, just as high economic activity generally leads to higher wage rates, it also generally leads to an improved profit situation. So on balance I think the situation resolves itself fairly across the board in that respect. I'm the last one to believe that these projects won't affect our economic conditions, I've tried to make that clear. But I would be the first one to suggest that we should try to solve that through a Bill dealing with labor relations. I think that would be entirely improper. So while the concern is noted, it's not one that should be properly addressed in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have another concern because I think it's a source of confusion. There seems to be a concern on both sides about rights. I would like to make it clear to hon. members that, prior to our system of registration in the collective bargaining process in the construction industry, it was possible to have what the industry then termed national agreements. Basically the idea is that a national contractor operating across Canada would negotiate with a trade union or unions operating across Canada. They would arrive at a no-strike, no-lockout agreement to build a certain project.

That was perfectly legal then, and that's what they did. We had quite a few projects built in Alberta in the '40s, '50s, and '60s. That's the way it was done — national agreements. There was no strike and no lockout on those projects. They were small by present standards but large by standards of the day, and that's how it was handled. It was handled the same way in other parts of Canada until, to produce a rationale and remove some of the chaos in the industry, we went to the registration system. With the registration system it became illegal to have these no-strike, no-lockout agreements on a project basis. That's why special legislation which covered a geographic area was introduced. This legislation doesn't cover a geographic area; it covers projects of a particular type for the production of oil of a non-conventional nature. That's a very fundamental difference.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated at the outset, by going the route of application from the owner and designation by cabinet, it is possible to make sure that we don't pick up under this legislation those situations for which the public interest does not appear to warrant a designation for a special project. I think that's valuable. That is a way of avoiding undue interference in the normal course of bargaining in the construction industry.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me reiterate the comment I made earlier. The basic and fundamental goal here is to try to normalize as much as we can a situation in

labor relations in the construction industry, from what would otherwise exist under present circumstances through the impact of these large projects. I think that is the objective of many of the contractors — not all. At the moment they don't all see it this way, and I have to acknowledge that. But it is certainly the objective of most of the trade unions — and I'm not sure all of them would agree, but most of them do — to have, as much as we can, a continuation of free collective bargaining in the construction industry, which is uninfluenced as nearly as possible by large construction projects.

Mr. Speaker, I note that I haven't dealt with one observation from the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar. Have all the alternatives been explored? I engaged in a very extensive round of consultation and solicited precisely on that question: whether we need legislation, or special provisions for labor relations in these types of projects, and if we do, what form should it take? Some suggestions were made. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that most of them were discarded because the experience in other places has not been successful, as nearly as we could judge.

A number of suggestions were made. But when we looked at them and analyzed them, the bottom line seemed to be that if there was a total breakdown in bargaining we as a government would ultimately be responsible for having to decide — on these large projects with all the social and fiscal problems which that could generate in a strike situation — whether or not we would order the construction workers back to work. Mr. Speaker, I do not think that is the way to normalize bargaining in the construction industry. That is why we've gone this route, even though there's no question that it's going to put responsibility on me and on cabinet. There's no question about that at all. But in my view it is the best route, the best choice of the alternatives we looked at to deal with a complex and difficult situation. I do not wish to be put in the position of having to direct anyone back to work, and it is my hope that we will not.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, since I have a couple of minutes left and a great audience now, it would be an opportune time to ...

MR. NOTLEY: ... a standing vote.

MR. YOUNG: We've got time for that; the clock will stop in that event.

It's an opportune time to relate some of the achieve-

ments in the construction industry bargaining area, which I hope will come to fruition in more senses than they already have. A number of tripartite forums for discussion and consultation have been under way. One of these looked at problems with work stoppages in the construction industry over the past few years. As a consequence of that, a task force on collective bargaining was established. That task force produced a report which was reviewed by a large number of union representatives, by owner and contractor representatives, and by government in Red Deer on October 4. There was unanimous agreement from all parties that they are going to change their approach to collective bargaining and try to achieve their collective agreements prior to the expiration of the contract.

This would have tremendous value, first of all in terms of assuring not only the owners and contractors but also the tradesmen themselves that when they go to work, they're not going to have first one trade out, and then another and another. It would also have tremendous value in terms of productivity, keeping our prices in line, and reducing the impact of inflation in the province. There's been a commitment to that objective. I could go into the details but I don't think this is the time, other than to assure hon. members that I believe this is a very major breakthrough. I only hope if the construction trades can do it, some other participants in our collective bargaining system can achieve or will work toward the same goal.

[Motion carried; Bill 56 read a second time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, because it's not proposed to sit tomorrow evening, I might outline the intention for government business on Friday. That would be to proceed with consideration of some of the estimates that have been presented today in regard to the capital projects division of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It is assumed that that will take a fair amount of time. But in the event that progress is more rapid than expected, we would return to second readings and committee study of Bills. Of course the work tomorrow afternoon is established by the rules. I need not remark on that.

I move we call it 5:30, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:29 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]