

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: **Wednesday, November 7, 1979 2:30 p.m.**

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the response to motions for returns Nos. 112 and 113.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly, for the record, a copy of the Premier's and the western premiers' position on sovereignty association released this morning; a restatement of the Alberta position which is, essentially, rejection of sovereignty association; that is, independence with economic association.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 1978 annual report of the Alberta Health Facilities Review Committee. Copies will be delivered to all members.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to draw attention of hon. members to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of the distinguished librarian of the Library of Parliament in Ottawa, Mr. Erik Spicer. He's accompanied by our own outstanding librarian, Mr. Blake McDougall. I would ask them to stand to receive your welcome.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to introduce to you and to Members of the Legislative Assembly 45 grade 9 students from the St. Augustine elementary and junior high school in the constituency of Calgary Egmont. They are accompanied by their teachers Herbert Morrison and Murella Bruno. They are in the members gallery, and I'd ask them to rise now and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today, also, to introduce some students in both galleries from beautiful Calgary Glenmore; 85 grade 7 to 9 students from the Calgary Hebrew school.

Mr. Speaker, they gave me a pretty good half-hour workout before they got here, and they're very aware of what we're doing. So I'm going to have to start paying careful attention. I ask that they please rise in the galleries and receive the welcome of the House.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Treasury**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, on October 25 I advised the Assembly that the treasury branch had agreed to consider special short-term arrangements with respect

to its existing lending policies as they affect small businesses and farmers in Alberta. I also advised that during the period of assessment of the impact of the Bank of Canada's 14 per cent bank rate, all interest rates of the Alberta Opportunity Company and the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation would be frozen, and that the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation would review its direct lending program.

The treasury branch and the government have completed their initial assessments, and I therefore advise the House as follows.

The treasury branch advises that effective immediately the interest rate under its small-business loan program, for existing borrowers, will be held at 14.5 per cent. This preferred rate will apply only to existing treasury branch small-business loans. This program makes available to Alberta small businesses loans up to \$500,000 for worth-while purposes. The preferred rate will also apply to treasury branch customers who have obtained loans under the federal small-business loans program.

Loans by farmers from the treasury branch, guaranteed by the Agricultural Development Corporation, will also be held at 14.5 per cent. This will be accomplished through a policy change by the treasury branch and also by the Agricultural Development Corporation absorbing temporarily the 1 per cent service charge made to borrowers. This 14.5 per cent preferred rate will also apply to the treasury branch agriplan loans program and the federal farm improvement loans program.

The temporary cancellation of the Agricultural Development Corporation's 1 per cent service charge will also apply to loans by chartered banks and credit unions, guaranteed by the Agricultural Development Corporation, thereby reducing loan costs to their customers as well. Loans of the Alberta Opportunity Company, which is and will remain a lender of last resort, will stay at the base rate of 12 per cent and will be reviewed monthly. The Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation is monitoring the impact of high interest rates on its programs and on prospective home buyers. Existing subsidies to low-income earners may be modified in the weeks ahead.

The superintendent of treasury branches advises that as hundreds of thousands of Albertans rely on treasury branches as a safe place to invest their funds, the treasury branch has already increased the interest rates being paid on deposits, and they will continue to maintain deposit rates competitive with those being paid in the market place.

Mr. Speaker, these special program modifications, designed to assist small business men and farmers, will be in effect during this period of very high interest rates. The program will be open for reassessment and possible further modification should the Bank of Canada bank rate increase or decrease in the weeks and months ahead.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Ministerial Conduct**

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife. In the minister's statement yesterday, he stated that he was not making any representation on the merits of

judicial proceedings. I believe two different meanings can be attached to the word "proceedings". In the narrow sense, it refers to the formal procedure followed in court; but in the broad sense, it includes such things as the admissibility and validity of evidence considered by the judge.

To set the record straight, Mr. Speaker, did the minister, or did he not, communicate to the judge an opinion on the validity of evidence; specifically, the medical examination which had been considered by the judge and was liable to be raised again in subsequent proceedings?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should read part of my statement yesterday, in which I said:

I wish to assure the Members of the Legislative Assembly that I did not have the slightest intention in any way whatsoever of making any actual representations on the merits of any proceedings under the mental health legislation which might come again before the judge I spoke to or any other provincial judge. I sincerely believe that my discussion with Judge Tibbitt could not be interpreted as the making of any representation in regard to the merits of any proceedings. My sole motive for being involved in the matter at all was my concern about the obvious distress of my constituent and what appeared to me to be a potentially very dangerous situation, to either the person who had been examined or to others.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Did the minister discuss with the Minister of Social Services and Community Health the possibility of the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife making representation to the provincial judge?

MR. MILLER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a supplementary question to the Attorney General. The former Attorney General of this government, Mr. Foster, advised the Legislative Assembly on October 19: "yes, I do go around calling judges. Fortunately, I'm the only one in this government who does."

Is that policy of the former Attorney General — that in fact the Attorney General is the only member of the government who discusses matters with judges — still the policy of the present government of the province of Alberta?

MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, that is the policy, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I should make it clear what is involved in that. In brief, without trying to be exhaustive, the occasions upon which a discussion would be held by an Attorney General, primarily with the chief judge as distinct from other judges, would relate to matters relating to the administration of the courts and the technical requirements and services that judges require in order to carry on. Obviously the Attorney General would not discuss the merits of a case with a judge.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Premier. The hon. Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife stated that the Premier advised him the telephone conversation "might be interpreted as interfering with the administration of justice".

Would the hon. Premier advise the Assembly what interpretation he puts upon the conversation? Was it or was it not consistent with the policy of the government just reinforced by the Attorney General?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question period, however wide the latitude may be, is not intended for the purpose of having constructions, interpretations, or definitions placed on statements. If the hon. leader wishes to ask a question of fact directly, he's certainly entitled to do so.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to rephrase the question to the Premier: is the action taken by the minister, as outlined in the minister's statement to the House yesterday, in keeping with this government's policy?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the telephoning of a judge by a minister of the Crown is clearly not consistent with the policy of the government. It appears to me — and I am fully satisfied, though, by the explanation by the hon. minister as to both his motives and intentions of why he was involved in the case as a Member of the Legislative Assembly — he was acting, quite obviously, in his capacity of trying to help as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, not in his role as a minister of the Crown, and I'm sure any fair-minded person would judge that. As a result of that, I'm satisfied of the motivation and intention of the minister, and that although the call should not have been made, the minister is well aware of the situation, having made the call. He should not have made the call; on the other hand, I think fair-minded citizens would respect the fact that he was making it with the intentions as described.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the Premier, perhaps prefacing it by saying that those are the arguments used basically by a former minister of the Crown in Ontario and a former national minister of the Crown, John Munro.

With no disrespect intended to the hon. member, what steps has the Premier taken to obtain an impartial investigation and review of the facts as they were indicated to the Assembly yesterday by the hon. member?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as President of Executive Council, I have to make judgment decisions, and I have made the judgment decision, in terms of the position and the intention of the hon. minister. The hon. minister has come here of his volition and made a full statement to the Legislative Assembly and the people of Alberta as to the circumstances. In my judgment, it would not be in the public interest of Alberta to examine the case in terms of the specifics involved, particularly because of the very nature of the case.

I'm satisfied to let the matter rest directly with the people of the province, because I think it's clear that this case — and I won't go into debate on it at this time — is clearly distinguishable from the other cases. I would just put it to the Legislative Assembly and the people of Alberta: the MLA, as a minister, should not have made the call, but he was doing it with the best of motives and the best of intentions for the people he represented.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the Premier. In light of the statement the Premier has just made, will the Premier follow the examples of the governments of Canada and the United States, and introduce guidelines which spell out precisely what is and what is not acceptable behavior by members of Executive Council?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I see no reason to do that. The guidelines have always been clear. The hon. member has read earlier in this Legislature the policy position of the government, which has been confirmed by the Attorney General. That position is the policy of the government.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then when the hon. minister was appointed to the cabinet, was he advised of the government's position on this matter, along with other new ministers?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is yes, and I'm sure that it's clear from the statement the hon. member made. That is why he made the statement that he was making this call without thinking of his position of minister of the Crown; making it on behalf of a constituent, as an MLA. He has said that he should not have made that call. He made it. He was aware of the guidelines. He thought he was acting as an MLA. He did not distinguish in his position of minister of the Crown. And I'm satisfied with that explanation.

MR. R. CLARK: Just one last supplementary question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. With the greatest respect for the Premier's statement, I would accept that, had the hon. member risen in the Assembly and made the comment he made yesterday, prior to the chief judge of the province calling the Premier, and then the matter being done after that.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. leader is debating the question and exploring the reasons why he may or may not find the explanation adequate.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I'm entitled to respond to that remark. It is obviously . . . [interjection] On a point of order. I'm entitled to respond to that remark. The position is quite clear.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. There has not been a question placed.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. A point of order, until it can be properly dealt with, pre-empts other proceedings of the House except a matter of privilege. And there's no way I can deal with the hon. Premier's point of order until I find out what it is.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The submission made by the hon. member in that allegation was that there was some way in which the hon. member could have brought this to the attention of this House before it was brought to his attention that the actual call might have been interpreted in the way in which it was interpreted. Clearly he could not have done that. He was completely surprised when the matter was there. So the point of order I want to make clearly is that there was no possible way he could have done that.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could put a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. It concerns page 3 of the hon. minister's statement, in which the minister said:

I had reviewed the nature of these examinations with the Minister of Social Services and Community Health and had been advised that a re-assessment of examination procedures would be conducted.

My question to either the hon. minister or the hon. Premier is: what review was made by the Premier of that particular observation by a minister of the Crown in talking to a judge in the province of Alberta?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I thought I was understanding that question, but I don't. Perhaps the member could clarify it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the question to the Premier is simply this: what assessment has the government of Alberta, and the Premier in particular, made concerning the propriety of a minister of the Crown raising concerns about legislation, and even the possibility of legislative changes, with a judge who is in fact reviewing a case?

MR. LOUGHEED: Well, Mr. Speaker, the statement, as answered here by the hon. member, is quite clear on what his intention was. He expressed that with regard to the judge. That is the very nature of the statement which stands in the record of *Hansard*. As for the examinations and procedures, that was a matter between the hon. minister, acting in his capacity as MLA, and the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. In regard to a previous answer, I think it's quite clear that there was no suggestion by the Minister of Social Services and Community Health of any approach to the judge to be made by the MLA for Lloydminster, the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier for clarification, so there's no misunderstanding. At the bottom of page 2, the minister says:

I then called Judge Tibbitt whom I have known for some time. During the course of our conversation, he told me about previously issuing a warrant and I told him that I had been troubled by the nature of the medical examination that had occurred when he issued the warrant and that I had reviewed the nature of these examinations with the Minister of Social Services and Community Health and had been advised that a re-assessment of examination procedures would be conducted.

Mr. Speaker, my question relates directly to a discussion of that kind of information with a judge, and the propriety of making those sorts of observations with a judge; information which was not relayed as an MLA, but in fact [by] someone who was a member of Executive Council.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that goes to the very early questions that I've already answered. That was the information provided to the judge. I said earlier that the minister should not have made the call, but I am satisfied as to his motive and intention. I'm quite prepared to stand before any people in this province

and say, that minister's intention was honorable in all respects. He was trying to help people.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Premier. It's not a question of the motives of the hon. gentleman whom, frankly, I don't question for a moment. It is the question of the propriety of any minister's calling a judge and discussing possible changes in legislation concerning a case that is before that judge. That is an entirely different question, and one I put again to the hon. Premier.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that's not an accurate interpretation of what occurred. The hon. member can take his own interpretation of it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, with great respect to the hon. Premier, that's what the hon. minister has said in his statement, which was tabled in the House.

I'd like to ask a supplementary question of the Attorney General. What is the policy of the government of Alberta with respect to either cabinet ministers or MLAs contacting members of quasi-judicial bodies, such as the LAB, the Public Utilities Board, or any quasi-judicial agency in this province? Will the same guidelines the Attorney General outlined with respect to judges apply to the relationship between members of this Assembly and quasi-judicial bodies?

MR. SPEAKER: I would have to put a very large question mark over a proposition that would say that the hon. Attorney General was entitled to lay down guidelines with respect to the behavior of members on either side of the Assembly, regardless of what constituency or party they might represent.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, can I put the question to the hon. Attorney General whether the government of Alberta has any particular policy with respect to quasi-judicial agencies in this province, somewhat similar to the policy that the minister indicated in this House with respect to judges?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. member will have noted that in the length of time that most of us have been here such an issue has not come up, as far as I know, before any members of this Assembly. This is the first time in memory that such a matter has come up. I suppose it demonstrates what can occur as a result of an inadvertence.

As the Premier has underlined, there is no question in regard to the policy in respect of ministers. I think it would generally be acknowledged that the position of an MLA of whatever party might be somewhat different. But if that's debatable, it's the sort of issue that I'd be pleased to have views of hon. members on, if it becomes relevant or if someone wants to forecast that it could become relevant.

As to quasi-judicial bodies, I would have to say that because such a matter as the one under discussion now has not come up before, no particular concern has been raised or expressed to try to put quasi-judicial bodies into the same area or classification as judicial bodies. At present my own opinion is that they are different by a very considerable degree. But once again, not having a suggested guideline to put before hon. members, perhaps the subject would be of interest.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Attorney General. At this stage then, there is no policy with respect to quasi-judicial bodies in this province, and it is a matter up to the individual conscience and sense of propriety of members, as opposed to a general policy?

I raise this with respect to the very real concern that people are going to have about the operation of quasi-judicial bodies, particularly the Local Authorities Board over the next few months.

MR. SPEAKER: To refer to a remark I made a few moments ago, my concern insofar as question period is concerned is, of course, that ministers may not be asked questions which do not relate to their official responsibilities as ministers. I question whether any minister, Attorney General or other, has included in his official duties or responsibilities the laying down of guidelines with regard to the conduct of individual members. I would find the question to be out of order unless it can avoid that difficulty.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, at this point the question is really asking clarification. As I understand it — so there's no misunderstanding — there is no policy on this important matter, and at this stage the government is just entertaining views.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is simply repeating the same question, and I must say it's out of order.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct one further question to the Premier. The Premier has stated that upon entering cabinet the minister was advised of guidelines against making such actions. Would the Premier be prepared to table those guidelines?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, those guidelines were verbal and directed from me at the first meeting of Executive Council with the new cabinet.

#### Quebec Referendum Debate

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier or the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It's with reference to the Premier's news release this morning in which he and other western Canadian premiers indicated that they reject the concept of sovereignty association as further defined in the Quebec white paper.

Can the hon. Premier or the minister involved indicate whether Alberta will be willing to negotiate sovereignty association should the people of Quebec give a positive response to the PQ referendum next year?

MR. LOUGHEED: I'll refer the question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, first, while I appreciate the concerns expressed by the Member for Calgary Currie, not just on this topic today but in advising me of his constituents' views on the question of sovereignty association in Quebec, I would be rather hesitant to speculate in this Assembly about the outcome of the referendum. But in reference to the news release, which was a joint release on behalf of the western premiers reinforcing the position taken at the western premiers'

conference on two different occasions, most recently March 26, 1979, I think it's important to get the message to the people of Quebec that sovereignty association is not an item which is negotiable on behalf of the people of western Canada, and that we would not entertain the question of independence with some other kind of economic association subsequent.

This is a very profound statement, Mr. Speaker, and I think it should be carefully considered. What we're saying is that the alternative is clear: stay within Confederation and work as other provinces have, or accept independence.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. At this point is it the position of the Alberta government that we should re-enter negotiations with respect to the constitution of Canada, with the view of providing the people of Quebec with a positive alternative to the sovereignty association situation?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the province of Alberta has always taken the view that negotiations of the sections of the constitution which deal with the concerns not only of Quebec but of other provinces — the division of power specifically; the recognition of culture and language in a general sense — can best be accomplished through the process of constitutional negotiation and change. That is the course we have pursued.

I suppose the difficulty is that during the period of the referendum and this very difficult debate facing all Canada the attendance at the table by the province of Quebec is not necessarily to be expected. Therefore, I wonder if we can achieve much during this very difficult period by a constitutional process. However, let me be very clear that the province of Alberta specifically, and through the debate in this Assembly last year on the Harmony in Diversity positions, has clearly articulated our view and our willingness to work within Confederation within the constitutional process.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has the Alberta government considered, or is it considering, the possibility of sending a delegation of bilingual Albertans to the province of Quebec to articulate our feelings with respect both to sovereignty association and to that particular part of our country?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again I would hesitate to outline in its fullest form any attempt at a strategy. It's just in the last few days that we've had a copy of the Quebec position on sovereignty association.

I do appreciate the assistance we've received, not just from members of the Assembly but from all members of the Alberta community, including, I might note, the French association in Alberta who have made suggestions and recommendations to us of ways in which we communicate to the people of Quebec.

Certainly I think, in terms of processes of communication, the position taken by the western premiers today in articulating once again the viewpoint on sovereignty association has to go to the heart of the difficulty we're facing in Canada. It should be noted that, in fact, in my cursory view of the new deal, the Quebec paper, recognition of the western premiers'

position is not articulated in that document. In all fairness, that has to be brought to the table for the people of Quebec to consider.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question on this issue. Is the minister then indicating that the Alberta government will be coming to this Legislature soon with a plan with respect to the referendum question?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I can't say if it will be in this Assembly. But I would hope that we will have an opportunity to express some of our thoughts on the processes and mechanisms, on this question of the referendum forthcoming in early 1980. In fact we are working on several options or strategies which we would attempt to pursue in the next few months.

MR. KNAAK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the view of the minister that Alberta's position as enunciated in Harmony in Diversity would be adequate to meet Quebec's needs in terms of their aspirations and provincial independence?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe the answer to that is yes.

#### Oil Supply

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. It flows from the assurance given yesterday by the Prime Minister to the leader of the Social Credit group in the House of Commons, with respect to assurance of heating oil supplies, including the possibility of a western reserve of oil and rationing if necessary.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to ask the minister to advise the Assembly what discussions, if any, took place with the government of Alberta concerning this proposal prior to the Prime Minister's writing the letter to the leader of the Social Credit party?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any discussions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Is the minister able to advise the Assembly whether any discussion took place between the government of Canada and the government of Alberta with respect to the two features: the reserve of western oil as well as the prospect of rationing if necessary?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I won't talk on the issue of the presumption of the shortage of oil. I'd leave that to my colleague. But on the question of the Bill to which you are referring, the emergency resources allocation Act, that Bill was passed under the emergency powers of the federal government some time ago, and at that point we clearly pointed out to the federal government our concern with that legislation. The notion of a board is incumbent in that legislation; therefore it's not a new aspect. I hope the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is not suggesting this is a new process.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The question didn't really relate to a Bill passed some time ago but to whether there was any specific discussion between the government of Canada and the government of Alberta on two concepts: a reserve of western oil as well as the possibility of rationing if necessary. Was there any discussion on those two features?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, specifically, no. But it should be reinforced that the federal government presumably is working under legislative authority it now has in place. That's what I'm making reference to. I'm making very clear that we have had discussions previously on our concerns with respect to that legislation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. Is the minister in a position to outline to the Assembly any information as to whether the Petroleum Marketing Commission has undertaken any studies or has any information with respect to the short-term energy supply situation this winter, on the heating oil question; and whether, in the view of the commission, a system of rationing of oil is a possibility?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'd suggest the hon. member define in somewhat more detail the geographical area he intends to cover with the question.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the question relates to an assurance given in the House of Commons. The obvious area of immediate concern would be the Quebec market and possibly part of Ontario. But the question relates to the larger issue of whether there has been any review by the Petroleum Marketing Commission of the general short-term heating oil supply situation — I'm not talking about the long-term question, where we move to natural gas substitution — that Canada's likely to face this winter.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't look to the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission to be doing a review of the availability of heating oil supplies in the rest of Canada. They would, I'm sure, be generally familiar with it, but I wouldn't anticipate or look to them for a detailed analysis of the availability of heating fuel in the rest of Canada.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. During the discussions with the federal government, has any discussion taken place in the last few months with respect to the allocation of supplies and possibly the introduction of rationing if need be? I raise this in view of the assurance given by the Prime Minister a few hours ago.

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I haven't been involved in any such discussions with representatives of the federal government. I call to the hon. member's attention that at the recent meeting of energy ministers in Calgary we did discuss in some detail Canada's vulnerability — and of course it is extreme — to interruptions in the world supplies of oil and the difficulties we would have getting supplies of oil to other parts of Canada, assuming there were a shortfall of imported oil supplies during particular times of the year.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. During those discussions, was there any consideration of rationing as an option? Again, I raise the question in light of the Prime Minister's statement of yesterday. Was there any discussion among the energy ministers of rationing, at least in part of Canada, as an option?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, there wasn't, because I think the matter of rationing is much different from the question of the total supply of oil to Canada.

#### Water Pollution

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Environment. It concerns that rather murky issue of the pollution of the Bow River. I'd ask the minister if he could confirm to this Assembly reports that members of his department have been dispatched to Germany and other countries to view tertiary sewage treatment facilities. If so, could the minister advise as to the exact nature and purpose of those visits?

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, we are presently working closely with regard to the problem of hazardous chemicals and the way in which, hopefully, we will be able to handle that. The management committee assigned this responsibility is not dealing specifically with problems of sewage but more particularly with hazardous chemicals. Within the last week or two this management committee has approached me with regard to trips overseas to study these facilities.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise the Assembly as to the present policy of the government with respect to the financing of tertiary sewage treatment facilities in the province?

MR. COOKSON: Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, we have always taken the position that the polluters should be responsible for solving their own problems. As I say, at the present time — of course policies are always subject to review — that has been our general position to date.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A final supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise the House when he expects the interim report on the South Saskatchewan River basin to be complete and available to the Assembly?

MR. COOKSON: I don't think I could, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping we might have something that I could perhaps table in the Legislative Assembly. Of course that depends on how long we manage to sit here. But I have had some preliminary discussions with the people who are working on the subject of the South Saskatchewan River basin. Other than that, I really can't report any specific interim report at this time.

#### Law Enforcement — Impaired Drivers

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Solicitor General has to do with impaired driving charges. Does the minister have any information that is available to the Assembly as to the percentage of

people apprehended as impaired drivers, and the percentage convicted? Does the minister have that information available in ballpark figures?

MR. HARLE: I'd have to take that question as notice, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the information at hand.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, in the area of trying to obtain sufficient information for an apprehension when the person is picked up. Can the minister indicate if he has had any request from the Calgary city police department for financial assistance to purchase equipment to take videotapes of people who are apprehended on drunk-driving charges?

MR. HARLE: I expect to be getting a letter. So far I haven't seen any arrive, although I'm anticipating one.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister received any communication from other police departments in the province as to the use of this equipment for collecting evidence against drunken drivers?

MR. HARLE: I believe the matter came up in the spring sitting of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Beyond that, while we anticipate receiving a request from the city of Calgary, we know that various police departments across the country are thinking of using videotapes.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question to the minister. Is the minister saying that his department has not itself taken the initiative to use this type of information-gathering device for prosecution of drunken drivers?

MR. HARLE: Yes, it hasn't been at the instigation of the officials in the department. As I recall, last spring there was a story from our sister province of British Columbia, where the taking of videotapes has been used, not in an evidentiary way in courtrooms but as a mechanism whereby, following the stopping of a suspected impaired driver, the tape could be shown to the person who has been stopped, after a charge has been laid but before it has reached trial.

DR. BUCK: My final supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister indicate if the minister or the department has any evidence to indicate if the Check Stop program is losing its effectiveness? At first everybody seemed to be quite aware of it, then we seemed to build up a human resistance. Is the minister in a position to indicate if that program is achieving its means, and if it will or will not be beefed up?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I think the Check Stop program has been extremely successful. In fact, the officials in the department have been encouraging police departments to make more checks. The statistics have been gathered quite regularly, and I could supply the hon. member with numbers if he wanted that type of information.

MRS. CRIPPS: A supplementary. Could the minister explain the 24-hour licence suspension?

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. member wishes to get that advice, perhaps it could be obtained from a solicitor.

DR. BUCK: It's your turn in caucus next month.

#### Loans and Interest Rates

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. It follows up the questioning yesterday on guaranteed loans. I'm sure the farmers and our small businesses who are customers of the treasury branch are going to appreciate the announcement the Provincial Treasurer made today. It's a step in the right direction.

Will the hon. Minister of Agriculture be meeting with officials of chartered banks with regard to interest rates on guaranteed loans and foreclosures? My understanding is that there are some foreclosures; they're not that extensive. But many calls are coming in to ADC regional offices as a result of the high interest rates.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge ADC has not received any numbers of calling loans that exist through chartered banks. Indeed, they have received some interest from individuals asking the interest rates and the policies available to them. But as of today, with the announcement of the Provincial Treasurer and, indeed, with the position we had yesterday, there is no change in the ADC lending rate, with a guarantee of 9 and the program announced today by the treasury branch.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the 1 per cent service charge cancellation, which the Provincial Treasurer mentioned today will no longer be charged on ADC guaranteed loans, apply to loans that are in arrears?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it's my knowledge that it will apply to new loans as of the guarantees that are issued from here to the chartered banks.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer for clarification. Could the Provincial Treasurer clarify the statement of the Minister of Agriculture and indicate whether the proposal announced today applies only to new loans? Or does it apply to loans already in place?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, no clarification is needed. As the statement says, the Treasury Branch advises that effective immediately the interest rate under its small business loan program for existing borrowers will be held at 14.5 per cent, and this preferred rate will apply to existing treasury branch small-business loans.

MR. R. CLARK: A supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer for some elaboration. I appreciate the comment as far as the treasury branches are concerned, but the question to the Treasurer or the Minister of Agriculture is: what about the guaranteed loans that are not being done by the treasury branches? Do farmers who have those guaranteed loans through ADC get the benefit of the announcement made today at 14.5 per cent?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, the 1 per cent service charge which has previously been mentioned would of

course apply, because it is under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Development Corporation. They would be absorbing that with respect to treasury branches and chartered banks and credit unions. But there's a limit, of course, to what the provincial government can do under the British North America Act with respect to the monetary system of the country. We are doing what we can to give a break to small businesses and farmers under and in respect of agencies which are under government jurisdiction, which are the treasury branches.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. The question really relates to new loans as opposed to existing loans. Do we understand it from the Minister of Agriculture, and is that a correct assumption, that the cancellation of that 1 per cent service charge will apply not only to existing borrowers but also to people who get loans under the guarantee program in the future?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we should clarify one point. The 1 per cent charged by the Agricultural Development Corporation is a one-time charge for administration at the opening of a particular loan. So that's the one that will be absorbed by the Agricultural Development Corporation. It is not a 1 per cent that continues over the life of the loan.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Does the Assembly understand, then, that with respect to the people who have already borrowed money and that 1 per cent has been paid, these people will not receive any benefit but in fact the benefit will relate to new borrowers as opposed to existing borrowers, and the existing borrowers will be the ones who will benefit under the treasury branch program? But when it comes to the chartered banks and the 1 per cent fee the minister has made reference to, that will only apply to new borrowers?

MR. SCHMIDT: That's correct.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate: the loans by chartered banks, guaranteed by ADC, when the proceedings are started on foreclosures — in all cases are they reported to the Alberta development corporation, or do the banks in some cases make the foreclosures themselves?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge the banks notify the Agricultural Development Corporation before any move is taken.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer with regard to loans. Would existing loans that have been placed with chartered banks be transferable to the treasury branches under this present program that's been announced?

MR. HYNDMAN: Quite clearly no, Mr. Speaker, if we're talking about existing loans of the treasury branch, which is what the statement relates to.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A final supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. On the foreclosures on direct loans, does the Alberta development corporation take title to the land or possession of the land when the foreclosures occur under the direct loan program under the development corporation?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, under foreclosure under the direct lending application, all the assets are recovered by the Agricultural Development Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: We have actually run out of time for the question period. I had not been anticipating the number of supplementaries to the last question. However, I did recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud, and the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones would like to supplement an answer.

Is it the wish of the Assembly that we deal with those two matters, or should they be put off until tomorrow?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, if I may, rather than ask a question and add a supplementary I'd like to do it in two parts. The first one is to the Provincial Treasurer, and the second is to the Premier.

Since Alberta is a growing province, Mr. Speaker, has the department assessed the relevant balance in Alberta between the need for debt financing and capital financing to determine the vulnerability of new small businesses now expanding in Alberta relative to other provinces? In other words, is the province of Alberta more sensitive to high interest rates than other provinces?

And the second part to the Premier. Since the federal government interest rate policy has some . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Having regard to the question period having run out, perhaps we should content ourselves with the first question, and perhaps the second one could be dealt with tomorrow.

MR. KNAAK: With respect, Mr. Speaker, it's all one question. It's just that one has to be answered by somebody else.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I think the question is important enough to deserve some time in answer, and perhaps we could take it tomorrow, if the hon. member would agree.

MR. KNAAK: In that case, Mr. Speaker, maybe rather than have half now and half later, I'll do it all tomorrow. Thank you.

#### **Opportunity Company — Guaranteed Loans**

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to complete an answer to a question posed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar yesterday when he asked if there had been any discussions between me, acting on behalf of the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, and chartered banks. I indicated yesterday that I had had no such discussions, and upon checking with the Department of Tourism and Small Business they have had no such discussions as well.



**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**  
(Committee of the Whole)

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of the Whole Assembly will please come to order.

**Bill 38**  
**The Alcoholism and Drug Abuse**  
**Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any further comments or questions with respect to Bill 38?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 38 be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 39**  
**The Private Vocational Schools Act**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, just for the record, I wish to reply to a question raised at second reading by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood relating to the question of whether or not students in private vocational schools are eligible for financial assistance under the student finance programs of the province. I wish to advise the Assembly that that is the case now, and that it will continue for students enrolled in full-time programs, provided that the vocational schools, or trade schools as they are now called, are registered under the Act.

Other than that, I think the matter was dealt with at some length on second reading.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments or questions with respect to Bill 39?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 39, The Private Vocational Schools Act, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 42**  
**The Public Contributions**  
**Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to Bill 42? Did the hon. member wish to comment?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 42, The Public Contributions Amendment Act, 1979, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 43**  
**The Co-operative Marketing Associations**  
**and Rural Utilities Guarantee**  
**Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to Bill No. 43?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 43, The Co-operative Marketing Associations and Rural Utilities Guarantee Amendment Act, 1979, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 44**  
**The Firefighters and Policemen**  
**Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1979**

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is an amendment, I believe, which has been circulated. Are there any questions or comments with respect to the amendment?

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the amendment the minister has circulated, in its simplest form that amendment asks the Assembly to pass the legislation virtually intact. And the minister really wants us to approve not that this Act comes into force upon the day this session concludes, but the day the minister proclaims it in the future. That may be 10 days after the House adjourns, or it may be two months.

Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that all members in the Assembly have to keep in mind two very important points. The first one — and I think the minister grudgingly acknowledged this during second reading on the Bill when we asked why there wasn't genuine consultation with the firefighters affected, prior to the legislation being drafted, rather than a whole raft of discussions, if I could use that term accurately, after. In question period this week, I think the minister indicated he'd had nine or 10 meetings with the firefighters and various groups involved. My understanding is that on not more than one or two occasions has there really been a sit-down, face-to-face meeting. One doesn't accomplish a great deal by standing on the front steps and speaking to the firefighters — that isn't a very meaningful dialogue as to what might be worked out as far as the legislation is concerned — or passing in the hallway and stopping for a few minutes.

It seems to me, Mr. Minister — and I say this with the greatest of respect — we're not dealing here with a number of people who have a reputation across this province for being radicals. In the firefighters in the province we're dealing with people whom we all entrust to protect our lives and property. I think all members on both sides of the House would agree that they do a splendid job.

These people also don't have the right to strike. I agree with that. But I believe they've been treated very shabbily with this Bill, as far as prior consultation has

been concerned. Mr. Minister, in the course of your discussions this afternoon, I'd like for you not to gloss over the kind of prior consultation there was before this legislation was introduced. With reference to the nine or 10 meetings we've held, I think it's important enough that we know basically what has been agreed upon in these meetings.

Are the firefighters now prepared to accept this amendment, Mr. Minister? From my point of view, the amendment doesn't do a great deal, other than not bringing the legislation into effect the day the Assembly concludes, but in fact having it come into effect through proclamation, the day the minister chooses.

Mr. Chairman, I want to raise one other point. I don't particularly blame the minister on this second point. But I must say my colleagues and I have come to this conclusion: in the course of the Fire Fighters Association making their representation to members on both sides of the House, I think they've been treated with less than the usual amount of courtesy as far as being able to have access to the Legislature Building and to the Chamber. I don't particularly blame the minister, but certainly from the discussions we've had with the group, there has been every indication that they haven't been able to get the kind of treatment one would expect for a group like this, which I think has a very excellent reputation.

Mr. Chairman, what we're really dealing with today is that we're being asked to approve the amendment to this piece of legislation, which allows the Act to come into effect on proclamation, not when the House concludes. I frankly think the minister would be far wiser to hold the legislation, not to proceed with it at this fall session. It may be the middle of November when the session concludes. The Assembly generally starts to sit in late February or early March. Reintroduce the legislation after the kind of meaningful consultation that should have taken place has taken place. I'd hope at that time both the minister's people and the firefighters' people would have been able to work out some sort of arrangement which both sides would find mutually acceptable.

Mr. Chairman, I say through you to the minister that I think that would be in keeping with the practice which has been established in the past in the province on negotiations on changing this kind of legislation. I'm sure the minister has seen the letters that have been made available to him by the Fire Fighters Association indicating the kinds of commitments that have been made in the past on this situation, albeit a number of years ago when a different government was in place. I recall a former government introducing legislation with not the kind of consultation there perhaps should have been. On that occasion, the legislation was held, and came in at a later date.

Recognizing the fact that we will likely be back in session in March 1980, some four months from now, I'm saying, Mr. Minister, that the best way to handle this would be to let this legislation die on the Order Paper and reintroduce it in March after meaningful consultation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a few observations about the amendment before us. Clearly the amendment is just an exercise in delaying the decision on the part of the government. Instead of the law coming into effect when the Lieutenant-Governor doffs his hat, it will come into effect on proclamation

which, as already mentioned, could be a few days from now or two or three months from now. In actual fact, I think the amendment is, if not meaningless, certainly not any meaningful effort to accommodate the concerns of the firefighters in this province.

I think it bears restating, Mr. Chairman, and to you, Mr. Minister: I remember well the debate we had in this Legislature on Bill 41, the public service amendment Act of 1976. At that time I think the recognition was that if you remove from people the right to have that ultimate "or else" in collective bargaining, the right to withdraw services, then it seems to me the corollary of that decision, Mr. Minister, is that we must go not only that extra mile but some distance more, to be reasonable, to negotiate, to consult.

Frankly, Mr. Minister, with great respect to you, that hasn't occurred in this case. The suggestion has been made, and you have indicated in the House, that you have met with the firefighters on nine different occasions, I believe. My understanding is that there was no meeting with the Alberta firefighters prior to the drafting of this legislation.

I think the first question that one has to ask you, Mr. Minister, and we have to have an answer: if there was no consultation with the firefighters before the legislation was drafted, was there any consultation with any of the municipalities in this province on the matter? If so, which municipalities were consulted with by the government before the government decided to introduce the legislation that we're dealing with at this time? I say to you, Mr. Minister, you know, if we're going to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. member please address the minister through the Chair.

MR. NOTLEY: I'm saying to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the minister, that if we are going to retain the good will of the firefighters in this province, we have an obligation, in my judgment anyway, to ensure that that process of consultation is in fact meaningful. Were these nine occasions really sit-down meetings where the minister had an opportunity to discuss all the implications for a period of several hours? Or were they chance encounters on the steps of the Legislature or in the hallways of this building? We really can't associate chance encounters with the concept of meaningful consultation.

Mr. Chairman, before I would want to approve the amendment, I for one would want a pretty full account of where those meetings took place, and why, in my understanding, there was no specific meeting with the firefighters of this province before the legislation was introduced. What we have at the moment is clearly a feeling — not just in the city of Edmonton, but backed by every single local in the province of Alberta; all eight locals are unanimous in their view — that this legislation should be held over and not proceeded with. The minister has no doubt received a telegram from the president of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association, which says: "... I respectfully beseech you Mr. Young to set aside the amendments ...". Not a statement full of rhetoric, not an unreasonable statement, but an appeal to say, what's the rush?

Now I've heard all sorts of arguments advanced as to why we must move ahead with this piece of legislation. One argument is that because we now have three fire departments where we have a situation that has in

fact been challenged by the legal case of last spring, somehow we've got to legitimize that position. But we're not going to legitimize that position if we pass the amendment, Mr. Chairman, because the amendment says that the law won't come into effect until such time as it's proclaimed, not "until such time as it's assented to". If it takes two or three months to proclaim it, then the law isn't clarified. If the purpose of proceeding now is that we must clarify the law, I find it very strange that we're now prepared to say, well you know, it'll come into effect when it's proclaimed.

Or is it the position of the government that we're going to see a very quick proclamation, Mr. Chairman, a proclamation in the next 10 days or two weeks? If that's the case, what kind of consultation will take place with the Alberta firefighters? Will they have any assurance that there will be meaningful consultation on this matter before the minister decides to proclaim the Act?

I just have to reassert, Mr. Chairman, that I find it very difficult — trying honestly to understand the government's position — I find it very difficult to understand what's the rush. Why in heaven's name are we in such a hurry that we can't set it aside until the spring session? The world isn't going to come to an end, you know. The entire fire fighting system in the province isn't going to collapse. My understanding, in talking to lawyers in the field, is that in the case of those other communities where in fact they've moved, they've moved as a result of voluntary agreements. So they're not going to be tested in the courts anyway.

That being the case, Mr. Chairman, I think the minister has to be able to demonstrate to us why it is necessary that we move now, when every day we've got firefighters from all over the province saying to us: hold it over so we can have meaningful consultation; hold it over so we can consult and not feel that we have this sword of Damocles, this proclamation, hanging over our heads; so that after another chance encounter perhaps, or even a meaningful meeting, the minister can say, well, people, that's it; we've had our meeting; I'm proclaiming the Act. That's it.

All sorts of concerns have been brought to me, Mr. Chairman, that I think have to be evaluated before we as an Assembly pass this Bill through committee. I want to know what kind of assessment has been given to the impact on the morale of the forces in this province, the morale that comes from knowing that promotion will eventually lead up the ladder to a position of deputy chief, so they have that incentive to improve themselves and move up; also the impact that's going to have on the pension. Knowing a little bit about the internal politics of the situation in the city of Edmonton, I am also fully aware of what will happen to the morale if we have people leapfrogging over men who have been in the force for a number of years.

Now I know the minister's getting some pressure from the city of Edmonton on this question, Mr. Chairman. But I say to the minister that we have an obligation not only to be fair to the firefighters of this province, but to be seen to be fair. At this juncture, we are not seen to be fair.

I would just conclude my initial remarks — I'm sure this debate will go on for some time; I have a sneaking suspicion it will. But I suggest to the minister, let us consider delaying it for another two or three months. It will not be the end of the world. Were the minister to take this decision, Mr. Chairman, it would

be one giant step that would vastly improve the morale among firefighters in this province, and the good feeling that I think any government would want to engender among people who are there to protect life and property.

The Leader of the Opposition made reference to Mr. Pugh's letter of some years ago. Mr. Chairman, the minister knows well that from time to time I've agreed with Mr. Pugh, and from time to time I've disagreed with him. But no one in this House would fail to recognize that Mr. Pugh is probably one of the most knowledgeable people in labor relations that you can find anywhere in Canada.

What did he say 10 years ago? He said to the former government: what's the rush? Don't rush into this thing; hold it over. He said specifically to the former Minister of Labour, hold it over so we can have consultation. What Mr. Pugh said in 1969, Mr. Chairman, is valid advice in 1979. I think it just confirms the need for a little more statesmanship on the part of the provincial government. We're not in that big a rush. Let's let the legislation die on the Order Paper this fall, continue discussions over the next three or four months, introduce it in the spring session, if need be, and proceed at that time. But let's not ram this legislation through the Assembly this fall.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I'm learning what a lot of noise can be made over an "s". Similarly, I have before me an amendment. I want to let the minister know that in view of representations made to me by constituents and, of course, I think the legitimate concern by everyone that we not get into labor negotiations between a union and a municipality, I would respectfully ask that we get a clear understanding of the meaning and purpose of the amendment before we ask for the vote.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. minister wish to reply? Two more speakers want to say something. Whichever you wish.

MR. YOUNG: However the committee wishes to proceed, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's your privilege; if you wish to reply now, go ahead.

MR. YOUNG: Perhaps it would be appropriate now to address at least some of the comments that have been made.

First, since it's not germane to the substantive issue but was raised in debate by, I believe, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think the matter of the treatment afforded individual firefighters or groups of firefighters as they came to the building should be addressed. Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that a fair comment was made on that matter.

DR. BUCK: Who does this building belong to?

MR. YOUNG: Hon. member, would you like to hear what really happened, or do you wish to have a discussion?

DR. BUCK: We'd be glad to hear what he has to offer.

MR. NOTLEY: We're listening. We're waiting, Les.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think it's only proper that each member be listened to and that the minister have a chance to respond. Any members who wish to comment further or add to their previous remarks may do so later. I think it would be in order to let the minister respond at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, if I can assume that at least some of the remarks were directed to the occasion which occurred on Monday, November 5, I think a number of things occurred which should be expressed.

First, some school groups were booked into the galleries, bookings which I understand were taken as much as three months earlier. There were some vacancies in the galleries, and my understanding is that, on request, the hon. Member for Clover Bar and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview were each issued 20 passes that could be distributed to firefighters. Is that not correct, hon. member? So that accommodated a fair number.

As all hon. members know, it is the normal procedure that when groups visit the Legislature Building in large numbers, they assist and co-operate by making some preliminary arrangements and notification. None was received in this case despite the fact that, as I understand it, the president of Local 209 — and presumably the organizer, although I'm not sure of that — had been in the building for a considerable number of hours prior to the arrival of the large group. As soon as the school delegations were removed from the galleries in the normal course of events, as they usually are, other firefighters were allowed in. Some had already toured the building with guides, and they were allowed into the galleries.

Mr. Chairman, I think the comment made was both unfair to the building staff and uncalled for.

MR. COOK: Typical of Walt Buck.

DR. BUCK: We'll hear you.

MR. NOTLEY: Where do you stand, Rollie?

DR. BUCK: Where do you stand, Rollie? Like a puppet, Cook?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Let the minister continue, and you can take care of the other members in their turn.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, it seems that the attitudes I'm encountering in trying to make myself heard are typical of some of the problems that have blown up in this debate.

First, let me go to the substantive issue and assure all hon. members that there is no way that I wish to bring forward a Bill which has the effect of adding two "s"s: one to make "deputy chief" of police "deputy chiefs", and the second to make "deputy chief" of a firefighters' unit "deputy chiefs". That is not the kind of Bill that I prefer to bring to this Assembly, and under normal conditions I would not have.

But what we're faced with, Mr. Chairman, what ought to be self-evident, and what was expressed and

explained was the fact that we had a court decision which changed the meaning of the legislation as it had been interpreted and applied, and as the parties had mutually agreed by virtue of their actions since 1971 — eight years to be precise, as I understand it. There was in fact an evolution of the operation of that section, by mutual agreement of the parties, that enabled there to be more than one deputy chief. The parties were very realistic, in my opinion. They recognized that when we have forces of 800 and 900 firefighters, there may be and probably should be more than one deputy chief. They agreed that there should be more than one deputy chief. In Calgary they agreed that there should be three. That's what we had evolve.

Mr. Chairman, I say to you that that is good labor relations. It was a natural evolution of parties working together in the interests of providing good public service and assuring that there were in fact a good relationship and good working conditions for the firefighters. That's what we had evolve.

The problem that then occurred in the situation of the city of Edmonton was that apparently relations were not as good as they were in some other areas. In consequence of that deteriorating relationship, one party decided to challenge another party. One way of challenging was to take this matter to court to have the legislation interpreted. One judge agreed with the interpretation of the legislation as the parties were using it and as it had evolved by agreement; another judge disagreed.

It's not my place to comment on my opinion of the quality of the judgment, the reasons for the judgment, or whatever. That's a question which I believe, as my hon. colleague the Attorney General would assure me, is restricted to the prerogatives of superior courts and not others of us. [interjections]

But, Mr. Chairman, it is a fact that it was a court decision, the effect of which would jeopardize the relationships which had evolved — the relationships, the administrative pattern, the management pattern, and the very appointments of some individuals in those positions, with respect to both police forces and firefighter forces. In both cases it had that jeopardy involved in it.

So what to do? I have to say it was late in the day when I was finally persuaded that we had a legal problem that had to be addressed. As I say, it's not my wish to bring legislation which deals just with a matter as simple as this one is on the surface.

Mr. Chairman, what then happened was that I spent some days trying to reach the president of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association before it was discovered that he was not in town but was on vacation, out of the country as a matter of fact. In the meantime, some contact was made with the president of Local 209. The end result was that there have been — and I wish the hon. Leader of the Opposition, who placed the question, would be in his place to hear me. You'll relay it to him, will you, hon. Member for Clover Bar? That's good, because I won't have to repeat it.

There have been three meetings — one meeting, I understand, with the full executive of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association, with the exception of the president, who still had not returned from Europe. That was a fairly long meeting.

MR. NOTLEY: After the Bill.

MR. YOUNG: The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview will be interested to know that two other meetings were then held. Both were meetings which lasted not minutes but a considerable length of time. They were very careful, well-considered discussions, I think, as far as all parties were concerned. They did not produce happiness; I wouldn't pretend to suggest to hon. members that they did.

However, they did produce an agreement on my part to amend the Bill, which amendment is before you. The effect of the amendment — contrary to my understanding of what the hon. Leader of the Opposition tried to advise hon. members — is to bring into force, on assent, that portion of the Bill which deals with police and the appointment of deputy chiefs of police forces. The second portion of the amendment is to hold the portion of the Bill dealing with deputy chiefs of firefighter forces — into effect on proclamation.

Additionally, Mr. Chairman, the meetings I had with the Alberta Fire Fighters Association identified a couple of other things. One, there are in fact some other areas not involving legislative change, insofar as I know and insofar as was identified to me, that could usefully be discussed by government and the Fire Fighters Association.

And there was a request, which led to the delay of proclamation, that there might be a better way of resolving the pluralization, if I can put it that way, of "deputy chief". One of the alternatives that I raised for discussion and suggested the firefighters might address was a definition of "deputy fire chief". I'm not sure that can be defined effectively, because we have a number of goals and objectives, which I am sure hon. members in the opposition would agree, with government, with the firefighters, and with municipalities. We want to provide a good public service. That's number one.

Number two, we want to provide a working condition or relationship within the firefighters forces that is a healthy, positive relationship. In my book, that's essential to the end result. We want to provide a means for realistic administration and management of firefighter forces. In other words, if the force is 900-strong, then maybe we need three deputy chiefs. I don't know. Maybe it's four; maybe it's two. I suspect in large measure it depends upon ...

MR. NOTLEY: In Toronto they have one.

MR. YOUNG: Well, that may not be a good situation; I really don't know. I don't think it's relevant. [interjection] Hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, the fact of the matter is that in Calgary, where I understand they have slightly over 800 firefighters, there are three, by mutual agreement. So whether they have 5,000 firefighters in Toronto and one deputy chief is, I think, irrelevant to the situation as it exists in Alberta and as it has been mutually arrived at by agreement. [interjections]

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Of course it's irrelevant. [interjections]

MR. YOUNG: Would you like any further explanation?

MR. R. CLARK: Some.

MR. YOUNG: I'm prepared. [interjections]

MR. R. CLARK: We're waiting.

MR. KOZIAK: The gang of four is ready.

MR. YOUNG: Don't overrate.

Mr. Chairman, those are some of the objectives I think we ought to have in mind. Having said that, I then agreed with the president of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association that we should have an opportunity to examine that question, along with some other questions, when we might do that. As nearly as I could tell, we both agreed that the opportune time would be January, when I would commit to a full day of discussion on that matter with the executive of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association or such other persons as the association might wish to bring to that meeting. In discussion with that association, we might also decide that it would be beneficial to bring some representatives of the municipalities, if they wished, and we would discuss that. I not only agreed to that verbally, I placed it in writing and supplied it to the president of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association.

I think it's important to look at one of the ingredients of the problem before us. One of the ingredients is the very difficult relationship which exists in the city of Edmonton. I'm regretful that I have to express a problem of that nature, but a problem does exist. Clearly a problem existed, or the legislation would never have been challenged. Had the legislation not been challenged by Local 209, we would not be faced with this Bill today, because everybody else was happy with The Firefighters and Policemen Labour Relations Act, as it stood with respect to this matter, until the court decided it didn't say what other people were interpreting it to say. So Local 209, through their own actions, have forced upon me the necessity of taking some action to legalize — if I may express it that way — what in fact exists in the province now, to enable it to be maintained beyond question. That's the fact of the matter.

Having looked at the difficult situation between Local 209 and the city administration, I concluded that the attitudinal relationship was not something that could be resolved by legislation, and I so expressed to both parties. Since it is indirectly a responsibility of mine to try to improve labor/management relationships wherever they may be within the province of Alberta, as long as it's a provincial jurisdiction, I then offered to make available the senior staff from labor management services. I so advised the president of Local 209 and obtained verbal agreement that that seemed like a useful effort to undertake. My verbal contact with the mayor of Edmonton produced a similar agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to advise that my staff have had at least one meeting with each of those parties. Subsequent to those meetings, my staff has been down to Calgary and talked to the local firefighters in the city of Calgary, as well as to some of the administration in the city of Calgary. They do indeed find a vast difference in attitude between the situations in our respective municipalities, and they do believe there's room for lots of improvement, in the interests of everybody. That is an effort which is

ongoing, which is available to both parties, but which should be kept quite separate from the Bill before us.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to conclude by saying that my understanding of the concern of the firefighters is this. As I understand them, they are not opposed to more than one deputy chief. Certainly Calgary isn't, or they wouldn't have more than one deputy chief; they have a commitment between themselves with respect to the number of deputy chiefs they currently have. Even in Edmonton, at one time there were two deputy chiefs. There may still be, for all I know. The problem arose with the possibility that there might be a third deputy chief and with respect to the appointment of that deputy chief.

So the challenge before the Alberta Fire Fighters Association, before the municipalities, and before government, Mr. Chairman, is to find a way to assure that the parties will indeed work out what I think is a good relationship between themselves with respect to, one, the conditions or arrangements by which they will develop additional positions of deputy chief. In other words, what will be the function performed by any additional deputy chief a department should wish to have, and how often or how many of them should there be, if there is more than one? That's the number one challenge.

The second challenge, then, and the concern in Edmonton for sure, is that there be a clear understanding of the criteria by which officers will be promoted to deputy chief. There is a concern — understandable, and I agree with it — a very valid concern that there be a system for the promotion of officers to deputy chief.

First of all, the concern is that outsiders who do not come through the ranks might be promoted to deputy chief. I cannot judge the validity of that concern. But I suspect it's a real concern in most circumstances, and I'd certainly feel very much toward that intent.

Secondly, there is a concern to have an adequate training program for officers who might then be eligible to be appointed to the position of deputy chief. I agree with that, too. Surely that's essential to good morale and a good opportunity for promotion within a system. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, it is on precisely those two points, among a long list of others, that Edmonton Local 209 and the Edmonton city administration have been unable to agree and upon which this whole court case began to evolve.

Mr. Chairman, I think that problem of the local situation can be resolved through the labor/management services assistance, if the parties are willing. Because basically it requires a change of attitude and a commitment to try to work together. With respect to the problem at the provincial level, I believe it is essential that we not jeopardize the good relationships that exist now, and that we not allow the possibility for a challenge to some of the systems now in place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are . . .

DR. BUCK: Can I just ask a question of the minister, Mr. Chairman, please? The hon. minister did not seem to indicate to us the immediacy of the Bill. He hasn't touched upon that at all. Can the minister indicate to us why this must be done now? I believe this was brought up in some of the previous questions. Can the minister indicate the immediacy of the Bill?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, I did indeed address it. I indicated that, should there be any challenge, the present system makes the existing administrative structures beyond the pale of the legislation as it now stands. We had no problem until we had a challenge to the legislation, and until it was found to be interpreted in the narrow way in which it was interpreted. [interjection] The hon. member mentioned that we should be very careful here, because firefighters don't have the ability to strike. I agree with the hon. member; they're due at least as much respect if not more than in the usual situation. But I would draw to the hon. member's attention that police do not have that right either, and that policemen are quite happy with the present situation as we're proposing it to be changed. That's why the amendment states that the section dealing with policemen will come in on assent, to remove any possible problem with respect to that group.

In the meantime, as I've committed, I'll hold the legislation at the proclamation stage until such time as we have a very thorough opportunity to see what suggestions, if any, the Alberta Fire Fighters Association can bring forward that deal with what I see to be an attitudinal or relationship problem at the local association level.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Several people have indicated a desire to speak, five in fact, from the constituencies of Edmonton Mill Woods, Edmonton Glengarry, Clover Bar, Edmonton Belmont, and St. Albert. So we'll ask these to speak in that order now. Does the Member for Edmonton Mills Woods wish to speak?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: He's already spoken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did he speak? I saw him get up, but I thought the minister responded.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a few comments on this legislation. I've had the opportunity to meet with the firefighters on several occasions, and I think the major question is one of negotiations. I think the minister has noted quite emphatically that negotiations were held before the introduction of the legislation. I think it's fair to say as well that the minister has had rather extensive discussions with the firefighters and the administration of the city of Edmonton since then. He has compromised and shown good faith, I believe, in bringing in an amendment before this House. The test of fairness of that amendment, I suppose, is that both parties are somewhat upset, I gather. Both wish they had their own way. I think that is a good test right there, Mr. Minister, that negotiations have proceeded equitably; neither side is happy. The fact of the matter is that there are very poor labor relations inside the city of Edmonton and the firefighters local.

I think it's also fair to say, from my canvassing of young firefighters in my district, that the union local executive doesn't have the entire support of the members. There seems to be a real block, based on seniority, of people who have demonstrated merit and are prevented from promotion. I would suggest that the local doesn't have an entire block to present to this House.

The point I'd really like to make, Mr. Chairman, is this: by this action the minister is forcing both sides to negotiate. I think that's a positive step, because in the past both sides have developed rather poor relations. I

don't like to use an extreme example, but I have a friend who says that sometimes it's necessary to bang a two-by-four over the head of a mule to attract its attention. I think that's applicable to both the city administration and some people in the union. This legislation is going to force both parties to come together and negotiate. The minister has made a commitment to the House, and to the firefighters and the city administration both, that the legislation will not be brought into force until he has seen that both sides have negotiated in a spirit of fair play. I think it's then incumbent on the union local as well as on the city administration to show some good faith from this point on. It's a two-way street, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to conclude with a bit of political advice for the gentlemen in the gallery, the firefighters, as well as for the city administration. I think that in a controversial matter like this it's incumbent on both sides to get to know the legislators here in the Assembly on a one-to-one basis, not in a threatening but in a positive way, to try to explain the case. I think by and large the union has done that. They've been a little intimidating for some; I understand the minister has had some interesting experiences in his office, where the union has been a little less than reasonable and friendly. I don't think that's the attitude that should be brought into this Chamber.

I think it's fair to say that from this point on, having made the compromise, the minister would appreciate a demonstration of negotiations in good faith. There are some very real problems, not just in this area but in occupational health and safety. I think this is an opportunity for both sides to vent their feelings, sit down at the bargaining table. If it's shown that the city administration, for example, has not been responsible and reasonable, Mr. Chairman, I think it's also fair to say the minister will take that into consideration when he brings that legislation before the government caucus for consideration of proclamation.

Finally, I would like to say that the union and the city both should consider a rather active program of trying to conciliate these differences, rather than a spirit of confrontation and just plain mulishness. I think the two groups should sit down and discuss their problems. If there are problems that they would like to bring before the government caucus, there are committees to do that. If they would like to bring it before the Legislature, I'm sure there are ways to do that as well. That's the kind of positive routing that I've encouraged the members of the union to take; take their energy and route it positively, make some positive suggestions, sit down and discuss it with the city and with us. We would appreciate that kind of negotiation.

MR. MACK: Mr. Chairman, having regard for the court decision and the hon. minister's explanation with regard to the difficulties associated with that, last evening I received a communication from constituents asking some pertinent questions which I really wasn't able to respond to clearly. I was, however, able to help them some in explaining the amendments the minister was bringing in with regard to the proclamation.

I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if the minister could indicate to us whether his department will play any role in ongoing negotiations during the period the proclamation of the amendment will be held?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We've heard two members from the government side. In keeping with the traditions established by the Speaker, I think we will now hear from the Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

MR. NOTLEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have some comments. But if there are several additional members who have not had an opportunity to speak a first time, I'd be glad to defer to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm proposing, though, that it's practice in this House to have two from the government; then if there are some from the opposition who wish to speak, they may. So you may continue.

MR. NOTLEY: I would like to respond to some of the comments made by the minister when he responded initially. First of all, Mr. Minister, you did not advise this committee — and Mr. Chairman, I think it's incumbent upon the minister to advise this committee — why there was no consultation before the legislation was drafted and presented to the Assembly. We had the suggestion that the president was away on holiday, but there are other members of the executive. I find it inconceivable that on a issue as sensitive as this — my heavens, no one can question the sensitivity of the issue; all we have to do is look in the gallery day after day, and it's obvious to everyone how sensitive the issue is — that an effort was not made to set up a formal meeting with the Alberta Fire Fighters Association before the legislation was introduced. Mr. Chairman, we have not had an answer to that question.

In my view it is not an adequate answer to say, the president was away and I wasn't able to get hold of him. There are other members of the executive. Frequently we have to meet with all sorts of groups where one or two members of the executive may not be present. So be it. A formal meeting, in my view, should have taken place.

Mr. Chairman, the minister made a couple of points that I can't help but agree with, but my conclusion is entirely different from his. He said, for example, that the whole business of the situation in Edmonton is in part an attitudinal problem that should be subject to negotiation rather than legislation. I couldn't agree more with that, Mr. Chairman.

But the problem is that that's not the position the government's taking. With the legislation we have hanging over the heads of the firefighters and the ability of the minister to proclaim the legislation in two weeks, two months, or whenever it is, in the judgment of the firefighters in the city of Edmonton we have the ability of the minister to change some of their basic rights in a very material way. It's fine to say that these things should be negotiated, but they should be negotiated precisely as a result of both sides feeling they don't have legislation in their back pockets.

Mr. Chairman, as long as the minister has this legislation, passed by the committee and the Assembly, that he can proclaim at any time, I really don't think you're going to contribute to an improvement of the "attitudinal problem" that the Member for Edmonton Glengarry and the minister cited. On the part of the firefighters, there's going to be the very definite and, I think, correct view that in any negotiations subsequent to this legislation they're dealing with a deck that, quite frankly, isn't equal to their opponent.

I want to deal with the question of deputy chiefs. Some of the members of the House laughed and scoffed at this question of what the situation is elsewhere in the country, elsewhere on the continent. The Attorney General, who suddenly is an expert on the fire-fighting industry of the continent, tells us it doesn't make any difference; what's being done is not material. Mr. Chairman, the minister knows labor relations well enough to know perfectly well that when you're dealing with people who in many ways have a stature based on what their contemporaries are doing throughout the continent, what is being done in other jurisdictions is very important.

You know, we have the national fire protection association, the NFPA, and quite frankly I'm advised by the firefighters that if there was a fireman's bible, it would be this particular document. The document, Mr. Chairman, sets out very clearly that even in major cities — Toronto, as an example — there is only one deputy chief.

The minister said that's not really a problem, because in Calgary there has been an agreement to have more than one deputy chief. That is true, Mr. Minister. But that came as a result of negotiations, without anybody feeling they had a gun to their head. The resulting promotion is through the system. As I understand it, people have to have worked for five years in the Calgary fire department before they can be eligible to become a deputy chief. That's not the situation in Edmonton. The concern in the city of Edmonton is that somebody's going to leapfrog over people who've been in the force for a number of years. And that's a very legitimate concern.

What has developed in Calgary as a result of mutual negotiation is one thing. But to bring in legislation which, I think, allows a situation in Edmonton to maybe or maybe not be negotiated, but if it isn't negotiated it's there in the Act, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, is imposing a form of legislative settlement when it is not only unnecessary but, in my view, unwise.

Another aspect of this business of the deputy chief is — you know, more than one deputy chief, yes; but, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman, more than one deputy chief in the bargaining unit. That also is a very crucial question. If you're going to hopscotch people over people who have been working for a number of years and take them out of the bargaining unit, who's to say we're going to stop at two or three deputy chiefs? Why not have 10 or 12? Why not just take them right out of the bargaining unit? What do you do then to the people who are working in the association and see that association as a way to protect the rights of working firemen?

So, Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned when I first spoke, I suspect we may have a fairly long discussion on this issue. But I say again with greatest respect, Mr. Minister, consider what you're doing. Consider the statements you made about morale being so important, about good working conditions, and the attitude of people who are working being important. Consider those things, and ask yourself: are we in such an emergency situation that it is necessary to move this fall? That court case, as I recall, was on March 16. Obviously it wasn't such an emergency that we had to move in the spring session. Why is it such an emergency now? The minister says we must clarify the ambiguity in the law. But as long as the legislation is

not proclaimed, that ambiguity exists. So if we're going to have this consultation until such time as it's proclaimed, why not wait until the spring session?

I have been advised — and I say this again; it's repeating what I said before — that the only way there's any possibility of the existing agreements being jeopardized is if one side or the other decides to challenge it. But that isn't going to happen, because there is an agreement in these other places. That being the case, why the rush? Why the rush this fall, when we waited and didn't do it in the spring? Why do we have to do it now? Why isn't it possible to wait until the spring session of the Legislature and accommodate what are not unreasonable requests on the part of Alberta firefighters?

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Chairman, on that note I suppose I could say: don't wait for spring, do it now.

I recognize some of the points the minister made, and I appreciate that we certainly cannot legislate attitude. Obviously we have a situation of very deep concern and very high emotions, and it's not an easy situation to resolve, for sure. But some of the questions I have in my mind that I have not been able to resolve in listening to the input I've received from those who are affected — and that would relate primarily to the situation in Calgary and in my constituency of St. Albert — is where there is a deputy chief who is responsible for a paramedic ambulance service, that I think is certainly the most progressive we have in the province. I certainly was very proud of the service we were able to implement in St. Albert. It was basically patterned after the Calgary system, and provided a system throughout the community that could be tied into an emergency number.

I was speaking to the vice-president of the Canadian association and trying to ascertain the feelings of the Calgary local of the union, whether Calgary wished to remove the two deputy chiefs, so there would only be one as the existing legislation states. The feeling I received was not that they would like any changes; that the changes in Calgary came about because of good will on both sides, and that it was a negotiation that was extremely successful, and they're very proud of their relationships and their structures.

So the conflict that exists in my mind — if we were not to try to resolve this or pass the legislation — whether it comes about at proclamation or in the spring, the problem is not going to go away. The concern then would be that we have an illegal situation in Calgary, which would mean that that would have to change. And I think we would be raising another problem. So I just don't see that we're going to be any further ahead by not passing it.

To respond to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, relating to comparing what happens in Toronto with one deputy fire chief: in my mind this is not a comparable situation. As I understand, the Toronto fire service is under the metro government, and there's a different line of responsibility to the affected municipalities. I don't think it's very fair to take a totally different management system and form of regional government, and try to compare it to the system we have within either Edmonton, Calgary, St. Albert, or the other affected municipalities in Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, I think my prime concern is that we could be losing flexibility in providing services. There's no doubt that the firemen provide one of the



most essential services in the community. There's simply no doubt about it. And in addition to this very essential service, the firemen as a group do an enormous amount of good. A situation where their morale would be reduced is extremely regrettable. There's no doubt about that. I would be very, very concerned about reducing morale.

But on the other hand, as legislators in this Assembly we have to be concerned about the provision of essential services and assisting the bodies responsible for the provision of those services. By losing the flexibility — if we maintained the system of only one fire chief, what happens to a system such as in Calgary where one deputy chief is responsible for paramedic service? Would this preclude any municipality hiring a deputy chief in the future who would be responsible for paramedic service, or would he only have to go up through the ranks without having had that background? I feel this would hamstring the provision of a co-ordinated service that seems to have worked so well in several of our communities.

In that way I find the input conflicting. I certainly did not get the impression that the Calgary system would like to change and remove the two deputy chiefs. Those are basically the comments I would try to add to this very emotional and very important debate, Mr. Chairman.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I want to make my remarks directly related to the amendment before us; that is, with regard to Section 3 coming into force on a date to be fixed by proclamation. To me, the arguments placed before us by the minister just supported the argument that we shouldn't go ahead with this amendment.

MR. NOTLEY: Exactly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: The minister has said to me — and I listened very carefully — that meetings have been established in January between the cities, other interested persons, the executive of the firefighters, and any other people they wish to bring along. And I'm sure others would be open to sit in on those meetings and discuss this long list of concerns. So really the minister has said to me that there's no need at this time to hold what I feel is a sort of axe-over-the-head amendment. If we go along with it in this Assembly, this amendment will place a cloud over those discussions in January. If the group there doesn't agree with what the minister has in mind, he can proclaim the amendment, and that's the end of the discussions. The free and open discussion would be terminated.

No question: if this were left in place it would have a terrific effect on how the discussion would take place. The people attempting to make representations, the executive of the firefighters, would have to be very careful how they treat the minister and how they make their presentations. If it gets emotional or they reach a deadlock, the amendment can be proclaimed. You can do that very, very easily under the amendment you're asking us to pass in this Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, I just can't see any need for that kind of amendment being passed at this time. I think the minister should withdraw it and say, look, I'm willing to go into those negotiations, reach agreements, come back in the spring, and make recommendations to this Assembly. We'll have harmony not only in this Legis-

lature but, I'm sure, between the firefighters of Alberta and the government of Alberta. I'd like to say there certainly is not good will between the firefighters of Alberta and this Conservative government at present. There are uneasy feelings.

The hon. Member for St. Albert talks about morale. I think this legislation has been a great cause of the loss of morale. The people from the various fire-fighting organizations feel they aren't being listened to; they can't get to the government; nobody cares about them. Once you start feeling like that at your local organization level, the morale continually disintegrates.

DR. BUCK: Seventy-one may be repeated.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I think the minister must recognize that. One of the biggest morale boosters at this time would be to say, look, I'm prepared to drop that amendment and negotiate, discuss, or whatever has to happen between now and next March, and come back with some good recommendations to this Legislative Assembly. I think that would be one of the best messages to the firefighters of Alberta at present. To take this sort of stone-wall, this hard position at present, certainly has done very little to build a good working relationship between the firefighters of Alberta and this Legislature. Mr. Chairman, I certainly hope the minister reconsiders the position he's taking at present.

The other concern I have is that conditions that seem to be emergent really don't seem to be that emergent. Conditions have existed since last March. Management and the working firefighters of Alberta have existed and worked in harmony since last March. I'm sure it can continue till next March. I think one of the things that could happen under the present situation is that the minister, who is open at most times, could talk to the cities, could talk to the Fire Fighters Association, and say, look, I am withdrawing that amendment; I want to have some open discussions; will you give me some verbal commitment that between now and the opening of the Legislature there are none of these emergency or fear situations the minister has related to us in this Assembly?

In my discussions with the Fire Fighters Association executive, I have found them very mature people who are willing to discuss the matter and attempt to come to some solution. They want to be trusted. But in talking to them today and during the last few days, there's no question in my mind that they feel the government of this province doesn't trust them, and that they are second-rated in their representations to the Legislature of Alberta.

I'd certainly urge that the minister reconsider the hard position he has taken with regard to this amendment. Through some common sense and a mature approach, I think agreement could be reached. By next March we could have harmony with regard to this situation, rather than the confrontation that exists at present and is only going to grow in magnitude over the next few months.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Clover Bar.

DR. BUCK: One of us and one of you. There are only five of us. You have to double-shift.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The minister probably wishes to respond.

MR. YOUNG: In that event, Mr. Chairman, I'd be happy to respond to some of the observations that have been made. First, the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry made some observations. I'd just like to assure him that a commitment has been made on the part of both the city administration in Edmonton and the president of Local 209 that some consultations would take place at a labor/management advisory level at the fire department level. So I would be quite optimistic that good progress is going to be made there. I think both parties wish to be able to develop a better relationship, and it's a matter of enabling them to do that. I trust and am sure they will bring to that effort their very best good will.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the concern of the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont about the role of the department, indeed there will be an effort to assist during the intervening period. It would be my wish that within the Edmonton scene at that level, the labor/management advisory efforts go on unabated and as speedily as possible, because there is a fair agenda to cover. I would hope that that will proceed, and I think it should be possible to proceed. It has proceeded in Calgary. There's a good relationship in Lethbridge; a good one in Red Deer; as far as I know, a good one in St. Albert; a good one in Sherwood Park; and a good one in Fort McMurray. I don't know why we can't have a good one in Edmonton. The parties will have to address that to themselves as well as to one another with the aid of our labor/management advisory services.

I want to make one observation about the need for this legislation, just in case some perspective is lost by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. We would not have needed this legislation had the relationship in Edmonton not been of the kind that challenged the legislation as it was then being interpreted. I think all hon. members ought to consider that. I'm not bringing in legislation to change a relationship which has evolved over time. I'm trying to respect, retain, build, and continue a very good relationship and a very good understanding which have been arrived at between the police associations and municipalities and between the firefighters and municipalities in all situations but Edmonton. If Edmonton needed an opportunity to achieve the relationship they so much talk about, and which we all wish they had, they had that opportunity and were happy — at least they seem to suggest they were happy — with the legislation as it then stood. The fact of the matter is that they challenged the legislation. I didn't do it. Hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, I'm simply trying to redress a situation which was brought on by a disagreement.

MR. NOTLEY: A disagreement?

MR. YOUNG: That's right. Brought on by a disagreement where one party was trying to have a go at another on a specific point which could be challenged, but which, in all other parts of the province, was respected, workable, and desirable. We now find that we're trying to amend the legislation to make sure that the courts read it the way the parties thought it was to be read up to now, save in the Edmonton situation under some stress. I'm simply trying to

bring back the situation that all parties thought existed until the court brought in a decision in March of this year. That's all.

I'm not proposing any massive, great upheaval of the situation but just trying to legitimize what the parties thought had existed when they were evolving their relationships, as they recognized the responsibilities and realities of the situation and the good will that ought to exist, both from the point of view of making a good situation in which firefighters could work, and of providing a good public service. At the bottom line, hon. members, it's as simple as that.

With respect to weakening of the bargaining unit — there's been a suggestion from the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview that the bargaining unit will be weakened. I ask all hon. members: how naive an argument can that be, to believe that so many deputy chiefs will be appointed that the bargaining unit will be destroyed? How long do you think the citizens of Edmonton or Calgary would stand for the appointment of so many deputy chiefs that there wouldn't be any firefighters left? They'd all be deputy chiefs. What a ridiculous suggestion. [interjections]

I'll give you the opportunity right now, hon. member.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter the debate.

Several things have bothered me since we brought this Bill before the Legislature. The first thing I would like to say to the hon. members of the government, Mr. Chairman, is that in the discussion this afternoon no one has convinced me why this Bill should proceed at this time.

If there's anything I've learned in my brief experience in this Legislature and in the four years that I sat on the government side — I'm saying this to the rookie members on the government back benches — when a minister says, I'm just bringing in a small amendment, that's the one to watch for. The hon. Minister of Environment brought a small amendment to this Legislature when we were looking at The Environment Conservation Act. All the minister said is, I'm just changing one word, from "may" to "shall". All of a sudden we destroyed the Environment Conservation Authority with that small, subtle change, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NOTLEY: Just a wee one. Just a touch.

DR. BUCK: Just a small, wee word. I would like to say to the hon. minister that this small change is really what this discussion is all about this afternoon. That small change is not a small change. It is going to affect very drastically what is going to happen between the firemen and the city of Edmonton, and their other employers. I'd like to say again that it is not an insignificant change.

I'd like to touch upon several areas. I would like to make a comment on the point that the Member for Edmonton Glengarry brought before us this afternoon. The member said we have to use a two-by-four to get their attention. Mr. Chairman, I believe this amendment is the two-by-four that is going to be used. If this legislation proceeds when the discussions are going on . . .

MR. R. CLARK: In January.

DR. BUCK: . . . in January of the coming year . . . .

MR. NOTLEY: It's a blackjack.

DR. BUCK: . . . that will be hanging over the negotiations and discussions. How can we have unbiased, fruitful, open discussions with that hanging over the heads of the negotiators?

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for St. Albert mentioned that we have to worry about morale, and that's true. It's time this government realizes — and I've made this speech many times — who it's answerable to, and that is the people. That's who we're here to serve. I'm sure that many Tory backbenchers have not been informed by the minister what this legislation is really going to do. Either they haven't been informed, or they're not listening to what the firefighters in their constituencies tell them. I would like to say to the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry, go back and do another survey. I'm sure the firefighters in those constituencies will be telling that member the same thing they're telling us and trying to tell the minister: hold it; don't get in such a big hurry.

But this government has a history of not listening. It didn't listen to the thousands of people from the Alberta Fish & Game Association and allied groups, who tried to tell this government, don't destroy the Environment Conservation Authority. They didn't listen to the university students. They didn't listen to the farmers. That's what happens when you've got too large a membership on one side and practically nobody on the other side.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to comment on the point the minister made about why the firemen were not allowed into their own building, not the government's building.

MR. R. SPEAKER: They were kept out on the steps.

DR. BUCK: The government seems to try to indicate to the people that this is King Peter's building; it's not the people's building. I get very upset when people who own this building, the taxpayers of this province, are not allowed to come into this Legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. BUCK: I looked up in that gallery and practically no one was there. Somebody at that front desk had better explain that to me. I accepted in all good faith from the person responsible for the security of this building that limited seats were available in the gallery. I said, sir, I respect the problems you have as far as security in this building goes. So if I'm allowed only 20 seats, I believe that. Then I looked up there, and the gallery was practically vacant. Now I would like to say to the minister responsible that some heads had better roll. Somebody didn't give me, as a member of this Assembly, the information as to how many guests I could have in that gallery. So, to the minister and whoever is responsible, that had better be rectified.

On the question of how many meetings we've had before the Bill was brought in, the minister has said we've had nine or 10, and the minister has said we've had about three or four. How many meetings has the

minister had with the Fire Fighters Association? The minister seems to feel that just Local 209 is causing the problems. The eight unions in this province have voted unanimously that they do not want this Bill brought through or proclaimed. That seems to be pretty unanimous. Not just this one group is grieving. Mr. Chairman, the minister has not convinced us, and I cannot see how the minister has convinced this Assembly to go ahead with this.

The last point I would like to make is that there is not any immediacy for this legislation. Nobody has convinced me of that. We in this Assembly seem to have become so inflated with our own self-importance that we seem to think that unless it's done now, the whole system's going to fall apart. It doesn't work that way.

Calgary has made negotiations; it is working fine. The firefighters are still at their stations, and I have great confidence they will stay at those stations. They are a responsible group of people in this province and in this city. Because the minister has not convinced us, we are asking why this has to proceed now. We are beseeching the minister to hold the legislation and have meaningful hearings with the two sides. Then, if that meaningful discussion has been held, the minister can be sure we will support this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [applause]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order in the gallery. You are not permitted to applaud.

DR. BUCK: As a matter of fact, you're hardly permitted to be in here.

MR. COOK: Mr. Chairman, on a point of personal privilege, the Member for Clover Bar has made a lot of accusations and insinuations. I'm just amazed and appalled at the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's no such thing as personal privilege on a question within this type of debate.

MR. COOK: On a point of order, I just wish the hon. member would be more responsible in his remarks.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Chairman, can I just ask the hon. member a question? Perhaps the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry would like to retract his statement on using the two-by-four, if that is what was bothering the member. I was just using his own words.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I suspect the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry will have occasion to recall that statement of the two-by-four for some time, particularly in the next election campaign.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with several questions that have been raised. [interjection] I beg your pardon? It's something else? Ah, yes, fair enough. I won't try to metrify the subject.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with some points the minister raised. We had a sense of urgency conveyed not only by the minister but by a number of government members. I guess I'd have to be just a little like the person from Missouri, who says you have to show me, because we've had the same minister stand in the House when questions have been asked about the Human Rights Commission recommendations on automobile insurance, saying you know this is what

the law says, The Individual's Rights Protection Act. We have had a very complacent attitude from that minister that, well, we're trying to work it out. Notwithstanding what The Individual's Rights Protection Act says, notwithstanding what the Human Rights Commission says, we're going to try to work it out. No need for legislation. Don't rush. All sorts of time to negotiate, discuss, consult, what have you.

But you know, when it comes to the firefighters, all of a sudden we don't have this approach. We have to ram this legislation through as if there really was a fire that would be put out by this legislation. I suspect the firefighters will continue to do their first-rate job of putting out real fires, but there'll be a number of political fires set throughout much of this city if this government doesn't recognize the need to be patient, wait, and let the process of meaningful negotiations proceed.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in his last set of observations the minister was attempting to be sweet reason itself. A beautiful job. I would give the minister an Oscar for his performance. Unfortunately the bottom line of that whole process, the sweet reasonableness, was nevertheless a firm commitment to an unreasonable position. It is an unreasonable position to expect negotiations to proceed if the minister has legislation in his back pocket that he can proclaim anytime — the two-by-four, the blackjack, or whatever you want to call it.

From his sweet reasonableness the minister went on to raise this question that we're going to have all these people appointed deputy chiefs, and that's going to undermine the bargaining unit. How ridiculous, said the minister; what a ridiculous argument.

Let's stop, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, and ask ourselves why people join unions. They join unions to protect themselves, so they can bargain collectively, so they can develop a seniority system, so they can clarify pension rights, the whole process of advancement. When you pluck people out of the bargaining unit, and those people are in your top level, what do you do to the whole process of advancement in your system? Particularly, Mr. Minister — and you admitted this yourself in the debate — it's one thing to say, as they've done in Calgary, we will appoint deputy chiefs, but we're going to appoint deputy chiefs from men who have been on the force for five years. That's a result of mutual agreement. It's one thing to say that.

It's quite another to say, we'll just take somebody, leapfrog him over people who have been there a number of years, and put him in the position of deputy chief outside the bargaining unit. Mr. Minister, when you say that, you are inviting no end of ill will and trouble from the people in the bargaining unit. And rightly so, because what you're doing is acquiescing to a management strategy which seriously undermines the effectiveness of that bargaining unit. I don't care whether that bargaining unit is the Fire Fighters Association, CUPE, AUPE, or whatever it may be: if that's the bottom line of that management strategy, then you're going to be in for some real difficulty.

The minister said, I didn't really want to bring in this legislation; it was as a result of a court case. Somehow we have the suggestion that everything would have been all right if there hadn't been this awful court case. But why was there the court case? The court case took place, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman, because Local 209 felt that, unlike Calgary where there had been an agreement and an acceptable situation.

you had a management in this city that was not acting in concert with the men. That's why you had the problem, and that's why you had the court case.

The court case didn't occur just because Local 209 wanted something else to do, and wanted to spend their money hiring lawyers so there could be a court case. They don't have the kind of money that they would choose to do that. To sort of side-step the issue of why the court case took place and say, you know, it really wasn't my fault; shucks, I just have to rectify the whole situation because of this terrible court case, misses the point why the court case took place in the first place.

I would just say again, Mr. Chairman, that we come right back to the need for maintaining good morale in the force. Why rush? We've waited, and the minister has not answered to my satisfaction some principal questions that I think remain outstanding. Question number one, why was there not consultation with the firefighters before this legislation was drafted? That still has not been answered. Question number two, if it was so important to clarify the legal position of these other cities, why did we wait until the fall session rather than moving in the spring session? If we can wait for seven or eight months, is it so dangerous to wait another three or four months? Until that question is answered, Mr. Chairman, I don't believe members of this committee can, in good conscience, support either this amendment or the Bill presently before the House.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I believe there are some arsonists among us. I have a very serious concern that we're being drawn into the wrong issue. I'm satisfied with the minister's explanations of the reason for the thing. I'm pleased with the reasonableness he's shown with respect to delaying enactment and making the senior people in his department available to the two parties in their discussion.

But, Mr. Chairman, representing a constituency in the city of Edmonton where there is a serious labor problem that is going unresolved, I have a serious concern that we not debate that labor relations problem in this Assembly, but leave it properly to the two parties to that dispute or discussion. So I would suggest that we let the management/labor negotiations proceed in their proper form. I just want to say that I appreciate the minister's lengthy and, to me, satisfactory explanation of the scenario today.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, very briefly, because it's become somewhat repetitious — the questions have become repetitious. The opposition is functioning as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in the face of whatever sweet reason the hon. member has acknowledged there is in this situation, so I expect him to continue to do that if he wishes. I will try to give him opportunity shortly to do so again.

Let me just refer to a couple of points that I think I could develop a bit more for the usefulness of the Assembly. First, with firefighters we're dealing with a situation considerably different from the policemen's situation. In the case of police forces, there is an organization of the officers of the police force and an organization of the policemen themselves. So you have the situation: two organizations, plus the chief. In the case of firefighters we've arrived at a different system. The rationale, I am told, is the platoon system, where the supervisory persons go out on call with the fire-

fighting unit. So the union of firefighters encompasses all except the chief and the deputy chief.

Ordinarily, under The Alberta Labour Act, we would be determining, in relation to the bargaining unit, who functions in a confidential or management capacity; who functions in a capacity which can relate to the promotion of others and make decisions with respect to others, in a very highly placed situation. These people are then excluded from the bargaining unit. That was one alternative available to us in this situation. But the consultation I had with the firefighters suggested to me that was not a suitable alternative, so we didn't go that route. We went back to the situation, which I will outline very briefly again.

Under the legislation as it existed prior to the court case, parties in a number of situations — and I think we should use Calgary, as it's the best illustration relative to Edmonton in size — worked out a harmonious relationship whereby they recognized the reality of the numbers of firefighters involved and the need for a number of deputy chiefs. They worked out a system of mutual agreement as to the kinds of promotional steps, requirements, and criteria that would be observed. They did all that by mutual agreement.

That was not the case in Edmonton. Instead, there was a court challenge to the legislation. What in fact happened was that the court gave a very narrow interpretation of the legislation, which would have precluded the Calgary situation ever developing and which, if challenged now — according to the advice I have — would lead to a difficult situation. So all I'm trying to do with this legislation, hon. members, is bring the situation back to the way it was before the challenge in the city of Edmonton.

I have no illusions that that will remove the morale problem or the attitudinal difficulties which may exist in the city of Edmonton and, as I have tried to express to hon. members, I've tried to isolate the Edmonton relationships from this legislation. Because I think and I agree — and I'm glad to see the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview agrees with me — that the proper way to deal with those relationships is apart from this legislation. That is the proper way to deal with it, and that's what should have happened six years ago, five years ago, four years ago, three years ago, two, one, and today.

That's the way it should be dealt with, and I hope the parties come to realize that that relationship doesn't hinge on this legislation. It is and should be an independent relationship. Unfortunately, it has become royally confused with this legislation. I hear that we should let a situation in one municipality in Alberta determine the whole scheme and all the legislation that applies to the province of Alberta. Surely that doesn't make sense. My responsibility is to the whole province of Alberta, and I believe that's a viewpoint quite frequently taken by most hon. members in the Assembly.

So I come back again to the situation where we need this legislation in order to make realistic and to recognize the evolutionary system in terms of good labor/management relations and the good administrative structures which have evolved in other locations. We need the legislation to make that right.

At the request of the Alberta Fire Fighters Association, I have agreed ... And let me reiterate, I've had three meetings with that association. I've had many, many more with the president of Edmonton Local 209.

I'm not sure, I haven't added it all up, but I would suspect at least 12 hours of meetings. For those who question what kind of meetings: those were sit-down meetings, either in my office or in the IBM building, which is the location of the senior staff of the Department of Labour. We've had all that. Surely in that length of time, if an easy alternative resolution would have been available, it would have been found. It wasn't. Maybe it will be, and I'm prepared to listen to any alternatives which can be advanced, as long as we get on about doing it. And that is the proposal for the meeting in January, which would look not only at that concern but also some others.

Mr. Chairman, I say again that we need this legislation to right the situation with the police, to give me the ability to act, in case there is someone, we know not where, who would make a challenge on the good relationships that do exist. But it is not my intention to do so until we've had every possible avenue explored to make this legislation conform with the best views that can be advanced. It's not going to be an easy challenge, but it's a challenge I'm prepared to look at, as I know the firefighters have agreed to do.

As for the relationship between me and the Fire Fighters Association — I believe the hon. Member for Clover Bar raised that matter — I'd just like to say that we had quite a good discussion at our last meeting. We recognized we were a distance apart on the preferences that were being identified. But I can assure the hon. member that we shook hands at the conclusion of the meeting, we agreed there would be further meetings, as I've indicated, and I promptly followed through with the letter I promised to send them containing the commitments I have already outlined to the Assembly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, could I raise just two questions with the minister? One, the minister has placed emphasis on the fact that Local 209 or the Edmonton situation seems to be the concern at the present time, the area where the most agitation or problem is. I wonder how the minister would reflect on that. I understand that the eight locals across the province have written a letter or communicated to the minister information that they do support the idea of withholding this particular amendment, that they don't support this amendment at this time, and are asking the minister to withdraw the amendment. In that sense, I see the problem as larger than just Edmonton and I'd like the minister to comment there.

Secondly, has the minister considered talking to the cities of Edmonton and Calgary and the other six areas with regard to a hold position until these January discussions are completed, until the opening of the spring Legislature? It would be a gentleman's agreement, an agreement of trust. But if that approach was taken to this problem, it could enhance not only the government's position, but certainly the relationship between the government and the firefighters. Has the minister considered that alternative, taken any steps in that area, and if not, does the minister see some problems in possibly considering that between now and the next session of discussion?

MR. YOUNG: I've considered quite a number of alternatives. The bottom line in all of the alternatives, I guess, is that we in fact had a court case. The parties are that far apart in the one situation that it's produced

that kind of development. Had we not had a court case, we wouldn't have the legislation. We wouldn't have had any problems from a legislative point of view. That simple. I might add that one judge found that the legislation as it existed should have been interpreted the way the parties were interpreting it; another judge found that it should be interpreted narrowly.

I would say to the Assembly as I have indicated to the firefighters: there are all kinds of opportunities for local agreements providing the legislation is permissive. But they can't have agreements which try to get around or by-pass legislation. Unfortunately that is the situation as it now stands, and that is why I'm afraid the onus is upon us to amend the legislation. It's not possible and it shouldn't be possible for parties to make agreements to the effect that the legislation shall be ignored.

MR. NOTLEY: I wonder if I could ask a couple of questions too. The minister indicated that he wasn't able to contact the Alberta Fire Fighters Association because the president was away. What consultation took place with the municipalities, and which levels of local government did the minister meet with, if any, before the legislation was drafted?

MR. YOUNG: There was, and has only been, one meeting. However, and more significantly, there have been some legal opinions, which finally caused me to blink and recognize we had a problem. It was some legal opinions that were beginning to come to my attention from both outside and inside of government as to the very difficult position being imposed upon the police and fire departments.

Mr. Chairman, it appears that this Bill has been seen as giving in to one of two adversaries. That's unfortunate, because that is not the situation. It was a legal situation that caused me to act. It was not pressure from the municipality as such. It was the legal opinion of persons inside and outside of government who recognised that we had an unacceptable situation to leave stand as it is. I had but one meeting, and I have had two telephone conversations with municipal authorities subsequently, when I have been explaining the fact that I did not intend to proceed to proclaim this legislation immediately, and the conditions under which I would withhold proclamation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to follow that along if I may. The minister indicated he'd had but one meeting. Was that one meeting before the legislation was introduced in the House, and with whom did the minister have that one meeting?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, that one meeting involved representatives of the city of Edmonton. It was a very brief meeting. I subsequently had a very long meeting with the president of Local 209 before this legislation was introduced. Very long.

MR. NOTLEY: Just so I am clear. The meeting with the city of Edmonton took place before the legislation was drafted?

MR. YOUNG: Both meetings did.

MR. KNAAK: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a comment on this. I think we're going

somewhat down the wrong path. In this particular situation, The Interpretation Act was interpreted by a court differently from the way the government expected it to be done, and in fact the legislation ceased to be what was intended. Because of that, this piece of legislation is introduced. It's a piece of legislation that the government is not enthusiastic about introducing. It's what you might call a very difficult piece of legislation, a no win.

However, the position of a governing party — the government must govern, and to that extent even very difficult pieces of legislation have to be passed. I should also say that in this case the minister, unlike what the Member for Clover Bar suspected, has the full support of caucus after full discussion on this matter. Notwithstanding that it is in some respect unpopular, it's necessary, and postponing the final decision only makes it difficult. It seems to me that if you want to be responsible to those who have elected you, and it's your job to govern, that governing process may be done. As the minister has indicated, if in fact new information comes to light, the proclamation does not have to take place and there is a chance for further amendment.

Thank you.

MR. CRAWFORD: I move the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration, and reports, the following Bills: 38, 39, 42, and 43.

Mr. Speaker, the committee also reports progress on Bill No. 44.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it is proposed that the House sit tomorrow evening. At that time we would be dealing with second readings of Bills. Because of the fact that we have routinely passed over second reading of some Bills until the present time, I thought I might mention that Bills 30 and 31 would be considered for second reading along with others on the Order Paper tomorrow evening.

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

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the hon. House Leader indicate that there will not be a sitting next Monday, in honor of Remembrance Day?

MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. If that requires any special reference, that is the situation. I believe that Monday is a holiday, and therefore the House wouldn't sit.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:28, pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

