

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Wednesday, March 26, 1980 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 4****The Department of Government Services
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 4, The Department of Government Services Amendment Act, 1980. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of the Bill, recommends the same to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the simple principle of this Bill is to increase the advance account of the Department of Government Services from \$45 million to \$60 million. The advance account is the account in which we purchase equipment, services, and supplies for government.

[Leave granted; Bill 4 read a first time]

Bill 12**The University of Alberta Hospital
Amendment Act, 1980**

MR. MACK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 12, The University of Alberta Hospital Amendment Act, 1980. The purpose of this Bill is to recognize the Walter C. MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre and to expand the powers of the Alberta University Hospital board to enable it to operate the centre.

[Leave granted; Bill 12 read a first time.]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 12, The University of Alberta Hospital Amendment Act, 1980, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill 215**The Home Energy Conservation Act**

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 215, The Home Energy Conservation Act.

The Bill provides for a system of grants and loans to Albertans who make their homes more energy efficient. The program has three main features. It would encourage utilities companies to provide home-owners with energy audits of their dwellings. Secondly, where improvements can be shown to be cost effective, a written cost estimate would be provided to the consumer by that auditor. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the home-owner could apply for

grants and loans to a maximum of \$2,500 to effect those changes.

[Leave granted; Bill 215 read a first time]

Bill 204**An Act to Amend
The Highway Traffic Act, 1975**

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 204, An Act to Amend The Highway Traffic Act, 1975.

This Bill is designed to reduce accidents and deaths among young Albertans. The Act requires that each individual under the age of 18 travelling in a motor vehicle wear a seat belt or be held by a child-restraint device. Bill 204 further prescribes the penalty for drivers under that age or with young passengers who are not complying with the provisions of the legislation.

[Leave granted; Bill 204 read a first time]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, some 27 grade 6 students from Westglen school, located in the constituency of Edmonton Kingsway. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Armin Wilcer and Betty-Ann Hennessey, a student teacher. With the hon. Minister of Tourism and Small Business, we had the privilege to meet with the students over the lunch period. They asked some very prying and excellent questions, and I compliment them for that. Of course, I have a special interest in the students, Mr. Speaker, because they are constituents of Edmonton Kingsway. The hon. minister has an extra-special interest because he has a niece named Linda Johnson in that class.

I welcome them to the Assembly. They're in the members gallery. I'd like them to rise now and receive the recognition of the House.

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, today I have great pleasure again in presenting to you and to the members of the Assembly students from the St. Alphonsus Catholic school, located in the constituency of Edmonton Norwood. They are grades 6 and 7 students; I believe 10 in number. They are accompanied by Mrs. Elizabeth Owerko. They are in the members gallery. I'd like them to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a group of Girl Guides of Canada who are in the public gallery this afternoon. They are accompanied by their leader Doreen Walker. I believe the group numbers seven. I'd ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to the Assembly a group of students from the Scott Robertson school in Edmonton Glengarry. There are 50 students from grades 5 and 6. They are accompanied by three teachers: Mrs. Korz, Mr. Romaniuk, and Miss McTeer. They are here to see the Legislature in action, Mr. Speaker. They were privileged this afternoon to have the opportunity to speak with both the hon. Member for

Spirit River-Fairview and me. We discussed the process of government and the purpose of the Legislature.

I'd like the Assembly to give them a very warm welcome, and I hope they have an enjoyable visit with us.

MR. D. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, one year ago those of us in the Assembly faced an electoral process which allowed us to be here. I'm honored today to be able to introduce to you and to the members of the Legislature two individuals who have just gone through that process at Mount Royal College in my constituency. They are the newly elected president of Mount Royal College, Chris Frazer, and the external vice-president, Dale Herrington. I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Department of Agriculture

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, today it is my privilege to advise hon. members of the details of a new program to assist beginning farmers in the province of Alberta. Today's announcement stems from a review of loan programs administered by the Agricultural Development Corporation.

The future of agriculture in Alberta relies on the recruitment of young farmers into the industry. In recognition of the difficulties confronting a starter farmer, such as rising land values and escalated interest rates, a modified beginning farmer loan program will be instituted by this government.

Commencing April 1, 1980, the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation will withdraw the last-resort lending provision for the beginning farmer loan program. In addition, the program will be modified to consider the applicant as an individual. The financial status of the parent or the guardian will no longer be considered in the application.

The main criteria of the new program are as follows:

- once-in-a-lifetime loan to establish a workable farm package,
- the maximum loan amount of \$200,000 with an upper limit of \$300,000 on the loan plus the assets,
- a preferred interest rate of 12 per cent for a term of the loan, with a 6 per cent earned interest rebate for the first five years,
- adequate experience and repayment ability on the part of the applicant.

Mr. Speaker, this new beginning farmer program represents the government's continuing commitment to agriculture in Alberta. Funding will be sourced from the Alberta investment division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It is anticipated that the new program will provide upwards of \$75 million in low-interest loans to young farmers.

In addition to the new beginning farmer program, modifications have been made to the Agricultural Development Corporation direct loans program. These loans are designed to provide financing on a preferred interest basis to those individuals presently engaged in farming.

The corporation will continue as a lender of last resort in an effort to develop and maintain viable farm units.

The direct loan program will provide assistance to primary producers with long-term loans at a preferred interest rate of 12 per cent, with an annual interest rebate of 3 per cent for a five-year period.

To those farmers who do not qualify for direct loans, an expanded direct farm package will provide special assistance at a preferred interest rate of 12 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception in 1972 the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation has provided financial assistance to establish and maintain family farms in Alberta. These special loan programs I have outlined today are designed to assist farmers according to the stated objectives of the corporation. Fulfilling these objectives will strengthen the future of agriculture in this province and play a significant role in developing this most important renewable resource.

In summation, Mr. Speaker, beginning farmers will have the availability of 6 per cent money for a period of five years, to allow these individuals to get their feet firmly planted — an agricultural statement which is understanding of responsibility and indeed stability. Direct financing will be available to the established farmer at 9 per cent for five years, while for others there will be the availability of loans at a preferred interest rate of 12 per cent.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, representing the official opposition I wish to compliment the minister on the new initiatives. I am pleased to see that the government is finally listening to the fact that ... [interjections] Laugh, if you wish.

MR. NOTLEY: The heritage trust fund committee recommended it.

DR. BUCK: The Department of Agriculture is listening to some of representations that have been made to it: the withdrawal of the lender of last resort has been resolved and the new farmer does not have to be tied to his parents' net worth.

But, Mr. Speaker, it really does disturb me that the problem of lenders who are already in dire economic straits is missing from this announcement. While I compliment the government on the new initiatives, I would like to say to the minister that it's time he found out what is happening in the other areas of the agricultural sector. At that time we'll be more enthusiastic in our applause.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hog Marketing

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, now that the Minister of Agriculture has made his announcement, I would like to address one or two questions to him that may not be quite so pleasant. Can the minister indicate what direct representation he has received by letter, delegations, or telephone from pork producers in the province as to the problem of the Pork Producers' Marketing Board?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, representation made to the office on behalf of producers by individual producers, individual conversations with individual producers, questioning the withholding of hogs, if that is the intent of the question — I didn't keep track of the names nor do I have them at my fingertips. Indeed, consultation on both sides ...

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In light of the fact that representation has been made — and I will give a letter to the minister from

the group of pork producers in Medicine Hat. The minister may be interested. He may have it, he may not. In light of the fact that there are meetings throughout the province as to the problem pork producers are experiencing, can the minister indicate if he will now reconsider putting a stop-loss program in place immediately? Since yesterday, has the minister made a decision to implement such a program?

MR. SCHMIDT: No, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if, since yesterday, he has had an opportunity to communicate with his federal counterpart as to the implementation of such a program?

MR. SCHMIDT: No, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to give the minister a copy of the letter the official opposition has sent to his counterpart, to see if we can possibly get the minister to move.

Can the minister indicate whether, in the discussions that he has had with pork producers throughout the province in the last 24 hours, he has given any consideration to reinstating the powers of the hog marketing board?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, other than the implementation in the future, based for April 11, for a modified system of marketing, I'm not aware that the authority of the hog marketing board has been changed.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to clarify the situation, is the minister considering withdrawing that proposal before it becomes effective on April 11?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I think I answered the question on Monday and Tuesday, that the statement that has been made by the hon. member is a directive on behalf of the Marketing Council. The intent of the Marketing Council, as stated by both the council and me, is that if the documentation exceeds the intent — in other words, to provide an interim marketing system — then perhaps on the meeting of the lawyers representing both sides a rewritten document stating the original intent be done.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In light of the three studies that the Department of Agriculture has initiated — the Harries report, the Fredeen report, and the Foodwest report — and the fact that these three reports have been rather recent, can the minister indicate what he is trying to find out with the Foster committee's proposed report? Specifically, what areas would he like this committee to report on?

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member asking that the minister restate the already published purposes of the Foster commission?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I am asking the hon. minister what additional information he is trying to ascertain, other than the information he already has in the three reports.

MR. SPEAKER: As I understand it, the question was to find out what the purposes were which the minister had in mind insofar as the Foster commission is concerned. If that's what the hon. member is asking, then as far as I know those purposes are public. If he wants to know if there are any purposes in addition to those, I don't know whether that question would have any point.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, that is the question I asked. In light of the fact that many of the recommendations have not been acted upon, can the minister indicate specifically what further information he wants from the Foster committee?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would look at the press releases that establish the committee and the area of review, he would find out the information that is required. The intent of the review board is to come up with a solution or a recommendation for an orderly system of marketing.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly if it is the government's intention that the review board will in any way, shape, or form will examine the evidence compiled by the Pork Producers' Marketing Board with respect to alleged collusion in the market place? Will that be examined, either officially or unofficially, by the review board? I raise that, Mr. Speaker, in light of reported statements by the chairman of that board.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the opportunity for the review board to receive submissions after the submissions that would be received throughout the province from producers provides the availability if the hog board wishes to make a presentation to that board. I would suggest that it was their intent to make that type of presentation. The opportunity is there.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister so there is no misunderstanding. It will not be the intention of the government or the board which is now reviewing this matter to request this information of the Pork Producers' Marketing Board. It will be totally up to the board, then, whether they wish to produce information for the board with respect to the alleged buying collusion?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, it would be the prerogative of the hog marketing board to provide whatever information they saw fit to the review for the purposes of presenting their case on behalf of producers to establish an open and orderly marketing system.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to advise the House today whether the department or the minister has yet had an opportunity to define the time span for this modified marketing system? Will it be coterminous with the time span of the Foster review, or is there some other intention with respect to the time the government feels is required for this new system to be in effect?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the modified system would go into effect on April 11, and it would certainly be with consultation with the two parties involved: the

producers, through their producers board, and the packers. As for any recommendations for a change in the system, or if it were felt that the modified system had some problems, some modifications to the modified system, but only in total consultation with both the producer, through its board, and the packer.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister. Can the minister indicate how many meetings the Foster committee has already had?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Foster committee will start the open meetings throughout the province. I haven't seen the date of the first meeting as established by the committee, but left that to the committee. I have no knowledge, but would certainly be able to check and keep the hon. member apprised of the first meeting.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, with great regret I have to say that the minister doesn't seem to realize . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: The minister doesn't seem . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If the hon. member has not a question, would he kindly resume his seat.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, just on that point, on the point of order. We seem to model ourselves after the House of Commons in London and the House of Commons in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say at this time, with great regret, that when watching the performance of those two houses I have seen much, much latitude in what the Leader of the Opposition can say before he poses his question. If we are following the precedent of those two houses, I challenge you, sir, to the fact that we must have more latitude when we are prefacing our questions. I think the leaders of the opposition or the leaders of major parties should be able to follow the precedents of the House of Commons and the House of Commons in London.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to respond to the observations made by the Acting Leader of the Opposition, having had some familiarity with having sat in the position of Leader of the Opposition in this Legislature under a Social Credit administration for the period of '67 to '71. I wasn't acting at that time; I was in the position of being Leader of the Opposition. I would like to make the point to you, Mr. Speaker, that I believe [interjection] . . . I'd like to have my opportunity to speak.

I believe that the people of this province have always felt very highly that we have in this Legislative Assembly an approach towards the parliamentary system that has been well accepted. That was true during the era of the Social Credit administration, in which we were involved over a number of years, and certainly was true in my experience when I was Leader of the Opposition. We follow what I believe is the proper approach, and certainly one that has been well received by the citizens of this province.

I think what's important, Mr. Speaker, is there is a tradition in this Legislative Assembly. When I was Leader of the Opposition, with a small group of six members, I met and accepted the provisions, the traditions, and the

approach to parliamentary democracy that I have seen reflected in this Chamber over the period that I have been privileged both to observe and to serve in it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order. During the time the hon. Premier recalls, I was not in the Assembly but had the opportunity to watch the hon. Premier from the gallery. I must confess that I admired the skill and persistence of those six members in opposition.

But I would say to you, sir, that those six members in opposition between 1967 and 1971 frequently flew against the wind and pushed the boundaries of *Beauchesne* as far as they could be pushed within the latitude of any reasonable discretion at all. I think most members of the press and most Albertans who viewed those four years were, quite frankly, impressed.

Mr. Speaker, the issue we have to face today is what kind of latitude should exist in the Oral Question Period. The hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition is perfectly correct that when one watches the mother House of Parliament in London there is more latitude in terms of the kind of things that are said in posing questions to cabinet ministers. The same goes without saying when one looks at other legislatures in this country, most particularly when one views the actions of members in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had occasion to rise on a point of order, because I felt that if the question of invitation to debate was relevant in relation to posing a question, the issue is equally relevant in answering a question. At this time I think it's important that we review — and perhaps the way to do that would be for house leaders to get together with you, sir, over the next several days.

But frankly I would express a public preference that the approach adopted in the House of Commons, where *Beauchesne* is not strictly enforced, where there is more latitude on both sides, would permit a better venting of public issues in the Legislative Assembly. I realize, sir, that that is somewhat inconsistent with the traditions of this Assembly over the years, in particular the last eight or nine years. This is not said in any criticism of you as Speaker. It is a difficult task to be Speaker, particularly in a House where the numbers are as represented in this particular Legislature.

But I would say, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of our Legislature fulfilling what the people of the province expect of us, it might well be time to take a close look at whether or not *Beauchesne* should be modified and that the rules applied during this legislative session be somewhat more comparable with other legislatures and the Parliament of Canada.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege because I wish to respond to the observations made by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. The observation made was that during the period of '67-71, when we were in opposition, our approach was one of straining *Beauchesne*. In order to clarify that matter, Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that our approach was to respect the traditions of this Legislative Assembly . . .

DR. BUCK: Did you listen to Horner?

MR. LOUGHEED: . . . and we presented ourselves in that way. Yes, we did. We were effective in opposition, Mr. Speaker, but in an entirely different way because we

had the penetrating questions [interjections], we had the positive and alternative positions to be presented, and not the negative thinking we get from this opposition.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, if I may . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I am somewhat concerned about the discussion that has taken place, relative to the time which will be left for the remainder of the question period. I would be quite glad to accept the suggestion of the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview to discuss the matter with the leaders of the Assembly. It would seem to me that a basic principle is quite often disregarded — and, rather surprisingly, disregarded by persons who might be expected to know — and that is that the question period is not intended for debate. Consequently, any debate during the question period is irregular. It's simply a basic elementary question of fairness. If any hon. members, because they happen to have been recognized for a question, have the right to engage in debate, lengthy or brief, then surely we ought to have a debate and follow the ordinary rules of debate, and all other members who wish to enter the debate should be able to do it. But that will be the end of the question period.

I question very much whether it would be a profitable avenue of research for this Assembly, a committee of this Assembly, or me to find out whether we should go a little farther in the direction of irregularity in order to provide more entertainment or for whatever other purpose. I don't see that we should be comparing the degree of irregularity in this Assembly with the degree of irregularity which there might be in other parliaments, and then complain because ours isn't sufficient. I would have great difficulty with that concept. So long as I occupy this Chair, it would not be my purpose to enter into a contest with other parliaments or other Speakers in a competition of that kind.

head: POINT OF ORDER

MR. SPEAKER: While I'm on my feet, the hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition was rather quicker than I was at the beginning of the question period, because I had intended to make a statement with regard to a point of order which was raised yesterday.

In yesterday's question period, the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview raised a point of order in regard to remarks included in a reply by the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I have reviewed that part of yesterday's question period as it is reported in the Hansard Blues. It appears that I reacted too severely to the intervention by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview.

It is also apparent that the Chair did not give enough consideration to part of the reply by the hon. minister. This refers to that part of the answer where there was gratuitous reference to the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview having made certain statements to the media. The minister's remarks in that regard were very courteous. However, the rule with regard to dragging press reports into the question period applies equally to members who are not ministers and members who are.

I also find, on reviewing the text, that there was nothing really objectionable in the questioning by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, which preceded the raising of the point of order.

Day Care Licensing

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. My question concerns recent intervention by the minister's office to prevent a higher appeal under The Social Care Facilities Licensing Act for parties in the Sunshine Day Care licence dispute. Can the minister indicate why he insisted, through his executive assistant, that findings of the initial appeal board would be final? Why was that directive sent out?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, in The Social Care Facilities Licensing Act there is ample provision for any citizen to approach the minister and ask that an appeal committee be struck to review the decision made by the licensing officials. I used my prerogative as minister to appoint such a committee. It came to my attention, through the chairman of the committee, that there was some concern by members of the committee as to whether their decision would be final. I indicated to the chairman, through my executive assistant, that barring any unforeseen recommendations which would be contrary to government policy and practices, the recommendations made by the citizens appeal committee would, in fact, be upheld. That was my decision; that decision stands.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In light of the fact that the Act specifies that a higher appeal to the Supreme Court can be made, can the minister indicate how he justifies contravening his own Act?

MR. SPEAKER: Hopefully there would be a better way to seek information than to imply that the minister is guilty of a breach of the law. If he is, this is not the place to deal with it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate why the normal appeal route was not followed in this case?

MR. BOGLE: It may be, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Acting Leader of the Official Opposition should take the same basic course in government that the director of The Social Care Facilities Licensing Act is.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure glad I'm not taking the same tack that the minister is taking in many of his approaches.

In light of the fact that the directive came from the minister, through his executive assistant, and that this case was being appealed and reviewed, can the minister indicate what effect that had upon the decision-making process the appeal board made?

MR. BOGLE: I will be very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to file three copies: the ministerial order appointing the committee, outlining its terms of reference, and the response from the appeal committee.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister indicate if he or his department is giving consideration to amending the Act as it now stands to permit the minister to do what he has really already done?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, one thing should be clear; that is, the policy directives of the department come from

the head of the department, and that is the minister. Any official who feels he is in any way compromised or finds difficulty accepting those policy directives by the minister has a career decision to make.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Government House Leader. Has the government given any consideration to amendments to various Acts with respect to the question of statutory obligations. The minister is referring to Section 9(8) of the licensing Act, which would replace the obligation on a particular public servant with the words "the minister may", as a general approach, as opposed to the question of "a public servant may", and then we get into the question of who is ordering whom to do what.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I haven't reviewed either the issue at large or the specific matters referred to in the section quoted in detail today by the hon. member. However, my quick reaction would be that with respect to legislation any occasion upon which it can be made more clear that there are not institutionalized and statutory decision-making powers beyond the review of elected people, they should be clarified in that way.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister on a point of clarification. Can the minister indicate if this is just an isolated case? Or will it be accepted procedure that the minister will intervene at any time when an appeal could go to a higher court but was not allowed to?

MR. BOGLE: To be clear, Mr. Speaker, a number of mechanisms within the various Acts which I am ultimately responsible for allow for an appeal committee or an appeal process, so that the citizen has an opportunity to take his or her case before a group of his or her peers. That is a well-established practice. We have appeal committees in many areas. It is and will continue to be my practice to follow the advice of the appeal committees, unless there are some very extenuating circumstances. That was made clear to the chairman of the appeal committee in this particular case.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. Has the government of Alberta, through the minister's department, reviewed the question of personnel morale in light of the ambiguity contained in certain clauses where statutory authority is given to a public servant as opposed to changing it to read "the minister"? Has the minister's department had an opportunity to review this question?

MR. STEVENS: No, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister of social development. Can the minister indicate what consideration was given to the minority member on the appeal committee? Can the minister indicate what that appeal was?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the written recommendations of the appeal committee were submitted to my office. It came to my attention that only two of the three members appointed had in fact signed the recommenda-

tions, and that will be noted in the copies I have tabled. I asked my office staff to arrange a meeting with the chairman so that I could get some explanation. I was satisfied with the explanation given on that particular point.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I must ask just one short question for clarification. The minister is indicating that this mechanism of allowing the appeal to go to the Supreme Court will not be jeopardized. I think that is a very, very important point, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister assure this Assembly that that appeal mechanism will not be jeopardized by the minister's decision?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, if hon. members who are quoting a section of the Act would look at the entire section, they will see that there is a mechanism for the director, in the name of the department, or the person whose appeal is heard to appeal the matter to a superior court.

ADC Loans

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. I certainly want to commend him on the announcement today. In regard to that announcement, would young farmers who already have a loan and are in debt — can that be renegotiated under the new announcement?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in a very general way, the Agricultural Development Corporation has the capability of consolidating debt if the applicant fits within the criteria of consolidation.

MR. WOLSTENHOLME: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Then the criteria haven't changed. Do I understand that properly?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I suppose the criteria are met, first of all, if consolidation will bring the applicant, he or she, within a closer repayment capability. Because of rising interest rates, I suppose the number that would be eligible for consideration of consolidation would be greater than in the past.

Prisoner Release

DR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the hon. Solicitor General regarding accidental prisoner escapes, a very serious concern for all Albertans. I wonder if the minister will advise the House what his department is doing to prevent the so-called accidental release of prisoners. I am referring particularly to the recent accidental release of a Warren Fraser, now public information, at the adult detention centre. I would like to ask the minister further: does he in fact tolerate such accidental releases?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, first of all might I say how concerned I am when there are such incidents. I can appreciate the concern not only of the member but of the citizens of this province when such events occur.

In this particular case, the incident involving Warren Fraser, he was arrested on March 21 at 9:30 in the morning. He appeared in court on March 24 and was on the 9:30 docket. As a result of his appearance before the court at that time, he was released on his own recogni-

zance. As a result of that release, the person in question was therefore released by the detention centre at 1:35 in the afternoon of March 24. At that particular point it appeared to be a normal release of an inmate on his own recognizance by the court.

As a result of some information attached to the documentation, it was felt that a further check should be made, as there was some indication that there might be an outstanding warrant for this particular individual at Wetaskiwin. Upon noticing that there was this outstanding warrant, the correction officers involved were concerned that perhaps they had released him when it was improper to do so. The following day a check was made by a senior officer of the Department of the Solicitor General. It was discovered that while there was a warrant, the warrant had not been signed. Therefore, for all intents and purposes the inmate was in fact properly released.

Edmonton Remand Centre

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would advise the House whether he received recently a copy of a letter from the city editor of *The Edmonton Sun* containing serious allegations respecting the Edmonton Remand Centre?

MR. HARLE: Yes, I have, Mr. Speaker. The matter has been referred to the Ombudsman.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would advise the House what those allegations were.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, the allegations involve beatings and assaults on inmates. That matter will be investigated by the Ombudsman.

Mobile Home Sales

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It relates to the plight of mobile-home owners in Alberta and, more specifically, the practice in the city of Calgary where some park managers require that mobile-home owners wishing to sell their homes list through a company which the mobile-home management has specifically set up for that purpose and which charges a very large fee on sale. Could the minister please advise the House what steps he has taken or intends to take to prohibit this practice, which is allowed under the existing Landlord and Tenant Act?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I believe the practice the hon. member refers to was considered by the Institute of Law Research and Reform in the draft Bill which they suggested might be implemented by this Legislature relative to the needs of mobile-home tenants. If memory serves me correctly, they did not address that matter in their report. However, I stand to be corrected on that.

The whole area of mobile-home parks is interesting, not only from the point of view of the needs of the tenants and the owners but also with respect to approaches taken in certain areas of the province by municipalities in limiting the number of these available and, in the hon. member's constituency I believe, in terms of the possible closure of a very large mobile-home park.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: For the benefit of the minister, Section 13(7) of the model Bill would specifically prohibit

that practice.

I would ask the minister as a supplementary whether he intends to introduce as government legislation the model Bill which the institute proposed a number of years earlier.

MR. KOZIAK: First of all, I'd like to thank the hon. member for refreshing my memory. With that, he's also refreshed my memory with respect to a series of questions and answers that took place in this Assembly last fall, I believe, when the hon. member posed a similar question.

At that time, with the then recent passage of The Landlord and Tenant Act, 1979, which covered not only the tenancies we normally think of but the tenancies involved in mobile-home parks, I indicated I felt we had better look at the experience we gained from the application and administration of that Act before considering a separate Act for different classes of tenants. I'm sure that that response, which I make today equally as strongly as I made it last fall, won't prevent the hon. member from considering the introduction of a private member's Bill which would bring to this Legislature a discussion of the model Bill proposed by the Institute of Law Research and Reform.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works on the same subject. Could the minister advise whether he has given consideration to expanding the present rural mobile-home program to permit the government to purchase used mobile homes as required, to try to help out mobile-home owners who are having difficulty selling right now, and which would allow the government to acquire good, used mobile homes at undoubtedly a lesser cost than the present brand-new ones they are utilizing?

MR. CHAMBERS: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Could the minister advise whether he is prepared to give consideration to such an expansion of the program?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, the subject the member alludes to is very complicated if you visualize trying to have the people to assess and evaluate the worth of a used mobile home. I think all members are aware that the new mobile-home industry has experienced considerable difficulty in the last year or two. So all our purchases of mobile homes for our various programs are, in effect, on a tender basis of new mobile-home units.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs with regard to the question from the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn. Could the minister advise whether the owners of the mobile-home sites who are in fact carrying out this practice require licensing under the real estate licensing Act, as either an agent or a salesman? If the minister doesn't have that information, could he provide it at his convenience?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. With great respect to the hon. member, with the statute books here in the Assembly, perhaps we could avoid this kind of question in the question period.

ADC Loans
(continued)

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture regarding his ministerial statement today on Agricultural Development Corporation loans. My first question is: is there any age limit on the first-time borrowing provision?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, to give some flexibility to the program we have not stated an age limit, because history has shown that beginning farmers' ages are changing somewhat. Many beginning farmers are perhaps in the early 30s, late 20s, so we've left the age limit open.

MR. LYSONS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would off-farm income affect the eligibility of any new borrowers?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, off-farm income is considered only in the area of repayment ability and certainly does not limit the applicant's eligibility.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary to the hon. minister. Will there be any change in the rules with respect to educational qualifications or farm experience for the beginning farmer program, or will the present rules be retained?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we've tried to leave some flexibility in the area of experience and eligibility. It's very difficult to lay down in black and white those who are eligible to enter agriculture and those who are not. So I would prefer to leave it as flexible as possible in reviewing each applicant.

Mine Accident — Grande Cache

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister responsible for Workers' Health, Safety and Compensation. Has the minister received a request from Local 7621 of the United Steelworkers of America in Grande Cache, for a public inquiry into the recent accident at McIntyre mines?

MR. DIACHUK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I received a letter from their president, Mr. Oakes, last week.

DR. REID: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate to the House whether he is prepared to act upon the request? If so, could he give some indication of a timetable? I ask this specifically because of the concern for early implementation of any recommendations that might result from such an inquiry.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member for Edson and the members of this Assembly that my response to Mr. Oakes was that as soon as the investigation is completed and I receive the report, I will give full consideration to their request for a public hearing.

Roloff Beny Collection

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. Minister responsible for Culture concerns the Roloff Beny collection. Why did the government offer \$27,500 for the Canadian portion of the Roloff Beny collection

when the estimate by the appraisers of the Sotheby company was for only \$24,000?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, the \$24,000 that my hon. colleague is quoting is in American dollars. If you take the American dollars and turn them into Canadian dollars, it's roughly \$27,500.

MR. GOGO: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of what's happened to the money markets in the last few days, perhaps that could change. Did the government offer include the purchase of the copyrights as well?

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

MR. GOGO: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the offer to Mr. Beny expired? If not, could the minister advise what the present situation is?

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, the original letter sent to Mr. Beny from our solicitors stated we would like a reply by March 17. We had a call from Mr. Beny's solicitor saying that Mr. Beny was out of Italy, in Algeria, and consequently would not be able to reply. In the meantime we have had a request from Mr. Beny to have an extension of that period. Our solicitors have wired Mr. Beny and suggested we would like to hear prior to June 15, and if no answer comes through by June 15 we then consider all negotiations finished.

MR. GOGO: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise the House whether or not the people of Alberta have any obligations to Mr. Beny at this point in time arising from the previous negotiations? I'm referring mainly to perhaps a year ago.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, this has been a subject with our solicitors, and they feel we are under no obligation whatsoever.

DR. BUCK: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Provincial Treasurer. In light of the fact the Provincial Treasurer signed a special warrant for \$229,000 last September — as a down payment, I might add — can he indicate approximately how many dollars of public funds have been expended in the pursuit of the purchase of the Beny collection up to this time?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information at my fingertips, but I will endeavor to get it for the hon. gentleman. Certainly, it's a sum very considerably less than that amount.

ADC Loans
(continued)

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. In reading the announcement today, I think it's very good. But I don't see anything in regard to guaranteed loans. Is the minister aware of chartered banks with farm loans guaranteed under ADC calling in any of these loans at this time?

MR. SCHMIDT: Not that I'm aware of, Mr. Speaker, more than I suppose would be normal. We must remember that the existing programs for ADC will continue, so guaranteed loans are still part of the lending responsibilities of ADC. The programs that were announced replace

the old beginning farmer program and upgrade the direct lending programs.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. At this time, will it be possible with the new policy for the guaranteed loans to be transferred to the direct loans?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in a very general way, if an individual were holding a guaranteed loan for which repayment was almost impossible, then the applicant would perhaps be wise to make application to ADC for consolidation of the loan for repayment purposes.

MR. MANDEVILLE: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will there be any changes in the maximum amount of \$150,000 under the direct loan program for an ordinary loan? Will that maximum be increased?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, to try to keep the programs and opportunities fairly equal, it was the intent to increase the maximum of \$150,000 to \$200,000 to match those of the beginning farmer.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for the question period has elapsed. I have recognized the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview. If the Assembly would agree, without wishing to establish any kind of precedent might I respectfully propose that we add, say, 10 minutes to the question period this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Public Service Pension Board

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Is the government currently planning the transfer of authority over the provincial public service pension plan from the Public Service Pension Board to the direct administration of the Department of the Provincial Treasurer?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, Mr. Speaker. The administration of the Public Service Pension Board will continue to report to me as the minister responsible for pensions.

Athabasca University

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower and relates to the relocation of Athabasca University. Could the minister clarify for the House the level and extent of consultation with the board of governors and the staff of Athabasca University prior to and subsequent to the decision for relocation?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the first discussions I had with the governing council, the staff, took place about a year ago, shortly after I became Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. At that time I discussed with them the possibility of moving their location from Edmonton, and I indicated I would do my best at the earliest opportunity to remove the uncertainty hanging over the head of that institution. Subsequent to that time I was in receipt of a number of briefs and letters from staff, staff associations, the council, and I held additional meetings from time to time with the chairman of the governing council and the president of that institu-

tion. When the decision was made that if the institution were moved it would be moved to the town of Athabasca and not to any of the other communities seeking it, I advised the chairman of the board to that effect.

Subsequently, of course, the decision was made and announced to the chairman of the board and the president immediately prior to making the information public. I then arranged to meet with the governing council of the institution, which I did the week following the announcement. On that date we met for one hour and a half, after which the council indicated some displeasure with me, I think it's fair to say. However, on the bottom line they indicated they would continue their commitment to the long-term success, vitality, and growth of Athabasca University in meeting a very important need in the field of distance education in its new location.

I might say that I had the pleasure today of meeting with the chairman of the governing council, who has indicated he is committed to continuing his dedication to seeing the institution succeed in its new location in the town of Athabasca. I've assured the chairman of the governing council that he will have my continuing interest and support, and that from now on the decision-making with respect to the development of the institution will be very much in the hands of the governing council as they plan to carry out their mandate in the town of Athabasca.

MR. HIEBERT: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What assurance can the minister give the House that the level and quality of educational services at Athabasca University, with due regard that it is a distant learning institution, will not be adversely affected by this announced change?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that was part of the discussion that took place with the governing council when I met with them on March 11. I indicated then that the government was committed in terms of both support and funding to ensuring the physical facility met the requirements that the governing council felt necessary for the development of the institution, and that what additional funds might be required by way of provision of library services and matters of that nature would be made available. In addition — and I repeat — we made it very clear in my meetings on March 11 and again today that the government is committed to the role of the institution as it presently exists and as it may be determined in the future by the governing council. That is their function and responsibility. I have assured the governing council and the chairman that the development of plans and the location in the town of Athabasca would get under way very quickly and would receive every co-operation from my department. Indeed the government, including the other departments involved, particularly Housing and Public Works, is firmly committed to the long-term success of Athabasca University.

MR. HIEBERT: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Since many outlying communities had made representation regarding site selection, could the minister outline briefly for the House the basis for relocating to the town of Athabasca?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the news release, which was made public on the date the decision was announced, many factors went into that consideration. But the fact that the town of Athabasca is centrally located in the province of Alberta, that the

people of Athabasca very much wanted the institution there and very actively promoted its transfer to that location [interjections] . . . Well, I might say the hon. members opposite, some of whom were interested in having the institution located in their constituencies, are acting as rather sore losers.

The fact of the matter is that the town of Athabasca was in a competition and it won. I think that speaks very highly not only of the people of the community but of their member in this Assembly. The hon. member was active in support of the bid. That was one of the factors that was taken into consideration. But primarily there was the aspect of decentralization of government services. In this government we have a commitment to that. The identity of Athabasca University was also taken into consideration. We believe that providing that identity in the town of Athabasca will give this institution, in the long-term, a much greater chance of success.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the last supplementary. We're really running short of time, and I've already recognized the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just ask one short question for clarification from the hon. minister. I have some concern with the term "relocation". Was this not choosing a permanent site for the university rather than relocation?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that is actually the case. They have been temporarily located in the city of Edmonton. The definition of the role of the institution took place under my predecessor as Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower. I'm pleased to say that the provision of a permanent home for the institution has now become a decision of this government.

Multiple Unit Housing

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It concerns a matter raised in the throne speech, in particular the reduction of multiple unit residential housing starts and the elimination by the federal government of the capital cost allowance regarding those starts. I understand the program had an automatic termination. I wonder if, prior to the automatic termination, the minister or his department contacted the federal government that Alberta would request an extension of that program?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, perhaps that question might more properly be directed to at least two of my colleagues. At this time I could report a broad perspective on behalf of our government.

I recall in late January or early February, 1978, the then Minister of Housing and Public Works called a sectoral meeting, on the request of the then Prime Minister of Canada. In that meeting the province clearly outlined to the federal minister that it was our firm belief that the capital cost allowances could well stimulate the investment by the private sector in the needed multiple unit residential building in Alberta. At that time we recommended that the capital cost allowance be extended indefinitely. I can assure the Assembly that subsequently other ministers have followed up on that request and that the federal government is well aware of the impact on the housing starts in Alberta of the withdrawal of that regulation.

MR. KNAAK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise the federal government's reaction to the successive attempts?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Housing and Public Works may want to supplement. I'm sure we're well aware that the regulation was extended through to the end of 1979.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I might add that I corresponded, without success, with my federal counterpart last year. The capital cost allowance expired at the end of the year. I've recently corresponded with the current federal minister responsible for housing and as yet have received no reply.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 15 The Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1980

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 15, The Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1980. The purpose of this Bill is the same as those introduced in the House on previous occasions at this time of the year.

[Motion carried; Bill 15 read a second time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would ask unanimous leave of the Assembly to deal with the matter in Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the hon. Government House Leader the unanimous leave requested?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: So ordered.

[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 15 The Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1980

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions or comments with regard to any sections of the Bill?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 15 be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and beg 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, Bill No. 15.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **CONSIDERATION OF HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S SPEECH**

Moved by Dr. Reid:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta as follows:
to His Honour the Honourable Frank Lynch-Staunton, Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate March 24: Mr. Hyland]

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to participate today in this throne speech. I wish to congratulate the Lieutenant-Governor for his delivery of the speech. I believe he was working under some handicaps. He appeared to have a very bad cold, yet he persisted until he got through the delivery of the speech.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I believe we should take time today to congratulate ourselves, the members of this Legislature, those second-termers and more, on the fifth anniversary of our election to this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the first subject from the throne speech that I'd like to talk about is agriculture. I must say I was very happy, and I'm sure many of my constituents will be very pleased, with the announcement the Minister of Agriculture made today changing the rules for loans for beginning farmers from the Agricultural Development Corporation. I'm sure those new initiatives are going to be a great boon in seeing that the family farm is maintained in rural Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few short words about high interest rates. Recently I had a discussion with the president of the chamber of commerce of a small town. He expressed his concerns about the interest rates and how they affect a town such as Foremost, which is totally dependent on agriculture. The high interest rate factor may be bad enough, but with the extremely slow movement of grain that we've had since fall, those two factors together have made it pretty tough for businesses to operate in a town like that, which is totally dependent on the farming community. In many cases they would be

carrying machinery that they figured would have been sold by now to farmers. Nobody is buying because of the interest rates and lack of grain movement. There is an old saying in the rural areas that if a farmer has money, he spends it and everybody else has money. I believe this is very true, because the capital costs of machinery and products needed to farm are very high, and there is a high rollover of capital in a town. When prices are good, everybody's buying.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that interest rates come under federal jurisdiction. But I would urge the federal government to return to and live with some of the promises they made a short time ago during an election, when they were talking about what they would do with interest rates.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about irrigation. I'm sure many members of this House would be disappointed if I got up on either the budget speech or the throne speech and didn't say at least a few words about irrigation. The irrigation area that is looked after from the Bow Island office of the irrigation division stretches from about Grassy Lake not quite to Seven Persons. In 1976 that area had 84 pivot sprinklers covering 140 circles, with about 130 acres per circle. Last year 47 new machines were purchased. Some of them replaced old and some were put on new areas, covering a total of 43 new circles. That shows the very nature of the farmer's interest in improving the efficiency of water delivery on his land. In one year, almost as many new pivot sprinklers were purchased as there were in existence some three years previously.

To date, about 243 systems are in place in this irrigation area alone. I stress that point, Mr. Speaker, because at least some of the other irrigation areas would have an equal number of those kinds of systems in place. I dwell on that point because these systems, putting them on either a quarter section of land or a half section, are running the farmer anywhere from \$45,000 to \$60,000 per system for installation. Some are as high as \$70,000, depending on the preparation that has to be done on your land to make the system work. So in that area alone on just that one type of equipment, if my figures are right — and I'm sure my economist friends will check me up if it doesn't add up — somewhere around \$2,350,000 is spent on one particular machine in one year in an area that size.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the Minister of Economic Development for his attempts to establish a climate in which additional agricultural processing industries can operate and get started in Alberta. I have maintained all along that this is going to be the backbone of our economy. We can grow anything here, as long as we can process it and sell it to people either here or elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the report of the select legislative committee on workers' health and safety. If the rumors out there about coverage of farmers — we had quite a lively discussion in this Legislature some years ago about that. I would challenge the minister and his department, if the idea of mandatory coverage of agricultural workers by workers' compensation is floating out there, that it is indeed a good plan. They should take a leaf out of the page of the dairy producers and do some advertising, sell their product. Get out there and talk to the farmers, show them what they have to offer, and show them it's better than anything else available. Sell it just like anybody else has to sell a good product they have. If the product is good, I'm sure people out there will buy it.

Mr. Speaker, in the field of education, I'd like to compliment the Alberta Teachers' Association. The centre page of the latest paper sent out by their association — and I don't think all members received that paper — is one of the best short and concise explanations of government and the operations of the Legislature that I have seen. I would like to commend the ATA for putting this document together and sending it to their teachers. I urge them to urge their membership to put this document into every classroom in Alberta or, even better, see that every student in Alberta receives a copy. As I said, it's brief, it's a good explanation, and if more students in Alberta receive a copy of something like this, I'm sure they will understand the processes of government and what makes it up.

Mr. Speaker, I must commend the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower on the increases listed in the throne speech and the emphasis on the apprenticeship and certification program. In years to come, I believe this is going to be an important thing in Alberta. I'm sure we will all benefit from the people there will be to partake of the jobs that are going to be created here.

Mr. Speaker, in the question period we heard questions about moving Athabasca University to Athabasca. I spent some time at the Athabasca University quarters in Edmonton, and talked to the board and some of the staff a year or so ago. They are very dedicated people. However, the editorial that appeared in the *Edmonton Journal*, asking what students were going to do when they move to Athabasca, emphasizes that this different university, this distant university, was sitting in the shadow of the University of Alberta. The public did not realize what it was really trying to do. Mr. Speaker, with this move I believe they will attain their own niche, and will not be in the shadow of anyone else. They will be able to make their own mark. I'm sure it will be a very good mark indeed, that they can make.

Mr. Speaker, I welcomed the emphasis in the throne speech on the increases in funds in the transportation budget. Many of us rural members know that you always seem to be short a good many miles of road. I'm hopeful that with this new budget increase we'll be able to do some of the roads that are urgently needed in this province. One especially, needless to say the one through my constituency and through the constituency of the hon. Member for Bow Valley, is Highway No. 1. Some improvements are needed immediately in the populated areas, and more improvements are needed to twin that highway from the border to Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the announcement on the budget for the Department of Recreation and Parks. This year we will see if the minister's new ideas on recreational areas become a fact. We will see where they are and what kind of funding will be given to them, and if these areas will take some of the pressure off the provincial parks in Alberta. I look forward to the minister's comments dealing with these areas when he participates in the budget speech.

In housing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the Alberta pioneer repair program. Needless to say, it has been extremely beneficial to many people in my constituency who again were able to do work on their homes, senior citizens who normally wouldn't have done this work to improve their homes if they hadn't had such a program available to them.

Mr. Speaker, dealing with the 75th Anniversary of this province. I'm sure, through stories that are told by many old timers about the hard times and the good times — it's

too bad that many of these stories told about these times, and the times through prohibition, aren't published. Some of the stories I've heard from my grandfather, that are handed down through generations — I'm sure there could be a lot of problems if these stories were printed. Some of the occurrences that make life interesting in the hard world our pioneers faced were quite unique indeed. I'm sure these stories will continue to be passed down from generation to generation, and I hope that many of them will be documented and become a record we can have for the next generations.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be a Canadian, and I am very proud to be an Albertan. Being a fourth generation Canadian, I am very happy to be in this Legislature. In 1917 my grandfather came from Kingston, Ontario, to Alberta. He left a farm and came out here to a vastly different land. But even though tough times occurred, and even though he was only here a few years before he went back to visit, he fell in love with Alberta. He made up his mind that in spite of the '30s, in spite of all the problems that occurred, he would stay and stick it out. He built up a farm, he built up a business, and with a grade 4 education he became a police magistrate. Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of person that made up our Alberta in the early years.

It may be of interest to note, Mr. Speaker, that my grandfather was born on May [30], 1880, in the county of Pittsburgh, near Kingston. My son was born five generations later — and that's five generations in Canada — on February 11, 1980, a couple of months short of a hundred years for four generations born here. Mr. Speaker, my grandmother came here in 1907 at a very early age. Her father came here a year before his family to prepare a homestead for them near Bow Island. That land is still in her possession. As I have said, these were the kinds of people who came to Alberta. They came, they stayed, they built the land, and they loved the land. And they also loved Canada. Mr. Speaker, that's the dilemma we're in now. We're Canadian and we're Albertans. I'm sure that in the next few short months when we get into negotiations on energy and on the constitution, it is going to be very hard for us to maintain those equally.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity this afternoon to participate in the debate in reply to the Speech from the Throne. In prefacing my remarks this afternoon, I'd like to indicate first of all that I was pleased today to hear the Minister of Agriculture announce improvements in the beginning farmer program. I would say that the higher level of \$200,000 up to a maximum of \$300,000 will be helpful, and the interest shielding up to 6 per cent will be a very useful addition to the program. Whether the addition of \$75 million will in fact allow the beginning farmer program in Alberta to be a program where it isn't a lender of last resort remains to be seen. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, the announcement today was very useful.

I look back over the last few months since our fall session, and I can express a certain amount of satisfaction that the government has done some backtracking on the Roloff Beny purchase. Mr. Speaker, there really is no way they can avoid acknowledging that they're backtracking. We actually had a special warrant passed for \$229,000, and one would assume that this government, that always does everything in a totally non-partisan, businesslike way, would arrive at the figure of \$229,000 only after the most careful and deliberate consideration.

The fact that we are now moving off that position and offering Mr. Beny \$27,000 is, I think, a clear indication of backtracking, which I suppose indicates that the government is at least willing to listen to public opinion. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that throughout the length and breadth of Alberta public opinion on the Beny question, including, I suspect, public opinion even within the ranks of the Conservative Party of Alberta itself, was almost unanimous.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with a number of major issues this afternoon. But before doing that, may I congratulate the mover and the seconder of the motion. I think the remarks both hon. gentlemen made were extremely constructive and well thought out. Unfortunately, there is an error in the Speech from the Throne itself, which I trust hon. members will correct. The fourth paragraph:

It is of interest in this special anniversary year to note that the Speech from the Throne delivered 75 years ago to the first representative Assembly in [Alberta] paid appropriate tributes to . . .

And then it goes on.

Mr. Speaker, that's fair enough, except for one minor historical problem. The first session of the Alberta Legislature did not take place in 1905; it took place in 1906. So in fact there is an error in the Speech from the Throne. Now this is hardly a major matter, but for a government that claims to be so on top of it all and so businesslike, to make this kind of error in the Speech from the Throne . . . [interjections] Members laugh, but the fact of the matter is that here you have an error and, of course, rather than acknowledging it we get jeers from across the way. But, that's the sort of thing one can expect from this government: jeers at first, and only when they find that public opinion is mounting against them do we get a retreat, a la the Roloff Beny affair.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to dwell on that particular subject; I bring it to the attention of the hon. members, knowing we'll want to amend the Speech from the Throne. I want to deal with some rather more important issues. I suppose that since the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs began with a heckle, I might start with his department.

I think we have to look at the question of this government's total failure to deal with the problems of growth in Alberta. Nowhere is that better shown than by the government's failure to protect consumers in Alberta. Let's look at a number of examples. We have the mystery land buyer in Cold Lake. It turns out that the mystery land buyer is Imperial Oil. Why are they buying land in Cold Lake, Mr. Speaker? The reason is that they're worried. It's not often that I congratulate Imperial Oil, but in this sense they were showing good corporate citizenship. This government hadn't got plans under way for proper land banking, and because the company was concerned about the cost of housing in the area, Imperial Oil had to go into the land banking business itself. Very definitely, Mr. Speaker, part of consumer protection is the price of housing.

We have the decision, made a year ago in this Assembly, that we're going to remove rent controls at the end of June. Faced with the present virtual no-vacancy rate in much of the province, the removal of rent controls will mean only one thing, that rents will skyrocket.

Then we have the little contribution of the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I could almost hear the minister chuckling as His Honour read the speech. When it comes to consumer protection, Mr.

Speaker, we're going to downgrade the protection, we're going to have less regulation. In fact at a time in Alberta when we face a boom, the adage of this government will be: let the buyer beware. What I am saying is that at a time when we face the pressures of the market place in a province that is rapidly growing, one of the responsibilities of a government is to make sure that it legislates properly for the protection of consumers.

We had an example of consumers of a slightly different kind the other day, when students from Grande Prairie college came to this building to lobby the government and members of the Assembly to construct a [residence] at that facility. Mr. Speaker, one doesn't need to be any great genius to know that unless we get a residence at Grande Prairie college, and get it fast, that institution's future is going to be seriously jeopardized. With rents at the present time in Grande Prairie at absolutely exorbitant levels, and with a less than zero vacancy rate, to sort of take this meandering course the present government is following is, quite frankly, close to signing a death warrant for Grande Prairie college. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that when the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower rises to present his estimates to the House after the budget is presented on April 2, we will have some good news that will include a commitment to get under way with construction of a residence at Grande Prairie college.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with four other important areas: the question of wage guidelines, the question of government neglect of social services, the issue of local autonomy and, finally, the government's takeover of the Pork Producers' Marketing Board.

Dealing first with the question of wage guidelines, on the opening day of the Legislature we had several hundred nurses picketing the Legislative Assembly, and I think with very good cause. When one compares the salaries of nurses in this province with other parts of the country, we find that nurses' salaries just aren't keeping pace. But even more important: when one looks at the levels of salaries in the private sector, the problem is even more acute.

I've had a number of nurses come to discuss their contract negotiations with me, as I assume most members of the Assembly have had various locals of the United Nurses of Alberta discuss their contract problems with them. The bottom line is that we are not paying nurses enough. We are not able to compete with the private sector. As a consequence, we find that people are leaving the nursing profession and, equally serious, young women are not getting into the nursing profession in this province in large enough numbers to even begin to cope with some of our health requirements down the road. Why? Because we have this 7.5 to 9 per cent wage guideline theory. It's fine to carry on in a dogmatic way to enforce guidelines, but the bottom line of any program is that we've got to be able to retain staff. And to retain staff our wages have to be competitive with the private sector.

But let's not just look at the question of nurses. Nurses' salaries are a very popular issue, and I have no doubt the overwhelming majority of people in this province would solidly support the United Nurses of Alberta. Let's look at other people who work in the public sector; for example, correctional officers. Today the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway was raising a whole series of questions about accidental releases of prisoners from the Remand Centre. I've met with correctional officers in this province, Mr. Speaker, and they tell me their wage levels are not comparable with other provinces. As a matter of

fact, there's as much as \$400 a month difference between British Columbia and Alberta. A correctional officer in Alberta starts at \$13,800. That's certainly no large amount of money to undertake the type of responsibilities these people have to face day by day.

In the Remand Centre they've also had to deal with serious shortages, which members in this House can't laugh off. One of the reasons we have problems recruiting people is that we are not paying enough. Again, why are we not paying enough? Because of this blind commitment to 7.5 to 9 per cent wage guidelines when even the former Minister of Finance, Mr. Crosbie, indicated we're going to have an inflation rate of about 10.8 to 11 per cent this year. In the United States that rate is 18 per cent; some economists are even suggesting it could be as high as 30 per cent.

But I don't want to get into a debate of what it could be down the road. I'm saying that if you're going to run a province properly, you must at least remain competitive in the wages you pay your public employees. Five or six years ago, we had all sorts of Tories getting up in this House one after another and saying that public-sector settlements were far outstripping private-sector settlements. For several years that was true. But since 1975 it has been the other way around. It has been the other way around to the point that unless we change our act in this House, we're going to seriously undermine the ability to retain competent and qualified staff.

Last summer, after the spring session, I had an opportunity to visit the Westfield centre in west Edmonton. Seeing the problems of the people who work in Westfield, I couldn't help but feel that one of the very real difficulties at that centre is that too few were trying to do too much. And again, when I questioned them about wage levels, it was clear that we are not keeping pace with wages in the case of people who work in social facilities of one kind or another in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I raise Westfield deliberately before going into the next subject, the question of the conduct of social services in total in Alberta. When one looks at the alarming evidence of high divorce rate, high suicide rate, high rate of alcoholism, and all the kinds of problems associated with rapid growth, then if there is one department which should be adequately funded and free from the shackles of a rigid and dogmatic restraint program, it is the Department of Social Services and Community Health. But we don't see that.

I know some of the things I'm going to say now will not be overly popular in this particular Assembly. But having experienced from time to time the position of being in a minority, that doesn't bother me in the least. I want to deal with some of the implications that come out of the northern residential treatment centre. I called for the minister's resignation outside the House, and I call for the minister's resignation inside the House.

In our system of government, the ultimate responsibility must rest with the minister. Harry Truman used to say that the buck stopped at his desk. In our system of government, the buck has to stop at the minister's desk. If the minister is going to take credit for all the flowery openings and all the opportunities to make announcements in the House, then when problems develop in the system — not individual, isolated cases, but serious problems that profoundly affect the operation of that system — the buck ultimately stops at the minister's door. It can be no other way.

I want to deal with the northern residential treatment centre and the way the minister and the government have

handled this particular case. There are a number of questions. First, an \$8,000 clerical error had been made by the two women running this centre. But somehow, in this government that always talks about flexibility, it wasn't possible in the Department of Social Services and Community Health to be flexible enough to make up that budget. So when Robert Hess talked to me when he resigned in November, the fuel allowance was very low. Why? Because of the \$8,000 shortage in the clerical error.

What about the information that was presented by the Hesses to the regional office in Peace River? That was first done on November 14. The Hesses, by the way, didn't run to the newspapers or to opposition MLAs. Their first move was to go to the legal guardian of those children, the social worker, and discuss it with them. Then two days later we had a meeting of the department in Peace River. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't until approximately a month later that the minister found out about it. But he didn't find out about it because it took a month for the information to filter down from Peace River. It's amazing how some information can come to Edmonton from Peace River very quickly, but other types of information take a long time.

It wasn't because of the filtering process. It was because the information would not have been transmitted. We would not be in a position where we have the Cavanagh Board of Review, where we're looking at the entire issue of behavior modification and all the ramifications of that issue, had it not been for the fact the Hesses went to the Ombudsman, and the Ombudsman transferred this information to senior members of the department. I think we have to know what kinds of avenues of communication we have in this department that something as offensive — the minister himself has indicated in the House that the practices were offensive — as this kind of activity could go on, yet somehow the department wasn't able to get that information to the minister, and we had to take the happenstance course of having the information presented by the Hesses to the Ombudsman, and the Ombudsman contact the Minister of Social Services and Community Health.

Mr. Speaker, I know we will probably have some major changes in child welfare legislation in this province as a result of the Cavanagh Board of Review, and I have no doubt that that will be a major step forward. I also have no doubt that we'll have all sorts of backbenchers and frontbenchers claiming credit for this government. But in all honesty to the members of the Assembly, I suggest that if we have improvements in child welfare legislation, it won't be because of the government, it won't be because of the opposition, and it won't even be because of the tremendous coverage on a day by day basis that the media gave this issue. It will be because two people, Robert and Laura Hess, were sufficiently concerned about the treatment of those children. They were strong enough to care, and strong enough to take a chance with their own careers, with their future. Perhaps members won't agree with me today, but five or 10 years from now they will, that no two people have made a greater contribution to the promotion of better child welfare legislation in this province than that young couple.

After the information was presented to the Ombudsman, we saw the minister waffle back and forth over the question of whether there should be an internal review or a board of review, a public inquiry. Beyond that question, we have the disturbing implications of the department's treatment of the Hesses themselves. On November 16,

department officials indicated to the Hesses that they would like them to be foster parents. They weren't sure they could handle that, and a few days later when they indicated that they would like to be foster parents, all of a sudden the rules were changed. Why were they changed, Mr. Speaker?

Another thing that has to be answered is that here was a couple who, because of their love for these children, took a real chance with their career. Yet they have indicated to me that since Christmas they have not even been able to see the children. What kind of department carries on its activities in such a way that people who have made the contribution the Hesses have to the complete examination of this crucial question, people who had the courage to tell us what we all needed to know, will be victimized?

It's my understanding that the Thompson report, while not presented to the government until February 29, was nevertheless made available to the senior officials on February 21. It wasn't until 18 days later, Mr. Speaker, that the minister read the report. Frankly, I find that incredible. I find that incredible. An issue of this importance, where the minister himself has indicated he thought the practices were offensive, and it took him 18 days to get around to reading the report? With great respect, Mr. Speaker, I just find that very, very difficult to accept. I say in the House what I've said outside: that, as much as any reason, should lead us to the conclusion that if Social Services and Community Health is to carry out the work that must be undertaken at this time in the history of the province, we need a new minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before getting into the question of hog marketing, I want to deal with the issue of local autonomy. We had a good example of how much regard this government has for local autonomy the other day, with the decision to relocate the hospital from the village of Berwyn, where it's been for 54 years, to the town of Grimshaw. I would say to members of the this House, quite frankly, that if the recommendation to move the location had come as a result of a board decision, a board which has to wrestle on a day by day basis with the decisions of running a hospital, which knows the communities, which knows where the staff lives — incidentally, 17 of the staff members live in Berwyn, only nine live in Grimshaw. But quite apart from that, if it had been a recommendation of the board, naturally as the MLA for Spirit River-Fairview I would have been disappointed, but would have accepted it because I would have known that the decision had come from the local level. The crucial question in this hospital location is: what respect does this government have for local autonomy?

DR. BUCK: None.

MR. NOTLEY: That's right, hon. member. Perhaps we got a bit of an indication from the minister's answer yesterday:

Mr. Speaker, the location, co-ordination, financing, and administration of health care facilities in the province are the responsibility of the government through the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

Let's go over that again: co-ordination, financing, and administration. The administration. What have we got hospital boards for? This is the statement the minister made yesterday to rousing cheers from all the hon. Tory members of the Legislature. The administration. Isn't that interesting? A new approach to hospital management in

the province of Alberta: not only the location, co-ordination, and financing, but now the administration. Really! What are we doing to local autonomy in this province, or what's left of it.

That leads me to the question of the takeover of the Pork Producers' Marketing Board. Here you've got a producer-controlled board which over a number of years has done an excellent job, that a little over a year ago convinced the government to bring in a modified system of marketing hogs. It was called advance bidding, and the objective of this system was to give the farmer some role in the market place. It was widely accepted at the time. I might just add that it was done just before the last provincial election; I don't know if that had any effect on the government's decision.

Nevertheless, we now find that the rules are going to be changed, and we have this new modified form of bidding, says the hon. minister. In order to facilitate that change, we have the agricultural Marketing Council exercising enormous control over the operation of the board. The minister indicated in the House that that wasn't going to be the case, that it wasn't his intention. I believe the hon. Minister of Agriculture is an honorable man. Unlike my view of the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, I think the Minister of Agriculture is the best person to be Minister of Agriculture in the present caucus. But in my judgment he has not handled this issue very well at all.

The powers — well, what did the Marketing Council do? Did they make just a little change here and there? No, Mr. Speaker, they did not. If you read the regulation which was amended, they now have the authority to have control in each case the written approval of the council. In what? Just bids? No, licensing of producer plants, truckers; taking services charges from licenses — that's a major source of income; the ability to solicit information; the ability to register producers; providing exemptions; requiring provision of security; regulatory power of shipping, buying, et cetera; imposing licence fees; control over disbursements; setting up of a fund to deal with bad debts insurance of producers; ability to use agent or represent the board in other nations for export purposes; and on, and on, and on. And this government says, oh, no problem at all; we're just making a slight adjustment here and there.

Mr. Speaker, the regulation that the government allowed the Marketing Council to convince them to follow through on will completely destroy the effectiveness of the Pork Producers' Marketing Board.

Mr. Speaker, many groups in the province have indicated their strong opposition to the government's position. On March 25, 30 pork producers in Medicine Hat passed this resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Minister of Agriculture ... immediately take steps to re-instate all powers removed from the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board under Alberta Regulation 99/80.

Just recently a resolution was passed by a producers' meeting in Daysland saying the same thing. As well, Mr. Speaker, you'll be interested to note:

We of the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board ... at Daysland instruct our Directors to prosecute any trespassers in our Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board ... who interfere with the operation of our business by our staff.

Already we have a good deal of bitterness, and rightly so. We have a statement from producers in the Barrhead region; producers are having meetings. There's another

one here from Calmar. I will table this information, Mr. Speaker.

It seems to me incumbent upon this Assembly to state clearly where we stand. Will this regulation be allowed to continue, or are we going to stand up on behalf of pork producers in our constituencies?

As a consequence, Mr. Speaker, I move an amendment to the Speech from the Throne:

That the Address be amended by adding, after the words "the present session", the words: "but regrets the decision of Her Majesty's Government to issue Alberta Regulation 99/80, and further requests Her Majesty's Government to rescind Alberta Regulation 99/80 and reinstate the powers of the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board."

Mr. Speaker, in moving the amendment I summarize my remarks by saying that this issue is of sufficient importance that it is time that members, especially from the rural constituencies of Alberta, stand up and be counted. The farmers are saying, rescind the regulation. We have an obligation this afternoon to debate that request from throughout the province.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to the amendment, I find it very interesting that in moving the amendment to the Speech from the Throne, the hon. member should in one breath conclude that the hon. Mr. Schmidt, the Minister of Agriculture, is the best man in the caucus to hold that position, then in the same breath move, in effect, a motion of non-confidence in this government ...

DR. BUCK: It's satire.

MR. KOZIAK: ... because of some of the excellent efforts of that hon. member. This suggests to me that, as usual, confusion reigns in the one-member caucus, from the constituency of Spirit River-Fairview, that sits opposite. As a matter of fact, I was very interested in the comments the hon. member made when he embarked upon his contributions.

MR. NOTLEY: Stick to the amendment, Julian.

MR. KOZIAK: This is related very much to the amendment, because it shows the train of thought the hon. member used in reaching that particular conclusion. He chastised the government because there was a slight error of one year in the period that the first throne speech was actually read, relative to what was stated in the printed version. My calculations indicate that that would be about a 13 per cent error. He went on to say that The Rent Decontrol Act was passed last year. In fact, The Rent Decontrol Act was passed in the fall of 1977. So an error of 15 years in 2.5 years is a 60 per cent ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The interest of the Chair is less in regard to errors in mathematics than it is in regard to the rules which relate to amendments. If the hon. minister continues to debate the remainder of the speech rather than deal with the amendment, that same privilege will have to be extended to other members and it will be difficult to apply any rule or practice of members speaking only once to an amendment and once to a motion.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification. If a member speaks now on the amendment, does he still have

the right to speak on the original motion on the throne speech?

MR. SPEAKER: That's exactly my concern. As hon. members know, the usual rule with regard to amendments is that when an amendment is debated, the debate must be strictly relevant to the amendment. When the amendment has been decided, the debate on the main motion goes on, and it's my understanding that a member whose remarks have been limited to the amendment should then have the right he usually has to speak to the main question.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I think your ruling is a wise one, and would only continue to provide the type of order that is necessary for this Assembly to continue with its business. My attempt in raising that issue, speaking specifically to the amendment, was to show the fallacious type of reasoning the hon. member used there, and to compare it with the similar fallacious reasoning used in putting forward the amendment. But in other respects I agree fully with Your Honour's ruling. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, on that particular issue, the question posed yesterday on the matter of consumer interest in hog prices relates directly to the particular amendment we're facing in the course of our discussion this afternoon. The retail price of pork has dropped substantially over the last year. It conforms with the same drop experienced in the wholesale price of pork and the same drop producers have experienced in the price of pork, to the point where notwithstanding the constant increase in the cost of living we have an anomaly that in the short term is beneficial to consumers of this province, but that in the long term can be deleterious to consumers of this province who would like in their choice of protein not only beef, poultry, fish, and lamb, but also pork. The long-term effects of what we see today in the market — although, as I say, presently beneficial for the consumer — may in fact result in a shortage of this product down the road which would then be to the detriment of consumers.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I fully support the efforts of my colleague in setting up the board of review, the inquiry chaired by the former Attorney General of this province, Mr. Foster, who did an admirable job in his position here and who brings to that board a wealth of experience in law, which will be useful.

Mr. Speaker, I speak against the motion, and I urge all hon. members to join with me in voting down the motion by the Member for Spirit River-Fairview amending the Speech from the Throne.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker ...

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the amendment ...

MR. SPEAKER: To the extent that it's possible, it's usually thought to be a good practice to alternate speakers pro and con. Perhaps we could hear from the hon. Member for Clover Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud. [interjections]

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it may be fine for government members to treat this matter very lightly. But I would just like to remind government members that it is a very, very serious matter. In the last two or three days, we in the official opposition have been pursuing with the minister the question of what is happening to our pork producers

in this province. When government members have the audacity to treat this so lightly, I say very sincerely that they should just have a look at what is happening. This is a serious matter. If government members were responsible as Members of this Legislative Assembly in looking after the interests of all the people of this province, they would take this matter very, very seriously. So I hope we've had the last of the snickering and the laughing, because it is a serious matter.

MR. COOK: Hotshots. Cheap shots.

DR. BUCK: Cheap shots.

MR. COOK: That's you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: Roloff Kookie. [laughter] I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. That was the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry. I think the first thing a new member learns is that you learn a lot more by keeping your mouth shut and your ears open than you do vice versa. So all I'm trying to do . . . [interjections.]

MR. NOTLEY: Privately they agree with you.

DR. BUCK: As I've said to the members of the government caucus, I can't educate that man all by myself, I need a little help from the government caucus. I've done as much as I possibly can.

Mr. Speaker, it is a serious matter that government members are treating very very lightly. I would like to say to hon. members [interjections] that we have had the government set up an agency, known as the Foster committee, which is going to be looking at this entire matter of what is happening to the pork producers in this province. Mr. Speaker, this government hasn't even acted on any of the recommendations of many committees that have already been set up.

I think it's only fair, in light of the fact that I couldn't get to all my supplementaries, that I bring two or three matters to the attention of the government backbenchers, on what some of those recommendations in the so-called Hu Harries report were. Looking at the report, some of the recommendations they talk about are plant facilities, producer subvention, freight assistance, retail pricing, forward planning. Have any of these things been acted upon, Mr. Speaker? They haven't. The minister, the caretaker minister I say, because the minister is doing basically nothing when it comes to pork production and his responsibility to try to help better the lot of pork producers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I think the amendment is very, very timely, because what we and the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview are trying to do is wake the government up to the fact that there is a real problem. Surely the minister knows that the way things are going now, within a year we will not have a pork producing industry in this province. That's the gravity of the situation, Mr. Speaker. And the government backbenchers had better wake up to that fact. Because if they don't wake up to that fact, there are going to be many people in the rural areas reminding them constantly — maybe even in four years — that they were derelict in their responsibilities. So, Mr. Speaker, the amendment is timely.

The letter that the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview mentioned — I'm sure all government back-

benchers are getting the same letters. They all got the same letters when we talked about The Planning Act. They get many representations. Do they bring these representations and concerns to the floor of the Legislature? I say they don't. Who are they representing? The Tory caucus or the people of their constituency? That's the basic question. We asked the minister if he had been in direct contact with his federal counterpart in Ottawa. The minister said no. Why has he not, Mr. Speaker? Why has he not been in contact? We as the official opposition, Mr. Speaker — and I will read into the record a telegram to the Hon. Eugene Whelan, Minister of Agriculture, dated yesterday:

ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION CAUCUS OF THE ALBERTA LEGISLATURE, I CALL ON THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO INITIATE A MARKET STABILIZATION PROGRAM ON BEHALF OF THE HOG PRODUCERS IN CANADA, AND IN PARTICULAR, ALBERTA.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA HAS SAID IT WILL NOT PROCEED WITH A STOP-LOSS PROGRAM IN ALBERTA. THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE IN ALBERTA HAS THROWN THE BALL INTO YOUR COURT.

ON BEHALF OF ALBERTA HOG PRODUCERS, I URGE THE MINISTER TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION.

ROBERT CLARK
LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Mr. Speaker, the question is very, very important. We are asking that when April 11 comes around, the minister not make the decision to get rid of the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board and in its place put the minister's own council with wide-ranging powers. Mr. Speaker, I challenge the government backbenchers and the minister to indicate to this legislature and to the people of this province, and especially to the pork producers, what this government is going to do. It's just not good enough not to do anything. That's what the government has been doing — nothing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against the motion, primarily because I think it indicates that both the Member for Clover Bar, who spoke in favor, and the Member for Spirit River-Fairview really lack an understanding of what's happening in the pork industry today.

MR. NOTLEY: The expert from Whitemud.

AN HON. MEMBER: Give him your credentials.

MR. KNAAK: I notice the minister from Spirit River-Fairview calls me the expert from Whitemud, and I just might be.

MR. NOTLEY: I'm a member. [laughter]

MR. KNAAK: One of the real problems with the hog industry, Mr. Speaker, is its cyclical nature. On the basis of statistics available to all of us — and I'm sure some of the members of the opposition have looked at them, but probably not — the cycle more or less repeats itself every three years. On the basis of that information, we'll

probably hit bottom this June and begin to increase at that time.

Over the last two years, pork output in North America has increased by 40 per cent. Our population has increased by something like 2 to 3 per cent. Clearly, there's nothing to be done with a 40 per cent increase in pork if it's not consumed. The only way that quantity of pork will be consumed is if the price of pork drops in relation to other commodities. In fact it is now being consumed. If the price of pork began to increase prior to the production decreasing, you'd have a surplus with no way of disposing of it. So we have a problem: the increase of 40 per cent over the last two years has to be eliminated prior to the price going up again. The cycles have always been there. Pork producers know it is a cyclical business. I agree that the increased interest rate has thrown in a calculation they hadn't anticipated.

The second problem is one that wasn't raised by the opposition and can't be solved by their motion either. The suggestion in the amendment to the motion is that a change in the marketing board will solve the problem. It certainly is a naive view of the situation and, I think, indicates a lack of understanding of what's really going on. [interjections] Furthermore, there is really a North American market in existence; there is not an Alberta hog market, so to speak. The price is set in North America, and if the members of the opposition would take the time to check the market, they will see that the prices in North America are very close to one another.

There is a question of whether the present dispute between the packers in Alberta and the hog marketing board leads to a lower price, and there is a question of whether there is a relationship among the packers that works to the detriment of the pork producers. That matter is going to court and will be resolved there. Even if the allegations are true, it doesn't affect the price of pork by more than a cent and a half per hundred, in my judgment. So it doesn't solve the problem we're addressing, or the problem the amended motion addresses. The real question we have to ask is: how do we reduce the supply of pork in North America?

The other problem is that other provinces subsidize their pork producers to a greater extent than Alberta does. The question is something this government will, and has been, addressing itself to. Because of the lack of understanding by the opposition, and to the extent that this motion won't resolve the difficulty, I urge members to vote against it.

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in addressing myself directly to the amendment with regard to Alberta Regulation 99/80, an Alberta regulation laid down by the Marketing Council covers the submission to the hog marketing board, and the intent of providing an alternate system of marketing on an interim base, pending the outcome of a review of the marketing system within this province. The amendment is worded in such a way as to reinstate the powers of the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board. I'm not of the opinion that they have lost any of the powers they enjoy as a producer marketing board, other than the fact that an alternate system of marketing will be injected into the system as of April 11, a system of marketing which the board itself had the opportunity to sit down, discuss, and review with the Marketing Council.

A reason for the submission of an interim marketing system by the Marketing Council is to accept its responsibilities to be absolutely sure that hog producers in this

province have an opportunity to market their hogs on an ongoing base. Looking back over the history from the Marketing Council's point of view: the withdrawal of hogs from the market itself, the withholding on the farm, and the subsequent remarketing of hogs in a system at a time when packers had withdrawn the manpower normally part of their strength during a day to day operation, and withdrawal of pork from that market and, of course, the laying off of staff, the subsequent marketing of hogs again, and the opportunity for producers to have a flow of a product to the market.

In accepting that basic responsibility of suggesting and presenting to the hog marketing board the opportunity for a revised system of marketing, the Marketing Council guarantees the producers in this province that hogs will continue to flow in the interim, and that hogs will not be withheld on the farm while the total system of marketing is being reviewed.

If the documentation and the legal interpretation of Alberta Regulation 99/80 go beyond the intent of providing that interim marketing system to the board, then I suggest that legal counsel on both sides review the wording to make sure the intent and the wording are at one. Mr. Speaker, in accepting responsibility to the hog producers in this province for an orderly system of marketing, the Marketing Council has accepted its responsibility to establish a system it feels will meet that requirement for the interim period.

Mr. Speaker, it is my responsibility to the producers of this province to see that that market continues in an orderly system until a review is complete and we have an opportunity collectively to sit down and review the recommendations to provide an orderly system that both producer and packer can agree with. The suggested change by the Marketing Council is a must. I suggest to you that the hog marketing board has lost none of its other powers, and that the amendment should be defeated.

[Motion on amendment lost]

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to participate in the 1980 throne speech debate on behalf of my constituents in Calgary Bow. I, too, would like to congratulate the members for Edson and Edmonton Mill Woods for their speeches in moving and seconding the throne speech. We certainly heard a good balance of the social and economic issues in this province. In my view, both members gave excellent speeches, and I think they are doing an excellent job in representing their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on some aspects of the throne speech as it affects my constituents and on those aspects related to my ministerial responsibilities. But before I get into that, I would like to comment on the speech of the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, who by the way is not in the House at this particular moment.

DR. BUCK: He's gone to see the Premier.

DR. WEBBER: While he was speaking, I was thinking of question period earlier today and the Premier's comments about how the opposition in 1967-71 operated in terms of being positive and providing constructive alternatives. Listening to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, I didn't find any of that at all. I listened very closely and carefully to his speech, and there wasn't one positive, constructive comment that I could pick out. So, Mr.

Speaker, in terms of providing opposition, I think it's important to note that all we've been hearing is carping and nit-picking on the part of the opposition since this session opened the other day.

Listening to the gloom and doom they paint for Alberta, I wonder why anybody would even want to come to Alberta. They paint this picture of gloom and doom when we have over 2,000 people per month moving into the Edmonton and 2,000 people per month moving into Calgary. And that says nothing about the number of people moving into other parts of the province.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview then went on to say that this government had failed to deal with growth. Yet in the throne speech there are four priorities: hospital construction, housing, manpower training, and highways and roads. Every one of those items, Mr. Speaker, is related to addressing the problems of growth. Then, Mr. Speaker, he went on to attack our wage guidelines of 7.5 to 9 per cent. I think wage guidelines have been well received by Albertans. The purpose of wage guidelines is to address a problem of inflation, also to address the problem of public-sector salaries not going ahead of private-sector salaries. This is a positive attempt on the part of our government to deal with the problem of inflation. But what does the hon. member do? He attacks it. What does he have in its place? Nothing. There was no positive, constructive comment on what he would do to address this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on with a number of other topics that were addressed by the hon. member, but I would like to comment now on some of the areas in the throne speech that relate to my constituency. Two areas I've often discussed with my constituents, and which arose during the pre-session meetings in my constituency, are medical care and senior citizen matters.

With respect to medical care, I want to congratulate the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care on his ministerial statement last Monday with respect to the government's plans for what I consider a mammoth hospital construction program. In Calgary, concerns have been expressed regarding the waiting time for elective surgery and the need for more hospital beds. Certainly the rapidly increasing growth in Calgary — as I mentioned, some 2,000-plus per month — has been a significant factor in regard to these alleged shortages. The construction of two new hospitals, one in southeast Calgary and the other in northeast, will be most welcome to all Calgarians. Those new facilities, together with the completion of the Southern Alberta Cancer Centre — which, by the way, is located in my constituency right next to the Foothills Hospital — and the Alberta Children's Provincial General Hospital, will provide not only for Calgarians but for all Albertans the most modern and complete health care facilities in Canada, as mentioned in the throne speech.

Another issue related to medical care that arose at the pre-session meetings, Mr. Speaker, was the practice of extra billing. At those pre-session meetings we heard all the arguments pro and con. But one of my constituents pointed out that if we are to continue to have the finest health care in the country, we need to have the finest doctors, and to get the finest doctors, we need to pay them well. As noted in the throne speech, Alberta doctors now have the highest fee schedule in Canada under the Alberta Health Care Insurance program. I agree it's important that the practice of extra billing be closely monitored in the months ahead, and I think my constituents agree with that.

Mr. Speaker, there is also a large senior citizen popula-

tion in my constituency, the largest concentration being in the West Hillhurst area, where approximately 20 per cent of the residents are age 65 and over. By and large, these senior citizens are very pleased with the programs the government has initiated over the years. In particular, the senior citizen home improvement program, often referred to as SCHIP, and the new Alberta pioneer repair program, have been well received. In these times, people on fixed incomes find it difficult to meet the extra expenses relative to improving or upgrading their residences. These funds will enable many of our pioneer citizens to remain in their own homes.

Mr. Speaker, when I was elected in 1975 there was one small group of about 10 senior citizen homes in Calgary Bow. It was just off Crowchild Trail and Memorial Drive, and the Lions Club was operating it. The largest concern expressed at that time by my constituents was the lack of senior citizen accommodation within the constituency. Since that time, we've seen the construction of what I consider a beautiful home, the Shouldice lodge and manor in Montgomery, which I had the pleasure of opening with the Minister of Housing and Public Works a little over a year ago. In addition, there's Bow Centre, a five-storey structure close to shopping and recreational facilities in Bowness. That was opened a little over a year ago. Currently, Legion No. 264 is building a 40-unit senior citizen complex in West Hillhurst, that will be opening very soon. So, Mr. Speaker, our retired senior citizens want to remain in their own communities in order to be near friends and relatives, and in my constituency the provision of these facilities enables them to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some remarks about telecommunications in Alberta. During the 1970s the telecommunication industry has been characterized by dynamic technological change and unprecedented demand for services. Alberta Government Telephones has kept pace with this growth and has remained a leader among the telephone companies in this country in dealing with this growth. I would like to acknowledge credit to both AGT management and employees for their energy, dedication, and hard work.

Last year I had the opportunity to visit all of AGT's seven regions in Alberta. These regions were established in 1977 to provide local management of all telecommunication services within a specific region. Regional offices were established in Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Vegreville, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat. I found my visits very informative. I was able to meet with AGT personnel and with the local MLAs, and observe first-hand the telecommunication operations in those various regions.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of moments ago I mentioned the unprecedented demand for service and dynamic technological change. I'd like to expand upon those points. During the past year the number of telephones in service through AGT has increased by about 100,000 to some 1,113,000. That was as of the end of February. AGT's total plant investment is now some \$1.6 billion. In 1979, revenues totalled \$529 million, with some 67 per cent of those revenues coming from long-distance toll. So certainly AGT is heavily dependent on revenues from long-distance toll. AGT now employs some 11,000 people, which makes it the largest single employer in the province.

Mr. Speaker, just a short time ago that the last of AGT's above-ground rural cable line was replaced with underground service. AGT's four-party rural telephone

service is indeed among the best in the country, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I receive phone calls and letters from constituents and other MLAs that they are having some problems in that area. But work is continuing on efforts to improve that level of service. One such effort is a rural interface device, called a RID, which, if the field trial is successful, can be installed outside a party line subscriber's phone. This device would increase telephone privacy for rural Albertans on party lines.

Telephone exchange service is being improved throughout Alberta through the gradual phase-in of what is called digital switching equipment. This equipment is much more compact yet much more efficient than existing electronic and mechanical equipment. Among other things, this equipment would allow Albertans to dial direct to overseas places.

Another interesting area, Mr. Speaker, is mobile telephones. Some 30,000 mobile units are in service in Alberta right now. In fact, AGT has the largest mobile network in North America. I heard a figure the other day which indicated that of all the mobile telephone calls made in Canada last year, some 60 to 65 per cent were made in Alberta. I think that is a reflection of the activity taking place outside our cities.

Also, Mr. Speaker, last year AGT turned up the only air-to-ground mobile telephone service in Canada. This means that aircraft travelling within 200 miles of Red Deer, depending on the height, would be able to access the telephone network and call virtually anywhere in Alberta or, as a matter of fact, anywhere in the world.

Another of the new services AGT is looking at closely is what is referred to as Telidon or Videotex technology. This technology was developed by the federal Department of Communications, and AGT is currently carrying out an experiment by the name of Vidon in Calgary. It utilizes that technology to provide fire and burglar alarm services, medical alert services, computer energy management, and interactive television to individual residents.

AGT is also continuing work in the area of fibre optics, and this year expects to complete the longest working fibre optic link in Canada, the Calgary-Cheadle project. Everybody's heard of Cheadle, a community a few miles east of Calgary. Fibre optics utilizes light transmitted through a small glass fibre in order to transmit messages. I have one such fibre in my hand right now. It is a silicon fibre so thin that it is difficult to see, yet that single fibre will carry 4,000-plus telephone conversations simultaneously by the process of laser light being passed through it. Amazing technology.

Continuing with some of the services AGT will be making available, Mr. Speaker, one that I have a very special interest in is the visual ear, a device that will greatly assist Albertans with hearing handicaps or other communications disorders. It's a computerized machine whereby one hard of hearing person can communicate with another simply by putting the telephone on top of this machine — of course the person they wish to talk to has to have one of these machines with a telephone on top — and they can communicate back and forth. A number of other devices of that nature are on the market now, but this is the one that AGT will be making available.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on several non-AGT communication matters. During the last year I met with representatives of both the cable television industry in Alberta and the broadcasting industry to discuss their needs and problems. Together with the broadcasters and the Northern Alberta Development Council, we've

recently been looking at ways in which improvements can be made to the level of television service in northern and remote communities in our province. At the present time, the CRTC is having a hearing related to the provision of television services to northern and remote communities. It started off as a hearing related to pay TV, but has expanded to the area of providing television services to northern communities. Dr. Allan Warrack, former Minister of Utilities and Telephones in this province, is a member of the CRTC panel involved in those hearings.

DR. BUCK: We'd almost forgotten poor Allan. [interjections]

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I didn't think the hon. Member for Clover Bar would ever forget Dr. Warrack.

As members are no doubt aware, here in Alberta we've asked the Public Utilities Board to inquire into the provision of what is referred to as local non-broadcast telecommunication services. This inquiry is scheduled to begin public hearings on April 14, and it's hoped that the outcome of this inquiry will assist this government in developing policy for telecommunications in the 1980s.

Mr. Speaker, we're all aware of the importance of diversifying our economy, and we're all aware of the statements the Premier has made that Alberta should become a brain centre for Canada. It is my view that the attraction of telecommunications and computer industries to Alberta will go a long way in assisting us to meet those very desirable objectives. During the 1970s we witnessed an almost explosive growth in those particular industries. United States firms which didn't even exist at the beginning of that decade are now reporting annual sales in the hundreds of millions of dollars. This is certainly an industry of the future, and one in which I think Alberta can have a significant role.

We have many natural advantages that an industry of this type would find attractive, such as a stable power supply, good universities and technical schools. I was very pleased to see that we are making manpower training a priority, because in the area of high technology there is a great demand for well-trained and qualified people. In addition, there are less tangible but highly important quality of life factors that I think we have in Alberta and that would be attractive to this industry. Additionally, the nature of the product itself — chip technology, chip manufacturing — is such that it would overcome many traditional inhibitors of manufacturing development; namely, distance from markets and transportation costs.

Several months ago, Mr. Speaker, Northern Telecom announced the location of a significant research and development facility and manufacturing facilities for Alberta. This announcement was highly significant because it creates high-skill jobs that Albertans can partake of. However, it is my hope that that will be the first of many announcements made by that particular industry for locating in Alberta. One of my priorities will be to do what I can to attract this type of high technology to Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I too wish to partake in the reply to the throne speech. But in view of the time, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member have leave to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the intention for tomorrow's business would be to continue tomorrow evening with the throne speech debate. I should say to the hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition that that decision wouldn't be finalized until tomorrow, but the present intention is to sit tomorrow night.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the motion of the hon. Government House Leader?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

