

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, March 27, 1980 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, and members of the Assembly, it's an honor today for me to introduce visitors to our Legislative Assembly who are seated in your gallery: Mr. Donald Craik, Minister of Finance and Minister of Energy and Mines for the province of Manitoba, and Mr. John Messer, Minister of Mineral Resources for the province of Saskatchewan. Accompanying Mr. Messer is Mr. Bill Allen, MLA for Regina Rosemont.

Also in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, are a number of senior officials from the three provinces. I'd like members of the Assembly to welcome them all. The reasons will become evident in a few moments.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 211

The Temporary Rent Regulation Measures Act, 1980

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 211, The Temporary Rent Regulation Measures Act, 1980.

Mr. Speaker, the basic principle contained in Bill 211 would be the continuation of rent controls. I might just say that the legislation is modelled almost completely on the legislation passed by this House in 1975, with changes in the amounts allowed as a result of inflationary factors.

[Leave granted; Bill 211 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report for the calendar year 1978-79 of the Department of Government Services.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly, students from the best university in this country, the University of Alberta, my alma mater and, I'm sure, that of others seated in this Assembly. I had the opportunity to meet with four of the students earlier this afternoon, at which time they presented me with a copy of a brief which had been prepared and shared with the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, and the opportunity to discuss some concerns they had.

I believe they are seated in the members gallery. I

would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of all members of the Assembly.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 20 students from the Gift Lake school in my constituency. They are seated in the members gallery, accompanied by their teacher Mr. Carl Christensen. I'd like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly some students from the University of Calgary. I do not wish to entertain a debate with the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs at this time, even though the University of Alberta is my alma mater too.

The students from the University of Calgary are up here speaking to the MLAs, touring, and learning the legislative process, and of course will be in Edmonton for a student conference this weekend. I am very pleased primarily to introduce a constituent of mine, Miss Teresa Goulet, who has recently been elected president of the students' council at the University of Calgary. Would you please accord them the usual welcome.

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to the other members of the Assembly a group of grade 8 students from Westlock junior high school in Athabasca constituency, where Athabasca University is located. They are accompanied this afternoon by two teachers, Pauline Hahn and Elsie McMaster, and their driver Mike Myziuk. They are in the public gallery, and I'd ask them to stand and be welcomed to the Assembly.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and to the House a group of 40 grades 5 and 6 students, accompanied by their teacher Mr. Salo. It's a very well known school in my constituency. I'd ask you to accord them the welcome of this House.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly, 20 grade 6 students from Alder Flats school, accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Miller, and by parents Mrs. Hammond, Mrs. McLean, and Mrs. Siegel. I understand it is the first time any of them have visited the Assembly. I hope they will recommend to their parents that they visit this Legislature, of which we are all justifiably proud.

They are in the visitors gallery. Would you please rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me today to present to you, and through you to the Assembly, four members from the students' association of the Grande Prairie Regional College who have been here this afternoon visiting some of the offices. They visited me just a little while ago. I'd like to introduce Bonnie MacKlin, Mary Klassen, Val Burghall, and Roger Guerin. I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Office of the Premier**

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, today the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta have taken a very important step in terms of interprovincial co-operation on economic matters, in particular on the exchange and development of renewable energy within the three western provinces. A similar statement is being presented to the respective Legislatures this afternoon by the premiers of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Our three governments have agreed to proceed immediately with definitive studies to determine the feasibility of a western electric power system. We began examination of this concept in 1978, and today have agreed to the undertaking of detailed feasibility studies, which should be completed prior to the end of this year. These studies will clearly determine whether or not a major power interconnection is feasible and whether or not it should proceed.

Mr. Speaker, preliminary examination of the proposal indicates to the government of Alberta that benefits of such an intertie would accrue to all three provinces. The detailed studies will determine the engineering, the configuration and utility aspects of the transmission, production, and delivery of the electric energy, as well as the measure of benefits to the provinces.

The Minister of Utilities and Telephones for Alberta, together with the Minister of Energy and Mines for Manitoba the Hon. D.W. Craik, and the Minister of Mineral Resources for Saskatchewan the Hon. John Messer, will constitute a committee with the responsibility for carrying out the purposes of the agreement at the direction of the three premiers involved. The ministers, working with a steering committee of designated officials, will complete the work they have been involved in since the western premiers' conference in Prince George in 1979, and will make recommendations to the respective provinces.

The Alberta government has decided as well to develop the hydro-electric potential of the Dunvegan dam at Peace River. We will be inviting proposals immediately for the development and construction of the hydro-electric capacity at Dunvegan. This initiative reinforces our government's intention to maintain an appropriate balance between renewable and non-renewable energy resources.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is an excellent example of interprovincial co-operation among the three provinces involved.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like permission to file certain documents.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree to revert to Tabling Returns and Reports?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

(*reversion*)

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Legislature Library a copy of the agreement referred to by the hon. Premier. Attached to that agreement is a copy of a letter addressed to our Premier from the Hon.

Don Craik, and a copy of the report of the Western Electric Power System Study which was commissioned by the four provinces and completed in 1979. The work was done by UNIES Ltd. I would also like to file a study commissioned by the province of Alberta, prepared by Foster Research and completed in July 1979. I would also like to file a list of the expected benefits of the western grid referred to and a copy of the primary conditions that Alberta feels are important in the execution of this agreement.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Dunvegan Dam**

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources in light of the announcement made this afternoon. Not having yet had the benefit of seeing a copy of the announcement, could I ask the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, the Minister of Utilities and Telephones, or the Premier what time line the government is looking at for the construction of the Dunvegan dam and what the anticipated costs are at this time?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, it would be premature to be definite on the time of commissioning of the Dunvegan dam. In his statement, the Premier indicated that we would be inviting proposals. Those proposals and the subsequent hearings by the ERCB would determine the appropriate timing for the commissioning of such a dam.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister or the Premier. Is the announcement today in fact nothing more than an indication to those firms that want to, to put forward proposals to the Alberta government and to the ERCB, and that the ERCB will then hold hearings on the desirability of the dam going ahead? Or is it a question of the timing of the dam going ahead? Has the decision been made that the dam will go ahead?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all hon. members heard the Premier's statement that it's the decision of the government that we should proceed with the development of the hydro capacity at Dunvegan. The question is who shall develop it, and the timing.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones. What time line is the government looking at for calling proposals and for completion of the ERCB hearings and its recommendation to the government?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, the proposals will be called for immediately. They will not be simply by invitation, but will be called for from the industry within the province. The government will carefully examine those proposals and subsequently the ERCB, as it is in these matters, will be asked for advice, as well as public hearings being held. To determine when the dam would be constructed and the time of commissioning is very difficult, because it has to fit into the overall electric needs of the province. But I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition is aware that a considerable time frame is involved from the planning to the actual completion and commissioning of hydro-electric potential.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. What are the best cost estimates that the government of Alberta now has for the dam that is to go ahead as of the announcement today? When might the good folks in the Dunvegan area expect to have ERCB hearings in that area?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to provide any sort of cost estimates at this stage because a design submitted by various companies would have to be examined very carefully. In terms of an indication to the citizens of the area, that follows my previous answer. The time frame for developing hydro can range anywhere from seven to 12 years.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, will the minister give an undertaking to the Assembly here today that before the government makes a final decision on the proposals that will be coming forward on request, the people in that part of the province will have the opportunity for public input to some kind of hearings — prior to a decision being made; not after the decision has been made, as we've had in the past.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years the government has received a number of representations from citizens who live near that proposed dam site. The support has been very, very strong for development of the hydro potential there. There will be ample opportunity through either their MLA or me, and any other methods, to present their views to the government.

MR. NOTLEY: Like the Berwyn hospital.

MR. SHABEN: As I indicated earlier, the final decision will be made after the ERCB hearings.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In the Premier's announcement today, has the government determined which of the three proposed dams — the low, the medium, or the high dam, as contained in the Dunvegan dam report of 1974, I believe — the government favors at this time? Or is that also going to be left up to people making proposals to the government?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, the government favors the low head dam.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. This is a follow-up to the question asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The minister indicated opportunity for public input. Will the government of Alberta consider the possibility of hearings by the Environment Council of Alberta on the Dunvegan dam in addition to the ERCB evaluation of the various proposals from power companies?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that question as notice.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In invitations for proposals, will the government of Alberta consider proposals from the major power companies in Alberta? Or would the government also look to the possibility of co-operation with the British Columbia government in view of B.C. Hydro's ownership of the dams just across the border?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I've had discussions with the minister responsible, the hon. Bob McClelland in British Columbia, as well as officials from Environment and the Department of Utilities and Telephones. The Minister of Environment has had discussions with officials and ministers in British Columbia. We have agreed to co-operate very carefully on the maximum use and environmental aspects of the Peace River, including consideration of site E and site C in British Columbia, and the development of the potential at Dunvegan.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Can he advise the Assembly a little more clearly as to the timetable for the invitation to power companies? Are we looking at asking for the invitations in six months, a year, or two years? Along with that question, Mr. Speaker, will the initial evaluation be done by the Department of Utilities and Telephones before the ERCB is asked to make a comment, or will it go to the ERCB first?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, we expect the invitations to be extended within the next month. The major investor-owned utilities, as well as Edmonton Power, are aware of this. I've had discussions with the utilities within the province. The intention of the government is to review carefully all proposals prior to their being presented to the ERCB.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question. When asking for proposals from the power companies in the province, will the government of Alberta give an undertaking that it would consider debt funding for such a project from the heritage trust fund, as I believe was a recommendation made by the heritage trust fund committee last fall?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to receiving the proposals on the development of this very important resource. Bearing in mind the statement of the Premier, the need to maintain a balance between renewable and non-renewable energy within the province, and the rising demand for and advantages of electric energy, the government will look at all aspects before making a decision.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, could the minister inform the House as to whether the feasibility study with respect to the western power grid and the Dunvegan dam will give due consideration to the city of Edmonton, specifically Edmonton Power's generation needs?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent question. I discussed the matter yesterday with the mayor of the city of Edmonton. The government is well aware of the application presently before the ERCB by the city of Edmonton and by the city of Calgary. Today's statement by the hon. Premier was to the effect that a definitive decision on the western electric power grid would be made prior to the end of the year. In our view, that time frame wouldn't prevent the careful planning of electric energy requirements for all citizens of the province, including those in the city of Edmonton.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go back and ask the minister one further supplementary question. It deals with the question I posed earlier regarding the anticipated, or I should use the term "ballpark" costs of this

project. The minister indicated to the Assembly that the government favored the low head dam. What are the best figures the Alberta government has on the projected cost of that project?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I believe it's a similar question to the one the hon. leader asked earlier. As I indicated, the answer can only be determined after we have received the specific proposals and the design proposals. We do have in-house estimates, but it wouldn't be appropriate because they are simply estimates at this time. Final determination would be made once detailed engineering is completed.

MR. NOTLEY: You've got a public report.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Does the minister support the cost projections as were made available in the report tabled in the Assembly by the former minister, I believe, last year or the year before? Are those still the ballpark figures you're looking at?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I have answered on two occasions that the design of such a dam and the final applications for that design will determine the ultimate price. Of course, the primary factor is that it has to be economical in order to provide power economically to the citizens of the province.

MR. OMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. minister could indicate to the Assembly . . . I would have thought it natural that British Columbia would have been included in the power grid. Were they not interested, or is there some reason why not? The second question is this.

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly we could just take them one at a time.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, subsequent to the March meeting of the four western premiers in Prince George, the ministers from the four western provinces met in Victoria. At that time, British Columbia indicated that they were not interested in pursuing the western electric grid.

MR. OMAN: Supplementary to that, Mr. Speaker. With the development of Dunvegan, and the other two provinces obviously have large possibilities, is it the intent of the study to indicate that there would be cross-sale of power to each province and then, likely, an exporting sale to the United States?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, part of the work that has to be done is how the power will be integrated into the three provinces. Those questions will be determined as a result of the studies.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones and ask if he has any figures on the potential megawatt capacity of the Dunvegan dam. I'm asking that in view of the fact that in this province we have about 4,000 megawatts of thermal electricity and only 800 megawatts of hydro-electricity.

MR. SHABEN: The studies indicate that the capacity of Dunvegan is approximately 1,000 megawatts with 500 firm.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has he a long-term agreement with the British Columbia government that somewhere down the road they will not sell water from the Peace River watershed to the U.S.?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, in responding to an earlier question, I indicated that the Minister of Environment had discussions with officials from British Columbia. The Minister of Environment may wish to supplement my answer, but as a result of those meetings and meetings that I have had, our understanding is that we will reactivate our committee, where in a previous period of time we have had discussions on the utilization of water.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. If I heard the hon. member and the hon. Premier correctly, the government has committed itself to proceed. The reason I ask the question is that the Dunvegan dam study of 1974 indicated a cost of approximately \$1 billion for the low dam and as much as \$2 billion for the high dam. We would have to translate that into 1980 or 1980-plus figures. Is the government committed to proceed notwithstanding the costs, or at this stage do we have some figures on what would be an acceptable cost for a project of this nature, bearing in mind the tremendous cost increases of major hydro projects elsewhere on the continent. The other part of the question is: what consideration was given to the Fort Smith project . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly we could take these questions one at a time as well.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, it's important that members of the Assembly understand that the power requirements for the province of Alberta are either in place or commissioned to the end of 1986. In the course of planning our electrical energy needs, we have attempted, in co-operation with the Electric Utility Planning Council and the Energy Resources Conservation Board, to look forward to a period of 30 years. It's very difficult to project either the cost of fuel or the cost of construction, but those estimates are done from time to time. Bearing in mind the answer I provided earlier to the hon. leader, a very important factor in determining the economics of whether it's thermal or hydro is the year in which it's commissioned. So until we receive proposals and consideration by the ERCB and the Electric Utility Planning Council on the proper time for sequencing this hydro potential into our requirements, at this stage it is difficult, if not impossible, to give an answer to what is an appropriate cost.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the other part of the first supplementary question was the consideration given to the proposed dam just south of Fort Smith, which is a competing project. Where does that sit now in terms of the government's announcement today? Have we abandoned it, or is it also going to be considered at further length?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, that's an important question, and it fits in with the initiatives of the province. We have not abandoned the Mountain Rapids proposal on the Slave River. It's a very important potential resource in terms of hydro-electric capacity. We have shortened the time span, and all members are aware of the detailed

studies going on right now. We hope those studies, in terms of the environmental impact and others, will be completed in the next two to three years. There is no deterrent by way of our announcement today as to the potential at Mountain Rapids. The Minister of Environment may wish to supplement my answer.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct one further supplementary question to the minister. I pose the supplementary question because of the figure of \$1 billion that was in the government's own report as far as building the dam the government has said today is most appropriate. In making its announcement today, has the government committed itself to going ahead with building this dam regardless of the cost, or in fact is there a maximum of \$1 billion, \$1.25 billion, \$1.5 billion, \$2 billion? What is the maximum where the government simply would feel it is not practical to go ahead? There obviously has to be one. Or is the government going to build it itself if it doesn't like the proposals?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I thought I'd responded to this question on two separate occasions, both to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview. In explaining the sequencing, the time it would be appropriate to have this power available to Albertans, has a great deal of bearing on what the price is. It's impossible to determine what an appropriate price is, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: But there must be a ceiling.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary. We're running out of time.

MR. COOK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can I direct this question to the minister and ask whether he has considered energy conservation measures which would forestall the necessity to construct those very expensive and perhaps environmentally sensitive structures, and thermal coal plants that would also be required — for example, the Genesee plant?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward with great interest to the debate on the hon. member's Bill that was introduced for first reading yesterday in the Assembly.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the member not hold his breath.

Student Financial Assistance

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the second question to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, after the most gracious introductions we had of students from the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary, and students who are in the building visiting MLAs. I'm sure the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower would appreciate the opportunity, and I'd like to ask when he is going to make major changes in the student finance program in this province.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the Speech from the Throne, which says on page 6:

Changes with respect to tuition fees and students' financial aid, which is available through provincial

programs, will be introduced.

At the present time, I have not yet received the recommendations from the various boards of governors — at least all of them — with respect to the question of tuition fees and their level for the next student year. Until such time as those are received and I have had an opportunity under my legal responsibilities to evaluate them, I do not propose to make a final announcement, nor do I intend to make that announcement independent of an announcement with regard to changes in the student financial aid program available in this province.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister referring to the Speech from the Throne. I'm sure he would appreciate a reference I would make. Last year on June 18 the minister said: my number one priority will be changes in the student finance program; that's my number one priority. That was last year on June 18. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly if he has had a chance to make a decision on the question of change of age of independent students? That's dealing with the question of students 18 years of age being declared independent under the student assistance program. Has the minister arrived at a decision in that area since June 18?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have prepared some recommendations for consideration with respect to the Grantham task force report, with which most members are familiar. In addition, those have been reviewed by my colleagues in the caucus committee on education. Very shortly we expect to be able to review those with cabinet and caucus. At such time as those matters have been carefully reviewed, along with representations we received today and yesterday from students visiting with members, we will then be in a position to make an announcement sometime during the course of this spring session.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, is the minister also going to be able to make an announcement dealing with the recommendation the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee made last fall, that the province consider scholarships out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund as a 75th Anniversary proposal?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think that matter would rightly be dealt with, if it is to be dealt with at all, in the course of the fall sittings when it is the custom and legislatively required to deal with the capital projects division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Prison Health Conditions

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Solicitor General and ask if the government has had an opportunity to confirm whether or not guards and prisoners at the High Level bush camp have been living in conditions that are quite unsatisfactory.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, from the inquiries I have made, I could confirm that such is not the case.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Solicitor General. Is the Solicitor General in a position to advise the Assembly why, when bunkhouses were located at the site at Christmastime, nothing has been done to make them usable at this time? And can the minister advise the Assembly when it is the intention of the department to make these new facilities usable?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I understand the trailers in use at the Footner Lake camp were originally acquired in 1962. They have been adequately maintained, and it's really due to the general refurbishing of this type of equipment that new trailers have been acquired. They're located on the site, and will be installed and hooked up to the various services this spring.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Solicitor General. What inspection took place with regard to the facilities at the Footner Lake camp? Was it done by the director of the Peace River Correctional Institution, or by someone from Edmonton? I ask that question because of the minister's first answer, that in the government's view the facilities were satisfactory. Who inspected the facilities in order to give the minister that information?

MR. HARLE: The director of the Peace River Correctional Institution, who is responsible for the Footner Lake camp.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Solicitor General. Is he in a position to advise the Assembly why the director of the Peace River institution did not move on recommendations made by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees with respect to their concerns about the conditions which have now become the subject of at least some controversy?

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to take that as notice. I can find some information as to the contact that occurs between the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and the director. As I think hon. members are aware, there is a well-defined route taken in all our institutions to work out problems between the union and the management of the institutions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In view of the fact the information the minister has given the House has come from the director of the Peace River institution — and that's fair enough — will the minister give an indication to the House whether the government would request the local health inspector to inspect the facilities to confirm either the director's report or the reports that have been given some attention of late?

MR. HARLE: The camp is checked on a monthly basis and was checked in January, February, and March by the medical staff of the Peace River Correctional Institution. Swabs are taken of the cooking and eating utensils and the facilities on a regular basis.

DR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would indicate to the House whether there is any evidence that medical treatment was denied or not available for the inmates.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, medical treatment is available at all times. A regular medical check is made of inmates before they are assigned to the forestry camps and while at the forestry camps. As soon as a problem is raised with the correctional officers by an inmate the necessary steps are taken to ensure that medical care is available.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would also indicate to the House whether the particular inmate in question had an examination prior to going to that camp, and what the results of that examination were.

MR. HARLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The inmate in question did receive a TB check about August 1, prior to his being assigned to the Footner Lake forestry camp.

Rent Control

MR. KUSHNER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is with regard to removal of rent control. Has the minister considered maintaining rent controls on those accommodations that house Albertans who are on limited or fixed incomes? The accommodations I mainly refer to are government funded or subsidized, such as senior citizens' homes, lodges, nursing homes, and accommodation housing handicapped citizens.

MR. KOZIAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite correct that with the coming of July 1 rent controls, as we now know them under The Rent Decontrol Act, expire. But we should be aware that rent controls in other respects which are provided for and subsidized by society as a whole will continue. Those are in the areas of senior citizens' accommodation. Hon. members are probably aware that well over a third of all senior citizens who rent in this province occupy government-subsidized accommodation, where their rents are controlled and, in many cases, geared to income with the effect that rents do not exceed 25 per cent of their income.

There are other areas in which rents are controlled, Mr. Speaker; for example, the government announcement about two weeks ago on apartments that are built and developed under our core housing incentive program. We announced \$205 million for the construction of an additional 4,500 rental units. Half those will be subject to a form of rental control in which the rents will be maintained at a moderate level, and those units will be available for tenants in need of that type of accommodation at those rentals.

MR. KUSHNER: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the representations I've been receiving from my own constituency, some tenants have had notification that their rents will be increasing as much as 25 per cent effective July 1. Would the minister please advise the Assembly whether he or his department has a plan in effect that may assist these basically lower income people who have had these notices?

MR. KOZIAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am personally concerned, as I know all members of the government are, about the needs of those tenants in our society, such as senior citizens and others in the low-income category, who find themselves on low fixed incomes. It will be in accordance with the philosophy of this government that we will consider the plight of these people and react to it in the best way possible. We have already indicated by our substantial announcement of \$0.5 billion in the family home purchase program and the core housing incentive program our commitment to providing housing for the many Albertans who will be coming into this province from other areas of the country, and for the many Albertans who will be forming households from within the province.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to what happens in the future, there may be other areas we as a government should consider, and those are being studied very carefully now.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, please, to the minister. As part of your rental control program, a freeze is placed on the conversion of rental accommodation to condominiums. Could you please advise this Legislature whether that freeze will be maintained?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, the freeze the hon. member refers to is contained in The Rent Decontrol Act. With the expiration of that Act, all the provisions found in it expire. Now that does not necessarily mean that conversions will take place without the approval of the local authorities. I'm sure that is an aspect they will consider very strongly.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary question. Could the minister advise if his department has made an estimate of the impact of the lifting of the freeze on conversions on the supply of rental accommodation?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, not directly. I suppose the greatest factors that affect supply are those that are well known to us. Those include the federal government's decision with respect to capital cost allowance, the removal of that incentive for private investors to invest in the rental fields, and the extremely high interest rates now facing people who would want to develop rental accommodation and condominium accommodation. Of course, the two programs I've made reference to in earlier answers meet the question of interest.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as the minister has raised the issue of the elimination of the capital cost allowance by the federal government, could the minister advise the Legislature whether he is considering some sort of provincial capital cost allowances as an incentive?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I think a provincial capital cost allowance *per se*, in the form that was afforded to us in the federal legislation that has now been threatened with removal, is not something we can accommodate in the existing tax structure. It would be my understanding, Mr. Speaker — in effect, opt for a provincial income tax Act on personal income. Perhaps it might be considered in terms of the moves we are taking with respect to the provincial corporate tax Act. That's something that is open for discussion and that we should consider.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: A supplementary. In light of the minister's earlier answer to the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo that the legislation *in toto* will expire as of June 30, can the minister advise whether a legal opinion was obtained by his department from the office of the Attorney General with respect to Section 39 of the legislation, which deals with mobile-home owners and provides that if there is a change of use of a mobile-home park, 12 months' notice must be provided to tenants? Can the minister advise whether a legal opinion was obtained from the Department of the Attorney General to the effect that Section 39 would remain in force after June 30?

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, no legal opinion was sought by me from the Department of the Attorney General or from the Attorney General in person.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Is it the minister's view that that section will in fact expire as of June 30?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. and learned member's previous question was somewhat doubtful because of the rule with regard to asking ministers for opinions given by the law officers of the Crown, and the second one has really gone over the line a little further.

ADC Loans

MR. L. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture in regard to his statement on loans to beginning farmers. Would the minister inform the Assembly if the once-in-a-lifetime loan he announced yesterday was for the purchase of land only, or can it be used for the purchase of livestock and equipment in the case of leases and rental?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, the package available to the beginning farmer can be all-inclusive. In many instances, beginning farmers have the opportunity to buy out a complete operating unit and have been able to take over the total unit and be in operation within one day. So we've left the flexibility for that approach for the beginning farmer to stay with a package, which may or may not be all-inclusive.

MR. L. CLARK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister clarify for the Assembly just what the qualifications are for a starting farmer?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, I suppose that would vary, depending upon who was judging whether you were capable or eligible to become a starting farmer. It may vary. Basically, the qualifications as we see them in the Agricultural Development Corporation is a youngster, either he or she, who can show sufficient knowledge and background, either in limited experience or having been raised on a farm, having had some education in agriculture, through college, having made themselves available and utilized the 4-H program as they've been growing up in rural Alberta, having also had the opportunity or may have been a recipient of the green certificate program: I guess in a very broad general way to demonstrate interest and some semblance of knowledge and experience, either first-hand or willing to learn.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister qualify who will qualify for the annual rebate of 3 per cent on the direct loan program? The announcement indicated there would be a 3 per cent discount on the direct loan program. Who will qualify for that annual rebate on the 3 per cent?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, that direct lending portion is designed to serve farmers who have been in agriculture for some time and would like, because of necessity, to expand their operation to make it a more viable unit, to expand in the purchase of more land, to improve what already exists, to improve the farmstead by the construction of buildings which would further enhance the operation they have. So they normally would have the preferred 12 per cent with a 3 per cent — in other words,

9 per cent money would be provided to that group of farmers in agriculture for a period of five years.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Under the direct loan program, the rule of thumb used was that if their assets were over \$400,000 they couldn't get a direct loan. Is there any change in the asset amount in the direct loan program?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we recognize the problem that exists in establishing an asset figure, and of course the almost monthly updating because of changes in values. The amount that has been established was rule of thumb, and we have indeed considered that it has to be increased. At the present time we haven't established a figure, other than that we do know the asset limit has to rise.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether the program has enough flexibility to refinance capital or operational loans already in effect, and maybe an arrangement with chartered banks, the Farm Credit Corporation, or other institutions where interest rates are relatively high and farm operations are being jeopardized because of that?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, there has always been a degree of flexibility through ADC to refinance the operations because of changes involved in interest rates which affected repayment ability. The program that has been redesigned in the area where direct funding is available at 12 per cent is basically designed with that degree of flexibility that will handle those farmers who do not fall into the other categories, and will be the area where all the refinancing or consolidations would take place.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate what interest rates are going to be charged on agribusiness now that there are changes in the interest rate structure?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, we would review agribusiness at the present time. That review should take place in conjunction with the meeting we're holding next week, now that we've reviewed the three basic programs in ADC. I would be pleased to bring back to this Assembly the fixed rate with regard to agribusiness at that time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the minister with regard to his answer to my earlier question. What farmers would be considered in that refinancing program? What asset level would be given consideration? Or is the program very flexible so that any farmer who feels he has some difficulty with regard to interest should submit an application and put it through the process? Is that the approach that should be used?

MR. SCHMIDT: Mr. Speaker, in a very general way, I suppose those individuals who hold various loans at interest rates which are now affecting repayment to the extent that they find themselves in financial difficulties, remembering that the direct loan is still the lender of last resort. People who find themselves in that position should make an application to the loans director in their area for that type of consolidation if, under the terms of

last resort, their repayment ability has been changed because of the high interest rates they are facing.

Programs for the Disabled

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour. It refers to priorities established in the throne speech. There is an indication that programs are going to be designed to increase the participation of disadvantaged Albertans and that special emphasis will be given to the disadvantaged. I'd like to ask the minister what type of programs are being envisaged. Possibly one of the changes that may be considered is a change in legislation that will prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of mental and physical handicaps. Is the minister considering this?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Little Bow has asked a question which contains many questions, as I analyse it. In due course, whatever changes will be made to The Individual's Rights Protection Act will be introduced into the House. I use the expression "in due course" advisedly. At that time the hon. member will know the answer to that part of his question.

With respect to the throne speech and the content thereof, the Department of Labour, through the general safety services division, had a committee which was working with the physically disabled organization on building code requirements which would assure access to new buildings for the physically disabled. It's my observation — and I have discussed this with several of the physically disabled groups — that while the code has done its best, perhaps the best we can expect to be expressed in the code on access, there still remain some problems in actual implementation.

Referring to that section, what we're looking at is a structure which would involve the physically disabled, in conjunction with representatives from architects and other building interests as well as the department, which would provide not only an amplification on code requirements as suggestions for architects, pointing out the real problems even of some of the accessible buildings, but also might deal in an advisory capacity with some questions that arise when there is a conflict in regulations, which can happen. The effort to make buildings safe for the general public sometimes puts constraints on the access needed for the physically disabled. This results in some very difficult questions. We need to assure that every interest is represented in the attempt to reach that compromise.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Through the media, the minister has indicated publicly that with regard to the disadvantaged and employment opportunity, the concept of voluntary affirmative action would not be accepted by the government at the present time. Is the minister reconsidering that position? Would he possibly introduce amendments with regard to affirmative action?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, we're pretty much back to the question I dealt with in my last response. I am not at all sure I wish to confirm the hon. member's statement of my alleged statements, first of all, for the reason that affirmative action means many different things to different people. I have come to the conclusion that I avoid the expression unless I qualify, as I have just done, that it's not an expression which really conveys anything very

clear. So on the balance of the hon. member's question, he will have to do as I suggested in my last answer; that is, wait a while — and not a very long time, I hope.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would move that both motions for returns stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: I regret the Chair did not hear the numbers.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, 102 and 103.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

206. Moved by Mr. R. Clark:

Be it resolved that this Assembly urge the government to assist those Albertans facing hardship as a result of the renegotiation of the mortgage on their principal residence at substantially increased interest rates.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to move the first designated motion for this session. It really revolves around this question of interest rates and individuals in this province who are having to remortgage.

Mr. Speaker, before I become involved in the formal part of my remarks might I say, for the benefit of hon. members who might not have heard yet, that today the prime interest rate in Canada went up some seven-tenths of a point and is now at 15.49. The best advice I received today indicates that by the early part of next week, individuals who are involved in remortgaging or placing a mortgage for a home will be looking at 17 or 17 per cent plus.

Just recently, I heard about two new kinds of mortgages that have entered the market, which I think indicates pretty clearly the kind of situation we're involved in. One is a six-month term mortgage some people are now having to turn to. I think members can appreciate the difficulty with a six-month term mortgage. It has also been drawn to the attention of my office that some individuals are now having to look very seriously at mortgages which will, in fact, make no payment on principal at all and simply attempt to pay the interest. It's with that kind of background, Mr. Speaker, and the realization that in this province, at a very conservative estimate, some 25,000 Alberta families in the course of the next 12 months are going to have to go through a renegotiation of mortgages, that I raise this matter before the Assembly this afternoon as our first designated motion.

In the Speech from the Throne, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor characterized Alberta as "the most dynamic area in Canada". The prosperity which gives us this dynamic character is very fragile, however, Mr. Speaker. I suggest to the members of the Assembly that that prosperity is very much endangered by the unprece-

dent interest rates which prevail in the market place today. The development of Alberta over the past many years has really hinged on two points, one being the richness of the land and the resources, and secondly — for the sake of the 10 minutes that I plan to speak this afternoon — secondly and most important, the willingness of Albertans to invest in the development of their own province.

Mr. Speaker, the province is facing a problem in home ownership in a broad sense. But in a very specific sense, 25,000 families in this province are now going through this process of having to renegotiate mortgages. It's imperative that the faith that Albertans have shown in investing in this province over the past many years is demonstrated by the government in helping these 25,000 families come to grips with this problem.

Mr. Speaker, in our judgment the solution to the current dilemma lies in Alberta investing in Albertans. In recent history it's been the norm that interest rates would be some 2 or 3 per cent above the rate of inflation. The interest rates provided the return needed to encourage investment, but not impose an unbearable burden upon the borrower. Today, though, because of the action of the federal governments in linking the Canadian and U.S. rates, the interest rate is 7 or 8 points above the rate of inflation. Such interest rates impose an untenable burden upon borrowers, a burden which must be alleviated if Alberta is to maintain its fragile prosperity — the kind of prosperity referred to in the Speech from the Throne delivered a week ago today by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that three vital sectors of Alberta's economy are hardest hit by the present interest rates. One is the opportunities for young people to acquire a home or, secondly, to remortgage their home if their mortgages are up, whether they've held a one- or five-year mortgage. And even though they're not the main topic of the debate today, small business and agriculture in this province are two other areas that are certainly hit tremendously hard by the kind of interest rates we're looking at today. However, we're looking at the question of housing in this particular debate.

As I've indicated, approximately 25,000 Alberta families will be renegotiating mortgages within the next 12 months. An Albertan of average income who has a \$40,000 mortgage for a one-year term will face a 48.5 per cent increase in his or her monthly payments if we take it that next week's interest rate will be 17 per cent. That's a 48 per cent increase on a \$40,000 one-year term mortgage for an individual who has an average income. Those payments, Mr. Speaker, would take up 40 per cent of the average Albertan's income before taxes.

Regardless of where one may sit in this Assembly, one can't help but recognize the virtually impossible position that families in that situation face. Such a large burden represents financial hardship and leaves many Albertans only two options. One is to go out and try to sell the home they've acquired perhaps last year or over the last five years; they have a one- or five-year term. The other option, unfortunately, is to be simply unable to face a 40 or 40-plus per cent increase in their mortgage payments.

The renegotiation of mortgages will have its most profound impact, though, upon home-owners who are on fixed and low incomes. These Albertans have no opportunity to offset the burden of increased payments by, on one hand, depleting their savings or, on the other hand, increasing their wages. An increase in housing costs to these Albertans must result in reduction of other necessi-

ties. Housing cost increases do not merely pose an inconvenience; they place a hardship on Albertans, the like of which — and I again refer specifically to families renegotiating their loans — has not been seen in this province since the 1930s.

But, Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned in the question period today by the Member for Calgary Mountain View, we shouldn't direct all our attention to those people who have these great difficulties as far as home ownership and renegotiating loans are concerned. There are people in rental accommodations who face similar kinds of increases, not in their mortgage payments but in their rental payments. Interest rates place a burden on renters as well as home-owners. Many rental facilities are financed by short-term or open-ended mortgages. The financing costs of these mortgages are similar to those outlined for home ownership. Landlords can't afford to absorb those costs, and must pass them on to their tenants. This comes at a most inopportune time, with rent controls coming off July 1 and the increases expected to hit at that time.

I offer the members of the Assembly two examples, Mr. Speaker, which I think are typical of the kind of representation members are receiving about increases in rentals. In fact, to be very frank, one intern who worked for members of the government side of the House before the end of January and is now working in the opposition offices finds himself with a \$100 per month increase in rental accommodations. I could go on to add that that's in an apartment which hasn't been painted for a number of years and so on. But the point is, there's a \$100 per month increase for that individual.

Another example: in an apartment building in Edmonton the landlord gave notice yesterday of rent increases as high as 36.3 per cent, or to put it another way, an increase from \$275 per month to \$375 per month. That takes up as much as 32 per cent of the tenant's pre-tax income. Neither the intern I referred to nor the tenant who pays 32 per cent of his pre-tax income for rental accommodations will be able to meet these costs without sacrifice. They certainly will be unable to meet future increases spurred by financial costs.

Mr. Speaker, what are the alternatives? I suppose in its simplest form there are at least three alternatives. Before becoming involved in those three alternatives, I should say to the Minister of Housing and Public Works that I commend him for the \$500 million announcement made about two weeks ago. In my judgment it was a positive step in the right direction. I say to the government that I don't believe that move went far enough, and certainly is of little or no assistance to the people we're primarily concerned with here: the people who are renegotiating mortgages at this particular time. But I give the minister credit for the initiative that was made.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to members of the Assembly that the best way to deal with the problem is to have Alberta as a province invest in the future of Albertans. The government can do this by acting through the existing market and financial institutions. In this way a minimum of bureaucracy and a minimum of disorder will be created, and the province will be able to be involved in the provincial housing industry, yet not on a permanent basis. We believe that government intervention in the market place is not desirable and should not be seen as an end in itself. But when the market does not perform, when it places inhuman burdens on people, then the government must temporarily enter the market place and restore some sense of balance.

So, Mr. Speaker, the proposal I'd like members of the

Assembly to consider earnestly and seriously today is: first of all, Albertans who are renegotiating the mortgage on their principal residence or who are buying a new home to be their principal residence have funds made available to them at an interest rate not exceeding 12 per cent. Now, the case can be made that the government's announced \$500 million will help some people who are building new homes. Some of those people will get interest at less than 12 per cent, depending on their income level. But there's no help at all for those individuals who are renegotiating mortgages at this particular time.

The second proposition I put forward to members of the Assembly is that rental accommodations which have a mortgage up for renegotiation be financed at a rate not exceeding 12 per cent if an agreement limiting the rent is signed; thirdly, that financing be made available for developers of new rental accommodations at 12 per cent if an agreement is entered into which would limit the rents charged while the financing is outstanding; fourthly, that builders producing less than 15 new units per year have bridge financing made available to them at 12 per cent. Such financing is to be provided from the accumulated surplus of the province, and in terms of three and five years with extensions available if interest rates continue to be unreasonably high. Funds are to be made available to the financial institutions which are currently in the mortgage financing market, so that they may re-lend them to Albertans at reasonable interest rates. In this way the government will take the initiative which the federal government has not taken, without having an unduly disruptive effect on the market place.

As I indicated earlier, this government has not been totally insensitive to the needs of Alberta's housing sector. Extensions of the Alberta family home purchase plan and the core housing incentive program are worth while, as far as they go. However, Mr. Speaker — and I want to emphasize this to hon. members — they do not help the home-owners and tenants who must face hardship as the mortgages on their residences or rental units are being renegotiated at this time. I make the point once again to hon. members: in the course of this year, the best figures we can get are that 25,000 Alberta families are involved in this renegotiation process for the 12 months we are now involved in.

In my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Alberta investing in Albertans as the way our current problems may be alleviated in the short term. This is an extension of the pioneering spirit we are celebrating as part of Alberta's 75th Anniversary. However, Alberta will not progress if the government, if we in this Assembly, interpret the pioneering spirit as "fend for yourselves".

I submit to members of the Assembly this afternoon that it's an emergent situation for those 25,000 families in this province who are renegotiating loans this year. The program that has been announced, desirable as it is, does not go to bat for these people. What we're proposing, in its simplest form, is a form of interest shielding or taking on at 12 per cent those mortgages that have to be renegotiated.

We believe that home ownership is desirable. I believe most Albertans see that as desirable. I urge the members of the Assembly this afternoon to give their enthusiastic support to a move which I think would be seen by not only the 25,000 families affected but all Albertans as a very positive move in our 75th Anniversary year.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, rising to speak on this motion, which in fact deals with "hardship as a result of

the renegotiation of the mortgage on their principal residence at substantially increased interest rates", from the outset I would like to indicate that obviously it's a very important topic. The mover who brought in the motion should be congratulated for the great interest that has been placed on high interest rates, and the concern for all of us in Alberta, across Canada, and in the United States.

Before I go into my main point of discussion, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition indicated 25,000 homes are coming up for negotiation: I challenge him on that. There may be 25,000 homes, but not necessarily 25,000 families. We have to recall that many properties being renegotiated are second rental properties or income properties. I'd like to know where he got those statistics. The other point is that many developers have stocks of homes that are for sale. They took out one- or two-year mortgage terms, and are ready to sell these homes. Unfortunately the interest rates have risen, and they are going to be renegotiating those homes. There are many people, of course, who truly can't afford and are having difficulty. I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that the precise numbers have to be known so we can deal with the items in a more precise way.

Mr. Speaker, I make these comments in a most sincere way, because we are all aware of the serious impact that high interest rates do and can make on the standard of living of all of us in Canada. In spite of this, I find difficulty with the initial, strong desire of the Leader of the Opposition to bring in an urgent debate on interest rates. Then he delays debate until another day, when in fact he had the opportunity the same day, March 21, 1980. Apart from that, he has raised it again. So he is concerned, and I'm sure all of us here in the House are concerned.

Further to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, in his usual fashion the member words a resolution in a way that it's difficult to act on definitively. Mr. Speaker, I noted today that he deviated from the actual resolution and went on to rental property and so forth. Let me illustrate. He did make a definitive comment apart from the resolution, in that he said 12 per cent, but that wasn't stated in the actual resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution states, "to assist. . . Albertans facing hardship". Obviously we all know what hardship means in a broad way: something very difficult to bear. But really, is he talking about the mortgages that are maybe \$100,000 or \$150,000 on a \$200,000, \$250,000, \$300,000, or \$350,000 residence? I hope not. There are hardships there too. But I wouldn't think the members of the Assembly are overly concerned about those particular mortgages and income groups. Or does he mean the lower income groups, those who are on fixed incomes and those who truly need assistance, Mr. Speaker? I'm suggesting that we in Alberta are certainly assisting those in a variety of ways, and I'm sure more can be done.

When he states, "substantially increased interest rates", Mr. Speaker, the difficulty again is the definitive aspect of it. I'm not jesting about it. What is substantial? One per cent, 2 per cent, 3, 6, or 7 per cent? I don't know what he means by that. I have to second-guess it, and I don't like to second-guess. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition probably doesn't know exactly either, because he wasn't definitive on that item in either his resolution or his comments today.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not joking in any way about the serious concern we are facing regarding interest rates on mortgages on principal residences. Truly, it is a serious matter. I suggest that if the Leader of the Opposition

wants appropriate action taken by this government, he may have to go back to the drawing board with his associates and come up with something very definitive, and clearer than what I've heard today. Although the 12 per cent was an item, I'm not quite sure how we're supposed to fund that. I think the government of this House has always acted in a responsible and deliberate way — quickly if possible, but always calculated to be sure that the ramifications are not overbearing. Mr. Speaker, they laugh at that, but that's exactly why we are the government and they are the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate some of the problems we face, because we as a government share the very serious concern. Although we know very well and recognize and appreciate that Alberta is not an island unto itself, and certainly the interest rates that have hit all sectors of our economy. Whether it be agriculture, business, the individual member of the family, the farmer, or the home-owner, it certainly hits not only Alberta but all of Canada, the United States and, as a matter of fact, the world.

Fortunately in Alberta we are shielded, Mr. Speaker, due to our very fortunate position regarding our buoyant economy, our energy resources and the income derived from that, and the strong agricultural base we have. The terrific employment record: more are employed in Alberta and more new jobs provided than anywhere else in Canada. These are all positive things that allow our citizens to be able to handle that kind of situation better than other Canadians. If there are difficulties in Alberta, I suggest the hon. members reflect for a minute on the other provinces in Canada, and the United States, and the difficulties they are facing.

The Alberta government's policy, Mr. Speaker, has been and will continue to be one of assistance to those truly in need. To reflect on some of the programs for lower income groups, for those on fixed incomes, for senior citizens, the assured income program for the handicapped, the programs for farmers announced yesterday, the small business programs, and for home-owners, property tax payers, and so forth. Those are in very specific and broad ways. I have mentioned 10 or 15 programs; there are probably more, and some other speakers undoubtedly will raise them. Then we have the general population support by improved net income in a variety of ways, as well as tax shelters. I'm sure the citizens of Alberta recognize those positive thrusts we've made in that regard. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should know this, but somehow he wants to ignore those facts.

Now I, and I'm sure all government members, would be the last to say adjustments should not be made, especially when further difficulties become evident and are apparent. But let's not say here at any time, Mr. Speaker, or imply by the resolution we have on the table today, that interest rates regarding mortgages are being ignored by this government and, for that matter, that high interest rates in general are being ignored. We are not ignoring them; we're acting to correct the situation as well as possible, given the circumstances and the short frame of time that things have changed.

Let me make some definitive points, Mr. Speaker. I always like to make these points in a one, two, three, four manner, so that not only will the members of the Assembly maybe better remember them, but the citizens out there will be able to grasp the items.

Number one: I mentioned already those 25,000 homes that are up for renegotiation. I question that. Many

people have second and third homes that are rental homes, and truly that's a difficulty too. But they're not necessarily single families. Mr. Speaker, 80 per cent of the mortgages are five-year terms, so most people have an appreciable capital gain in their homes. I don't think any Albertan who bought a home five years ago would deny that the value of that home has gone up significantly. Nobody is suggesting he should sell it, but if he chooses to sell that home, he knows he can make a substantial profit. However, I am not suggesting that. But that is an important item. In a five-year renewal program, when he renews his mortgages the rate could be anything. It could be a lot lower; it could be higher than now; it could be the same.

Number two: some mortgages are truly up for renewal now or within a year or two, where single families are involved and it's not a rental property, not an additional property, not a developer's property. These people are the target group we are talking about today. I'm not quite sure of the numbers. But under the assisted home ownership program — as we know, that was federally sponsored — there was an indication that some 200,000 homes may be lost across Canada. It has come to light, Mr. Speaker, that only 28,000 of these will in fact have difficulty. And I understand the federal government is contemplating or has committed itself to assist these people.

AN HON. MEMBER: Two thousand.

DR. PAPROSKI: Two thousand out of 28,000. But we should remember that only a small percentage will not be able to afford this increased rate, as difficult as it is. And brother, it hurts. Nobody here would stand in his place and say those interest rates are not painful. In spite of the fact that incomes have gone up, the mortgage rates are an abrupt change when you file for a new mortgage. However, I suggest a majority of those will be able to renew a mortgage for a one- or two-year term, with the pain associated with that, then hope the mortgage rates will change in one or two years. At that time, if they do not change, maybe some other measures need to come in.

What's the third point I want to make, Mr. Speaker? Wages in Alberta have outstripped interest rate payments, so people are better able to afford higher rates than ever before, even if it is painful. We in this government know very well that the general improvement of our citizens' income was not intended to cover higher interest rates, but to improve our life style. However, life is unpredictable, as we know. These high interest rates have resulted in difficulties. At least there is a compensatory factor that other provinces in Canada do not have. We have the Heritage Savings Trust Fund to cover those kinds of things for rainy days also for our future citizens. We're very fortunate, and if we forget very quickly, maybe we should remind ourselves; maybe we should take a trip across Canada, especially to the eastern seaboard.

Number four, Mr. Speaker, we have numerous housing programs. The hon. Leader of the Opposition, in his honest way, has alluded to those programs. But we have numerous housing programs that are very effective in making a supply of homes, affordable homes, and accommodation available for many of our citizens. What did the hon. Minister of Housing and Public Works announce on March 14? Five hundred million dollars for 10,000 units via two housing programs. Mr. Speaker, \$300 million of that \$500 million will go to the Alberta family home purchase program. The increased eligibility:

up to \$70,000 for a new home; the increased eligibility of the family member, up to \$31,000 gross income. But even more important than that, is the maximum subsidy: \$270 a month, plus \$20 more for a first-time owner, which is a total of \$290.

Mr. Speaker, just to get the impact of this, an article was recently written in *Maclean's* magazine regarding a father who was 26. Five years ago he married a girl 17 years old, had two children since that time, and was earning roughly \$12,000. They bought a home and the interest rate went up from 9.75 per cent to 15 per cent, which is a darn good rate because it's apt to be higher right now. His monthly payments went up from \$465 to \$693.

The point I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that if he had this program, he would be paying half the amount he paid originally. He'd probably be paying not more than \$300; initially he was paying \$465, now he'd have to pay \$693. So he would be paying \$300 a month. I can't possibly describe the impact of this kind of program, the Alberta home mortgage program, on our newly married citizens acquiring new homes. And as we know now, the program also applied to existing or second-hand homes and condominiums. When I was newly married, if I had been able to get a home, earning only \$12,000 — and frankly, that's just about the amount I was earning, Mr. Speaker — what a benefit; what a starter; what an opportunity. However, we didn't have that opportunity. Thank God for the buoyant economy we have in Alberta, which we are allowed to pass on to our citizens.

Then we have another housing program, Mr. Speaker, the core housing incentive program: \$250 million for rented accommodation. We're proposing some 4,500 units, double that of any year in the past four years. We know very well that half those rental units will be at lower rates. The hon. Leader of the Opposition brought up a point about rental accommodation. We have it already, and the rate I think is 8.75 per cent, not 9 per cent or 12 per cent: a 95 per cent mortgage over a 50-year term at 8.75 per cent for rental accommodation, provided half of those go to lower income groups. And I can go on.

The next point, Mr. Speaker: a modest apartment program, to stimulate small rental housing for moderate-income families. We have rural home assistance, where grants are available for designated remote areas. We have the senior citizens repair program, and why do I bring that up? It's \$2,000. The argument is: well, you know, what's \$2,000? You ask the senior citizens out there, and they'll tell you it did a lot for them. Because some of them have mortgages, they can take that \$2,000, do the repairs that they had to do anyway, and use the other \$2,000 to cushion themselves from higher mortgage payments maybe for a year or two, which is again the shielding that I'm talking about.

We have the revolving trunk service program for water trunks and storm sewers for municipalities, to increase the supply and stabilize the prices of lots. We have land assembly for land banking, again to increase the supply of lots at reasonable costs. Mr. Speaker, the senior citizens' lodges and self-contained suites are at a reasonable rental rate. Just recently we announced that the requirement for the rental rate would be dropped from 30 per cent to 25 per cent of the income of senior citizens. They were up in this gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they were very, very pleased with that. We can go on and on.

Then in a very specific way, Mr. Speaker, on November 7, 1979, in a quick response to the rising interest

rates, the Treasurer indicated in this House that AOC and the Agricultural Development Corporation interest rates were frozen. That's action. Sure, it wasn't on mortgages, but again it's the spinoff effect. If you don't have to pay high interest rates there, you can better afford mortgage rates in another area.

Mr. Speaker, the treasury branch small business loan program to existing borrowers was held below the chartered bank rates. I'm sorry that as an M.L.A. I can't deal with the treasury branches because, boy, what an advantage that is. Be it small, it all helps. We have the target group for small business, for the federal business loans and the agricultural loans via the treasury branches, that we have assisted. And the program yesterday — it's no use articulating that. But I just want to make one comment. If a starting farmer takes a \$200,000 loan at 6 per cent instead of 16 per cent, he is actually saving \$20,000 a year for the next five years. Boy, what a break.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on with many items like this, but I'm just going to flip through another two or three, because I know the time is running short and the members are trembling to comment on this very serious concern. The ceiling for all treasury branch loans will be set. They were set and shielded, and all loans were shielded to a degree. We have all these items regarding loans to help our citizens to deal with, one, their businesses, whether it be agriculture or businesses generally, but also increased dollars for mortgage financing. We have to again remind ourselves that that situation does not exist anywhere in Canada. Frankly, we in Alberta are so fortunate that it is something to underline.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, numerous other factors that we have already brought in cushion and shield the citizen. I know that if you're sitting here and dealing with a mortgage that's up for renewal tomorrow morning, it's painful. The hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview knows that very well too, because he's faced it. We've all faced it. But remind ourselves that all these programs bring in \$3,000, \$4,000, or \$5,000 more per family per year. If you have a small business, because of the lower business rate it's another \$4,000 a year. If we're still despondent, maybe we should go to another province, have a look around, and compare notes with our relatives there.

Mr. Speaker, let's remind ourselves of the municipal debt reduction plan, brought in in 1978, which in essence provided a shielding of \$500 for each man, woman, and child in this province. There is still no sales tax, despite the fact that everybody in Canada pays a sales tax. We have a property tax reduction plan which provides property tax at the lowest possible rate. We have the lowest provincial income tax. In 1978, a family of four people earning roughly \$17,000 paid half the personal income tax on a provincial level than in either B.C. or Ontario. We have the lowest business corporation tax for the small business.

We have the lowest natural gas prices. Maybe we should be reminded what that means. Our natural gas price protection program costs hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The citizens of Alberta indeed deserve it, but their natural gas prices are in fact approximately one-third lower than what they would be if we hadn't brought in that plan. There is no gasoline tax. Every time we go to a gas pump and fill up our car, it's again a few dollars more in the pocket. No other province has that at all; every province has gasoline tax. The lower income groups pay no personal income tax, no medical care premiums — as the senior citizens. All these are very

positive factors.

Mr. Speaker, of course we have the international problem. We know this is an international trend. But somehow that doesn't fly with me. I feel that Canadians, not Albertans in isolation but Canadians, should be able to handle that. What have we done? We didn't sit around here and say, well, it's a federal issue. What did we do? We wrote, we talked, we consulted, and advised the federal government to get down their huge deficit of \$11 billion, plus assisting themselves somehow with the large balance of payment deficit. We told them to strengthen their dollars if they develop a viable energy self-sufficiency plan. We advised them to increase exports, to assist us to export. They didn't. We had to send out our minister himself to help us export our goods from this country and this province. We advised about increased productivity, and we told them not once but many times about cutting down their deficits so that inflation would be cut and the high interest rates would be under control.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to leave three or four items of major importance that I wanted to indicate. I'm going to conclude by saying this: in the interim, help is going to those who need it most, and I'm sure that ongoing adjustments will continue in a cautious, responsible way, after proper evaluation.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, if people are in fact losing their homes and substantial hardship is demonstrated, then I'd suggest that maybe this government should exercise some hard, voluntary persuasion of mortgage companies and/or financial institutions to forego some of their excess profit for one or two years until adjustment occurs.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a real Tory speaking.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, if it doesn't happen through voluntary persuasion — and that's only if things are really bad and facts demonstrate that — then maybe involuntary legislation would be necessary. When that happens, the mortgage companies probably would gladly give up their houses, because nobody would want them and they couldn't handle them anyway.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, I hope we continue to encourage the federal government to correct their posture. Fifth point: maybe increase special provisions to developers of homes in order that the low interest rates may be available to buyers, providing developers with a special business tax incentive because they're building homes, but provided that they provide good mortgages.

Sixthly, Mr. Speaker, the final consideration is fixing the mortgage rate, as they have in some states of the United States, at a maximum that is acceptable over the whole term of the mortgage, like a 29-year mortgage at 12 per cent. But those states that have had that have already taken it off, so there must be something wrong with that, and that's only after evaluation.

Those are my brief comments, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the members for their patience.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. I congratulate the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway on his remarks. I almost thought it was a throne speech debate, because virtually every possible subject in government policy, federal and provincial, was covered. Nevertheless some interesting remarks were made.

Mr. Speaker, in commencing my remarks, I'd like to pick up on one of the points the hon. Member for

Edmonton Kingsway made; that is, with respect to interest rates in the country in total. I certainly intend to support this particular resolution before the Legislature, because as a provincial Assembly we have to look at the impact of higher interest rates on those Albertans who are renegotiating their houses.

I might just say as an aside to the hon. member who has just spoken that the 25,000 homes still have quite an impact. There may not in fact be 25,000 individual families who have to renegotiate their mortgages. But in all likelihood at least 25,000 families, and probably more, will be affected by that renegotiation, because whether it's rental units or not — the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs smiles and beams happily, and on July 1 there are no longer any rent controls — the fact of the matter is that renegotiations of mortgages on rental accommodations will have just as great an effect on the people of this province, albeit in higher rental rates, as they do in the case of the individual home-owner who finds that his or her mortgage will go up substantially.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me at some point we really have to take a close look at this federal policy of dealing with inflation by pushing up interest rates every time we turn around. We had eight increases under the previous government. When the present administration was campaigning for re-election, they gained support throughout the country basically by arguing that we had had enough of tight money and high interest rates. As a matter of fact, one of the senior ministers in the present federal government made it very clear that if interest rates went up after the Liberals got into office, and he was a cabinet minister, that hon. gentleman would resign. He has suddenly changed his position and now seems to be very, very happy with this floating arrangement.

Today the bank rate has gone up another 0.7 per cent, to an all-time high of 15.49 per cent. When one looks at that kind of Bank of Canada rate, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that even the 16.5 per cent mortgages that some members have been talking about will be pushed higher than that. I know the governor of the Bank of Canada argues that it's necessary for bank rates in this country to go up in order to bring in enough foreign capital to balance our dollar at approximately 83 or 84 cents, and that if we don't do that we're going to run the risk of seriously increasing inflation. But I think there are some arguments that have to be made now.

The inflation rate of approximately 18 per cent in the United States is substantially higher than the inflation rate in Canada. I mentioned yesterday that some observers have estimated it could be as high as 30 per cent at the end of the year. I hope not. But in Canada the inflation rate is somewhat lower than that. The former federal Minister of Finance estimated an inflation rate of 10.8 per cent. So it is significantly lower than the American inflation rate.

That being the case, I for one am not convinced that our bank rates slavishly have to follow American bank rates. It seems to me that if we're going to tackle this problem in any effective way at all, Canada has to come to grips with increases in the interest rates which have gone beyond the reasonable level. In my view, they represent a very serious impediment to the continued prosperity of those sections of the country that are doing well, and will throw the rest of the nation into a very serious depression or at least a major recession.

So, Mr. Speaker, one argument I would use in debating this issue is that high interest rates in Canada, far from being the solution to inflation, are basically an

antiquated method of trying to prop up the Canadian dollar. I remember a few years ago when the former government of Great Britain finally decided to let the pound float. It was a tremendous decision for the British people. It was a difficult decision for the government of Harold Wilson at the time, because the pound dropped sharply. Nevertheless, it increased the exports of Great Britain enough that, together with the good fortune of the North Sea oil, they were able to begin to recover.

I say to the members of this House that there is no great magic in keeping that dollar at 83 cents forever. If we have to push interest rates to the level where we create chaos in our economy, small benefit to us that the dollar is at 83 cents. In the final analysis, those people who deal in international securities will be against us in any event, because our economy will be in such serious trouble. So quite frankly in addressing this subject, while there are things that a provincial Legislature must do, it seems to me we should be making it clear to the government of Canada that we want an interest policy made in Canada, one that doesn't slavishly follow interest rates in the United States.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us deal with the specifics of the motion this afternoon. The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway outlined programs which Alberta has in place, and made particular mention of the program announced several weeks ago by the Minister of Housing and Public Works. I know all members in this House, and Albertans generally, welcome the announcements made on March 14. While I think they will make it possible for many young Albertans to acquire homes who would not otherwise have been able to do so, nevertheless the ceilings contained in the program — \$54,000 for existing homes to \$56,000, and newly constructed homes now up to \$70,000 — do represent a problem in Edmonton, Calgary, and other high-growth areas of the province. I'm given to understand the average cost of a home in Edmonton rose to \$82,745 in February of this year. That doesn't mean the program won't be useful, but it does mean the ceiling contained in it will reduce very substantially the effectiveness of the program in major urban areas and other high-growth centres in the province.

Because we have a program announced on March 14 and other programs the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway alluded to, does that mean we should not examine seriously the plight of those Albertans who have to renegotiate their mortgages? There will have to be some form of shielding or subsidy, however you want to slice it. Whether it is done through heritage trust fund loans in addition to the amounts already assigned, or whether it is a direct draw on the provincial budget, there is no question that if we're going to shield renegotiated loans at 11, 12, or 13 per cent, there will have to be dollars from the public purse.

But I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that we can make a good case for that. When one looks at the impact of some of these renegotiations that people presently have to face — for example, on a \$50,000 mortgage with a 25-year term at an interest rate of 11.5 per cent, which most people were assuming wasn't too unreasonable a year ago, the individual would have paid \$508 a month. At the new rates, as high as 16.5 per cent, that individual would have to pay \$699 a month, an increase in the monthly mortgage payment of \$181, or some 36 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway talked glowingly about higher wages in this province. Some people have enjoyed higher wages — although I might add not too many people working in our public

sector, who must live within 7.5 to 9 per cent guidelines. But other than some fairly well publicized examples close to home, very few received an increase of 36 per cent or more in the last year.

So the question is: would it be a reasonable move for the province of Alberta to consider a form of shielding, as requested in the motion presented by the hon. Leader of the Opposition today? I would argue that it would indeed be a reasonable step at this juncture. We are able to do it financially; we are able to shield people. We have already undertaken other programs in housing that have made a useful contribution to improving Albertans' access to housing of their own. But it is small consolation to the young couple who suddenly find that their mortgage rates have gone up rather substantially. The hon. minister says, there's a capital gain. No question about that. The member said, but I hope they don't have to sell. I'm sure he believes that, but unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there probably will be some people who have to sell.

People are getting into slightly larger mortgages, \$70,000 mortgages. An 11.5 per cent mortgage would have cost \$711 a month last year. Now that's \$978 dollars a month, an increase of \$270 a month. All of us in this House, Mr. Speaker, are well aware of the fact that with young couples today, normally both have to be working in order to qualify for the mortgage, even a year ago at 11.5 per cent. If for some reason both are not able to continue working, we may very well find a situation, hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, where people will not be able to pay the higher rate. That being the case, I would frankly ask members of this Assembly to consider the merit of the resolution presented today.

Mr. Speaker, I gather that the time for the motion has elapsed. I would just conclude my remarks by saying that we're in a position to do something. I would hope we would move, but even in the context of what can be done in Alberta, it is nevertheless very important that this government make it clear to the powers that be in Ottawa that increased interest rates — which we now hear about every week instead of going through the political exercise that we saw in years past, where the Minister of Finance had to account publicly for the Bank of Canada's decision — that this kind of policy is wrong and will lead not only to a worsened housing situation but to a deteriorating economic situation for the total country.

MR. SPEAKER: I regret to say that the allotted time has elapsed. We are now obliged by *Standing Orders* to deal with private members' public Bills.

MR. NOTLEY: Peter, adjourn debate.

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, in that case, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: I have a feeling that debate was already adjourned, but the Assembly could agree to the motion.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Bill 201

An Act to Amend

The Individual's Rights Protection Act

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it certainly gives me pleasure to introduce this legislation and move second reading of An Act to Amend The Individual's Rights Protection Act.

I was also very pleased to see the Minister of Labour in his chair this afternoon, because in question period it seemed there was more than one definition of the concept inherent in Bill No. 201. Certainly I'll be most pleased if the minister will later rise in his place and comment with regard to the Bill, because I feel that at this time in our history with our experience with The Individual's Rights Protection Act, consideration should be made with regard to amendments that can adjust themselves to the needs of the times, and certainly to the needs of and the respect for human and individual rights in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill 201 what I would first like to do is look back at the origin and introduction of Bill 201. In 1972, Mr. Ron Ghitter, the former Member for Calgary Buffalo, introduced and sponsored the Bill in this Assembly. At that time he was asked by the Assembly whether the Act would make it illegal for a person to initiate a plan designed specifically to aid a particular race. It was one of the questions raised in the Assembly at that time. I would like to read Mr. Ghitter's response to that question:

... it would be doubtful ... firstly, that anybody would complain.

Then he added:

I'm sure that if that were referred to the Human Rights Branch, they would take that on an understanding basis and not be too worried about it. I can't see that this act would really stand too much in the way of a situation like that.

We can read that in *Hansard* of November 20, 1972.

But as time has gone by, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo at that time was not correct. There have been complaints. In February of this year, a board of inquiry held that the strict reading of The Individual's Rights Protection Act forbids affirmative action, which is the basic concept we want to discuss in Bill 201. They said that the strict reading of the Act forbids affirmative action which can be construed as discrimination on the basis of race or color. It followed then that in a majority decision the board held that the University of Calgary discriminated unfairly against this young lady, Marlene Bloedel, when it denied her entrance to a business course on the Hobbema reserve while accepting native students with lower grades than hers. If we refer to an article in the *Edmonton Journal* of February 12, 1980, that particular item is explained in full and indicates the content of the decision.

Working from the assumption that affirmative action is illegal under The Individual's Rights Protection Act, the Human Rights Commission gave top priority to its recommendation that the Act be permitted to allow affirmative action. That was one of their top priority recommendations because of the concern and the experience they had had in the past.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 201, which would permit voluntary affirmative action, is, in my mind, most necessary to rectify a very apparent accidental exclusion of a provision for affirmative action in the 1972 Bill.

Now let me talk a bit about Bill 201 before us in the Legislature. Bill 201 is an enabling piece of legislation; that is, it would permit affirmative action on a voluntary basis. It would not require it. I think that's a most important concept in Bill 201. It would allow an employer, landlord, or educational institution to set up a special program on behalf of a disadvantaged group when that program would benefit the community as a whole. Mr. Speaker, that is the basic intent of Bill 201. It's voluntary, it would relate to disadvantaged groups, but it would help the community as a whole. I think that is very sound. Then why Bill 201? Why is it necessary and important?

There are three reasons that I think are significant. Firstly, it clearly states that affirmative action is allowed under The Individual's Rights Protection Act. At present no one, including the government of Alberta or any other body, is certain whether affirmative action is illegal or not. It is not clear. For example, the Bloedel decision suggests that affirmative action is illegal. But if we look at the decision of the board of inquiry, it was not unanimous.

Secondly, our Minister responsible for Personnel Administration, in a statement I saw quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* — and hopefully that is as accurate as can be — was not sure whether his department's recent plan to review the government's hiring policy to ensure that natives are given equal employment opportunities is actually legal. In a quote from the *Journal*, March 21, 1980, the minister was "not sure whether the program is legal", to support my initial point which indicates that we are not sure. I'm saying, let's put it into the legislation, into the Act, as an amendment and be sure as lawmakers in the province of Alberta.

I'd like to cite a third example as well. I note this in a clipping from the *Alberta Report*, February 15, 1980, [about] judges reserving ruling. It comments with regard to the Alsands project: in recommending that the government approve the Alsands project, the Energy Resources Conservation Board refused to make the permit contingent on a commitment by Alsands to hire local natives. The ERCB noted that the policy might be illegal under The Individual's Rights Protection Act, and they were concerned. The issue is being decided before the Alberta Court of Appeal.

So, Mr. Speaker, the point I wish to make is that I think it should be clarified whether affirmative action is legal or illegal at present.

There are two further reasons I think Bill 201 should be passed by this Legislature. Even if we make the assumption that affirmative action is legal under the Act as it now stands, there are no criteria for distinguishing between good and bad special kinds of programs for the disadvantaged whom we, an employer, or some volunteer group such as the Calgary Chamber of Commerce may wish to help.

In Bill 201, which is before you, there are criteria which clarify that particular aspect. First, a special program must seek to overcome disadvantages which arise from discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, color, sex, age, ancestry, or place of origin. Second, the special program must result in a net benefit to the whole community. This provision is important because it answers the objection that affirmative action on behalf of one group may impose disadvantages on other groups in

that particular community.

Let me give you an example. If a large employer in an isolated community wanted to hire only natives and this would cause substantial unemployment with remaining white persons in the community, the program would not be allowed since, on balance, it would not benefit the whole community. That's how Bill 201 would be interpreted. So the employer would have to revise his plan so that he encouraged native employment without excluding all other local people in that respective community. Bill 201 requires the Human Rights Commission to look at a proposed special program in the context of the entire community. That, as well, is a very important aspect of Bill 201.

What is a third important provision of Bill 201? It provides a mechanism for determining in advance whether a special program is permitted under The Individual's Rights Protection Act. It gives notice as to whether or not the program will take place. As long as there is no way of knowing whether a proposed special program is legal, any employers interested in helping disadvantaged groups will be discouraged by the possibility that their benevolence will be repaid by a complaint to the Human Rights Commission. It will take great courage for an employer to proceed with a special program as long as it remains in this ambiguous state of affairs.

Why then is affirmative action sometimes very necessary? A period of voluntary affirmative action may be necessary to overcome extensive and entrenched disadvantages based on unfair discrimination. The intent of The Individual's Rights Protection Act, with which I'm sure we're all familiar, is to foster the voluntary acceptance of the principle that the dignity and rights of all people are equal. However, severe and entrenched discrimination against one group cannot be overcome by a simple decree. Treating groups that begin from very unequal positions with literal equality only maintains and reinforces those inequalities that do exist.

Let me give you an example. I think native education is one of the best I could use at this time. In 1978 Alberta's ratio of status Indian graduates of postsecondary institutions to total status Indians was the worst in Canada. At that time we had one graduate per 850 status Indians. This was the time, 1972, when the University of Calgary initiated its special program for native people. At that time, the university had had only one native graduate in its entire history. If we examine their statistics, seven years later, in 1979, there were 30 native graduates from the University of Calgary. That's a significant record. During this year at that university there are 63 natives enrolled — enrolled, we feel, because of the special consideration given toward that program.

Similarly, the culture shock, alienation, and discrimination that native children felt when placed in a white school system resulted in very high drop-out rates. The drop-out rate of students at the plains Indian cultural school, which has a curriculum designed for native students and is open only to native children, is lower than that of native students in white schools. This can be supported by statistical and scientific research. A University of Alberta program to train native teachers has assisted greatly in training teachers who can relate to native students. Both these programs depend on certain insulation from the white educational system for their success. Without them, native students would doubtless remain at a very low and unacceptable level in our communities. I would say, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure we all agree, that an inadequate education is one of the worst disadvan-

tages any person can suffer, whether native or anyone else.

One other question raised with regard to the concept in Bill 201 is: if it's so good, why not make it mandatory? Why not make it mandatory rather than voluntary? I'd like to cite three reasons that I think we should use the voluntary approach with regard to affirmative action.

First of all, I believe people must want to overcome unfair discrimination before affirmative action can work. People must recognize an unjust, unfair situation, and commit themselves willingly and voluntarily to overcoming that situation. I'm sure the situation can work itself out where there's good will and co-operation. If there is a forced situation, if people are forced to do certain kinds of things, I'm sure the process will not work. That's one reason I support the voluntary approach.

Secondly, I don't agree with the concept of quotas, which foster the belief that a person has a job or a position only because that person has certain disadvantaged characteristics, such as being a female, a native, or over 45. These are some of the reasons people are put into special categories. Mr. Speaker, I think the best way to overcome prejudice with regard to such items is by demonstrating that historically disadvantaged persons have as many merits as other persons when they are given the same opportunities as others.

What is my third reason for supporting the concept of the voluntary approach to affirmative action? Affirmative action provides a positive approach to problems arising from discrimination. It allows individual employers, landlords, and educational institutions to take the initiative in solving problems arising from discrimination. It also allows disadvantaged groups who know and understand their problems the best to act on their own behalf. I feel that Bill 201 meets the genuine needs of disadvantaged groups without forcing more government regulation on the general public. The voluntary aspect is key in that discussion.

Mr. Speaker, what are some of the other objections we should look at? Some people may argue that Bill 201 will erode individual rights by forcing minority groups on employers, landlords, and educational institutions. But Bill 201 does not do this. It does not require anyone to practice affirmative action. The actions are voluntary. Even if an employer, a landlord, or an educational institution opts for affirmative action, it is still justified in taking *bonafide* considerations into account. No one will force an employer to hire an unqualified person for a job, or force a landlord to accept a tenant with a poor credit rating.

Bill 201 neither gives new rights nor takes any rights away. It does allow some groups who now have unenforceable rights to enforce their own rights. It is pointless to have a right to fair hiring practices when a person has been denied the adequate education which would make him a reasonable candidate for a respective job. Voluntary affirmative action will allow disadvantaged groups to share in advantages that allow them to contribute most effectively to the whole society.

Other people might argue that any kind of discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, color, sex, age, ancestry, or place of origin is wrong. I think that such people are ignoring the difference between the concept of prejudice and the concept of discrimination. Clearly prejudicing a group collectively is wrong. But surely some forms of discrimination in our society are good. For instance, the ability of a person to discriminate between good literature and bad literature: what's wrong with

that? I think it's the mark of a well-educated person. I'd also argue that positive discrimination with the intent of overcoming a historically unjust situation can be good as long as, on balance, it is advantageous to the community at large.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, people argue, rightly I think, that quotas are counterproductive. I've already mentioned what I'm not in favor of the quota system.

Let me summarize what Bill does and what I feel it does not do. Bill 201 would permit voluntary affirmative action on behalf of certain historically disadvantaged groups in the province of Alberta. The irony of the present situation is that the only groups in Alberta who are not eligible for special programs are those who have been recognized by the government to have been discriminated against most badly — that is, those groups who are covered by The Individual's Rights Protection Act at the present time. For example, as long as the handicapped fail in their bid to have discrimination on the basis of mental and physical handicaps included in the Act as unlawful, they can be discriminated against with impunity in the time ahead. However, they can have all the special programs they want. If they were to succeed, they could not be legally discriminated against, but neither could they have special programs to overcome the disadvantages arising from the historical discrimination they have against them at the present time. Mr. Speaker, to me this situation is not rational.

In closing, I would certainly urge all Members of the Legislative Assembly to support Bill 201, and allow the disadvantaged groups of this province affected by The Individual's Rights Protection Act an opportunity to participate fully in Alberta society and to contribute to the society to the best of their abilities. To quote George Eliot: What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to support this concept. I feel it can be of great benefit to all our citizens. I had a great desire today to request that, by unanimous consent, we vote on second reading of Bill 201. However, I felt that with the minister's remarks in question period, with his good intent to bring legislative amendments before this Assembly, one of the amendments from the government may be with regard to the concepts of Bill 201. I'm not going to ask for that vote unless it comes by the natural processes of the Assembly. I leave with confidence that the minister will, one, support the concept and, two, if there is any mechanism by which the government can take this as a government Bill, I would be most happy if they would do so.

Thank you.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make comments with regard to Bill 201. First of all, I have known the sponsor of the Bill for some time. I think I recognize the motivation of the hon. member in wanting to do things for his fellow man that he doesn't perceive other people in Alberta are doing. About 11 years ago I had the opportunity, when the hon. sponsor of the Bill was a member of the Executive Council of the previous government — and I must say I was indeed impressed with the empathy he had for certain groups of people in those days, albeit they were, even at that time, the disadvantaged.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with Bill 201, it might be appropriate to take a few minutes to look at where we've been in the province of Alberta, where we are at this point in time, and where we're going or — to listen to Bill

201 — where we should go.

I think all members recall that until we adjourned last fall, on the west wall of this Legislature we had The Alberta Bill of Rights carved in wood. It's out now, I understand, because the tempers here flare so often that they remove the humidity and it tends to crack. They've taken it out, but they promise it'll be back, just so members don't think it was removed purposely for this debate. I think it's just as important today as it was back in the days of '69, '70, and into '71, when a leader of a political party in this province campaigned around the province on the rights of individuals and the disadvantaged.

Mr. Speaker, it's probably worth while just to take a minute to review how we got to where we are today. Do members in the House think we're either ahead of or behind other jurisdictions in terms of this type of legislation? Let's take a minute and review.

The first Bill introduced by the government elected in 1971 under Peter Lougheed, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of this province, was The Alberta Bill of Rights. No other province had done that at that time; this was the first province. Granted, it appeared to be modelled after the Canadian Bill of Rights, introduced by Mr. Diefenbaker's government earlier. But I suggest it was the government, newly elected in 1971 and here today, which brought in that legislation. Perhaps it might be wise for me to recite how I interpret The Alberta Bill of Rights and how it led to its companion Bill, the one the hon. Member for Little Bow wants to amend today.

The Bill of Rights is really a move by the people of a province, in this case Alberta, who elected a government essentially to protect their rights. In very strong terms, The Alberta Bill of Rights prohibits this Legislative Assembly from enacting any Bill or statute that would infringe on the rights of the individual, without there being a special "notwithstanding" section in that Act. I think that is very important for us to remember, Mr. Speaker, because there are times when legislatures in their anxieties and the heat of the moment pass legislation they believe to be in the best interests of their citizens, only to discover later — and perhaps repent at their leisure — that they have in some way infringed on the rights of individuals within their jurisdiction.

That was Bill No. 1. Bill No. 2, essentially a companion Bill, was The Individual's Rights Protection Act. That too was passed in 1972. As the hon. Member for Little Bow says, the sponsor of that Bill was the former Member for Calgary Buffalo, well known, I think, to most of us — albeit he's a lawyer — as a champion of the little man in Alberta. [laughter] I've read parts of that debate the Member for Little Bow refers to. Even to this day it makes exceptionally good reading when one considers the amount of time and effort that went into debate in this Assembly on passing The Individual's Rights Protection Act.

The major difference between The Alberta Bill of Rights and The Individual's Rights Protection Act is that while the Bill of Rights really protects the citizen from the state or the Legislature as it were, in terms of passing statutes that affect their rights, The Individual's Rights Protection Act protects the citizens of Alberta from their fellow man — essentially acts of prejudice. I suppose, and referred to by the Member for Little Bow. In my opinion that's extremely difficult to do, but The Individual's Rights Protection Act has attempted to do that. It's attempted to do that by what's known as grounds of discrimination.

I believe all members are familiar with it, Mr. Speaker; perhaps I should just remind them. It is illegal or unlawful — I'm never clear on which way to use that term — to discriminate on the basis of any of the following: "race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, . . . ancestry or place of origin". There are groups who would like to see that expanded by perhaps another four or five. Presently, Mr. Speaker, it is against the law — I guess that's essentially the way you say it — to forbid to do certain things like hire, rent, and so on using those grounds. If you do, you're subject to the long arm of the law.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in a perfect society we would not need The Individual's Rights Protection Act. Perhaps one could extrapolate and say in an ideal society we wouldn't need governments. It's purely and simply because people are prejudiced and prejudicial to others that The Individual's Rights Protection Act was brought in.

Now, with that Bill, Mr. Speaker, there had to be an operative section. You just can't have a statute out there without somebody to look after it. With that came the appointment of the Alberta Human Rights Commission. As hon. members know, each year they table their annual report before this House, and each year they make observations in that report. I for one have been impressed with the function of the Alberta Human Rights Commission over the years. There are those who say, and that's their opinion, I suppose, that the Human Rights Commission has essentially been a eunuch in that it doesn't have any powers. But I suggest that the sole purpose of the commission was really to be an agency that would listen to people's concerns, consider them, and attempt to negotiate a settlement in much the same way the director of The Unfair Trade Practices Act under the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs attempts, perhaps successfully at times.

Of course, when you attempt to conciliate and negotiate you are not always successful. So there is obviously some enforcement in the Human Rights Commission's terms of reference. I hear the arguments each year that teeth should be put in that Act so they could do more, but I suggest that's a matter for another debate.

What the Member for Little Bow is suggesting to us today, however, is that we should amend the Act to allow affirmative action, known by other names as positive discrimination or reverse discrimination. There is a variety of names. I'm neither qualified nor prepared to debate the history of the human rights movement in America, but it's been very closely allied to that. I think most members who have read the history of the American experience with positive discrimination are somewhat nervous about seeing it adopted.

Well, here we are eight years later, in 1980. Alberta was the first to bring this legislation in. Other provinces followed, and affirmative action or positive discrimination today essentially exists — because I'm not that familiar with the workings of it — in all provinces of Canada except Alberta and Quebec. So I suppose one would logically ask oneself why.

I think we have to go back to the intent, and there we get to the thoughts, morals, and prejudices of people. Can we hope to put into legislation an Act that will compel co-operation and positive thoughts by citizens? Can we put that into legislation so it is going to be done in fact? I must say I am a little bit intrigued by the unique suggestion of the Member for Little Bow of the word "voluntary". In what I've experienced, I think it's a new wrinkle not to have an advocate who would have procedures at

his disposal to enforce affirmative action. That is a new approach to me.

When I think of the minority groups and the disadvantaged, right away I can't help thinking of people like the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower and the 10 per cent of Canadians who are left-handed. When I look at the way they struggle in writing notes, the way they struggle in attempting to dial telephones, I begin to understand . . .

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I'm a left-hander and I have no problem dialing a telephone or writing a note or anything. [laughter]

MR. GOGO: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, I have to choose another example. It's just as well they invented the touch-tone telephone.

But seriously, where do you draw the line with disadvantaged people? Are left-handers in effect disadvantaged? When one looks at how things are done and the utensils made available for them — I don't really want to mention can openers, but I've seen hon. ministers attempting to open things with their left hand with a can opener, and it's extremely difficult, not to mention skill saws or a variety of things.

Mr. Speaker, I guess what I'm saying in effect is that the answer to the proposal by the Member for Little Bow is not as simple as it sounds. It sounds to me like an extremely good idea, and I wonder where the catches are. Are the catches in that we would find there are many more disadvantaged groups of people? There's no question in my mind, as the Member for Lethbridge West — when I look at the largest Indian reserve in Canada, the Blood Reserve, where about 80 to 85 per cent are unemployed, I say to myself: is it right that that group should be receiving social assistance or welfare or whatever on an ongoing basis when we see all around us developing projects, such as the coal industry, which could perhaps employ those people and end that way of life? Why don't we do it? And I suggest it sends us a message: why don't we do things to encourage that type of affirmative action?

I say to myself, there are obviously jobs out there which can be done by many people, but somebody has said they require grade 12, whereas 10 years ago someone with grade 3 could have done them. Arbitrarily they've set a figure. Well, I think it goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that when a particular group of people — and I would use Hutterites as an example — has not been to university, you automatically exclude that entire group from participation in a particular sector of the economy. I think that's what the hon. Member for Little Bow is saying.

I must say I'm very intrigued by the word "voluntary". I really haven't had time to think that through. But I've only been in this Legislature for five years. If it's taught me anything, Mr. Speaker, it's taught me to be cautious. Some would say it hasn't taught me that. It's taught me to be very cautious. When I look at the proposed amendment, I look at it in relation to The Individual's Rights Protection Act. In the amendment I see similar terms, but also different terms used. The one that intrigues me very much is "by improving opportunities respecting goods". Now I understand "services, accommodation and or employment", but I don't understand the word "goods". I would have to look at that in much greater depth.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I applaud the motivation

of the hon. Member for Little Bow in wanting to determine with some degree of finality something that's in many people's minds; that is, are the merits of affirmative action positive enough today that this Legislature should adopt them? I don't know how to answer that. I do suggest that members seriously consider the adjective the hon. member has added, and that's "voluntary". I think that presents to the government of Alberta some serious, challenging opportunities. I know the Minister of Labour, along with other people in this House, has listened to many groups in Alberta who have come to us with changes in grounds for discrimination. As we enter the 1980s, the one that appears to me to bear some degree of improvement to many disadvantaged people in our community is positive discrimination or affirmative action programs.

So I would encourage members to look very closely at the Bill. It appears to me to merit some support, but I would caution members about voting in favor of it until they've looked at it much more closely.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate the hon. Member for Little Bow for his concern, expressed quite eloquently, for those individuals and groups who are regarded as underprivileged and disadvantaged. I'm sure all members of this Assembly share that concern. For many of us it may indeed have been one of the reasons we got into active politics and why we are here. In my own case it certainly was a major factor in that decision.

On several occasions I've expressed in this Assembly the opinion that whereas I really disagree with the idea that governments can do things better than individuals, and I disagree with the socialist principle that if big government is good, bigger government is better, I do feel there is a place for government, and one of the real places is to look after those who for varying reasons cannot take a full part in society. It's that philosophy of government involvement, to protect those who require protection or to look after the disadvantaged, that has led to the development of civil rights, individual rights legislation. The belief in government involvement leads one quite easily to that type of legislation. It is a matter of history, as expressed by the Member for Lethbridge West, that this particular government gave tremendous priority to that type of legislation when it was first elected.

The Individual's Rights Protection Act was second only because it had slightly less priority than The Alberta Bill of Rights. But it was only a numerical and time priority; it was not a priority of philosophy, because the two are quite intertwined. I think the priority these two Bills had for the Premier and for his first caucus and government is indicative of the true concern for individuals and their benefits that has led to the social service legislation this government has introduced over the last eight years. It is indicative of a concern that the Premier expressed so well in his campaigns, and which I think most people who have sat in this Legislature over the last two decades have expressed as civil rights legislation developed elsewhere in the world.

There's an interesting emphasis in both of these Bills, an emphasis that I believe is still unique; it was certainly unique when they were introduced and passed by this Legislature. They hold primacy over all other legislation unless this Legislature very specifically gives any statute exemption. Otherwise these two Bills have primacy. I do think that is still unique, but I am open to correction.

To discuss The Individual's Rights Protection Act I think one has to consider the words we are using: firstly, "discrimination", and the somewhat catchall phrase "affirmative action". When you try to define affirmative action, as the Minister of Labour already expressed during the question period this afternoon, you very rapidly learn that to many people it means many different things. It is almost undefinable. I think for that reason most of us try to avoid it when we are discussing the concept with constituents and other concerned people. It's a phrase you can use and very easily be misunderstood or misconstrued.

The definition of "discrimination" is almost as bad, because we are not talking about finite concepts; we're not talking about something that can be measured. We're talking about opinions and attitudes, the opinions and attitudes of many people, and those people are different. Because of various backgrounds, their attitudes and opinions are just as different as they are.

We end up dealing inevitably with what is termed "prejudice". That word defines itself by its Latin roots. It means that instead of taking somebody for what they are, for what they as an individual have become, you take them with prejudice; you judge them in advance. You decide what they are before you even know them, who they are, what their capabilities are, what their attitude to law and order may be, or even what their education can be.

The word "prejudice" has done more historically to slow the development of the human race than any other single word. If one looks at this continent, the prejudice that has been held against varying groups coming to this country — sometimes against the French, sometimes against the Ukrainians, sometimes against the Hutterites, and, mostly south of the border, against those whose skin is a different colour, but also in this country during the Second World War against a group of Canadians who happened to be Mongolian in origin — when one looks at prejudice and the effects it has had on the development of freedom in this country, one has to give due pause and concern to what can happen as a result of prejudice.

It's of interest that in the two Acts I've been discussing the word "discrimination" is not defined. I like to think, and I believe, that the lack of a definition was that any definition would, of itself, restrict and confine the use of the legislation. When things are defined, we tend to regard those definitions as finite, and as I've said, discrimination is not a finite concept. It has varied historically, as we know, from the discrimination against individuals or races, which reached its peak in western Europe in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

It's a word which even in dictionaries has been defined in three ways. We can talk about discrimination as a positive entity. We talk about somebody who can discriminate, in the idea of discernment of quality. We can talk about it in a neutral fashion, where one is just making a decision, discriminating between a blue ball or a red ball for a child. It's a completely neutral concept. Or, of course, we can use the word the way it has been used and which has resulted in legislation of this type.

There is direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination was that type originally covered by all legislation of this type. It said that one cannot discriminate against someone because of their race, color, creed, or the other factors that have been used. Once that type was dealt with, there was the indirect type of discrimination, mentioned by the Member for Lethbridge West, where by setting standards one may either wittingly or unwittingly

also indulge in discrimination.

If you take a community which is largely Indian or Negro and has a lower level of education for that particular section of society and an employer says, I require grade 12 education, one has to look at why he needs it. If he has a complex chemical plant and wants to be able to promote people through that plant, it may well be that anybody entering it really does require grade 12. But if he's doing it just on the basis of an unthinking setting of high levels of education for employment, and if the employment is in fact of a very basic nature, it may be that requiring grade 12 education is just as discriminatory as to say, I will not employ Indians or Negroes.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, there has been an evolution in the concept of discrimination. It was perhaps for that reason and the non-finite nature of the word that in The Individual's Rights Protection Act the Alberta Human Rights Commission was part of the legislation. The commission has given the Act the flexibility that is required because of the very nature of discrimination. I think that over the years the members of that commission certainly deserve the thanks of the people of Alberta for the way they have dealt, so far reasonably successfully, with discrimination in this province.

If any criticism can be levelled at the succeeding members of that commission, it is that rather than having followed the fullest, broad philosophy behind the Act, if anything they have tended to be inhibited by legal opinions and legalistic frameworks that have suggested, perhaps wrongly, that the Act does prevent special programs for the benefit of particular groups in society. It's not really a criticism that most of the people who have served on that commission have had no legal training. Like most of us who are not lawyers, we tend to be inhibited by legal argument. It always seems so definite until you get two lawyers and find you have two definites, and they're not the same. [interjections] The lawyers are for it, aren't they?

Mr. Speaker, there is a whole spectrum of discrimination, and one can use the word as I was defining it from the dictionary. There is the evil, bad form of discrimination which these Acts are meant essentially to prohibit and to legislate against. That's one end of the spectrum. At the other end of the spectrum one has the other type of discrimination, sometimes referred to as positive discrimination, where one introduces programs or legislation which are so one-sided for the benefit of a minority group that in actual fact they can discriminate against the majority. That may be just as bad a concept of discrimination as the other one. One has to be careful that one does not introduce such favorable programs for a specific group that another group suffers as a result. In the centre of the spectrum — I suppose one might say, from the orange to the blue — is the relatively wide range that I think The Individual's Rights Protection Act covers, that range where one does not have to treat people absolutely equally. One can treat them somewhat differently, but can give the equality of opportunity that is the main aim of that Act.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the vast majority of Albertans believe in equality of opportunity. In actual fact it is the purpose of the Act. I like to think that I can assure the Member for Little Bow that because of the commitment of this government and this Assembly, at this time in our history there is no doubt that the legislation in this Assembly will always make sure there is that equality of opportunity. At this time in our history we will make sure that the equality of opportunity we all desire does, as far

as possible, exist in the province of Alberta.

In view of the hour, Mr. Speaker, I think I would like to adjourn the debate.

[Motion carried]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is not proposed that the House sit this evening. By way of government busi-

ness tomorrow, I wish to advise members of the Assembly that we will proceed with third reading of Bill No. 15, The Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1980, then to royal assent of same, and then proceed with the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

[At 5:26 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

