

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, April 24, 1980 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Assembly copies of the nine communiques from the 1980 western premiers' conference just concluded yesterday in Lethbridge.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm tabling the report of the special committee of the Legislative Assembly to consider the appointment or reappointment of the Chief Electoral Officer. This has already been circulated to all members.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

DR. McCRIMMON: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 68 grade 6 students from the Rimbey elementary school. They're accompanied by their group leader Mr. Marshall; teachers Mr. Stemo and Mr. Moore; and also Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Ulveland, and Mrs. Nowicki. They're in the members gallery. I'd ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, may I please introduce to you, and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, a class of grade 6 students from Logos Christian school in Calgary. Logos Christian school is unique in that it's the only [private] school in North America funded by a public school board. This is its first year in operation in Calgary. It has moved into the Sunalta school, which was scheduled for closure last year. The school has been well used by the students. I ask them all now to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 28 grades 5 and 6 students from the Kehewin school in the Bonnyville constituency. They are accompanied today by their principal Mr. Jim Hawkins, one of their teachers Mr. John McKay, and their bus driver Mr. Glen Badger, who is an education student at Concordia College. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, a good friend of Alberta and a gentleman well known throughout Canada: Mr. Don Stewart. He holds two particular positions: elected representative for the Northwest Territories Council, and mayor of the town of Hay River. I would ask Mr. Stewart to rise and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislature, a very distinguished gentleman from Prince Edward Island, the Hon. Leo Rossiter, Minister of Fisheries. He is accompanied by his brother Al Rossiter, who is a distinguished oil man from Calgary. I would ask that they stand and be recognized by the Legislature.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Nurses' Strike

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Can the Premier indicate what discussion he has had with the United Nurses of Alberta since he returned from Lethbridge?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had any such discussion. Those matters are under the purview of the responsibility of the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Can the Premier indicate at this time if he will be directly involved with the two disputants in the strike we have before us?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I have no present intention of such involvement. It certainly hasn't been something that would involve the office of the Premier. But I have just returned from Lethbridge and would have to assess developments over the course of the next few days.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. In light of the fact that in the emergency debate yesterday we had no participation by government backbenchers, can the Premier indicate what representation he has received from his government backbenchers on the matter of the nurses' strike since he returned from Lethbridge?

MR. SPEAKER: It would take a very considerable stretch of the imagination to say that the official duties of the Premier of our province would include reporting on discussions with upperbenchers.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, maybe it wouldn't take him long to answer that question.

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. What review of the collective bargaining process involving nurses will the Premier undertake, in light of the fact that Section 163 of the Labour Act has been invoked twice in the last three years?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I think that's a question you would have to deal with in the normal course of events by way of debate. I don't think there's any useful comment I can make at this time.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Attorney General. Have legal counsel for the government concluded their consideration of the documents filed by the United Nurses of Alberta at this time? Has that counsel been received by the minister?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday that certain documents relative to the dispute involving the United Nurses of Alberta and the Alberta Hospital

Association had indeed been served upon the government, and that they were under consideration at that time. A consideration of the remedies claimed in that document served on us yesterday has been completed. The government's response is still under consideration.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. In light of the minister's statement yesterday about the emergent situation in the province, can the minister give the House information as to what utilization we have of facilities, especially in Edmonton at the Glenrose and at the University Hospital, as it applies to the emergency situation?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, both of those hospitals are provincial hospitals and as such are not involved in the strike. The Camsell hospital is a federal hospital and is also not involved. So the facilities at those institutions are being used to take the emergency and intensive-care patients, as needed, as loads from the other hospitals.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to indicate that many of the beds in those two facilities are not being used at present?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, without referring to my files, I can't. But I suspect that would be the case.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, first to the hon. Attorney General. The Attorney General indicated that the Alberta government's review of the United Nurses document is still under way. Is the Attorney General in a position to be any more specific as to when the hearing could be held? Because if both sides agree, the hearing could be held somewhat before the normal time. Yesterday I believe the Attorney General indicated: possibly tomorrow. Is the hon. minister in a position to advise whether we would be able to meet that timetable, so the question could be heard more quickly?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I should clarify one thing with regard to the answer I gave. I think the hon. member may have heard me wrong. I indicated that the review of the document served upon the government had in fact been completed, and that what was under consideration was what the government's response should be.

In answer to the specific question, I think it is still possible that the matter could be resolved in a very short time frame, potentially as soon as tomorrow.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. In view of the emergency throughout the province, is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether it is correct that at the Foothills hospital elective surgery is still proceeding, in view of the pressures on intensive care services?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I believe that's the case, that elective surgery was discontinued some time ago in all major hospitals throughout the province. But I hesitate to say that, and want to qualify it because there may be some exceptions of which I'm not aware.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Perhaps the minister misunderstood my question. It wasn't elective care being discontinued, which I think most people would assume would be the case. It was

whether, as I am given to understand, elective surgery is still taking place at the Foothills hospital, in view of the pressures on intensive care services.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how to answer that question. There may be some procedures being carried out that do fall into that category. But generally speaking, elective procedures were discontinued some time ago. When I say that, there may be instances involving what they call outpatient or day-hospital services that would fall into the category to which the hon. member is alluding.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly today where things stand on the department's investigation of a letter the minister received from the United Nurses of Alberta on December 28, 1979, indicating a number of serious and dangerous practices in Alberta hospitals as a consequence of the union's position that there were severe restraints? My question is: in view of the minister's response that this would be investigated, is the minister in a position today to advise the Assembly whether that investigation has been completed, and what the results of the investigation were?

MR. RUSSELL: I'll take notice of that question and report back, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Is the minister in a position to indicate if he has received any resignations from the United Nurses of Alberta, the RNs, or if any of the hospital administrators in the province have received resignations?

MR. RUSSELL: I'm not aware of any, Mr. Speaker. The only reports we have to date are that a considerable number of application forms for resignation are being picked up.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Has the minister had any representation as to the Alberta Medical Association's stand as it relates to its support of the UNA?

MR. RUSSELL: I haven't heard from any members of the executive of the AMA during this dispute, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, just for the minister's information, there's a document I would like him to look at — medical doctors, some of them supporting the nurses.

Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary question to the minister. In light of the fact that we are in a strike situation at this time, last week I asked the minister what contingency plans were in place to look after an emergency. Is the minister in a position to indicate at this time what contingency plans are in place to look after the emergency situation in the province?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are now in that situation, and the system is functioning. I don't know where the hon. member has been this last week if he doesn't realize that.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, according to the headline in the paper yesterday, it doesn't seem to be functioning too well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: in light of the fact that an emergency does exist, can the minister indicate at this time what studies he has in place as to when the situation may come where hospitals presently working will not be able to function?

MR. RUSSELL: The hon. member is really dealing with the crux of the situation now, Mr. Speaker. That's a situation that is changing from hour to hour, and in different ways throughout the province. As the hon. member is aware, some hospitals in rural Alberta are closing down. A couple of others that closed have opened up again. Patient distribution in some of the major metropolitan hospitals is shifting to meet the increasing pressures. I can supplement that by giving, I suppose, some detailed reports with respect to various kinds of patients who are now not able to receive the kind of treatment they ought to. We're into that phase of the situation at the present time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care or the hon. Minister of Labour. This flows from the minister's statement yesterday that he hoped to be able to recruit nurses to the province of Alberta. Is either hon. gentleman able to advise the Assembly today whether the government of Alberta has been able to assess what the implications will be of the pending settlement in the province of Saskatchewan, which I believe is based on a 32 per cent increase?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that that is correctly identified as pending. Perhaps "pending" is not correct; I should say it's a memorandum of agreement, more correctly expressed. Presuming that it may be a settlement at some point, I don't know how we could evaluate at this time the significance of that in terms of the supply of nurses in Alberta. First of all, it isn't a fact; and even if it were a fact, the question of the flow of people across this country is pretty much an individual option. All the prognostications I've ever looked at, of demand and supply and the motivations of people to move to an area, are generally not very precise. So I don't see that it would be possible to have, with any precision, any anticipation of what that settlement might mean.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It really flows from the minister's statement in the Hansard [Blues] yesterday. What specific studies have been undertaken by the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care to lead the government to the conclusion, in view of the general shortage of nurses across the country and the rather uncompetitive position of Alberta as far as salaries are concerned, that in fact we can recruit nurses from other parts of Canada?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, this is a continuing activity that I think goes on throughout all provinces all the time. In reading various professional journals, I think the advertisements placed in those journals by different hos-

pital boards in all provinces would indicate that that's what's happening. Of course people in any locale make their own career decisions for a variety of reasons, and the thrust of a hospital board's advertising is to try to attract people who may become interested in coming to Alberta for whatever reason to seek employment with their particular hospital board. It's not a special kind of program; it goes on all the time, and it's conducted by the employers, the various hospital boards throughout Alberta.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I just have one final supplementary question. This is to the hon. Attorney General again. I'd like to be clear on the government's position on the UNA's contest with respect to Section 163 of the Labour Act. What is the impediment that would in fact make it impossible to meet the hoped-for deadline tomorrow? I'd like to be a little more certain as to whether there is a serious technical problem, or whether it is still a question of the government itself reviewing its position vis-a-vis the UNA's decision to contest the implications of Section 163 of the Labour Act and the government's back to [work] order pursuant to that.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I did not use the word "impediment". I indicated that the good prospects were that the matter could indeed be heard by tomorrow. But I hope that hon. members appreciate that the issues raised are extensive. Even though the one that has been the subject of much discussion here — that is, in the sense of the Executive Council order made on Monday — is one of those issues, I don't think it's possible to assess a legal proceeding without looking at the other points that have also been raised.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. Our emergency debate yesterday had as its thrust the hope for voluntary settlement. Since our debate yesterday, I was wondering whether the minister has had any opportunity to discuss any matters with the two parties. Has any communication gone on that we should be aware of at this point in time?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I think I should best respond to that by indicating, as has appeared in a public statement, that Mr. Renouf of the United Nurses of Alberta has said he's always available to participate at the bargaining table; I'm not sure on what conditions. My understanding is that there may be an effort on the part of the Department of Labour to endeavor to determine on what conditions he's interested in participating at the bargaining table.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. The late President Truman had a sign, the buck-passing stops here.

MR. SPEAKER: Might I pick up that theme and say that perhaps the supplementaries might also stop here. [interjections]

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, directly to the Premier. In light of the fact that the possibility to bring the two sides together in negotiations is still open, can the Premier at this time reconsider his position and indicate to this Legislature if he will be personally and directly involved in bringing the two sides back to the bargaining table?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered that question earlier. I stated that as far as the way Executive Council operates, they have their portfolio responsibilities. I will continue to watch and monitor the situation, and if there's any way I can be of slight help in assisting the parties or the ministers responsible, I certainly will do so.

Forest Fires

DR. BUCK: I'd like to ask my second question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact the government doesn't put out political brush fires too well, I have a forest fire question for them.

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the associate minister responsible for forest management. In light of the high fire danger at this time, can the minister indicate what equipment and manpower we have in position to fight the serious forest fire situation in northern Alberta?

MR. MILLER: Forestry is under the Department of Energy and Natural Resources. I will take that question as notice and refer it to the minister when he returns.

Metis Settlements

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Premier. It flows from a commitment made by the Premier on Tuesday, June 19, with respect to a general, without-prejudice agreement between the Metis settlements association in the province of Alberta and the government of this province. Aside from the ministerial order several weeks ago setting up a joint committee, is the Premier in a position to report any progress in achieving a general, without-prejudice agreement, so that there can in fact be a recognition of the settlement councils and their role in this province?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly reaffirm that it's the policy objective of the government to work out such a without-prejudice settlement. But there is a matter of considerable detail there. I'm sure the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, who has responsibility, may wish to elaborate.

MR. BOGLE: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker. Because of the commitment made by the government early in its term that certain claims by representatives of Metis people living on settlements pertaining to ownership of mineral rights should not in any way be prejudiced by actions taken by the government, there was a general understanding at that time that no alterations would be made to either The Metis Betterment Act or the regulations therein.

One of the difficulties we have at the present time, Mr. Speaker, is that in order to recognize the Metis settlement councils on the eight Metis settlements as legitimate local government councils, certain amendments would have to be made to the legislation. Therefore, there has been great difficulty in allowing those councils to operate the same as other local governments would like to operate. By bending rules wherever possible, we have tried very hard to do just that: to recognize the settlement councils. Through co-operation and consultation with the settlement councils, we've also tried to work out a process whereby we may look at The Metis Betterment Act to determine what changes, if any, might be made to that legislation which would benefit Metis people and help in

the overall goal of the government of Alberta to assist the same in achieving a measure of responsibility that we feel they're entitled to.

The matter is a very complex one, Mr. Speaker, with legal entanglements. My colleague the hon. Attorney General may wish to comment further. But it is a process which is under way and ongoing. In addition to the conversations I've had personally with representatives in the settlements, many of my colleagues — the MLAs who represent those particular settlements and their councils — have had the same kinds of ongoing discussions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. It flows from the minister's commitment on June 19 last year with respect to the \$500 per capita municipal debt reduction payments. In light of the fact that other municipalities received this payment some eight months ago, what is the holdup in meeting the commitment the hon. minister gave the House on June 19 last year that settlements would in fact be receiving their municipal debt reduction payments?

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I guess the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview is not aware of the manner in which municipal debt reduction payments were handled in the Bill that was before this House, which clearly outlined that the \$500 per capita debt reduction payment would go to the municipal authority in every case.

Throughout this province we have some 350-odd municipalities, some of which are improvement districts which, under The Improvements Districts Act, are administered by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Others are Metis colonies which, under that legislation, are administered by the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. In fact, those payments did go to the proper place, and the commitments I made, that the member refers to, have been fully met.

MR. BOGLE: If I might supplement that answer, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding the fact that the funds have been put in a special trust account and are drawing interest, an offer has been made to the Metis settlements that although we cannot directly respond to a resolution passed by the settlement council, if the settlement council wishes to place a resolution before all the members of the settlement that would be dealt with in a plebiscite, and if the members of the settlement wish to have the moneys transferred to the settlement council, then we'll certainly comply with that.

A further request was made by the Federation of Metis Settlements that some assistance might be provided in terms of advising the members on the settlement of the ramifications of such a decision. I've responded positively to that. However, no formal request has been made to date by any of the eight Metis settlements that such a plebiscite should be held so that that decision might be made.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether this rather cumbersome procedure of plebiscites was a decision made by the minister and the government, or whether it was a decision made only on the specific advice of the government's legal counsel with respect to the minerals rights case?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, under the terms of The Metis Betterment Act, the minister responsible for the Act is to act as trustee. The suggestion of a plebiscite originated with the MLAs representing the Metis settlements throughout the province as a way that we might be able to respond as a government to legitimate concerns of the Metis settlements. The offer has been put forward in that light.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister, so there's no misunderstanding in the House. The government's decision to request that settlements in this province go the plebiscite route, then, is a political decision of the government, as opposed to a decision which the government has decided to follow as a specific consequence of seeking the advice of the government's legal counsel on the mineral rights claim?

MR. CRAWFORD: On a point of order. I think the hon. member would know that questioning with regard to legal advice provided, particularly in such a specific way, is extraordinary.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to the point of order, my understanding of the question is that it is directed to action which may or may not have arisen out of the legal advice, rather than to the legal advice itself.

DR. BUCK: Back to law school.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, that's precisely the purpose of the question. I would put the question again to the hon. minister.

MR. BOGLE: I think a key point for the hon. member asking the question to keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, is that it was not a request; it was an offer. If the settlements are satisfied that the funds should stay in the trust account and draw interest, as other municipalities have chosen to do, then they are perfectly entitled to do that. On the other hand, if there's a request on a particular settlement, on a combination of settlements, or on all the settlements that the fund should be transferred to the care and responsibility of the settlement council, then we will respond to that request, and it would be done in the manner of a plebiscite.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the hon. Attorney General or the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. This is with respect to the \$250,000 in surface rights settlements — not the mineral rights, which are subject to the dispute in court — that are owing not only to the settlement associations, but to individuals residing in the settlements. In view of the fact that some of these cases are now two or three years outstanding, is the hon. Attorney General in a position to advise the Assembly why it isn't possible at least to settle this question of the surface rights settlement as soon as possible?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the difficulty over the question of surface rights relates at least in part to the question of entering into agreements which are binding upon all the parties, given the legal and statutory situation the settlements are in. However, I have not personally reviewed that particular situation for some time, and for further detail I would have to take the matter as notice.

Western Premiers' Conference

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier, and concerns the western premiers' conference. The communiques from that conference tend to suggest that there was increasing consensus among the western premiers, notwithstanding possible political/philosophical differences, on major questions concerning western Canada. Could the Premier comment on whether a stronger consensus on the concerns facing western Canada is in fact developing among the four western provinces?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that is hard to answer in the general. I think the communiques are extensive; they deal with a variety of subjects. Certainly there are still some areas on which the western provinces are not in full accord, but I think the communiques indicate by their extent and breadth a wide degree of consensus on western issues relative to the federal state.

MR. KNAAK: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. The first communique dealt with the question of constitutional change. In fact, the first paragraph in the first communique stressed the need for a new constitution within Confederation. I would ask the Premier to comment on whether in fact that indicates a priority of the western premiers, and whether the western premiers discussed the possibility of hosting a constitutional conference in western Canada to initiate this kind of constitutional discussion.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, to the latter part of the question, the answer is no, we did not discuss that. The nature of the discussion on constitutional conferences was related to attempting to express to the people of Quebec the view that if they voted "no" in the referendum on May 20, there are other parts of Canada, particularly western Canada, urgently looking towards change and a new federalism.

Handicapped School — Calgary

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. Yesterday I asked the minister a question with regard to the Christine Meikle school, and the possibility of 40 students having neither a residence nor a training program available to them in September of 1980. I was wondering if the minister has reviewed that matter and could report at this time.

MR. BOGLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Calgary Public School Board has decided to discontinue school funding for individuals over the age of 18 at the Christine Meikle school, as of September 1, 1980. There will be approximately 44 students adversely affected by that decision. A meeting will take place the first week of May among officials from the Department of Social Services and Community Health, the school, and Calgary vocational services programming groups to look at alternatives for the 44 individuals who will be adversely affected by the decision of the public school board.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Will one of those alternatives explored be the possibility of expanding some of the adult training pro-

grams, and also the approved residences, so that the system does have the capability of taking care of these young people?

MR. BOGLE: The discussions which will take place, Mr. Speaker, will obviously centre around the 44 individuals who will be adversely affected. Certain recommendations will be made as to what needs to be put in place to assist those individuals. I can't prejudge exactly what that might entail. However, I will indicate that we want to ensure they are not left high and dry.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the minister. Would the minister give a commitment to me and to the Assembly to report back on this matter prior to the end of this sitting?

MR. BOGLE: I'll be pleased, Mr. Speaker, to give a status report during my estimates as to where the discussions are at that particular time. On the other hand, I don't want to leave the impression that there will automatically be a resolution of this matter by the end of this sitting, whenever it may be. The key is to ensure that, as of September 1, 1980, when the service will no longer be available at the Christine Meikle school, some adequate alternative is in place for the 44 individuals affected.

Crown Land Use

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife. It deals with the integrated resource management concept that the minister is responsible for. What progress is being made in the implementation of the concept across the province?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I would have to say this is probably one of the most important ideas that has ever been presented by any government. The fact that we have a concern about the utilization of Crown lands . . . What we propose to do is to regionalize. In our upgrading program, on which we are spending \$40 million to improve Crown lands throughout Alberta in the next 10 years, user groups will be put in place to have their input as to what we want to do in a specific area. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we hope to be able not only to accommodate the people who are using the land for grazing, but we'll be able to increase the wildlife carrying capacity, have input from fish and game people, have input from wilderness people; and environmentalists will be involved. It's a planning process that will be carried on. Planning is most important, and will be aimed at maximizing the use of Crown lands in Alberta.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. What mechanism is now in place for user groups to be involved in the decisions on land use in various areas of the province?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, what is presently being done is that the department is laying out the plans, then submitting them to user groups for their input.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly what kind of input user groups had to the decision that a grazing area would be developed west of Rimbey?

MR. MILLER: I presume that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to the Rocky Mountain House grazing association, where the plan was developed by the department with input from the wildlife branch, from environmentalists, from forestry, and from agricultural departments. Then the plan was submitted to various groups in the Rocky Mountain area for their input.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. How was it possible, or what mechanism was used, for input groups to get their views into the department before the department's plan was finalized, with regard to this case specifically?

MR. MILLER: Public meetings were held at which input was received from user groups.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can the minister indicate what user groups had input, and what public meetings were held other than the one at Rimbey this week?

MR. SPEAKER: We're getting into considerable detail that reminds me of the function of the Order Paper.

MR. R. CLARK: Supplementary, then, to the minister. I'm sure the minister will want to answer this question. Can the minister indicate to the Assembly why the commitment made by the MLA for Ponoka that that area would stay a recreation area has been discarded by the government, and the government has now decided, one, not to get any input from user groups, and, secondly, to move on a grazing area?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. R. CLARK: My question is . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. leader may wish to rephrase the question, but as it stands, the hon. leader purports to make a minister of the Crown responsible for representations made by an MLA. As far as I'm concerned and as far as I know, the official duties of a minister don't extend to that kind of reporting, regardless of where the MLA happens to sit in the House.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to the minister. Why was the commitment not lived up to that that area west of Rimbey would remain a recreation area?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I believe that in any development of Crown lands, the recreational aspect is taken into full consideration.

MR. R. CLARK: Oh, oh.

MR. MILLER: In the development of Crown lands — and he can "oh" all he wants to — there are areas set aside for recreationalists and for wildlife, and actually the amount of development taking place amounts to only 28 per cent of the total area being developed.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, then to the minister. Would the minister indicate to the Assembly if a commitment was made on behalf of the government to the people west of Rimbey that that area would remain a

recreation area? Was that a commitment of the government, or was it just an offhand statement?

MR. NOTLEY: An offhand statement by the MLA.

MR. R. CLARK: You can get a little coaching there.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered that, in that there is an area set aside for recreation, and that part won't be developed for grazing purposes.

Metis Betterment Committee

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It follows up questions raised on April 21 of this month. With respect to the committee to review The Metis Betterment Act, is the minister able to advise the House whether the decision to go the route of two co-chairmen — as opposed to one independent chairman, as recommended in the Ombudsman's report — was a position that the government of Alberta insisted upon, or was it in fact a result of mutual agreement without insistence by the government of Alberta?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the questions relating to the make-up of the committee are ones which have been discussed with representatives of the Federation of Metis Settlements and MLAs from government caucus and myself over a period of time. The first proposal put forward by the Ombudsman did in fact suggest that a five-member committee — two nominees from the Metis people, two from government, and one independent chairman, but all appointed by government — review the Act to determine ways of loosening the logjam that I referred to earlier during question period. During the course of discussions, the government caucus put forward a position where we recommended two co-chairmen — the president of the Federation of Metis Settlements and an MLA from this Assembly — and that the overall make-up of the committee consist of four members.

During some discussions with the Federation of Metis Settlements, and at the same time the proposal was put forward as to other ways of utilizing the municipal debt reduction funds that I mentioned earlier today, a proposal was placed on the table that the committee be expanded to six members, which seemed acceptable to both sides. On that basis we went ahead, the ministerial order was drawn and signed on March 14 before representatives of both sides, and the first organizational meeting of the committee took place. As a result of a request by the Federation of Metis Settlements' president that other matters needed to be clarified before further meetings were held, that wish was complied with by the government.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the hon. minister. Is the minister in a position to confirm that two co-chairmen was the position of the government, period; that it was not a question of being open on the neutral chairman at all; and that it was basically a take it or leave it position where the government was saying, two co-chairmen and that's it?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, in several pieces of correspondence, I've clearly indicated to the president of the Metis federation the position of the government and the reasons for that position. We went to the table with the

suggestion that there be a four-member committee. A further suggestion was made that the committee be expanded by two members to a total of six. That recommendation was accepted, and on that basis the committee was drawn.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The minister indicated on April 21 that a budget had been set. Is the minister able to advise the Assembly whether the budget for this committee is to include just the remuneration and travel expenses, or whether there is a specific commitment in the budget for a researcher, as requested by the Federation of Metis Settlements?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, we're getting into the sort of detail that seems to be eminently suitable for Committee of Supply.

Prince Rupert Terminal

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is a follow-up to one I asked a few days ago with regard to Prince Rupert. Could the Minister of Economic Development indicate the present involvement of the federal government? Have we commitments from them? Is the scheduling of construction at Prince Rupert on track and on schedule?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, since the last time I answered that question in the House, the only thing I can report is that the negotiations are ongoing between the federal Minister of Transport and the consortium members involved.

Nurses' Strike (continued)

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I can now confirm the answer to a question asked earlier today by the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview with regard to elective surgery being done in the Foothills hospital in Calgary. It's as I suspected: they are doing only elective day surgery, so no inpatient elective surgery is being carried out.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

208. Moved by Mr. Borstad:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to consider the introduction of incentives for doctors, dentists, and other health service professionals to practice in areas away from the main population centres

MR. BORSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Motion 208. When I was putting my notes together, I noticed with interest that back in October 1978 Dr. Winston Backus from Grande Prairie did a study and tabled a report to the Legislature on health care in the north, particularly on doctors. Today I wish to speak on the whole gamut of health professionals. The problem is general in smaller centres throughout the province. But I would like to speak in particular this afternoon about

northern Alberta, because that's the part I know more about. I might say that no province in Canada at this time matches the speed of development taking place in Alberta. With this comes a responsibility to the people involved in government to provide the necessary health care services for these developing areas.

In May 1978 the Northern Alberta Development Council passed a motion that made the investigation of health care needs in northern Alberta a top priority. The intention was to review and clarify the issues which previously had been submitted to the council from various groups throughout northern Alberta — northern citizens and communities, and health organizations. One result of that investigation is the resolution put to the Legislature today regarding the attraction and retention of health care professionals to work in northern Alberta. As chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council, I am pleased to present this major concern, which is identified through the investigation of health needs in northern Alberta, the deliberations of workshops involving a wide cross section of health care professionals, government officials, and professional organizations, along with the various submissions that have been presented to the Northern Alberta Development Council over the last year.

The problem of attracting and retaining health care professionals in northern Alberta was identified as one of the major gaps in the health care delivery system. Initial solutions suggested to fill the gap were to establish some incentives or programs on incentives that will give additional encouragement for health care professionals to work in the north.

It might be well to define an isolated area. It is an area within the province more than one hour away from primary medical care by usual means of transportation, even by air. An underserved area is any area of the province where there are more than 2,000 people for every primary care physician. While the northern average is one doctor per 1,346 people, some areas are in excess of that figure.

Mr. Speaker, I might mention that there is a need for a province-wide ambulance service based on the larger hospitals in the rural areas on a fixed fee for service, plus an override covered by the province at large.

In looking at the resolution, the health care professional is used in its broadest terms and meaning. Health care professionals are classed as private practitioners. Those employed by hospitals, health or social service agencies in areas of northern Alberta are generally in short supply compared with other parts of the province, if they are present at all in some cases.

Let me cite some facts to illustrate the point. The ratio of physicians for population in the province overall is one doctor per 724 people, while in northern Alberta that figure is one for 1,346 people, almost twice as high as the provincial average. Specialist physicians are non-existent in three of the largest health units in northern Alberta, which cover the northwest quarter of the province and a fourth of the health unit area, if you exclude general surgery. The ratio of dentists for population in Alberta is one dentist per 2,243 people; in northern Alberta it's one dentist for 4,845 people — again, twice as high. I realize that some moves are presently under way to relieve this situation, and I'm pleased to see that.

The ratio of registered nurses on a provincial average is one nurse per 144 people, while in northern Alberta this is one for 333. This high ratio is further complicated by a high turnover and a vacancy of established positions. The

turnover percentage rate last year was 40 per cent. Nursing training should be carried out in northern Alberta, as I've mentioned before, at Keyano College and Grande Prairie College. I believe we could hold some of our nurses in the north if they were trained in these two colleges.

The examples cited are not the only professionals where examples of short supply can be given. Examples could be given from most categories in health care delivery for all northern Alberta, particularly the isolated communities. It should be said that attempts have been made, with some success, to remedy the problem of attracting and retaining health care professionals in the north. The Northern Alberta Development Council offers a bursary to those going to university to complete their training. For that training, they must return one year's service to the north. This is helping in some areas and, with increased emphasis on this program, I believe we can improve it even more. The opportunities in Alberta towns program has attracted some private health professionals to the north, and the mobile dental trailers have given beginning dentists exposure to northern service.

Although these programs have brought some professionals, the attempts have not significantly changed the overall status of the northern areas. I believe the time has come to put renewed effort into attracting and retaining health care professionals in northern Alberta. Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia have initiated incentive schemes which show that progress can be made. In broad terms, three major results have been used: educational support, tax-free incentives, and guaranteed incomes. In addition to government support, some universities are conducting programs that specialize in rural health care that includes service to rural areas. The government of Alberta recently instituted a program to improve dental service in underserved areas in the north, and they are to be commended for that. The resolution put to you suggests that incentive programs be developed for attracting and retaining health care professionals in all professions, including dentistry, in northern Alberta.

I thought I might elaborate on those incentive programs carried out in Ontario, just so you have some idea of what I was talking about. Through grants and bursaries, educational support is given to return to the more isolated areas for service. This can be scaled so the person returning service would serve less time in, say, places like Grande Prairie or Peace River. You would not have to return as much time as you might in Fort Vermilion, Rainbow Lake, or some of the more isolated communities. In Ontario tax incentives such as the tax-free grant are given to establish and practise, with some controls as to how the money is to be used, of course. The guaranteed income is another option Ontario offers to doctors setting up practice in underserved areas. Almost all physicians choosing this alternative have earned the minimum wage and thereby had no reason to resort to government help.

These same imaginative programs, I believe, could be used on all members of the medical profession in the health services area. I ask for your support on this resolution because present distribution of health care professionals is not equitable. Northerners are not asking for a range of services equal to those in the major centres. Rather, their search is for a raised minimum level. If quality controls of standards more applicable to urban areas are mandated throughout the province, then the north and other rural areas of Alberta may be dealt with inequitably for many years to come.

Incentives that may be considered are: fees paid to private practitioners could be higher for certain selected areas; salary schedules could be on a graded base to encourage employees to work in the underserved areas; guaranteed annual income could be established for selected areas; facilities could be established in some of the areas for clinics and residences; low-interest loans could be made available for the construction of private clinic facilities; special communication facilities could be installed for consultation; rotational training sessions could be established; continuing education could be increased to enable health care professionals to take additional training close to their homes; university programs could be designed to encourage northern exposure; northern bursary programs could be instituted to supplement those already in place; travelling teams of specialists could be established which would make regular contact with clientele; distance and population could be given more consideration when establishing the case load; incentives for families of health care professionals could also be considered.

I feel that imagination is the limiting factor for incentive programs that could be established. The definition of an underserved area would vary depending upon the discipline involved. The centre of the northern half of the province, called the isolated communities, is the most underserved for all disciplines. Here special consideration must be made. Other areas that are marginal in economic support would have to be treated in a different manner. For example, in that area lying north of Lesser Slave Lake, the residents have to rely on the medical services of Slave Lake and High Prairie. Some of them are a considerable distance from those two centres.

Northern Alberta can generally be classed as underserved in terms of health care. An aid to solving this problem is a program of incentives that would encourage health care professionals to establish practices and fill positions that are presently vacant. These incentives would also encourage health care professionals to remain in the north.

Another problem we have is that resource development brings on increased wages and benefits. This distorts the wages and benefits of the health care professionals who are presently there. For example, resource companies are providing house purchase plans, northern allowances, and many more benefits in order to retain their good workers, which leaves our profession behind. As more families move into these boom areas of the north to join their spouses in the work force, they are usually moving from areas that have adequate health care. Provision must be made to ensure that health care to treat the physical and mental needs of these families is in place, to make that transition easier.

In this time of economic boom, development will occur across the province of Alberta generally during the years to come. Development can be made easier if we plan now. These plans must include establishment of adequate health care. This resolution will move towards that goal. I ask all members of the Assembly to support this motion.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that it's a pleasure to be able to stand in my place and support the resolution of the hon. Member for Grande Prairie. I feel the issue at hand is one that needs our recognition in this Legislative Assembly. There are certainly some areas where we can fulfil a need for people outside the major population centres of Alberta.

In my remarks on the resolution this afternoon, first of

all I would like to indicate the urgency of supporting such a resolution. Secondly, I'd like to point out that I feel there are two steps that must be taken in dealing with a program of incentives. Thirdly, I'd like to list what I feel are some of the problems being confronted in the areas outside the major cities, in the rural areas of Alberta. Lastly, I'd like to make 14 recommendations that I think are significant, which are certainly supportive of the mover of the resolution and parallel to some of the ones the hon. member mentioned in his remarks.

In dealing with this resolution, Mr. Speaker, I think we must look at the quality of health care we want. The quality of health care we deliver in Alberta is certainly dependent upon the qualified and interested health care professionals we have throughout the province. To attract such individuals to all areas of the province and to keep those already there in service, I want to mention two things that I feel we and the government must do to accomplish that particular end. First, I think we must take care of the health professionals who are already working in the province. Secondly, once we've established a rapport with those health care people, Alberta must provide incentives for health care professionals to locate away from the major centres, in the more sparsely populated areas of the province of Alberta.

My second point certainly rests and depends upon the first; that is, we must have an adequate number of health care professionals in Alberta before we can move them into the rural areas of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, I think we cannot expect health care professionals to come to Alberta or young people to enter the health care profession or the present staff to relocate unless Alberta earns the reputation of treating health care staff fairly and with respect.

As a stepping stone to that integrated quality health care throughout the province, we must do certain things. Firstly, I think working conditions must be improved for all of them. Secondly, the level of pay must be increased for professionals already employed by the province. Thirdly, we must bargain with these professionals in good faith and with all honesty. Mr. Speaker, I think this is the way we build a rapport with the professionals we have in Alberta at the present time. Only after that will a quality integrated health care system develop in this province. I think we can well recognize, however, that it won't develop overnight and that there are some problems and complex situations we must deal with.

What about the first step of earning rapport with the health care professionals in the province of Alberta? How do we attract health care professionals to underserved areas in the province? I suggest that we, as an Assembly, recommend that a number of incentives be put in place to attract doctors to the rural area. In my remarks I just want to deal with physicians, doctor support and availability in rural areas of Alberta. If such an incentive program is successful, other professionals will most likely relocate in the areas as well. Each case will need to be considered separately but, as I said, today I'd like to deal just with physicians. Certainly the principle I use in discussing the required physicians in the rural areas will apply to other health care professionals.

The concern with regard to the shortage of doctors in rural Alberta has been expressed by a number of very legitimate groups; for example, the Alberta Hospital Association, the Alberta Medical Association, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Certainly the public in the rural and regional areas of this province have expressed their concern.

There is a consensus in those areas about the problems that exist. What are some of them? First, additional costs of living or even setting up the practice, of travelling from a major centre to the regional area. There's also a lower income possibility. The second thing: the need for both consultation and relief from duty in the absence of colleagues or supportive help. The third concern: inadequate facilities that may be expensive to replace or upgrade. The fourth concern: an absence of qualified support staff and ancillary health care workers, such as nurses, social workers, and pharmacists. The fifth concern: fewer social, cultural, and recreational opportunities for physicians and their families. The sixth concern: inadequate training in the particular skills required of general practitioners in isolated areas without support services.

In dealing with these particular concerns, my colleagues and I in the Social Credit Party would like to propose to this Assembly and recommend that incentives be provided that will attract physicians to the various rural areas of Alberta. What are the recommendations, Mr. Speaker? There are 14. Firstly, we recommend that we provide capital loans at preferred rates of interest to build clinics in unserved areas. Secondly, we should pay isolated doctors more than the standard Alberta health insurance schedule fees. This is done in other provinces at the present time, British Columbia for example, to attract doctors into rural or regional areas. It has also been recommended by the Alberta Medical Association. As well, the report of Dr. Backus, former member of this Legislature for Grande Prairie, recommended the same to this Legislature.

The third recommendation: we should guarantee doctors in designated areas a minimum income. This is done in Ontario and, as well, has been recommended and advised by the Alberta Medical Association. The fourth recommendation: we should provide bursaries to medical students who agree to work in designated areas after graduation. The fifth recommendation: we should establish a program to enable interns to complete the residency portion of their training in remote areas, providing they agree to work for at least six months after graduation in the hospital where they trained. This was also recommended by the Backus report.

The sixth recommendation: we should pay the expenses of medical staff who travel to underserved areas to provide part-time medical services. Our seventh recommendation: that subsidies linked to income be provided for physicians and nurses to attend educational sessions and workshops to upgrade their skills and foster their professional development, not only to serve in the rural area but for their own personal development as physicians. Mr. Speaker, this has been recommended by the Alberta Medical Association. Our eighth recommendation: that we provide in-service training to practising nursing staff and rural doctors to teach them skills usually completed in urban areas by support staff, to broaden their capability to deal with some of the rural problems they will face.

The ninth recommendation: there should be funding of a back-up service for physicians who are on vacation or at educational meetings and seminars. The tenth recommendation: we should upgrade rural hospitals — and certainly the earlier announcement in this Assembly by the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care is good and in the right direction — to provide the same quality of care as in urban centres. The eleventh recommendation: we should establish a new program to lend equipment to clinics in remote areas. Number 12: we should fund spe-

cialists to provide consultation services to rural physicians through regular visits to designated areas. Thirteen: we should sponsor the return of rural doctors to school for upgrading providing that they agree to return to work in a designated rural area for a predetermined time period. Our last recommendation, Mr. Speaker, is that we revise the medical school curriculum to provide optional training experience for physicians in the general practice skills they require to work in the rural areas of Alberta. Training should be available in both teaching hospitals and community hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that by providing the incentives in those recommendations, the government would go a long way in providing a good quality, integrated, health care system for rural Alberta and the regional areas in the province of Alberta.

I'd like to conclude by saying that I support Motion No. 208 and certainly urge the government to introduce incentives that will meet the needs across this province. I can only add, as the hon. member did, that I hope other members will take the opportunity to support the resolution.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, a book is currently being published in Alberta titled *The Country Doctors*. The author of this book is Henri Chatenay of Red Deer. It very forcefully describes the contribution of pioneer doctors in rural Alberta in the making of our province. It describes the contribution of Dr. P.F. Smith, formerly of Camrose, to east-central Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the other day I picked up the government news release with interest. It makes reference to Dr. Scott Apartments in Bassano, officially opened April 18. May I just read of his accomplishments and contribution to that part of Alberta:

Dr. Scott is best known as being the first "flying doctor" in Canada. His first plane was built in 1929 with the assistance of W.E. Shambrooke. It flew on many trips but crashed in 1930. In 1931, Dr. Scott replaced it with the purchase of a De Havilland Gypsy Moth and ... became [the first] pilot and flight instructor. The doctor and the pilot flew on medical missions in the open cockpit regardless of the elements. It was not uncommon for them to take off from Bassano, land on the ice above Bassano dam, change to skis and then take off to visit a patient whose district was snowbound.

Not only has that community recognized one of their pioneer doctors, but 75 years ago in your Legislature my constituency was represented by a Dr. McLeod. Dr. McLeod was well known in the Ferintosh and New Norway districts, especially for his contribution during the flu epidemic of 1919. Dr. McLeod also brought me into the world, Mr. Speaker, on Christmas Day in a howling blizzard a number of years ago.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many years ago?

MR. STROMBERG: Oh, maybe 40 plus.

But, Mr. Speaker, we also have a number of doctors in our Assembly who have contributed a lot to the province. I'm always amazed at their scope of imagination, and their various viewpoints.

I believe it was about a month ago that I was feeling a little under the weather, and I thought I'd seek some free medical advice. I asked one of my colleagues what he thought was ailing me. He proceeded to poke me all over with his finger, and gave me a prescription with enough

antibiotics to last all the animals on my farm for about a year. I then went to another colleague, who isn't in the House right now, for his free medical advice. I went through the same procedure, and he prescribed a drench. I didn't think that would cure me. I asked another colleague what he might recommend for my ills, and he recommended surgery. Then I really got worried and decided maybe I should seek outside advice. So I went and talked to my local veterinarian. [interjections]

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, when you think of our pioneer country doctors, you really have to wonder why today we're not able to attract doctors to rural Alberta. I think it's a combination of a number of things, perhaps our faculties of medicine with their quota system. In 1977-1978, there were only 176 graduates from the faculties of medicine of our two universities. If that quota system were raised, it might help the matter considerably.

We seem to be turning out specialists nowadays. Specialists will not go into rural Alberta. Perhaps one of the problems is that when doctors do decide to locate in one of our smaller communities, their wives have a different viewpoint. They're too far away from the opera or the swimming pool, not realizing what rural Alberta has to offer. My gosh, if those wives would only realize that when 9 o'clock at night comes in Bashaw, they know where their kids are. They're either at the poolroom or at the theatre. They're not running around all over Edmonton.

MRS. CHICHAK: Don't pin it all on the wives.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I wonder why all the doctors have to be in Edmonton and Calgary. I see in Edmonton that we have one doctor for 462 people. That's not counting all the interns being trained. Then we go down to Fort McMurray where we have one doctor for 1,566 people.

Mr. Speaker, reference has also been made to other provinces by the Member for Little Bow. A few years ago in British Columbia, the former government of Mr. Barrett indicated that medical students who were being financed by the tax dollar would have to spend two years outside the lower mainland of British Columbia. That didn't go over too well. British Columbia is presently subsidizing its doctors to a \$25,000 maximum. In the province of Saskatchewan a grant is available to the medical profession. Communities or municipalities having a population of 5,000 or less are eligible for a grant. It's a sliding grant, but it's been a good incentive.

I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that when you really drive home the point of why we can't get our doctors to go into rural Alberta . . . I know of two clinics within my constituency that have advertised right across Alberta and Canada when there's a vacancy, and had to bring in their doctors from the United Kingdom. That just further strengthens my argument that our faculties of medicine are turning out too many specialists.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, another area that I think would help greatly in attracting physicians to rural areas is to put the equipment in the hospitals. If they're trained as specialists, at least give them some of the equipment. There are great restrictions placed on the doctors in rural Alberta through government-imposed regulations. The hospitals may have fairly sophisticated equipment, but the regulations state it cannot be used unless certain specialists are

present. The hospitals do not need or could not support specialists full time, Mr. Speaker, and consequently do not have them on staff. Therefore, for certain procedures patients must be shipped out, either to Red Deer or here to Edmonton. Then, when the powers that be take a look at the occupancy of those hospitals in these small towns, they see that they do not have as many patients and they cut their funding. So it's a vicious merry-go-round.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I think that when hospital boards make requests for certain equipment for their rural hospitals, the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care should give serious consideration. If the equipment is out there and we get the calibre of doctors such as the Smiths, the Reeces, or the Smiths of Bashaw who have come into that community, have run as mayors, have served as aldermen, and have contributed greatly to that community, then that is money well spent.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking of doctors, they're well known for their handwriting or scrawl. The first year I was elected to this Assembly, my wife and I were living in an apartment in north Edmonton, and we made it a rule that, usually on Wednesday afternoons, we'd ask an Edmonton urban MLA and his wife for supper at our apartment. My wife sent a message to the MLA for Edmonton Kingsway asking if he and his wife would be our guests the following week for supper. The member returned the message. I understood later that it basically said that he and his wife would be very pleased to be our guests, but I couldn't understand it. I passed it around caucus, and no one could decipher it. Someone came up with the idea that maybe it was written in Latin and I should get a druggist to interpret it. I drove uptown on Jasper Avenue and showed it to a druggist. He looked it over, studied it for awhile, and sold me \$8 worth of pills. [laughter]

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, that could be a tough act to follow.

In speaking to Motion 208, brought to this Legislature by the Member for Grande Prairie, I wish to speak about the problems in the southern part of the province where the population isn't as thick in many areas, and the problems related to that more than the problems related to the northern part of the province. In my constituency, Mr. Speaker, there is one hospital at Bow Island, and the other villages and towns don't have any hospitals. The eastern part of the constituency goes to either Bow Island or Lethbridge, and the western part of the constituency goes to Medicine Hat. Sorry, I got that backwards; it should be eastern going into Medicine Hat, and the western half going into Bow Island, Lethbridge, and some into Milk River.

The problems they have been having: a village the size of Foremost, with about 700 people, is not able to have a doctor stay because they have no hospital or no facilities for him. Over many years they've had a number of doctors, but it's been a temporary measure, never very long lasting. A number of years ago they had one who practised in the Bow Island hospital, but it did mean 30 miles of driving for him back and forth every day. At the present time the two doctors in Bow Island are serving Foremost on a part-time basis, which is working out fairly well. But serving both places is stretching their capabilities in Bow Island as well.

Often, Mr. Speaker, when people have to go elsewhere for medicine or medical advice, they take their business there too. So we're faced not just with a person going from an area like that into Lethbridge or Bow Island;

they go in, do their business, buy their groceries, then go home. So basically the business people in the town suffer somewhat from this inconvenience as well.

Strange patterns may develop with people when they go out of their population centre for medical assistance. You find that, instead of going to the next closest place, they may go whichever direction the best road goes, or wherever there are more business opportunities. As I've said, many people go from Foremost to Lethbridge, because that's where the business opportunities are. They don't come to the nearest hospital, and that does create some problems.

Another place where there is either a village or very few people, if any, and they're many miles from medical services is the corner of the Saskatchewan and American borders. They have quite a long drive into Medicine Hat. But there's probably little we can do to cover areas like that. We have other places with little population — 50, 100, or 150 in a village — where it is not possible for a doctor, a dentist, or any kind of health professional to go and make a reasonable living.

The one problem I suppose we're faced with is that health professionals are free enterprisers. They have a business, they deliver a product, and they go where they wish. Unless we come up with some very different enticements for them to go into the rural areas, I think we're going to have serious problems. We're seeing it now, and we'll see it in many years to come.

Members before me have spoken about the growing number of specialists, or the growing number of medical personnel who just want to stay in the city for one reason or another. It often creates a problem. There's nothing more traumatic for a town than to have a doctor for many, many years, and suddenly something happens and he's gone. We went through that in my home town of Bow Island. We had a doctor who was around for 25 years or more. He was the only doctor for a short while. We had a number of other doctors from time to time. I guess at one time the highest number we had was three. They had moved on from one place to another, and we were left with one doctor who stayed there, Dr. Harry Nakaido. He became, as other members have said, a very integral part of the town. He served on the council for a few years. Then, just as the hospital was expanding and adding a new wing, he took a heart attack and died. So he left the town in a very precarious position indeed. We were fortunate. Another doctor came in to help out who has since stayed, made it his home, and feels happy there. But it just goes to show what can really happen to a town of 1,300 people when something like that happens and the doctor either moves away or passes on, the very impact it has on the people of the area.

Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago in this Legislature — I'm not sure how long ago it was — I believe there was a resolution with regard to ambulance coverage in the province. Maybe this is one way we can provide service to the people of the outlying areas, especially in the southern part of the province where there are some roads. In the northern part of the province, maybe we can provide the service through air ambulance, so that these people can get medical help as soon as possible.

In my constituency many areas are 40, 50, and 60 miles from a hospital, and some farther. With good ambulance service it would be possible to move people into the hospitals in a short time. I realize that when we talk about ambulances, we have a very definite line to be drawn with regard to a fully staffed ambulance where we would have paramedics totally on call. Or out there in

rural Alberta we still have some really good ambulance services provided by either the towns or the counties and driven by people who donate their time, usually the firemen of the town or county. I think these people deserve a great tribute for the services they provide. They either move the people from a small town with a hospital that is unable to cope with the condition of the patient to a regional hospital that is, or they move them from wherever they are, whether it's an accident or from the people's home, to the hospital.

Maybe we can expand that kind of system, Mr. Speaker, throughout the province. We may have to provide some sort of financial assistance towards purchasing or even towards running the ambulances. Maybe some areas that are more wealthy can afford to buy one of these units; they're getting very expensive. But other areas might be able to afford to run them if they didn't have the capital cost involved to start with. I think this should be looked at.

Also we should look at communications devices in these ambulances, be they air ambulances or ground ambulances, but especially in the ground ambulance, whereby they could readily contact the hospitals they are going to, the police, or whoever they need to. Maybe a radio system tied in with some of the existing radio systems or a type of mobile telephone, or something that makes it so that they can use this device when they need to and not have to wait in line or whatever. So when they do go out and call back, the hospital knows what kind of case they have and what it looks like the complications might be, so they can be ready to act when the ambulance gets there with that person.

Mr. Speaker, I've outlined many of the problems out there in the rural areas with relation to the availability of hospital service. I haven't had too many recommendations towards the righting of the problems we have there. Some services we might consider providing are office spaces. In some cases it may even be personnel to run them, or assistance toward providing that. I know in some areas, the town and village councils tried to provide this sort of service in order to entice doctors to come and practise there.

As previous members have said, maybe there should be additional remuneration associated with those GPs, dentists, or other professional health occupational people who would come and serve in a rural area. Other suggestions have been that maybe we should have additional funding in the training of these people, so it enables them to continue their education. As part of the conditions, they would come to a rural area in Alberta to serve and carry out their profession. I know in a lot of cases these people have come to a small town and have never left — have enjoyed it, have become a part of the town and, as we have said previously, have stayed there.

But not everyone has. As I have said before, we are now running into quite a problem with medical services in rural areas. When those doctors there expand and advertise for additional help, it takes a long, long time. Often they don't get people applying for that job, and if they do apply for it, they don't always stay around for an extended period.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the members who have participated on this motion so far have laid out some ideas we should consider. I would ask all members to support this motion, and that we consider the ideas put out to ensure that we get adequate and good medical service out there in the rural portions of the province.

Thank you.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter the debate this afternoon on Motion 208. I support any move by this Assembly that will result in an integrated and all-encompassing health care system for this province.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague the hon. Member for Little Bow that the problems involved in developing such a system are complex, but that's no excuse. Even though the situation is complex, the problem should not be insoluble. Incentives to attract health care professionals to areas other than main population centres must be implemented at a crucial first step in this development. We just can't sort of let nature take its way without providing some type of incentives to get professionals into these areas.

My colleague for Little Bow has already spoken about the need for the government to earn some rapport among health care professionals presently in the province. We have to be able to get them to get along. He has outlined a number of incentives that must be put in place to attract doctors, dentists, and other professionals to rural areas.

But today, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak about the provision of an integrated ambulance system as one incentive to attract health care professionals to underserved areas. I would have to say in all humility that I've probably been carrying on this crusade longer than many other members in this Assembly. You know, it's not very often that an opposition member's resolution gets passed by this one-sided Legislature. But in 1974, this Assembly passed an official opposition resolution, which I had the honor to present, which strongly recommended that the government give consideration to studying — and we know the government does a lot of studying — but most importantly, making recommendations upon all aspects of ambulance service in this province.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution has not been acted upon to date. Two successive ministries have investigated ambulance service, but they have made no recommendations. I'm not going to rethresh old straw and, as I did last year, give you the chronological happening as it has unveiled itself on the steps that have been taken, steps which really do nothing as far as ambulance service goes.

In the interim, ambulance service in Alberta continues to be insufficient and unevenly distributed, with the result that the lives of rural Albertans are risked by the unavailability of transportation to hospitals. I am sure many members, even from the government side, are aware of the shortfall and shortcomings in this area. The problem also has implications for the availability of health care professionals in rural Alberta. In many instances the two are tied together. These professionals and their associations cite inadequate facilities and support systems as one reason they are reluctant to move away from the large urban centres. Once these support systems are improved, professionals will be more willing to relocate in the areas.

Quite often, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you yourself have been told by medical professional people who are looking at going into rural areas — they have come to you and said, we won't go, for one or two or three reasons. Number one, the hospital facility is inadequate. Number two, the ambulance service is inadequate. Number three, the fine and intricate support systems in some of the hospitals are inadequate.

Mr. Speaker, an improved ambulance system is one goal which is a dire need and should require immediate attention. I hope we are not going to have another minister get up and tell us we're going to have another study. I think we've studied it so long, it's time we had

some action.

In another area, Mr. Speaker, as the number of work camps and oil rigs continues to increase, the need for services such as we've mentioned will become more critical. To develop a co-ordinated ambulance service in the province, four main issues must be addressed. The first one, of course, is very obvious. Ambulance services in Alberta are insufficient and unevenly distributed. I would like to say at this time, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, that the municipalities — towns, villages, and counties — have really tried to the best of their fiscal ability to implement an ambulance service in the province. But in many instances that is just not up to the standard the people in those communities would like to see.

Secondly, ambulance service in Alberta is not regulated in regard to skills and knowledge of staff, standards of patient care, and the quality of transportation and inspection. The ambulance that was going from the constituency of the hon. Member for Vegreville through my constituency — I think the wheel or something fell off the ambulance from Holden at the outskirts of Tofield. That's where the ambulance expired. Fortunately the patient didn't expire. But that's really just a small indicator of the inadequate machinery, the inadequate ambulance vehicles we have in some parts of the province.

Thirdly, provincial funding is not available for ambulance services, and in many instances the municipalities cannot afford to pay for these services. Number four, the setting of fees on the basis of mode of transport is unequal and subject to misuse.

As a partial solution to these problems, the government must establish a provincially co-ordinated ambulance network, as advised by the Alberta Hospital Association, the Alberta Medical Association, and the government's own Backus report on rural health care. If we had that in place, every Albertan would be guaranteed access to more than adequate ambulance care.

Secondly, we could introduce an ambulance service Act to provide basic standards for ambulance personnel, for the vehicles and equipment, and for the licensing and inspection advised by the Alberta Hospital Association, so we won't have the problems I just mentioned. Thirdly: develop a provincial funding system and make the system available to local authorities to operate or contract for ambulance services, in accordance with the standards required by the new legislation as recommended by the Alberta Hospital Association. Fourthly: make financial assistance available to local authorities to purchase adequate ambulance and other equipment, so that those ambulances will do the job and the equipment in them will look after our accident patients or people being transferred from hospital to hospital. Fifthly: make extra funding available for programs of extraordinary need, also recommended by the Alberta Hospital Association — adequate need in some of the more remote sections of the province.

It's very interesting to see states of the United States of America where their service is very, very sophisticated, where they have combinations of air and ground ambulances, plus the personnel to staff those modes of moving patients.

Sixthly: charge ambulance users a moderate standard fee for service throughout the province regardless of the mode of transport, to even out the more sophisticated and exotic transport as it relates to other means. Seven: set up a communications system to integrate and co-ordinate a network of ambulance bases, also as advised

by the AHA.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if the present government initiates even half the suggestions made here today by the hon. Member for Little Bow and me, they will have made a huge step forward in addressing the health care problems of this province and in attracting health care professionals to underserved areas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think I'm going to get tired of making this pitch to this Legislature, but I am tired of making the pitch and not having any action. If the government likes to play their little games by bringing these resolutions to the floor of the Assembly so they can go back and tell their constituency associations, look at the great and wonderful things we are doing because we brought in a resolution — I think it's time we stopped playing little games and had some action from this government.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to speak on this motion. It is probably a little unusual that somebody from a very large urban metropolitan centre would wish to speak on this topic, but I will be speaking primarily from the point of view of a caucus committee chairman and as one person who has lived in rural communities and knows what it means to people not to have facilities close by.

I was pleased to hear that the Member for Little Bow directed his remarks to the urgency of this motion. It's interesting to note that he has finally caught up to the rest of the members of this government who have been identifying this issue for quite some time. As was stated by the Member for Grande Prairie, Dr. Backus and his committee produced a report on this topic.

The Member for Clover Bar is a little tired of speaking about the need for ambulance services. Being a relatively new member in the Legislature, it's hard for me to comment. But I suggest that probably some of my colleagues are a little tired of hearing him make his same pitch about an ambulance service and about the games he alludes to that we constantly play. It's an area I cannot speak on in regard to the ambulance services in this province, but I would like to point out that a lot of people in private businesses do supply ambulance services. I also know that some private businesses supply rather inadequate or antiquated ambulance services. So I suggest this is not only a problem of our government, but a problem of industry's.

In responding to this debate, I'd like to say that frankly we have considered the concerns of shortages of health care professionals in areas other than our main population centres. In fact in 1974, in the state of the province address, the Premier of our province stated:

... we've tried to outline the economic goals of the Alberta government and the basic goal is that, as a province in transition we should diversify ...

One of the goals is to

... spread the growth on a balanced basis across the province — "decentralization" [or] "balanced economic growth" — to capitalize upon the potential, and I say the spirit too, of the smaller centres of this province and to assure a better quality of life for our citizens living ... in the smaller centres [as well as in] the metropolitan areas ...

As our large metropolitan centres are growing so rapidly and presenting a higher cost of living today, housing concerns, transportation concerns, a growing rate of crime, and other social problems, frankly I think there is a much stronger appeal in the last few years to return to

the smaller centres.

One argument often raised is that people born and educated in smaller centres will return to those communities. While I think this may be true to some extent, rural people still seem to be lured to the larger centres. However, as I said, I think we're in a time of transition because of what the smaller communities offer. One example I can give in this regard is that I was very privileged to attend a dinner party for the graduates of the dental class from the University of Alberta sponsored by the Alberta Dental Association. In speaking to several of the young graduates, it was amazing to see how many of them were going into rural communities to practise. Secondly, I asked them where they had been born and raised, and I found it interesting that many of them had come from urban centres. So I think this illustrates a trend of people to moving out to the communities.

I would like to make special note of the Northern Alberta Development Council, because I would suspect reviewing this topic we're talking about today would be one of their prime concerns. It seems to be primarily a concern of the northern part of our province. I know it is a grave concern where distances are very great. Weather conditions can be a problem when you're travelling in the winter. So people find it very, very difficult to travel, to have the facilities or see the qualified personnel that they would like.

As chairman of the caucus committee on health and social services, I attended a meeting of a delegation from a northern community. They expressed grave concern about the lack of qualified health personnel in their area. In listening to their delegation, I was very interested in one thing. While they presented the problem, I also think they wanted to have a lot of input in what types of solutions are available to help solve this problem.

Many factors will influence the decision on how we find people to go to the rural areas. Some of these factors are, first of all, the size of the community. One might consider some type of grant system to the practising people in the area or to the people in our educational settings who would consider going out to the rural areas. The exact location you're talking about is very important too. Community ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I apologize for having to interrupt the hon. member, but the time for consideration of resolutions this afternoon has expired. Perhaps the hon. member would wish to adjourn debate.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, I'll adjourn debate.

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

Bill 208
The Freedom of Information Act

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on rising to commence debate on Bill 208, The Freedom of Information Act, April 3, 1980, I would just like to say that this is the sixth consecutive year that I have had the honor to present to this Legislature a Bill which will guarantee our citizens a basic right, the right to information as it applies to government operations. I'm sure that this time, because we had a Tory government in Ottawa that presented

basically the same kind of Bill and we have a Tory government here in Alberta, this Bill will go through without any dissent. If it doesn't, Mr. Speaker, then I guess we'll find that the reason we still don't have a Tory government in Ottawa is because Tories don't think alike.

Mr. Speaker, at the moment Albertans do not have a legal right to information possessed by their own government. The government provides and releases information if and when it decides to do so. Most of our regulations and legislation, as well as the established practices of government, this government and others, tend to create a very effective veil of secrecy. It seems to be one of the tendencies of all governments.

A citizen applying to a department or government agency for information may be refused by any government officer of the department or agency, without even the benefit of written reasons for that denial. An appeal against such a decision before an independent arbitrator is not available to the citizen through legislation, and a court review is practically out of the question. There just doesn't seem to be any mechanism in place for that to happen. There is presently no legislative requirement for the information to be made public. The civil servants' tradition of secrecy — because this is what we've grown up with — coupled with the legal obstacles to disclosure, have created a climate of secrecy within government which is now very, very well entrenched. I'm not blaming this government *per se*. I'm saying that this system has evolved over many years.

Why is freedom of information so vitally important? I propose that freedom of information through legislation must be considered a fundamental right rather than a procedural right. Access to information is a prerequisite to the exercise of other fundamental rights and freedoms. Without such access, other rights tend to lose much of their meaning.

Looking at past performances of this government, I know we'll go round and round on the government side.

MR. NOTLEY: This time they're going to reform, Walt.

DR. BUCK: Maybe their going to reform and not block the passage of this Bill. A little later we will talk about the mechanics of what happens when you order returns, and the little games that can be played. But this is for a little later in the afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, information is power. Concealing information can and does lead to abuses of power. One can hardly argue, especially in Alberta, that the numerical strength of the government provides it with a great deal of power and, I hesitate to say, arrogance in many instances. But I would never say that. When one considers the compounding of that numerical power with a veil of secrecy, there's no doubt this government has fantastic power and a sort of built in mechanism with the capacity to abuse that power. Now I would never accuse them of misuse of power, but I am saying that they could abuse that power if they so chose.

The citizen's ability to participate depends largely on the amount of information available to that citizen. The electorate cannot properly or effectively judge its government unless that electorate has information relating to the government's actions and the reasons the government is taking certain actions. The Red Deer dam issue was a prime example of that, Mr. Speaker. It was a prime example.

Freedom of information legislation also is essential to protect civil liberties and the private rights of each indi-

vidual. Each citizen must have access to government information pertaining to himself, and must also have assurance and protection against the circulation of confidential information about him being made public. Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides that protection.

One must recognize that much information now withheld by government is blanketed under the guise of national or provincial security, or protection of the public interest. We've so often heard these terms used. One should also attempt to recognize that governments do not withhold all information on the grounds of national or provincial security or the public interest. There is really no definite pattern to reasons for withholding information, and something considered secret by one government or agency could well be considered easily made public by another. A great deal of information is withheld without any reason being given, because we don't seem to have parameters or guidelines on what should be made public and what is not public.

I believe it is necessary that legislation be enacted which compels the government to release departmental interpretation of legislation administered by departments, the rules of policy applied in administering schemes which could affect the public, and complete public disclosure of the rules which guide officers in discharging their official and statutory responsibilities. Very simply, freedom of information legislation is necessary because it tends to foster good government. What we're trying to do is make it easier for this government, place it above suspicion, so the electorate can understand that the government is open. Openness of government very simply makes for better government.

There is a tremendous volume of matters upon which governments gather information, none of which is required to be made public. Examples include caucus committee reports. More and more and more, this government has caucus committees. I would like to say to the people out there: there is a misinterpretation by the public. It is perceived by the public that what they are making their presentation to when they have a caucus committee is a legislative committee.

DR. C. ANDERSON: Aw, baloney.

DR. BUCK: Baloney, the hon. doctor says.

MR. R. CLARK: That's the first thing he's said all session.

DR. BUCK: The first thing the hon. member has made. But he had a little trip to Quebec, so he's all charged up and ready to go now. He's going to make a big speech.

There is a difference, but the people out there do not perceive that difference. People in their representations many times do not file a copy with the official opposition, the leader of the New Democratic Party, or his honor on high the leader of the Liberal Party, because the people think they are addressing it to a legislative committee. It's fine to have the government think the people out there are addressing a legislative committee, but they're not. They are addressing a caucus committee.

MR. COOK: They're addressing the government, Walt.

DR. BUCK: The hon. Roloff Kookie. [laughter] the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry, has a lot to learn about the way the process operates. [interjections] I'm

sorry, I mean the hon. member Mr. Cook. I just got the accent on the wrong 'syllaaable'. [laughter]

MR. COOK: No problem, Walt.

DR. BUCK: The caucus committees and task force reports compiled by outside advisory agencies, feasibility studies, government contracts, and other policies which become law without the benefit of public knowledge . . . And isn't it lovely to have so much money in the campaign coffers that you can even pay some of the boys in blue and orange to sit on these caucus committees. It's great to be rich.

One should keep in mind that all these delegations are funded by the public purse. But no legislation now in force requires these studies to be made public, and that is the crux of the matter. That is the crux of the matter, Mr. Speaker. The argument has been advanced in past debates that freedom of information by this government is assured simply because there's reasonable access to government ministers. I state with some surety that being able to see a minister is not a guarantee to any group or individual that they will have access to information, particularly information in the possession of the minister.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I think we must review for some of the new Tory backbenchers the way the system has been known to operate in the past. When the hon. former minister I'm going to speak of, the hon. Donald Getty, was in this Assembly, he played little games with a motion for a return that I had presented to this Assembly. Three times we didn't have the dot in the right place, so the minister rejected the information on the Walter Levy Consultants Limited report. Now if that isn't playing little games with the Legislature . .

MR. BRADLEY: What do you [inaudible] have research staff, Walt.

DR. BUCK: The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, just because he's getting \$18,000 a year for sitting on the Syncrude board — I'm sure the taxpayers of Alberta are getting their money's worth on that appointment, I'll tell you. The member says that our research people aren't doing their job. I can say to the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest that if he could triple our budget we could probably get that many more people. We don't have 74 Tories and 40,000 civil servants at our beck and call.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why? [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: You can't use the resources you have, Walt?

DR. BUCK: Why? This government says in its usual arrogant manner — why?

MR. HORSMAN: They didn't vote for you, that's why.

DR. BUCK: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower is pretty smug now, but he went to the well three times before he came back with any water. [laughter] Just twice? Just twice. So now, in his usual humility, he tells us maybe they didn't vote for us.

MR. HORSMAN: No maybe, Walt.

DR. BUCK: I'd like the hon. minister to remember that the former Premier of Quebec, the hon. Mr. Bourassa, also had the largest majority in the history of that National Assembly. You know where he is now? He's not even party leader. He's spent a lot of time on the beaches in the Bahamas because he isn't in the Legislature and he isn't the leader of a party. When the government was overthrown in Quebec, in response to a newsman's question as to what I thought about that, I said, you should be asking the Premier of Alberta what he thinks, because the people in Quebec gave that government a message. And you never know, Mr. Speaker, when the people of this province can give this government a message too. You never know. All we need is a few more marches on the Legislature. We need a few more groups like the farmers who are not being listened to. We need a few more groups like the nurses who are not being listened to. And we may have a change of government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say to government members that written questions can have little games played with them. In this province the only information the government makes public is what it wants the public to hear. We've gone through the exercise of arguing about the effectiveness of the question period, written questions, orders for return, and Public Accounts. That argument does not need to be repeated here, Mr. Speaker. It is sufficient to say that just because questions are asked either verbally or in writing in this Assembly, there's absolutely no guarantee answers will be forthcoming. That's what we're really talking about.

What are the arguments being advanced against freedom of information, and how valid are these? Information gathered from the recent Canadian Bar Association publication dealing with this issue outlined three basic and main arguments against the passage of freedom of information legislation. The first one: public access to government documents would open the way to invasion of privacy of people dealing with government. That's one of the arguments. Quite frankly, no one who is an advocate of freedom of information has ever asked for the right to invade anyone's privacy. No one has ever asked for that. In fact, the shielding of privacy is clearly spelled out in the legislation.

Secondly, freedom of information would invade corporate privacy. We hear that argument used. Release of some information would probably have the effect of putting some corporations at a competitive disadvantage, if this was made public, and I can accept that. So goes the argument. But it is my belief that any corporation which borrows money from or wins a contract for service from government should expect to be subject to having information upon which such decisions were made by government made public. There's really no legitimate reason these decisions should be confidential. We have the case of the Alberta Opportunity Company, the Ag. Development Corporation, and the Alberta Energy Company — three Crown corporations or quasi-Crown corporations. We couldn't even find out from the Alberta Energy Company how much money the president is getting.

Thirdly, the argument goes, freedom of information would inhibit civil servants when they make reports to their political bosses. Now that is one. It would be very simple to solve this problem. Simply remove the civil servant's name from the document. It's that simple. Even the Tory government could understand that. Much of the civil servant's job, especially within the higher echelons, is

to provide general information and policy suggestions. The public should most certainly have the right to know what sort of information goes into these decisions. This might even tend to make the employee somewhat more efficient, particularly if that employee knew his ideas and opinions would become the focus of public attention. It would make people even more responsible.

Fourthly, freedom of information might be embarrassing to ministers and tend to break down the effectiveness of government, its unanimity, and its uniting. Let's be quite frank and honest about this point. If mistakes are made which would tend to have the effect of embarrassing ministers, this should certainly not be hidden from the public in the so-called murky depths of those thousands of people who work for us at all levels of government. Examples come to mind. The handling of the Metis files episode, the Westfield fiasco, and the problems with the Peace River Northern Regional Treatment Residence are prime examples of things that have embarrassed ministers. But we're not here to worry about how embarrassed ministers become.

We should couple these examples with the rather unfortunate situation we had with the Roloff Beny case — your name comes up again, Rollie. The Minister responsible for Culture inherited a somewhat questionable transaction for the purchase of a photo collection, then was unable to deal accurately with the problem on a day to day basis.

MR. BRADLEY: The documents were tabled, Walt.

DR. BUCK: The documents were tabled. We're still waiting for the final report, Mr. \$18,000-a-year man.

The government has now done almost a 360-degree turnabout on the entire issue of the Roloff Beny collection. Somewhat embarrassing. I realize it's embarrassing to the government, but I mean that's what governments are for. If they're withholding information, they should be embarrassed. With freedom of information legislation in place, the minister would have nothing to worry about. All the information which went into the Roloff Beny deal would have been made public before the transaction was completed.

I'd just like to know if the hon. minister of that long name for travel consultant — what is it? Minister of State for Economic Development — International Trade, the hon. Member for Edmonton Avonmore. I just want to know if the member has made his trip to Italy yet. Has the hon. minister of — what's that big title again? Minister of State for Economic Development — International Trade. Because if the minister went to Italy, I hope he stopped in and saw his friend Roloff Beny to find out if he's going to sell his pictures to us.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the champion of freedom of information legislation is the highly respected, now retired Member of Parliament the hon. Ged Baldwin, the man who for many years carried on this crusade in Ottawa. I'm sure Alberta members, who have great respect for Mr. Baldwin, could not do him a more significant service than to incorporate freedom of information legislation in Alberta. It would be a fitting tribute to a man who has long fought for freedom of information. As a Tory to Tories, I'm sure members will support that argument.

Thank you.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: It's not customary for the Speaker to referee matters within the government caucus.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, this is in the Legislature, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I realize that. I appreciate the hon. member's wisdom.

The hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek happened to catch the Chair's eye first, if that isn't a mixed metaphor.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this opportunity to participate in this afternoon's second reading debate of Bill 208, The Freedom of Information Act, sponsored by the hon. Member for Clover Bar. Although I welcome the opportunity, I must admit I find it somewhat difficult to introduce new ideas in debating the Bill. It's an issue that has been debated exhaustively these past six years or so. Despite that difficulty, I feel somewhat impelled to participate today. After reviewing the opposition arguments in past years for this type of legislation and after listening to the comments made today by the hon. Member for Clover Bar in speaking to his Bill, I am forced to conclude that impoverished logic, no matter how frequently or repetitively used, is none the less impoverished.

At the outset today, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate clearly to you and to my colleagues in the Assembly my firm belief in the principle of the public's right to government information. The need to know what government is doing and why is obviously fundamental to the democratic process. I hasten to add with equal conviction that that right is fully honored by this government.

I do not believe the case has been made by the Member for Clover Bar in speaking to his Bill, nor has the case been made in the past that the public does not have adequate access to information relevant to the making of public decisions. Over the past two years, as a candidate and as an M.L.A. I have not had one single representation from a constituent on the subject of government information accessibility. And that's in a constituency where the people rarely, if ever, hesitate to make their concerns known to me regarding the processes of government.

Mr. Speaker, in examining the implications of this Bill, I submit that it would be useful for members here today to apprise themselves of the questionable results achieved by this kind of legislation in other jurisdictions. To take one useful and nearby illustration, I'd like to refer to the freedom of information Act as passed in 1966 in the United States, and its liberalizing amendments passed in 1974 and 1976. I'm the first to admit that those liberalizing amendments admittedly met a public need for access to the records of a government that had betrayed its trust in the Watergate period.

The problems that have been created by this legislation have served to dramatize the principle that legislated solutions oftentimes generate problems greater than those that prompted the legislation in the first place. *The New York Times* has reported that more than 60 per cent of the requests for government information are not filed by aggrieved citizens or by public interest advocates or even journalists but by businessmen and lobbyists and their lawyers, many seeking otherwise secret information about their competitors. Increasingly it is reported that the freedom of information Act in the United States is being used by prison inmates and people under active criminal

investigation.

Mr. Speaker, as a further illustration that the United States' citizens are poorly served by the freedom of information Act there, the costs of compliance have soared far beyond any level anticipated by the legislators, sponsors, and drafters. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation created a freedom of information Act unit as a consequence of this legislation. In 1974, merely six years ago, the FBI's FOIA unit was staffed by eight full-time employees. Six years later, in 1980, that unit has now swollen to 305 full-time employees addressing themselves exclusively to the bureaucratic burden associated with the flood of requests for information arising from the freedom of information Act and its passage.

Returning now to the Bill before the House this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I am traditionally uneasy about "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not" legislation that incorporates a great host of exceptions. In Bill 208, which I believe comprises some 10 pages of print, 30 to 40 per cent of the space taken by that print is devoted to exceptions. Now many of those exceptions could very well be appropriate, but surely such an awesome catalogue of exceptions suggests that the Bill is not only impractical but would be incredibly onerous and cumbersome to implement and monitor.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members today to consider for a moment the procedures, the staff, the methods, and so on to implement this legislation, in particular provision 23(a) which provides that the court may deny the application if the complaint is trivial. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can see it all now. A whole new additional bureaucracy making learned determinations of what is trivial and what is not, all of which would be subject to appeal and more bureaucracy and, inevitably, more delay. It may well be argued by the Member for Clover Bar that triviality is easy to measure. But he has much more experience with triviality than most of the members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 208 provides that a person may apply for a court order on four different grounds. If I may summarize those: one, in the instance of refused access; two, if the billed amounts are unreasonable; three, in cases of an unreasonably short time extension; and four, if "he believes that any other right established by this Act has been denied to him".

The argument has been made in this House before and in other legislatures, and I would like to make it again; that is, the argument based on the basic fundamental objection of removing decision-making from elected representatives and transferring it to the appointed judiciary. I'd like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that's totally alien to the administration of government as it has developed in our parliamentary system in Canada.

I'm concerned as well, Mr. Speaker, about the legalistic approach to the release of government information. I know that many here today and many outside these chambers share my concern about the courts and the fact that they are already overloaded with matters that could very well be dealt with elsewhere. Speaking to this theme much more eloquently than I could, United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Berger said a few years ago: the harsh truth is that if we do not devise substitutes for the courtroom processes and we do not do it rather quickly, we may well be on our way to a society overrun by hordes of lawyers, hungry as locusts, competing with each other, and brigades of judges in numbers never before contemplated.

If I may pick up a theme introduced by the hon.

member opposite, Mr. Speaker, decisions and judgments in the process of being made undoubtedly require the unfettered flow of ideas, candid expression if you will — the exposure to the full range of possibilities in approaching that particular decision or judgment. It's an approach that needs to be made without anxieties about inadvertent disclosures that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted out of context.

Based on the British model, Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure you are well aware, the heart of our parliamentary system is the concept of collective or cabinet solidarity for all aspects of government activity, whether we're talking about policy development or program execution. In the process of developing policy or executing programs, ministers and cabinet must be free to seek frank and candid advice from their advisors. Their advisors, in turn, must work within an environment that encourages their candor.

Earlier in my career, Mr. Speaker, I spent several years as a senior civil servant here in Alberta. In that capacity, from time to time I was requested to provide to members of Executive Council my analysis of a matter before the government and my recommendation for possible courses of action. Had there been in existence at that time, sir, a legislated possibility that such advisory communications could be subject to subsequent public release, I would have written them somewhat differently. It would not have been a question of compromising my integrity, but rather there simply would have been a constraint on candor to avoid the risk of professional embarrassment, such as might occur with a comment or action alternative being taken out of context.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, such constraint would not have served the public interest very well, for it would have denied to the decision-making process by government advice that otherwise would have been more comprehensive. The Member for Clover Bar has proffered a solution to that problem: erasing the names of those who write the memos. I've added that to my list of examples of impoverished logic from the other side.

In reviewing past debates on this kind of legislation, Mr. Speaker — and possibly in debate that will follow my own brief remarks today — many members have reviewed, and quite possibly will review, the countless illustrations of the openness of this government. This isn't the place or the time for me to review that catalogue, but I'd be happy to do so elsewhere for the hon. members opposite. But may I remind them that it was this government that brought television cameras into these chambers. May I remind them that it was this government that brought in the regional information telephone enquiry system that made government accessible to every citizen with one phone call. [interjections] May I remind them today that it was this government that initiated the concept of a cabinet that was prepared to leave these cloistered chambers and tour the regions of this province to make themselves personally accessible to the people of this province.

But even more important than these illustrations, Mr. Speaker — and they are but a few of a very long list — are the attitudes behind them. In my view the attitudes of the members of Executive Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly are laudable and clearly persuasive of this point, that open government is no mere campaign slogan but is an indisputable characteristic, sir, of this government.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, what we're really discussing is the day to day conflict between the democratic ideal of

freely flowing information versus the pragmatic realities of running a government. Or to put it another way, we're discussing the need to strike a balance between the public's right to know and the government's ability to function effectively. The bill brought before this House by the hon. member opposite, Bill 208, does not strike that balance in my view, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I simply cannot support it.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, in rising today to speak on a Bill which in my mind includes a very worth-while principle, I'd like to divide my comments into three areas: first of all, the concept of freedom of information; second, the Bill that's before us today; and, third, other Bills that exist today with regard to freedom of information.

A few days ago in this Legislature, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs stood and addressed us with regard to an amendment. He said he didn't believe his department should be dealing with gimmicks or any other type of legislation with regard to legislating matters. The hon. minister said he felt that the best protection consumers could have was to be adequately and sufficiently informed so they can make informed judgments and decisions. I'm paraphrasing the hon. minister, but in essence that's what he said.

About seven years ago a conference was held in Calgary called the Western Economic Opportunities Conference. The four western premiers and the Prime Minister of Canada were at that conference. One of the major concerns put forward at that time by the western premiers dealt with transportation, in particular railway freight rates. At that time, the premiers said they could not make informed judgments or decisions about the equity or fairness of railway freight rates unless they had full disclosure on railway costs. They had to have adequate information to make that judgment decision.

Prior to that, I went to Ottawa to see if I could get that information. For one day I went all about the Canadian Transport Commission trying to get the railway cost information. I persisted, and for the entire day I was shuffled from one person to another, all of them acknowledging the existence of those costs and the fact that they had them in their possession. But they would not let me see them or peruse them. Near the end of the day it was suggested that I go to Statistics Canada in Tunney's Pasture to get those costs. Since I'd been given the runaround all day, I thought that Tunney's Pasture was somewhere out in the boondocks and their instructions were simply to get me out there and be rid of me. Strange as it may sound, there is a place called Tunney's Pasture in the outskirts of Ottawa. There's a large building there containing Statistics Canada.

I spent a good part of the morning running around trying to find somebody who had knowledge and possession of the railway costs. Eventually, before noon, I did find a gentleman in a cubicle who actually had the costs. He took great delight in pulling them out and placing them on his desk before me. They were in a three-ring binder and were very thick. I have some experience and expertise in that area; I was aware of what they were. They were the costs for CN rail and CP rail.

He said, however, that I couldn't see them because they were confidential, and that if I were to see them I'd have to get authority from somebody else. I asked if I could speak to his supervisor. He said I could, but he wouldn't back for a week. I asked him who his supervisor's supervisor was. And he told me, but he was out of the country.

I asked who the director was. He was not available. So finally, in exasperation, I asked him who was in charge of Statistics Canada. He advised me that it was Dr. Sylvia Ostry, who is a well-known economist in Canada.

Since I am a professional economist, I had a great deal of interest in meeting Ms Ostry. I asked if I could go meet her and ask her if I could get the costs. The way he looked at me he was saying, sure you smart young fellow from the west, you go see Dr. Ostry. I said, all right, where is she? He said, she's up in the penthouse, at the top. So I got up and walked out. As I got to the entrance of his cubicle, I paused and turned back to him and said, oh, by the way, so Dr. Ostry will know what I'm talking about, may I take the costs with me to show her? Sure, take them, he said. [laughter]

The point here is that freedom of information can cut two ways. First of all, I'd like to refer to the concept more as "access to information". It's my belief and opinion that the public has a right of access to information. On the other hand, as I've pointed out, this can cut two ways. In essence, I had no right to those railway costs. I couldn't get in to see Dr. Ostry. I sat in her anteroom for two hours with these costs on my lap, confidential material submitted to the Canadian Transport Commission and Statistics Canada on that condition. I didn't look at them, but somebody else might have. Whose trust had been betrayed at that time?

I think freedom of information, right of access to information, is important for two reasons. I believe it's important that the public has access to information so it can be adequately and sufficiently informed about what is happening in its government, so it can make rational judgments about that government. On the other hand, I believe there should be freedom of information that specifies what should not be accessible to the public, what information should be protected for various reasons — to protect individuals, to protect negotiations that are under way; in short, just to ensure that the business of the government can be conducted efficiently and in confidence over the short term. So I have a deep personal belief in freedom of information. I stand here using my own words and ideas to stand behind that belief.

The second thing I want to talk about is the Bill we have in front of us today — 208, The Freedom of Information Act. I've gone through this Act. If other members were to look at the one I have in front of me, they would see that it's outlined in red, yellow, black, blue, and what have you. There are a lot of problems in this Act, in my judgment. I'm not a lawyer, so I couldn't have the last word on that. But in my opinion, this Act is much better than any of the other Acts presented before by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

I believe this Act incorporates a basic essence, intent, and spirit of a concept of right of access to public information. I can go through here and find a lot of words that should be changed and lines that should be thrown out. I could say it doesn't go far enough in this area here, or maybe you ought to tighten it up there. But I have in my hand here something that exists today. I haven't seen anything else in this Legislature to date that I could support with regard to the concept of right of access to information.

This Bill is a lot like other Bills. When they're first initiated, they're new. We don't know what's going to happen with them. I'm certain that if this Bill were to be passed, by one way or another, it would come back time after time because of the experience we have with it, and it would be amended. We spend much of our time in this

Legislature amending Bills. That's good that we can do that. It's good that we're responsive to the demands and needs of the public, that we can amend Bills when they need to be amended. So whereas this is not a perfect Bill, it is a good Bill, because it incorporates that concept. It incorporates both edges of that blade: the right of the public to know and the right of the government to maintain confidential those things that need to be confidential.

The third thing I wanted to talk about was freedom of information legislation in other areas. There is freedom of information legislation in other areas. It's not new or unique to this Legislature. There are Bills or Acts covering this concept in Sweden and Norway. Acts are proposed in other parts of the world: Britain, Australia, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. It's not a new concept. It's not one that isn't considered to have a great deal of merit to it.

The Canadian Bar Association has been promulgating a freedom of information Act for some time now. It has listed various things, items, and characteristics that should be included in a freedom of information Act.

When I first looked at this Act, all I had to go on was my judgment, my own opinion. Was this good or not? With the resources I had at my disposal, I came to the conclusion this was a good Act. But that wasn't good enough for me. I had to measure it against other Acts and legislation and against the recommendations made by the Canadian Bar Association. In my judgment, this Act incorporates most of the recommendations made by the Canadian Bar Association. It's therefore good from that point of view.

It's difficult for me to stand here and speak about this, Mr. Speaker. Not because I don't believe in it, but because of the urging I've got from some of the other members in this Legislative Assembly, because of the comments I got when I first stood to speak. Some of the members knew what I was going to say. But I believe in this concept. I believe it's important for the people of Alberta. I don't mean to impugn the integrity of this government, because I know the integrity of this government to date has been beyond question. But I do believe that the government, the legislators, and the people of Alberta deserve something of this nature.

I've talked about three things, Mr. Speaker: first of all the concept, which I agree with; second, the Bill before us, which I believe in essence, spirit, and intent incorporates that concept; and, third, the measure of goodness, if I may, the measure of that Bill against other Bills and against recommendations made by prestigious and well-esteemed groups in our society. I think it's a good Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I don't mean to come to this Legislature and spend my time here with a closed mind. I don't believe that ideas are good because they come from only one side or another. I believe that all men and women in this Legislature are here sincerely, intent on doing what they believe is right for the people of Alberta, their constituents, and indeed for their colleagues in this Assembly. I don't believe in opposing for opposing's sake, Mr. Speaker. I therefore support this Bill.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak on this Bill, on a number of occasions I have already spoken on the item of such great importance to everybody in Alberta. I feel some of the remarks may merit repetition, because the opposition member who brought this Bill in is obviously determined, in spite of those remarks and remarks by other government members from time to

time.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Clover Bar is trying to tell Albertans here today, you are not getting information, and we as a government are terrible. He has said this before in previous sessions when he brought in this Bill or similar Bills. It may be great to raise the issue over and over again, but let's review the issue of information that this public, this province, this government is providing. Let's review the issue fairly and clearly. Let's not be fooled by the fact that it's merely a Bill with a title — with items in there that may be acceptable, depending on your point of view, and depending on the situation in other provinces, countries and, for that matter, the federal government — but review it relative to Alberta. This is where we should be, this is where we are, and this is what we should be discussing. If we review those items fairly and clearly here in this Legislature, I think we will conclude that this type of Bill is not necessary.

I, too, as the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo has indicated, am not here merely to follow an automatic pathway. I honestly believe that information is necessary for citizens on an ongoing basis so they will indeed make rational judgments. But, Mr. Speaker, it would be deluding ourselves to believe for even one minute that merely bringing in an Act would resolve the situation. We know very well — and we all have children, university students, college students, and students in technical schools, and libraries, and we have an increased library fund. We can surround ourselves with information, library books, and that just isn't enough. Information merely being there is just not enough. Maybe that is another problem we should address our minds to regarding our society and the communication of government to society.

Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard one example from the opposition member where this type of Bill is necessary, where there are complaints. In my period of time in office since 1971, I have never been denied any information at any time relative to government activities, except where it deals with the private individual or a private corporation dealing with government, or when information is in the formative stages. Formative stages means the idea, the concept, a note, a number of propositions that may be put forward and are not yet even in the detail stage of a policy program or legislation. Unless I am directly involved via caucus committee, or because the issue is of great importance to me and I am indeed putting in that information. But, Mr. Speaker, we are kidding ourselves if we presume for one minute that the public wants that information in the formative stages. They want the information when the policy and programs or the legislation, are formulated, and indeed reports of government activities on an annual basis and so forth. That, I suggest is provided very well.

The opposition member raises the issue — again, he brings it over and over again in this province. He makes the assumption that there is great public interest for this type of Bill. Not to be misunderstood, Mr. Speaker, freedom of information and information is always, and will be, and should be, of great public interest. As members have stated, and I would support that idea, access to information and information is fundamental and elementary to formulating policy and programs and decisions where governments are functioning properly.

But the hon. opposition Member for Clover Bar is obviously prompted very seriously by the federal issue and problem. The hon. member should review that problem federally very carefully because there lieth a different kettle of fish. Comparing the province with the federal

government and jurisdiction and the problems they have there regarding the secrecy and the inability of getting information is like comparing, as I've said before, day and night, or comparing Social Credit and NDP or, for that matter, Progressive Conservative and NDP. I wouldn't want to offend the hon. opposition member.

DR. BUCK: You wouldn't find too much difference between the latter two.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I don't think that merits even a comment.

But, Mr. Speaker, the opposition member also says we do not have the legal right to get that information. I think that's the most ridiculous statement I've ever heard in this House. Under our parliamentary system, legislative system, we have ministerial responsibility to all citizens. We have responsibilities as members of the Legislature to all citizens, who voted us in, asked us to lead, and asked us to be trustees.

I can assure you when we get into an issue that is sensitive and unpopular with the public, who gets the phone calls? Who gets the phone calls for clarification and response and, for that matter, action? Who has to respond? The hon. opposition member knows darn well. Certainly I know darn well, because we have responded and will continue to respond, difficult as some of those decisions are.

DR. BUCK: Have you heard of the nurses, Ken?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition member would go to court. He doesn't consider the cost or the confusion or how cumbersome it is or how much delay there would be. But even that isn't important, because I'm sure the government of Alberta would indeed provide some provisions for funding that cost if that were the choice that we would make in this Legislature.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's a more important principle. It's a parliamentary principle that stretches right back to British parliamentary times. It undermines the essence of our traditions, Mr. Speaker, where we have responsibility, ministerial responsibility, responsibility of government members to the citizens in the public arena. And this is the public arena.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have many, many more things I'm going to say on this Bill. I haven't finished yet or even started, but I'd like to carry on for a couple more minutes. And if that is misinterpreted I'll clarify, but I don't think it's necessary.

The problem is that the Social Credit member, the hon. Member for Clover Bar, who is, as we all know, seeking the leadership of that party, uses the word — and this is

one of their fundamental problems, Mr. Speaker — he uses the word ...

DR. BUCK: Is he running for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party?

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition Member for Clover Bar is just so emotional, he can't contain himself. He has to hop and talk in between. I've never done that to him. Now if he could contain himself for another minute and a half, I'll adjourn debate and we'll carry on the next time.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition member of the Social Credit Party uses the word "power", and this is one of the fundamental reasons why they lost their governmental position in 1971. They lost the essence even to toy around with that kind of word. It tells you the mentality of that party.

We are here serving the people of Alberta. We are in government office. We are trustees.

MR. R. CLARK: Ask the nurses.

DR. PAPROSKI: Who chose us? The electors chose us. In 1971, Mr. Speaker, we were the majority as trustees. In 1975 a greater majority, and in 1979 a greater majority. Surely during that frame of time, if information wasn't free-flowing to the citizens of Alberta, I would suggest that most of us wouldn't be here.

DR. BUCK: The money was.

DR. PAPROSKI: Well that must tell you something too. Now what does the public want to hear? I suggest, Mr. Speaker, ...

MR. SPEAKER: I must draw the hon. member's attention to the direction of the clock.

DR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I respect your judgment and comments, and I will adjourn debate.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the House will not sit this evening. By way of business tomorrow, we propose to deal with third reading and Royal Assent of Bill No. 30, and perhaps a number of second readings now on the Order Paper. We will then move to Committee of Supply with consideration of the Department of Economic Development, followed by the Department of Environment.

[At 5:31 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

