

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Friday, May 22, 1981 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the annual report, ended March 31, 1980, for the Students Finance Board.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, this morning I'm pleased to introduce a large group of grade 5 students from the Coronation area in my constituency, accompanied by group leader Mrs. Watson. We have additional participation by adults. I think this is very important, and I'm going to name them: Mr. Lang, Mr. Buday, Mrs. Zinger, Mrs. McCullough, Mrs. Scoville, Mrs. Perry, Mrs. Taylor, and Mrs. Johnstone. I would invite them to stand and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this morning to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the House, 65 grades 4, 5, and 6 students from St. Dominic school in the town of Cold Lake, which sits on the shores of the most beautiful lake in the province. If you don't believe me, come up and visit us.

MR. DIACHUK: Has the ice moved off?

MR. ISLEY: Yes, the ice is off, and the trout are biting.

Accompanied by three teachers, Mr. Don Marr, Mrs. Mary Marr, Mr. Jerry Lecky; and four parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harry VanLanges and Mr. and Mrs. Romeo LeFebvre, the students are seated in the public gallery. I would ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Oil and Gas Industry in Alberta**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, today my question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is with regard to the pressure independent oil companies in this province are feeling due to high interest rates, reduced sales, and pressure to move to the United States. Could the minister indicate at this time whether the government is considering any type of program to assist these companies within the next few months, while the energy negotiations are continuing and these other external factors are putting pressure on the industry?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly would be aware of a program contained in the budget

which dealt with expanded activity in road construction. That program will be of assistance to a certain segment of that industry in the sense that it will provide a greater opportunity for employment of road-building equipment, particularly in those areas that have been most seriously affected by the downturn in exploration and drilling activity.

A while ago at a meeting with representatives of that segment of the industry, I indicated that we would continue to monitor that program, and it may be that an expansion of it would be appropriate at some time during the future. But we are not contemplating a general program of relief for the industry in the sense of repairing or relieving the damage inflicted on the industry by the Ottawa budget and energy proposals of October 28.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. Could the minister indicate specifically whether the government is considering extending the five-year leases — some of which terminate as of July 1, and there is a sequence of terminations after that — at that time for the respective companies that now hold them in terms of maybe extending them for one year or until such time as it is more conducive for the companies to drill?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I interpret the question to be: is the government contemplating a change in its policy that requires the drilling of wells or certain exploratory work within the term defined within the lease, otherwise the lease reverts to the Crown? We had a number of requests to consider that action. We have reviewed it and at the present moment are not contemplating any change in the arrangements now in place with respect to the termination of leases.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The minister has indicated "now", and I wonder what the interpretation of the word "now" was? Is it still open to consideration and review during this year, 1981, or is the answer no, and a final no? That's part of the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

As well, could the minister indicate whether any representation has been made by his office or by the minister to other ministers with regard to expanding the lending terms of the Alberta Opportunity Company or the treasury branches to assist some of these companies in the oil and gas exploration or production business that are finding it difficult right now?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the latter portion of the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I would refer that to my colleagues the Provincial Treasurer and the minister responsible for the Alberta Opportunity Company, who is away today; perhaps I could take that question as notice and bring it to his attention.

With respect to the first part of his question, Mr. Speaker, I should be more specific and say we are not contemplating any change. We have considered it and are not contemplating it. What I really meant in my further answer was simply that none of these policies are carved in stone. Circumstances that would lead us to change may develop in the future. But we have considered the request to change the lease termination provisions and do not feel we should make any changes in that area now. If something that we're not currently anticipating occurs in the future, we would of course keep it under review.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The minister indicated that an assessment is going on with regard to the number of oil and gas exploration and drilling companies facing or in bankruptcy and the number of companies leaving or potentially leaving Alberta. Could the minister indicate whether that is a formal assessment or very informal in terms of just gathering information here and there?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to leave the impression that any formal assessment as to the companies that may be leaving the province or having financial difficulties is being conducted by the department. It's a general matter. We get information on these matters from a variety of sources, and that's what we're doing. But we're not making any formal departmental assessment.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister, as well in the area of assessment. The minister indicated that some work was extended relative to highway construction. But that's only one part of the oil service industry. As well, there are welders, truckers, lease contractors, fabricators, and the list goes on. Is the minister doing any type of formal investigation as to the effect of the present circumstances on that aspect of Alberta industry at the present time? If so, are any plans contemplated to assist that part of the industry further than what was indicated in the budget?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, we are getting information from a variety of sources as to the extent of the impact of the October 28 budget and energy proposals on all segments of the industry. I don't know whether one would characterize those as formal.

In response to the second portion of the question, I'd have to repeat what I said earlier. In our view it would be an inappropriate action for the provincial government now to bring in programs or policies designed to repair, either in whole or in part, the damage inflicted upon the industry by the actions of the Ottawa government on October 28. We're referring there to the oil and natural gas industry in the variety of its areas. But I did point out earlier that in the one area, particularly with heavy equipment, which is really peripheral to the oil and natural gas industry, we have introduced a program — which I've indicated would be under review as to whether that could be expanded — which, in our judgment, will provide significant relief to that peripheral component of the industry engaged in road building and things of that nature.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. The minister has indicated that the responsibility for this problem lies with the federal government. But these are homegrown Alberta industries, and I feel we have some responsibility here in Alberta.

Could the minister indicate who and what techniques are used in the department for this assessment? I believe the government should show they are really concerned by having at least maybe one person who can formally do the assessment. Or does the minister sit by his telephone and wait for someone to phone in and say, hey, I'm bankrupt, what are you doing about it? Is there a formal mechanism in the department? If not, is the minister considering just that one aspect, to show open government and real concern?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition really makes an amusing charge. With its actions over the past number of years, I think this government has demonstrated its concern for the people of this province employed in the oil and natural gas industry. Surely I don't need to stress to the Leader of the Opposition that that industry has flourished during the past number of years in this province as a result of programs introduced by this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: OPEC.

MR. LEITCH: The hon. leader's questions have really gone along the path of saying to the Alberta government, you should now repair the damage inflicted by the Ottawa government.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'm just saying you should know about it.

MR. LEITCH: Yes, we know about it.

As to a formal mechanism, Mr. Speaker, the department is gathering information in all these areas. I'd only conclude by saying that we reject totally the path he's implying in his questions, that this government should now take action that repairs the harm inflicted by the Ottawa government on October 28.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate what methods are used or what policy is used in order to distribute the marketing and permits to the different companies? Is Alberta Energy able to market all the gas they have for production at this point?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid the hon. member will have to be a bit more specific in his question. Is he referring only to the marketing of natural gas?

Well, the marketing of natural gas is done pursuant to contracts and is significantly different from the marketing of conventional crude or synthetic oil. Volumes that are marketed are pursuant to the contracts entered into between the purchasers and the producers. As to the volumes being marketed by the Alberta Energy Company, I don't have that information at hand.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary, please, to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether or not the government has completed its assessment and evaluation of the energy proposals presented at the April 13 meeting between him and the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to leave uncommented on the reference to proposals presented at the April 13 meeting, in the sense that the question implies that some definitive or detailed proposals were presented. That was not the case. As I indicated to the Assembly in reporting on that meeting, all the energy matters were discussed in general terms but not in detailed or terms of specific proposals.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, a further supplementary. Without inviting the minister to get into details and debating the matter in public or negotiating the deal in public, could the minister be a little more specific and indicate whether or not there were any substantial

changes in conceptual approaches by the federal government?

MR. LEITCH: Mr. Speaker, I really don't think I can usefully add to the Assembly to anything I've said already about the April 13 meeting.

LRT Feasibility Study

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a second question of the Minister of Transportation with regard to the LRT leg in Calgary that starts this Monday, May 25. I wonder if the minister could indicate what assurances are going to be given with regard to shortening the trial time of the first leg, so as to avoid costly delays in the second and further legs.

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the time that will be involved in doing an assessment on the feasibility of the operation, we have offered to set up a working group with the two cities through Transportation, and I commented on that earlier. Part of their job will be to get a reading on the operation to see what the responses from the public are, to see how well it works.

We did not specifically give a time. We had suggested a two-year trial period — that's the amount of time suggested to Edmonton. We did the same with Calgary, in a letter I sent to the mayor. We are prepared to do an ongoing assessment, of course, but it's pretty difficult to say how long it would take. If a picture emerges early, probably some decisions could be made there. But we have no commitment to expand funding. Certainly at the department level we can't consider anything beyond 1981, because our budget is in, as the member would know. So the assessment would be aimed at making decisions down the road.

Fire Safety — Sprinkler Systems

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Labour. It flows from the government's decision not to enforce mandatory sprinklers in the building code, and relates to the two commissioned studies recently completed in the state of Nevada as a result of the MGM Grand Hotel and Las Vegas Hilton tragedies: one completed by the state Senate, the other by a group of people appointed by Governor List. I have a copy to file with the Legislature Library.

My question directly to the minister: in view of the fact that both studies in the state of Nevada come up with the very firm recommendation that there be compulsory sprinkler systems in all hotels, and that it even be done on a retroactive basis, what review, if any, has the government made of these reports? Is the government prepared to reassess its position on compulsory sprinkler systems?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to repeat for the benefit of the hon. member, who must have been absent during the estimates when I did address that very question, that at least three initiatives are being considered at the present time. One is that a subcommittee of the National Research Council — which is the sponsor, if I may use that expression, of the National Building Code — will be examining the existing standards in terms of their effectiveness, trying to study how effective certain aspects of them are where they have been put into buildings, particularly those which would be relevant to situations where sprinkler systems might be

more likely to be considered as an alternative. That's number one, Mr. Speaker.

Number two, the fire chiefs are examining different standards across the country, and not only in Canada but, as I understand, also in the United States. I expect they will conclude their efforts in either late 1981 or early 1982, although it's a private study, so I would have no ability to influence the timing. Thirdly, we in Alberta will be doing some analysis of certain situations, primarily those involving residents who are less mobile on their own than the more able-bodied of us, in terms of whether or not accommodation for these people needs additional consideration beyond that already provided for in the building code.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I remind the hon. minister that it was the unanimous testimony of all the fire chiefs before both commissions in Nevada that had sprinkler systems been in both hotels, there would have been no deaths. That was the unanimous testimony of fire chiefs who appeared before these commissions.

That being the case, Mr. Speaker, my specific question to the minister is: what target date does the government have? The government indicates that the fire chiefs are studying this matter, but gives no indication. Are we as a Legislature going to see changes in the building code on this particular matter in the next year?

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Speaker, while the hon. member is reminding me, perhaps I should have the opportunity to remind the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview that if there were no cigarette, cigar, or pipe smoking, there would be considerably fewer deaths due to lung cancer. If there were no automobiles, there would be considerably fewer deaths due to traffic accidents. The fact is that any time we have practices in society and groups of people in society who live and work together and have different choices, there is the opportunity for actions by one to influence the other.

Now, I've already indicated three initiatives. I'd also like to remind the hon. member that the National Research Council, a body of scientific expertise very widely renowned both in Canada and well beyond Canada, is the proponent, if you will, the promoter of the National Building Code. The code is developed based upon their research. Their research also takes into account the experience turned in to it by the fire chiefs in Canada. Within Alberta we have the Alberta Building Standards Council, which reflected upon the very question the hon. member has raised. On that Building Standards Council is the chief of the fire department for the city of Edmonton as one expert among others, and that council did not recommend sprinklers as the hon. member suggests.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The hon. minister talked about all kinds of ifs, but it's worth noting that the fire chiefs in Nevada made one very significant "if. If there had been sprinklers, the people in the MGM Grand and the Las Vegas Hilton would not have died. That's a pretty important if, Mr. Speaker.

Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether it is correct that both Chief Day, the gentleman the hon. minister referred to, and the fire chief of the city of Calgary recommend the introduction of sprinkler systems?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I've had representations from a number of sources. I think it is a public fact that Chief Day said that sprinkler systems offer a form of protection and may be preferable in certain circumstances. That is acknowledged in the building code. In areas over a certain size, rooms over a certain size used for certain purposes, there must be sprinkler systems. The same is true in accommodation required for certain purposes. Judgments are made on what is necessary to achieve a level of safety.

As I have understood, the fact is that in the state of Nevada the code was not effectively enforced in respect of the MGM Grand situation. I've seen one report which said a thousand violations. That's pretty extreme, but if there are a thousand violations, I have some real hesitation in accepting the total statement the hon. member has made, without some qualifications. While I have not read the report, I would be extremely surprised that the recommendation is unqualified in terms of the effect it may have had.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Has any consideration been given to a system of fiscal incentives to encourage the introduction of sprinkler systems, especially in older buildings? This is one of the specific proposals contained in the Nevada report. There should be compulsory sprinkler systems . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member is certainly entitled to ask his questions directly, but in fairness to other members who have not been able to prepare for such a debate, or far less to take part in it, I suggest that we have had sufficient debate about a report made in the state of Nevada.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, my specific question is: has any consideration been given to a system of fiscal incentives to encourage the introduction of sprinkler systems?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that some consideration has been given to the factors which would influence the trade-offs or alternatives for safety, besides the safety considerations or otherwise. Some consideration has been given to the economics. I have had one presentation of a preliminary nature, in which the technology has reached the point that the same equipment used for sprinklering may also be used for temperature control, heating, and cooling in a building. So in view of the rapid development of technology in this area, I think it would be very difficult to make a decision which would be valid for any length of time in terms of what the economics would require. In fact it is suggested — and that's one of the elements that will be looked at — that the economics of introduction of sprinklers may be as great or greater than some of the alternatives. But, again, that would depend upon the skill and knowledge of the designers.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question. The minister indicated that economics would be a factor as well as safety. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly how many of the 11 members on the Alberta Building Standards Council are representatives of professional fire-fighting and prevention groups?

MR. SPEAKER: May I ask whether the membership of this council is not a matter of considerable public knowledge?

MR. NOTLEY: Could I ask the minister if he could confirm that only Chief Day represents fire fighting and fire prevention on the building trades council, and that the bulk of the membership in fact are . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Skilfully though it be, the hon. member is asking the same question.

Power Transmission Lines

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Utilities and Telephones deals with the question of power line locations. I'd like to ask if it's the intention of the government in 1981 to become involved in a new policy regarding location of power lines? Will that new policy mean changes in legislation or regulations?

MR. SHABEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe I've commented on this matter before in the Assembly. Over a year ago, we commenced an interdepartmental evaluation of the existing process for approval of major transmission lines. That work has been concluded, and we're now in the process of finalizing a policy position paper that will be filed in the Assembly during this year's session. I can't yet determine whether legislative changes will be required. They may only require policy changes.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Will the policy paper the minister has agreed to table in the Assembly — and I welcome that offer — be in place prior to a final decision being made on the location of the major transmission line in southern Alberta?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I can answer that question, because I'm not sure when the ERCB is likely to make a final decision on that matter, nor can I be precise as to when the tabling will occur. The only answer I can give is that it's my intention to file the position paper during this year's session of the Alberta Legislature.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister or one of his colleagues indicated to the ERCB that, based on the existing policy, they should in fact make a recommendation to the government on the location of this main transmission line? Or in fact has the direction of the new policy been indicated to the ERCB, and will the ERCB wait until that new policy is in place? I raise the question because it seems to me that the ERCB is in a virtually impossible position in knowing that the government is developing a new policy yet being asked to hold the present hearings under the old policy.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, in the course of developing policy recommendations, the interdepartmental committee, though it didn't include the Energy Resources Conservation Board because they are at arm's length from government — I'm aware that discussions did take place between officials in my department and the ERCB comparing thoughts and ideas as to how the procedure might be improved. In view of the fact that the hearing on the 500 kV transmission line is scheduled for fall this year, I believe, there is a good likelihood that the paper would be filed prior to that. But I can't be positive.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister indicated to the various groups concerned about

the location of this line at least the general direction the government is moving as far as a new policy, so the preparation those groups are doing for presentation to the ERCB, which as the minister said may very well be under this new policy, will not be based on the former policy, and those groups would have the benefit of a new and changed policy so in fact their work would not be for naught?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, there may be some suggestion in the suggestions or comments by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury that the previous policy and procedures followed by the ERCB were inadequate. I hope that's not the intention of the hon. member.

The process has worked very, very well in the past, but some improvements are required. Those are the improvements we're considering at the moment. I can't answer beyond that in adding any more to the response I've given, except to say that as soon as it's possible to file that policy position paper, it will be done.

MR. R. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, one last supplementary question to the minister. Can the minister give a commitment to the Assembly that in fact the minister will meet with the groups concerned about the location of the transmission line and indicate to them the broad general direction the government is going on the question of changing policy? Has the minister already done that with the utility company and, if not, is the minister intending to do that so all groups will go before the ERCB knowing what the ground rules are going to be prior to getting there and having some appreciation for the change in policy?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I've had representations from and discussions with a number of groups. We're in the process of scheduling meetings with a couple of groups which have written and asked to discuss the matter. As the hon. member suggests, we will be meeting and, if it's appropriate, meet with the utility company.

MLA/Media Baseball Game

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I have a question of the hon. Government House Leader. This has to do with the annual MLA versus press gallery ball game at Fort Saskatchewan Tuesday night. In light of the absence of the Premier and the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, is the Government House Leader in a position to indicate if both hon. members are out practising for that ball game?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can take this occasion to apologize to hon. members with respect to that game. No matter what other capable players there are that will enable the MLAs once again to defeat the media . . . I will not be present. [laughter]

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't apologize.

MR. CRAWFORD: I've been receiving encouragement in that direction from my colleagues. But as far as the Premier and the Minister of Small Business and Tourism are concerned, I don't think they need the practice but, the Premier being away at present, I think he took his glove with him.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, at that Tuesday game I will be acting the same role as you do in this Assembly: the umpire in chief. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: I have to remind the hon. member that I am only the chief listener in the Assembly.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate to the hon. Government House Leader that he can inform the hon. Premier, as I've informed the people in the area, that the Premier had better swing at it regardless of where it is, because they'll all be strikes.

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I would like to ask if the hon. minister, on behalf of cystic fibrosis, will accept the donation of the proceeds of that ball game?

MR. BOGLE: We certainly will, Mr. Speaker. [applause]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MRS. CHICHAK: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege to request a correction with respect to remarks made last evening in the annexation debate. I referred to the 1979 comparative tax assessment ratio for residential and non-residential property attributed to St. Albert as 98 per cent residential and 8 per cent non-residential assessment base. I wish to have *Hansard* corrected. The ratios should have read as 92 per cent residential and 8 per cent non-residential assessment base.

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

1. Moved by Mr. Moore:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly give consideration to the Local Authorities Board Order, Report and Recommendations on Annexation to the City of Edmonton and, in so doing, urge the government to give consideration to the importance of preserving agricultural land when arriving at a final decision with regard to the Local Authorities Board Order, Report and Recommendations on Annexation to the City of Edmonton.

[Adjourned debate May 21: Mr. Woo]

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, the Mexican war was not a popular one with the American people. Abraham Lincoln, then a member of Congress, opposed it, declaring that those who said the war was not one of territorial aggression made him think of the Illinois farmer who said, I ain't greedy about land; I only want what joins mine.

Mr. Speaker, I may be hard put to suggest that annexation, whether you call it unification, amalgamation, or centralized government, can be equated with a war. Nevertheless, annexation is not popular with the residents of Sherwood Park and the county of Strathcona and, I would hazard a guess, with a great many residents of the city of Edmonton. I appreciate the remarks made by hon. members who spoke before me. I respect those views and opinions. In addressing the motion before this Assembly, I too am committed to representing the views of my constituency and of the very able leadership of the county of Strathcona. Mr. Speaker, I trust my remarks

will reflect the intelligent views and majority concern of the informed voters in my constituency and at the same time demonstrate respect for the views of the minority who support the process of annexation.

I'm reminded of the story of the general who shot his messenger because the news he bore was not good. I must confess, Mr. Speaker, that this was my initial inclination when the board order was handed down. However, at the outset let me say that I have the deepest respect for the chairman of the commission, the former Chief Justice of this province, Mr. J.V.H. Milvain. I recognize that he was faced with a most formidable task, as were members of his commission.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the report and recommendation mark an important and very significant phase in a process of addressing annexation proposals in an extremely critical time for this province. Certainly the ultimate resolution of this particular application will establish significant precedents which, in my view, will have an impact on the entire province. Concurrently, I believe there is a secondary consideration which may be of greater importance, and that is the reflection of how governments will respond in future to the wishes and aspirations of people who elect them.

In addressing this motion, in many respects I believe I am not just speaking for Sherwood Park but for the Legals, the Highwoods, the Morinville, the Cochrane, and the other small communities throughout Alberta. I am not just speaking for the county of Strathcona, but for all the other counties, municipal districts, and local improvement districts throughout the province.

It has been suggested that residents of the affected areas have responded to the LAB recommendation with emotional rhetoric and emotional reaction, without having the facts at hand. It has been my experience that when people are threatened, they react emotionally. Under different circumstances, I'm not so sure that details matter. However, annexation is no stranger to the citizens of the county of Strathcona. They have lived with it for a number of years. Other residents of Sherwood Park have experienced it first-hand, particularly those who once lived in Jasper Place and Beverly. I suggest that they do indeed have the facts.

I would like to spend a few moments looking at the report of the Local Authorities Board. This report is the result of 105 days of hearings and many thousands of pages of documentation. The report raises a number of questions, but in the time permitted me I can only touch upon a few. First, I am disturbed at the commission's immediate acceptance of the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission's definition that an

Inner Metropolitan Area containing the City of Edmonton, the City of St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Winterburn, and rural and industrial lands between or on the periphery of these communities [exists].

In my view, Mr. Speaker, an "Inner Metropolitan Area" is an assumption. The fact is that the area described is a normal regional area that could be found anywhere in Canada, a geographical knit of communities working in harmony with intermunicipal agreements, co-operation, and certainly a high degree of social, cultural, and recreational mix. The implication of the board's statement is that existing and functioning arrangements were not working or would not continue to work, hence the need to change, to annex. I recognize no evidence that would prove that point.

But a more significant conclusion emerged from the definition and the acceptance of the assumption that an

inner metro area existed, and that was in the commission's view that if it existed, it would automatically require a corresponding single formal local government, hence 'unicity'; notwithstanding that a network of functioning contracts and agreements between a number of interdependent municipalities was in place. Further, the Local Authorities Board report says that if the city of St. Albert were to be excluded from being annexed it would be left alone to struggle for an increased tax base. This would produce two undesirable results: St. Albert would not be able to make a "natural contribution to the region"; secondly, its residents could not "continue enjoying the quiet life to which they have become accustomed".

This same test was not applied to the county of Strathcona. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, on that basis the county should not be annexed. By the same token, however, if applied to St. Albert, the test applied to the county of Strathcona which resulted in the board's deciding that it should be annexed would not justify that city's annexation. In effect, what we have here are different principles being applied to each of the major areas in order to substantiate the required annexation.

It is important to note that there are considerable precedents in the history of annexation hearings in this province. Those precedents require the LAB to satisfy itself that four major considerations will accrue to those areas to be annexed. They are in the areas of tax benefits, improved municipal management, the direction that growth will occur, and how the population would be accommodated. The report simply states that in its view, the city of Edmonton was not required to demonstrate any or all of these factors, nor does the board say why these were not required.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other areas of concern regarding the report, areas which I wish to touch upon very briefly. The board will make no recommendations regarding electrical power services. The board will make no recommendations regarding telephone services. The board makes no definitive recommendation with respect to policing. These are but a few of the many problems identified by the board. Once having identified the problems, its recommendation is that such problems go to a committee. Mr. Speaker, the result would be rule by committee.

I wish to address a very important concern relating to one of the best systems of its kind in Alberta, if not in western Canada: the public and separate school systems of the county of Strathcona. These systems have been educational models that have attracted numerous study groups. They are progressive, imaginative, innovative and, in essence, reflect significant leadership in their board chairmanships and make-up. The school districts and counties now have coterminous boundaries, so quite naturally the implementation of the board recommendation will raise very serious and dramatic problems.

Here again, the board makes no recommendations, but provides the response that it feels education will not suffer under the proposed annexation. The board went on to say that it heard many representations, but it summed up by saying that the field of education was beyond the authority of the board. It would appear to me that for whatever reasons, in a number of critical areas in its report the board recognized problems, acknowledged them in so many words, then said, you solve them, or that annexation will solve the problems. However, I find a great deal of difficulty with this rationale, particularly when I come to the conclusion that these problems were born as a result of the annexation process.

Mr. Speaker, compared to other reports of a similar nature, the overriding concern about this report specifically is that the board did not see its mandate as requiring:

... a meticulous dissection of the many facts brought before us. We have rather used these facts to evolve a concept which is applicable to the region as a whole.

By choosing to rest its decision on a concept, the normal requirement to systematically analyse and distinguish the evidence put before the board was deemed unnecessary. The board appears to have accepted many documents at face value, without analysis, including the findings of the 1956 McNally report, which said it would be a metropolitan tragedy to have centres like St. Albert and Sherwood Park grow on the periphery of the city of Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, there is a suggestion that once having evolved a concept, the next step is merely to apply those necessary and appropriate findings to substantiate it, thereby precluding the need to examine or raise alternate ways of dealing with the situation. The apparent wholesale adoption of the McNally report and that Edmonton dominates, the board's final decision regarding arguments in favor of or opposed to the decision are never given. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there are other Canadian and American working models other than the board recommendations, which demonstrate more functionally and efficiently the control, direction, and channelling of growth without creating one large city. The report sweeps all this experience under the rug and, indeed, does not cite any alternative or discuss its relevance as an alternative to its conclusion that only 'unicity' will meet Edmonton's problems. The report denies a very important strength of the county of Strathcona, and that is that over the years the development of a governmental system has evolved that provides for diversity, growth, and future opportunities in the Edmonton region. Most important, the system allowed for and survived change. It is unique, certainly, but it works.

I would like to make one last specific reference to the board report. That reference is related to the title Representation by Population on page 158 of the document. Mr. Speaker, upon examination it is significant that successful democracies operate on twin principles of representation by population and identity by unit. Examples can be found here in Canada and the United States: the federal government of Canada, the provinces of this nation, the federal government of the United States, and the states of that great country.

The board report suggests that democracy has always been majority representation; therefore, the logical conclusion is that because Edmonton dominates in terms of population, its government alone should exercise power over all its surrounding areas. If we take that logic to its ultimate conclusion, then I say this to you, Mr. Speaker: Ontario and Quebec should decide for the rest of Canada. I hope the city of Edmonton does not wish to emulate Ottawa in its desire to change the face of what is now democracy in a real sense.

The county of Strathcona comprises a number of elements brought together in harmony under a single unique administration. Certainly it is appropriate for the city of Edmonton in its annexation bid to lay claim to the fact that it can administer a similar diverse area. Indeed the reeve and his councillors in the county have blazed away and proven it. Agricultural land, spoken of by many of my hon. colleagues during the course of this debate, is a prime element in the make-up of the county. Its relationship to annexation is a sensitive one.

Perhaps the remarks I'm going to make will not meet with the approval of Sad Grey son, chairman of the citizens' committee, who is also a farmer and an official of Unifarm. In a number of studies it has been stated that slightly over half the prime agricultural land in Canada is located within 50 miles of approximately 20 major urban areas. Given these figures, it is understandable that as these and other urban areas grow, more and more of these lands will be taken up for urban development. Distasteful as this might be, Mr. Speaker, especially to the agricultural committee and certainly to many urban residents, this must eventually come to be recognized as a fact of life.

Our heavy industrial areas are the result of long-term planning and co-operation between them and the county of Strathcona. It is done through planning, co-operation, initiative, and mutual understanding of each other's needs, and is historically linked as one. In its representations to the board, the heavy industries outlined, among a number of other concerns, three major considerations: that residential encroachment will not continue, that an adequate buffer zone between heavy industry and residential development be maintained, and, very importantly, the proposed application will place the heavy industrial area in the heart of the future expanded city.

Having regard for this, Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to respond to some of the comments made during the course of this debate by a number of hon. colleagues. In doing so I recognize that many comments were made in a constructive way. However, after listening carefully, I am put in mind of the state guest who was invited to a hanging and, upon receiving the invitation, found he was the main event. Something is wrong when one would encourage or support a process or system that allows the imposition of a framework or set of conditions upon another jurisdiction, particularly when it is against the will of the people in that jurisdiction. I find that repugnant. I believe it is morally wrong for one jurisdiction to unilaterally lay claim to what belongs to another simply because it was there.

With respect to Refinery Row, we talk of a form of compensation with complete disregard for the initial millions of dollars spent in planning, preparation, and provision of infrastructure by both the county and the industries concerned. I would be interested to know what the total price tag will be and, just as important, who is going to pay it.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Strathcona county have demonstrated their feelings toward annexation. In this Legislature last fall I tabled a petition containing the signatures of 11,285 residents expressing their opposition to annexation. A plebiscite held during the last municipal election demonstrated that 90 per cent of the electorate opposed annexation. A rally attracted over 5,000 residents who voiced their opposition to annexation. Two well-informed and concerned homemakers of Sherwood Park, Sandra Addley and Peg Brown, initiated the citizens' committee, which launched a program which produced many thousands of letters from residents of Sherwood Park and the county expressing their opposition to government with respect to annexation.

As residents of a close-knit community we are proud of Edmonton. We are also proud of the community we live in and worked so hard to build. We have respect for the leadership of the city of Edmonton and are proud to call Edmonton our capital city. But as residents of the county of Strathcona we also have respect and take pride in the leadership of our reeve and council. Mr. Speaker, certain-

ly give the city of Edmonton land for growth and expansion. Edmonton can be given land for residential development without destroying the county of Strathcona. Edmonton can be given land to develop industrial growth without depriving the county of Strathcona. Edmonton can be given land to develop heavy industries without emasculating the county's life lines. All this can be done without destroying the county. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I believe the requirements to satisfy the city's stated objectives for developable land would be consistent with their expressed wishes to see them through the next 40 to 50 years.

Yes, we are a unique entity. We not only survived the doom and gloom of past studies and reports, but indeed we thrived. Our system of government has been challenged as improbable, yet it functions. Our concerns with regard to people, commerce, hopes, and aspirations are similar to the questions so ably raised by my hon. colleagues the Member for St. Albert and the Member for Stony Plain.

Mr. Speaker, today the county is faced with annihilation. What is left to be said? The residents of Sherwood Park and the county of Strathcona leave their fate in the hands of the honorable Executive Council with one question only: what is fair?

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we continue with the hon. Member for Edmonton Beverly, may the Member for Drayton Valley revert to the introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MRS. CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce some very interested observers in the members gallery. We have Les Miller, reeve of the county of Parkland, accompanied by Otto Schuster, also from the county of Parkland. Would you please rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (continued)

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Speaker, it is most important that we realize that the question of annexation of surrounding areas by an urban area will always be difficult to resolve and will always create opposing parties anywhere in this free land. There is the elected council of an urban area, such as the council of Edmonton, who are delegated by their electors to plan for the future. They are the corporate directors of this corporation, the city of Edmonton, and they are to establish a growth plan that the citizens of this city require of them; otherwise they would be failing their responsibility as elected people. At the same time there are the council members of the areas next to the urban area in the surrounding counties or municipal districts. They also have a mandate from their electors to plan without interference. This is the kind of situation we have facing us many times in this province and other provinces in our free and great country of Canada.

Yes, the ideal way would be amalgamation. As history has shown, at one time a great part of my constituency,

the town of Beverly, amalgamated with the city, as did Jasper Place, because the majority of those residents considered it and voted in favor of joining Edmonton. Even today some residents of my constituency wonder if they would have been better off. However, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs pointed out in giving us a good review of one of the earliest amalgamations that took place in this province, the twin cities of Strathcona and Edmonton, some residents still wonder if Strathcona wouldn't have been better as the city of Strathcona. Someone once said, in life so often we weigh our decisions, and in hindsight we then review whether we've made the right decision. It's like ordering a dessert in a restaurant. After eating the dessert you wonder whether you shouldn't have ordered the other dessert that was available.

Edmonton has been pointed out — and I'm sad, but I must share — as the bad guy in this charade, this exercise, in the need for the Edmonton regional area. It is my opinion, and it is shared by some of my constituents, that Edmonton did not need to defend its position on the need for area to grow and meet the demands the city of Edmonton was asked to fulfil: the needs for housing, recreation, parkland, and industrial development.

As expressed by my colleague the M.L.A. for Edmonton Gold Bar, the residents of Edmonton do consider very supportive the support from residents outside Edmonton when they cheer for the great Eskimos or the more recent teams: the great Oilers, the wonderful Drillers, and even the exciting Trappers. We welcome that, and we don't question whether the fan sitting next to us is from St. Albert, Lloydminster, or even farther areas. Edmonton has not been the bad guy, Mr. Speaker, because even as early as Clark Stadium, which was totally funded at that time by the taxpayers of Edmonton, there was not a priority to Edmonton residents to have the first choice on season tickets. Commonwealth Stadium: we have the understanding that because there was provincial funding in a shared program, that would prohibit any priority to Edmonton residents. But the deficits are picked up by the Edmonton taxpayers. So I want to set in this debate the perspective that Edmonton is not the bad guy in this annexation question.

I do not intend to review what the Local Authorities Board did or didn't say. In the brief moment that I have accepted to speak on this resolution, I want to say what I support and what my constituents have asked me to speak up for and support during this debate. I must state that I do not accept the recommendation of the Local Authorities Board, the annexation of such a great area, in particular the annexation of St. Albert and Sherwood Park. However, with some pleasure I want to reflect on our colleague the New Democratic Party member when he spoke. I refer to *Hansard* of Wednesday, May 20:

The second proposal I would make, Mr. Speaker, is to establish Sherwood Park as a municipally autonomous town, but on the clear understanding that city status would be conferred in the future.

Interesting, because how in the world can Sherwood Park ever be restricted and not grow into that beautiful agricultural soil. Mr. Speaker, I sincerely support that concept, but we must also be aware that if Sherwood Park is a town . . .

DR. BUCK: A hamlet.

MR. DIACHUK: I'm speaking of the future. . . . and does become a city, it has to expand into what is classed

as No. 1 agricultural soil. Someday, when the residents of that county decide they are ready for town status, I hope the hon. member will not criticize that they are encroaching on good agricultural land. However, *Hansard* will be there so we will be able to remind him of it.

In the question of the residential areas around Edmonton, some of my colleagues have mentioned the growth, and all one has to do is travel by automobile or in a light Cessna plane to see the growth of residences around Edmonton. We received some submissions. At one time in the discussions the hon. Member for Edmonton Sherwood Park shared that there are owners of farmland in the area in the proximity of Edmonton just waiting, gleefully hoping they will be annexed so their land would increase in value. We're advised that in the area to the south, as was reflected in the heritage valley project, some 80 to 85 per cent of the owners have voted in support of being annexed to Edmonton. These are corporations or groups of people who collectively own the land. They are the owners. So we do have an interest in the surrounding area to be able to join and support Edmonton. Outside the Edmonton area, it is not all opposition to the annexation to Edmonton. However, with the proposed report and my support and my views of my constituents on the expansion of the boundaries of Edmonton in order to provide residential area, good housing, and long-range planning, a sufficient area of industrial taxes must come to be able to support that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe my own constituency has a fair share of public housing. Housing is needed, provided through the programs of the provincial government. However, I wonder why all this public housing has to take place in the city of Edmonton, and not in the counties or municipal districts, or even the city of St. Albert or the town of Sherwood Park. But I gather that it is the choice of the people. Because of the proximity to social services, to work, people don't have the luxury of being able to live in public housing farther away from the core of the city centre, and therefore need that public housing in the Edmonton constituencies we speak of. We must then provide it. But let's set that there: it is there in greater abundance. To my understanding, I imagine I have more public housing in my constituency of Edmonton Beverly than St. Albert and Sherwood Park put together.

Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, I believe that for the retention of Sherwood Park and the county of Strathcona as viable units, a good balance of the industrial tax base must remain. The question really, as the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar pointed out — because all my constituents have to do is look across the river and they see, enviably, Refinery Row. I must say that with my support of the retention of the hamlet of Sherwood Park, Strathcona does require Refinery Row. I therefore will hope to be able to convince my colleagues, and place it on the record, that I do not support the annexation of Refinery Row to Edmonton, because they need it to maintain the future of Sherwood Park which, I share with the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview, may someday be a city; however, only to indicate that we're not afraid to make our position known when the time is required.

I therefore will continue to explore with my colleagues a reasonable and fair annexation on the balance to provide for the growth of Edmonton. But I do want to say that Edmonton is not the bad guy, and Edmonton requires sufficient area to grow and plan to grow for the

next half century.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the motion on annexation, I hope to bring to the debate some of the views, perspectives, and experiences of Edmonton Mill Woods. I feel this perspective is important because the projected population of the Mill Woods area is about 100,000-plus people at about the turn of the century. If Edmonton's population doubles in the next 20 to 30 years, that is going to involve Mill Woods two, Mill Woods three, Mill Woods four, Mill Woods five, possibly Mill Woods six. The Mill Woods one population presently stands at about 40,000-plus people, less than half way there. So we in Edmonton Mill Woods can only provide less than half the answers to rational urban development.

Mr. Speaker, Edmonton Mill Woods has, and is having, its growing pains. But I very much want to put on record my firm belief that the quality of life in our province, our region, our city, and our neighborhoods is among the best in the world. The subject of this debate addresses the important opportunity to possibly sustain and enhance our region's very excellent quality of life. Mr. Speaker, how lucky we are. Notwithstanding the unaccustomed media attention to this debate, I sincerely hope this is not the most important debate that I participate in in this Legislature. Do we appear greedy to the outside world when we say give us more? Do we appear selfish when some of us say, stay away, we want to keep what we have? In this time of ours, when there are very significant people problems to resolve, energy problems, sharing with the rest of Canada in terms of energy resources, I sincerely hope we will keep this debate in the proper perspective.

Speaking to the quality of life aspect, Mr. Speaker, in no small measure it will be determined by how well the annexation decision of our Executive Council sets the stage for rational development of Edmonton's metropolitan area. Another way to describe or depict the Edmonton metropolitan area could be to call it the commutershed of Edmonton. This would be defined as an area where a significant portion of an area's residents drive to and from Edmonton on a daily basis. I note that I'm not far from the hon. Member for Edmonton Sherwood Park in his definition. It is my view that all the citizens of Edmonton Mill Woods will support and indeed expect that planning on a regional or commutershed basis be governed by certain parameters or constraints that, you could say, there is a general consensus to accept.

Perhaps by way of example, environmental constraints would first govern the Edmonton region's growth in terms of watershed and airshed. There are limits to the North Saskatchewan rivershed, for example, and a logical one says placement of the water intake above the sewer outlet, and treatment of sewage systems in the total that are within the absorptive capacity of the North Saskatchewan River system. Some of my friends who are environmentally sensitive would suggest that placing the water intake below the sewer outlet will ensure that we are totally responsible in that regard. We also share the airshed of the Edmonton region in the same way. The residential area and Refinery Row share the same airshed, and we rely on our provincial standards to make sure air emissions are of an acceptable quality.

I'd also submit that there are economic constraints to expanded urban development. The level of service that can be provided to residents of municipalities is finite and limited, as we well know in Edmonton Mill Woods.

Planning for rational and economic development is limiting in that not every area can be developed and serviced with roads, sewers, and water lines willy-nilly.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, I submit that the loss of agricultural land to urban development is an economic constraint. As much as I decry the loss of prime agricultural land — and I am somewhat comforted by the suggested initiative of the Minister of Municipal Affairs on saving topsoil — if we're going to have the capacity to build homes that people have some hope of being able to buy, it must be dictated that the larger, unoccupied, mainly farmlands be consumed.

Mr. Speaker, as the trend for every level of government is — regrettably, in my view — to become more involved with the lives of our citizens, there is another level of constraint to regional urban development that I will term socio/cultural issues. These issues embody themselves in what might be called the soft services or people-oriented services. Surely the constraint must be accepted upon a regional basis that one municipality's actions or policies cannot hurt or hinder another municipality's very important people programs.

Mr. Speaker, the constraints or parameters mentioned suggest, and in fact demand, that there be a regional allocation of resources. This process first starts with the planning process, which from now on should be based on representation by population. The acknowledged need for Edmonton city to have land available to absorb the growth it will receive as the major urban unit in northern Alberta must be qualified. As a complex major urban centre, Edmonton must have both adequate land and an adequate mix of land that will provide accommodation for residential, recreational, commercial, and heavy and light industry for land bases.

I think it must be borne in mind that there is a symbiotic relationship between residential and industrial areas. Quite reasonably the people who live in the residential areas travel to work in industrial areas, and the industrial area needs that people base to run the factories.

It also must be borne in mind that not all industry can be squeaky clean or free from some sort of negative aspects. Certainly the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar addressed this issue with respect to the rendering plant, and the need for a diversity of land base for a diversity of industry within the city. Everything isn't high technology. You must have a petrochemical industry as a primary base before you can have a plastics industry, which would be a secondary industry. You can't logically follow the plastics industry with a plastics fabrication industry without starting out with that basic petrochemical industry that has some level of unattractiveness.

Mr. Speaker, in our democracy, I believe an element of choice is important. We must be free to choose, but the choice is not free. For example, the quality of life in a city core — and we'll use our own — is deemed to be somehow less than that on a farm, an acreage, or a rural subdivision. Of course the rural resident pays the costs of commuting and benefits from the pastoral environment in his off hours. That parallel, though, should also hold for the city dweller who pays or suffers the costs of living near industry, near high traffic, near high crime areas, and thus should also receive the benefits. He receives the benefits of less driving, but he also receives the benefits of more sophisticated services that are shared, a shared tax burden by more residents, and an industrial base that is supported by the residential area. In other words, Mr. Speaker, those who bear the costs should reap the benefits, and those who want the benefits should be prepared

to pay the costs.

I feel it's also important to stress that the decision of cabinet should provide a rational model for the future. The expensive and, at times, divisive process of the past months will hopefully result in a solution or a framework that will set the principles governing future urban expansion in both metro Edmonton and throughout Alberta.

The urban development process, beyond setting jurisdictional boundaries, has some problems. Here the Mill Woods experience is instructive, as would be the experience of other rapid-growth areas throughout Alberta such as Fort McMurray and Calgary, only to name two. In an era of instant cities — for example, Mill Woods in less than a decade with an estimated population presently of around 40,000 people, standing alone, is in the league of the fourth largest city in the province. These instant cities generally have instant curbs and gutters, instant paved roads, and instant street lights. We often see those instant street lights burning along blocks where there aren't even any houses. But the social, cultural, or people-oriented services are not so instant. There is too long a delay in providing schools, usable playgrounds, health clinics, and such services, given the high human cost caused by their absence; although in the area of schools in Edmonton Mill Woods, I certainly can't complain this month. On three consecutive Fridays, including tonight, I have had the privilege of participating in the opening of three schools in Mill Woods. For a non-minister of education I think that must be somewhat of a record.

Mr. Speaker, my point is that in an era of instant cities, all levels of government need to be more responsive in providing the more timely people services in these new urban areas.

In summary, I have three or four thoughts for my Executive Council colleagues that I hope they will consider in making the final assessment and decision on the Milvain recommendation. First, Edmonton should receive an adequate mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land sufficient for a presently foreseeable future urban growth of 40 years' duration, as was requested in their submission. As the dominant population unit, Edmonton should have the means to control those items that impact upon the quality of life of its residents; specifically, control over planning and the delivery of regionally based hard and, to a lesser extent, soft services. To me this would imply representation on the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission based on population.

Thirdly, to the extent practical, existing urban areas should be free to choose the type and format of their local governance, provided of course that they are prepared to accept the assignable costs associated with that choice, and are correspondingly prepared to forego the benefits attributable to, or associated with, another municipality's presence. This implies to me that Edmonton's satellite communities of Sherwood Park and St. Albert should be able to remain autonomous municipal units with certain limitations as to their boundaries and growth and to tax assessment sources, related primarily to Edmonton's dominant position and responsibilities with respect to delivery of services.

Finally, with tongue only slightly in cheek, I recommend that Mill Woods not be permitted to secede from Edmonton unless the civic administration fails to grant ward status to Mill Woods prior to the next civic election.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar have permission to revert to introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

(reversion)

MR. HIEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since many of the municipal officials have been introduced, I too would like to introduce Alderman Ron Hayter, in the Speaker's gallery. Would Ron please rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

(continued)

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, this morning and over the past two days, my colleagues in their remarks have reviewed, in what I believe is a perceptive and long-range way, the many dimensions of this very important issue. Accordingly, I believe I can be brief, and I will endeavor to set forth my views with an economy of words this morning.

Mr. Speaker, clearly a decision is needed. In my view, when a decision is made, that in itself will unleash creative energies in a very positive way. That decision is inevitable. That decision will be made soon.

In moving towards a decision, I have concluded that there are certain specific objectives which should be weighed carefully and should be satisfied. These objectives reflect my responsibility in a number of ways; firstly, as the member of this Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Edmonton Glenora. As well, these views take into account the needs, problems, and opportunities of the entire Edmonton regional family and, indeed, of the province.

In coming to these conclusions, Mr. Speaker, I have carefully reviewed the report of the Local Authorities Board chaired by Mr. Milvain. I've weighed the submissions of the city of Edmonton and other relevant municipal entities, pondered the thoughtful advice of many constituents, and considered the arguments of my colleagues and indeed many others who have views which reflect both common sense and technical expertise. Therefore, my judgment is that our decision should be tested against five objectives.

Firstly, as a thriving and proud city with economic momentum and a quite remarkable cultural kaleidoscope, Edmonton must have room to grow and expand in a way that allows predictable long-range planning for our pioneers, the present residents of the city, and future citizens. Only by that approach can our citizens be assured of opportunity, equality of life in its broadest sense, jobs, affordable housing, and a light industry, commercial, and manufacturing balance.

Secondly, I believe that significantly wider boundaries for the city of Edmonton in the lateral way must be balanced by the realization of the need for incentives for selectively greater density, and more efficient and aesthetically pleasing use of the space in the urban environment. In this way, the degree of expansion into our renewable resource farmlands can be minimized.

Thirdly, with regard to the existing communities close to Edmonton, I believe that this Alberta government's perception of the Canadian family, the Canadian federal-

tion, provides the philosophical guideline. There is harmony in diversity, a choice of life styles, a range of options for individuals and families, and a healthy respect for what is different and unique. That is Canada, this is Alberta, and that is a guidepost for our decision on this issue. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, Edmonton must remain the key urban growth centre. The relative population of Edmonton and the region should remain roughly constant in the years ahead.

Fourthly, I believe there should be modifications to the regional planning processes and the geographical jurisdiction of past years, to update and make more equitable planning for the decades ahead and to ensure that we can continue to avoid any drift into mindless urban sprawl.

Fifthly, what is needed is an improved mechanism to provide certain major regional services to people, services which cut across new municipal boundaries and obviously require co-ordination.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, in my judgment those five objectives should be very carefully weighed if the decision in this matter is to be fair, practical, and realistic for Edmonton and for all members of the Edmonton regional family. If that route is followed, and if we look at those five objectives, I believe we can ensure for the Edmonton area decades of opportunity in the widest sense, quality of life choices, and the basis for individual, family, and business growth. For Edmonton city itself, I believe this balanced approach will give a proud city the opportunity to continue to reach for greatness in the years ahead.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Member for Barrhead would like to have permission to revert to introduction of visitors.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

(reversion)

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This has been a very, very interesting week for the Member for Barrhead. He will very shortly have the opportunity to introduce the sixth group of smiling, intelligent young people. Thirty students representing grades 5 and 6 from the Rich Valley school are accompanied this morning by their teacher Miss Debbie Branting, parents Mrs. Maureen Bucknell, Mrs. Irene Harris, Mrs. Delores Vince, Miss Terry Vince, and their bus driver, Mr. Harvey Hove.

For the benefit of members of the Assembly, I would like to point out where Rich Valley is. It's located about 20 miles south of Barrhead on Highway 33, which is soon to be renamed the Grizzly Trail. More importantly, Rich Valley is also the birthplace of our [Acting Deputy] Speaker, the Member for Stony Plain. I think that makes it rather unique. As the Member for Stony Plain ages in years, perhaps it will be looked upon as an historic area of the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the young people, the parents, and the bus driver to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I should be kind to the hon. Member for Barrhead in trying to place me into the historic society of Rich Valley, which I'm not.

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

(continued)

MR. MACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being perhaps the 20th speaker on this very, very important subject of annexation probably places me in a somewhat difficult position to attempt to be innovative and perhaps in attempting to restrain from being overly repetitive. At this time I might briefly reflect on the process in the debate that took place insofar as the annexation process is concerned, and express the concerns of the constituents of Edmonton Belmont in this matter.

The question of annexation has been addressed on many occasions by different bodies, and to date has eluded being answered. For example, in 1956 the McNally Royal Commission considered a two-tier form of government for Edmonton and Calgary, and specifically reported that they rejected the two-tier system. The government of the day chose not to implement the suggested boundaries. As a result, it is significant to note that the developers applied for piecemeal annexation for several years hence.

In 1961 the town of Beverly, by its own volition, applied to the Local Authorities Board to be annexed to the city of Edmonton. This was approved. In 1962 the town of Jasper Place approached the Local Authorities Board to become part of Edmonton. In 1964 the city of Edmonton applied for the annexation of Jasper Place, part of the MD of Stony Plain, and part of Strathcona which would have included Refinery Row. The Local Authorities Board approved the amalgamation of Jasper Place only. In 1967 the city of Edmonton commissioned Dr. Hanson. When his report was brought down, it concluded that the most reasonable form of government was to extend Edmonton's boundaries to include the entire metropolitan area. The report cited that the city should have the ability to have additional land area for residential and industrial growth, and the ability to create a pleasant physical environment.

In October 1973 the city of Edmonton submitted a report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs entitled A Statement on the Future of the City. The major thrust of the report made certain assumptions: that the growing municipalities outside Edmonton's boundaries were dependent on the city and the provincial government for many of their services, and therefore did not represent true satellite communities but rather sprawling extensions of the city proper. It went on to say that the urban area would be best served by one government unit to optimize long-range comprehensive planning for the area. In order that the comprehensive plan could be put in place, an adequate supply of land was necessary to meet residential, industrial, and recreational needs for the immediate and long-range plan. In 1976 the Land Use Forum published its report stating that Edmonton needed to have sufficient influence over the development in its region to permit orderly and efficient development of the city. The report further stated that this could best be achieved through a unitary system of local government for the metropolitan region. The Milvain report of 1980 considered a multiplicity of alternative governmental arrangements but strongly recommended a unitary government.

Mr. Speaker, having reviewed previous annexation studies by commissions, land-use forums, and others, in each instance the conclusions arrived at strongly favor adequate future land supply for the city of Edmonton, for housing and industrial development, sufficient to enable the city to plan orderly growth. As the Member for

Edmonton Belmont, I support the major thrust of Edmonton's annexation proposal, with a caveat. It is imperative that Edmonton's boundaries be expanded to provide land for up to 40 years' growth, to allow the city the ability to provide housing land for its citizens, to create a strong industrial tax base which will satisfy long-range developmental and growth requirements well into the next century if Edmonton is to remain and, as a consequence, contribute to the vigor and economic stability of the region. Having stated Edmonton's right and obligation to provide adequate housing for its citizens and the ability to establish a solid industrial base to carry the major tax burden, this must and can be achieved. I am certain it will become a reality.

Last day, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General reflected very ably on Edmonton's continued growth over the years, in spite of the lack of fully addressing the annexation question after the many studies. However, I believe it's important to know that the developers became the dominant piecemeal annexation proponents, rather than through the various studies which have been carried out.

In reviewing the massive amount of material related to the annexation process, I first had to deal with a personal bias — I confess to that — which was influenced and tempered by the constituents of Edmonton Belmont, when our quality of life was profoundly impacted by the seemingly uncontrolled, *ad hoc* growth outside the city boundary, which we have no way of controlling. The transportation problems the constituents of Edmonton Belmont are experiencing are a nightmare, partly because the infrastructure was not put in place to deal with inordinate growth by ensuring that the inner and outer ring roads were in place to carry the extra traffic generated by sheer growth. I believe that when the decision will be made by cabinet on the annexation boundaries, they will obviously not be able to escape addressing the provincial government's responsibilities and role, that they will have to take a very leading role to ensure that these ring roads are in place so that the quality of life in a constituency bordering the growing areas is not deleteriously affected, as is currently the case in Edmonton Belmont.

I placed a caveat on my support of Edmonton's annexation proposal. Essentially, that caveat deals with the desire by established communities to preserve their integrity and the existing community. I believe we can translate these desires into people issues. Having served many years working with and serving people, I find myself extremely sensitive to their views, aspirations, and goals. When we as elected officials lose that sensitivity, essentially we have abrogated the responsibility we undertook to listen to our constituents and to Albertans. I don't believe we should only give lip-service to the words "listen to you", but that we should respond when they communicate with us. I think it's fair to say that established communities have articulated extremely well their concerns, their wishes, their aspirations, both for themselves and their families. I'm sensitive to that because I believe we are here because of them and we should articulate their concerns and be sensitive to those concerns. I think they put forward very compelling arguments as to why their communities should not be swallowed up into a larger, dominant community, but that they should retain their current self-governance.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, as a strong believer that a nation's or a province's greatest strength and heritage lie in its people, I find dictatorial measures or unilateral action as distasteful in forcing a large community to become part of something it is not their wish to as the Ottawa government's unilateral action against the province of Alberta. I have great concerns, too, that we should minimize, if not eliminate, and certainly be extremely concerned that we not pit one municipality against another. It is not only immoral, but lends to questioning the democratic process being fully respected or just being used for convenience. Do we need to further a spirit of confrontation, or will we opt for the spirit of consultation? I support the latter.

As was followed in the cases of the city of Strathcona and the towns of Beverly and Jasper Place, for example . . . In my research in preparation for this day, in taking a look at Calgary and how it achieved — whether there were unilateral actions or whether it was voluntary — I found that in each instance, the towns of Bowness, Montgomery, Ogden, and others, were all approved because there was a request from those municipal communities to become part of the city of Calgary. I think this is proper, because it provides the element and gives those residents, those citizens, the opportunity to express their wishes rather than have it superimposed on them. I cannot support a superimposition of a strong government's will on people who may in fact at some point become vulnerable because of the situations that develop round about them. I further suggest that it is not sufficient to apply the practical and simplistic principles of drawing straight lines, as they might be so easy, acceptable, and orderly to apply.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the will of the people should be ignored. If the cabinet's choice is to respect the integrity of the well-established communities, with respect I would suggest to the hon. gentlemen and colleagues . . .

MR. DIACHUK: And lady.

MR. MACK: . . . and lady, that the boundaries of those communities which may retain their integrity be clearly established, the size of their growth articulated, and that they should clearly further undertake a social conscience for their community and those people who may require social housing, rather than perhaps attracting a specific level of wage earner. The city of Edmonton should retain its continuing dominant role in growth.

I hold the view that the heavy industrial area on Edmonton's east boundary should be placed within the boundary of Edmonton. Logically, I think the total impact of that heavy industrial area is absorbed by the citizens of Edmonton. The quality of life of those residents is impacted — the traffic patterns that go through various communities in the city of Edmonton, in many cases hauling highly explosive and volatile materials. To me that would logically say that surely those citizens should have at least the benefit of that tax base to compensate partially, if it will, the deleterious side effects that particular heavy industry carries with it.

It is a necessary industry, and we're not being critical of the industry itself. But we do feel that perhaps the time has come when the community that feeds the cow should start milking that cow, rather than having to feed it but the milk going to the county of Strathcona.

MRS. CRIPPS: I didn't know you could milk.

MR. MACK: For my hon. colleagues, I'm making reference to an industrial cow.

MRS. OSTERMAN: There is a difference between industrial and whole milk.

MR. MACK: I'll accept that it is whole milk.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I too wish to congratulate Justice J.V.H. Milvain and his committee for doing an excellent job. It's a difficult task. They spent many hours listening to briefs and presentations, and then they submitted their report. I think we have had the benefit which perhaps they have not. The cabinet also has the responsibility of answering the wishes of people. Because of that, I trust and have faith that the decision that will ultimately be made will not exclude the wishes of those people who would be affected by the proposed L A B report; namely, St. Albert and Sherwood Park.

But more importantly, I think, I'd like to leave these words in conclusion. We should never lose sight of the wishes of people. Perhaps there are times we will have to make decisions that will not necessarily provide the kind of straight line that will give us a very nice-looking, graphic picture. But ultimately the future will be bright and leave the citizens in a mood of co-operation, with one municipality and another, rather than leaving citizens with a great degree of frustration and stress.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to participate this morning in the debate on this resolution. Later in my remarks, I would like the opportunity to speak directly as the representative of an Edmonton constituency, as well as to speak directly as the Minister of Education. But first I would like to make some preliminary remarks. [interjection] That's right; I want an hour and a half.

An important issue is before us in the Legislature, and it is much broader in its implications than the wording of the resolution suggests. I think the debate has indicated a recognition of that fact by all members because, in my view, they have appropriately gone beyond the precise wording of the resolution in an absolutely essential way. The issue under debate touches on the future of the city of Edmonton. By that I mean the body corporate of the city of Edmonton. It also, and distinctly, touches on the future well-being of those of us who are citizens of the city of Edmonton. Important as well, this debate, nominally about the city of Edmonton, is also about the future well-being of many other citizens in the region. And it is about the nature of development in all of northern Alberta, because Edmonton is and will continue to be a very significant part of the life of everyone who lives in northern Alberta. We are talking about a body corporate, about the citizens of Edmonton, about the citizens of a region, and in part about the future of northern Alberta.

As a matter of policy, and embodied in the statute law of this province, the government recognizes that annexations are potentially complex and significant far beyond the geography immediately involved. In Executive Council we approve annexations monthly, almost weekly. Most involve a quarter, a half section, a section of land. They are very straightforward and easily dealt with. As a matter of course, in many, many cases Executive Council simply confirms the recommended order of the Local Authorities Board. But by policy and by law, we have recognized that in some situations that would not be good enough. The issue before us, Mr. Speaker, is pre-

cisely one of those situations.

In considering that reality, in recognizing that annexations are sometimes significant far beyond the geography immediately involved, the government had two options by way of response. One was to broaden the terms of reference of the Local Authorities Board and to leave the responsibility for a final decision with that board. The other alternative was to remove from the Local Authorities Board responsibility for the final decision, to lodge that responsibility with some other body that had the power to consider the issue not simply within the terms of reference of the LAB but in terms of broader or additional criteria. We all know the decision that was made by the government when faced with those two alternatives. Rather than broaden the terms of reference of the LAB and leave the final decision with the board, the government chose to have the final decision lodge with the Executive Council in recognition of the fact that the Executive Council was generally empowered to consider aspects of annexation beyond the terms of reference of the Local Authorities Board.

In other words, when we consider the recommended order of the Local Authorities Board, we have to remember that it was the end result of a process which limited the capacity of the board in some respects. I want to be clear that it was not the capacity of individuals on the board that was or is limited. Mr. Justice Milvain and the other members have been congratulated, as rightly they should be, for the diligence and intelligence they applied to their task. But the fact remains that their conclusion was arrived at within limits imposed on them externally. The impact of those limits must be acknowledged as we in Executive Council consider whether or not to confirm, reject, or vary the order recommended by the Local Authorities Board.

We can cite just two examples of aspects not considered by the Local Authorities Board: one was education, and the other was evolving public policy. With the application of intelligence, a board set apart from the government can clearly understand what has been or what is now the general policy of the government. But it is equally clear that it cannot be expected to know how the government may have in mind evolution of public policy with respect to urban development, as well as with respect to any other issue. The Executive Council must consider the recommended LAB order in light of criteria that are additional to those used by the board. That is not a criticism of the LAB; it is a very straightforward recognition of the limits under which they work as a result of legislation.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, the heart of the matter is found on page 156 of the report, and I'd like to read from it briefly, if I may.

In our view, the onus on the City was to establish two fundamental things; that it required more land for future use, and that it required extension of its jurisdiction over territories beyond those needed to supply land for use and development.

Later on the same page:

This Board is satisfied that the City of Edmonton has established a reasonable prospect of an increased population moving into the area dominated by the City . . .

And on page 157:

It is . . . clear that the City of Edmonton dominates the Inner Metropolitan area and furnishes the main driving force behind its future development. It follows that in the best interest of the whole community

which constitutes the Inner Metropolitan area, it should be brought under a single municipal authority.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I consider that to be the heart of the matter. And I'd like to say right now that I accept the first conclusion of the Local Authorities Board, and I reject their second conclusion. I'd like to return to those in the course of my remarks.

As a representative of an Edmonton constituency, as a Member of the provincial Legislative Assembly, and as a member of Executive Council, I have considered the application and the recommended order on the basis of five criteria. Land for balanced development is first, and I include the consideration of necessary residential, commercial, industrial, and service land. My second consideration was conditions for appropriate planning over a necessary period of time, having regard for desirable certainty in the planning process and for appropriate structures and resources. The second criterion we must apply is that there be appropriate conditions for planning.

The third criterion we must apply: have regard for the means of implementing the plan. Basically we must be concerned again with time, certainty, structures, and resources. The fourth criterion is that we provide equity and the opportunity for choice. The hon. Provincial Treasurer referred to a much-honoured document, *Harmony in Diversity*, and I agree with him that its title has merit when we look in one direction as much as when we look in another direction. The fifth criterion is for the good stewardship of land.

Let me speak now as an Edmonton M.L.A. My only regret is that I came to the city at the age of 7. I can't say I was born here, but I am proud of this community. I'm proud of the small community in which I live, and I'm proud of the larger community of which Highlands is a part. I am concerned for the well-being of the city as a whole. I am particularly concerned for the well-being of those communities and constituents I have the honor to represent in this Assembly.

What I hope for, Mr. Speaker, is a manageable city. If we have a manageable city, I hope for something much more than simply manageability. I would like to be part of a city that grows as it has to but improves as it wants to. In Edmonton, I want us to strive for quality, not quantity. As many of my constituents know, my ideal would be a city of 500,000 to 750,000 people. But I acknowledge that it is not practical to do the things which you hope would limit the size of the city to that population. In our world experience those attempts appear to have been universally unsuccessful.

What I hope for is not what I will live to see. Nevertheless some urban studies suggest that, all things being equal, a larger city becomes more dysfunctional. To use a phrase with respect to urbanization that I have used with respect to education, there comes a point when the law of diminishing returns applies itself to the operations of city government and to the life style of communities within cities.

I am fortunate enough now to be living less than half a block from the home I was raised in. I can remember very clearly that when I misbehaved as a youngster, four, five, or six blocks away from home, people knew me by name, knew what my parents' values were, shared those values, and felt perfectly free to draw me over to the side of the street and ream me out. In addition, I knew that when I got home they would have phoned my parents and I'd get it a second time. [interjections] Look what it's done for me. Not only that, but look at how all my hon. colleagues

have benefited from what it has done for me.

Mr. Speaker, that may have been something I didn't appreciate when I was growing up, but it's something I appreciate now and it's one of the reasons I moved back into that community. Having moved back, many of those same people are there and know my children by name. The phone calls that used to come to my parents about me still come to me, from time to time, about my two sons, from the same men and women. That is something I value very, very greatly. That was a completely urban experience, and I like to live in the city of Edmonton. I also respect very much the equally real interest of some other Albertans to live in smaller communities, to participate in different kinds of social activities, to have a different life style.

As an urban MLA, I have been and I continue to be a proponent of this government's policy of balanced growth. I believe that in the long term and in significant ways, Edmonton benefits from the growth of every community in northern Alberta. Edmonton benefits from the prosperity of every community in northern Alberta. If someone moves from Toronto to Barrhead, Edmonton benefits as much as if that person were to move from Toronto to Edmonton. I believe that. It is because of that belief that I am influenced in some of the decisions I make in this Legislature and in Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, I hope for a compact city, which I understand is favored by the city administration, although I don't see any intimation of the idea of a compact city in the LAB report.

Speaking as an MLA I would like to digress for a moment to comment on the apparent level of interest in this subject among the citizens of Edmonton. I'd like to report to the Assembly that since the LAB report was made public in December, if I recall correctly, I have received one phone call from a constituent, who was ardently in favor of annexation. I have received one letter from a constituent, who was opposed to annexation. In the personal conversations I have had with people in grocery stores, at church, and at parties, I would have to say that there is no clear indication of preference one way or another, but that there is a lot of concern and hesitation about annexation.

Excepting my constituency and considering the city as a whole, I have received only one letter from an Edmonton address, and that letter was very much in favor of annexation. From the region I have received any number of letters. With two exceptions favoring annexation, the balance, probably in excess of 40, have been strongly opposed to the recommended order of the Local Authorities Board. I can't say how many of the cards received by the city may have come from my constituents because they haven't yet been transmitted to us from the city.

The public response, particularly when we consider response initiated by the individual citizen rather than response invited by the city, would suggest that the citizens of Edmonton are not concerned about annexation, or perhaps they are not convinced of its merit, or perhaps they are concerned that we should set in order the house we have before we start adding rooms.

Nevertheless, I favor what I would describe as very large-scale annexation. I favor the annexation that may be necessary to supply the land requirements of the city through a time frame of 25 to 40 years. I reject the second argument of the Local Authorities Board that beyond control of land for growth purposes there should be control of land for jurisdictional purposes. I am opposed to annexation as it becomes a manifestation of the exten-

sion of the city's jurisdiction for planning or implementation purposes. As an alternative to the idea of 'unicity' for jurisdictional purposes, I would support a reorganization of the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission in order to reflect current realities. I would support the establishment of new structures for the delivery of services. I support a plan which provides for diversity and choice.

If I could speak only briefly as Minister of Education — I can be brief because I am forced to be general in the current debate. However, I would like to make these points. There will have to be some reorganization of the structures by which we deliver education. That will be the result of any annexation regardless of how small or large it may be. In such a reorganization, these three considerations are essential. The first is that the instruction of pupils is more important. That we maintain the quality of the instruction to pupils is more important than any other consideration. The second essential consideration is that there should be minimal disruption for students and minimal disruption of the student/teacher relationship. The third essential is that there should be security for classroom teachers.

Those considerations are essential. Others are desirable. In general terms we want to minimize dislocation and maximize opportunity of learning for children and the growth of teachers in their work experience.

I want to advise and assure all members that flexibility exists within The School Act, within the regulations, and within the programs of the Department of Education, to make the necessary adjustments and, in the process of doing that, to attend to the three essential conditions I described. And that will happen. There will necessarily be a period of transition. I expect it will be of about one year's duration; that is, the 1981-82 school year. But within that year, we should, and I expect we will, respond to the three conditions I described.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KNAACK: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to participate in the debate on Motion 1. The issue is an important one to the Edmonton metropolitan region, and even more important to the city of Edmonton itself.

Growth in the Edmonton metropolitan region has increased dramatically over the last 10 years, outstripping forecasts by a significant margin. Growth has created serious pressures on the city of Edmonton for planning and the provision of services. Piecemeal annexation has not allowed proper planning for roads, water, sewer, or for layout of future growth in industrial, commercial, and residential developments.

Many Edmontonians feel that the city is now large enough, and that an increase in size is the last thing we need. Unfortunately the issue is not as simple as that, Mr. Speaker. The region will grow because of the attractions of the greater Edmonton metropolitan area, and particularly the attractions of the city of Edmonton itself. Whether we like it or not, the population of the Edmonton metropolitan region may be doubled by the turn of the century.

The issue is not whether to grow or not to grow. The region will grow. The issue is how to plan for and accommodate such growth in the Edmonton metropolitan region in order to minimize possible adverse impact. Municipal boundaries are, in a sense, irrelevant to growth. Even if the city boundaries were not increased, there would be adjacent growth, and in fact it would be a very large metropolitan area.

In my view the city of Edmonton took a much-needed,

responsible, well-thought approach in its submission to the Local Authorities Board. Although the application is called an annexation proposal, it is in fact much more than that. It's a proposal for the governance of the Edmonton metropolitan region by one municipal form of government. I also accept the judgments of the McNally report, the Hanson report and the Local Authorities report that one government for the entire region is the most efficient in an economic and functional sense. The debate and the decision may be two-sided. Perhaps it's a 55-45 debate in favor of one government for the region instead of several, but I'm satisfied that the consistency of the reports on this matter are weighty evidence in favor of a single form of government for the region.

The question arises as to whether there's an overriding consideration, overriding economics and pure functional efficiency. I believe there is, Mr. Speaker. As Albertans and Canadians we have always cherished the democratic tradition, notwithstanding that democracy may not be the most efficient or the most utilitarian type of government. Democracy is not simply the will of the majority. It is combined with the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the minority. The people of St. Albert and Sherwood Park have been clear and unequivocal that they do not wish a single form of government for the region. I accept that decision, and therefore feel that St. Albert and Sherwood Park should not be annexed, but that such reservation be on conditions. And I will speak about those conditions following my collateral remarks.

I wish to speak briefly to the issue of whether or not this Legislative Assembly or Executive Council should always accept recommendations from boards or instrumentalities it has itself created. In this case both opposition parties in this House have not supported the recommendation of the Local Authorities Board. In some cases a political decision must be made. After all we are politicians. It is our responsibility to make political decisions sensitive to the views of all Albertans. I make no apologies for that.

In the past, both opposition parties have made a lot of the fact that this government has not followed all the recommendations of all the instrumentalities or boards it has created. Now we have the two opposition parties not supporting a recommendation of the Local Authorities Board. I concur in that. Why? Because of legitimate political considerations that surpass mere economics and functionality. It relates to the concern of the people of St. Albert and Sherwood Park. The ultimate responsibility of governmental decisions rests with the members of this Assembly and [Executive] Council. We are elected to use our own judgment based on the best information available to us. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this government will continue to assume that responsibility for final decisions, and that it will continue to use its own judgment as it is obligated to do with respect to matters before it.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about conditions with respect to the annexation. In altering the Local Authorities report, my recommendation to my colleagues and Executive Council would be as follows: that the city of Edmonton be granted sufficient industrial, commercial, and residential land in order to permit the city to plan for future growth and to accommodate that growth for the next 35 to 50 years; that the boundaries of St. Albert and Sherwood Park be permanently fixed to confine their growth to finite limit; that the anomaly of the industrial area to the east of Edmonton be examined as to the possibility of annexing to the city of Edmonton what is

otherwise known as Refinery Row. That suggestion is really subject to the practicality of developing a formula whereby the tax revenue generated by that area would be transferred to the county of Strathcona on a declining basis over the next 10 years as the tax base of the region grows up. If it turns out that such a formula is not practical, then my suggestion will have to be reconsidered. Fourthly, it is extremely important that the regional planning commission be revamped to reflect the importance of Edmonton in the region. My suggestion and preference would be representation by population.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to compliment the city of Edmonton for accepting this responsibility. It's not necessarily popular, but it had to be done. I also wish to thank the city of St. Albert and the members of the county of Strathcona who have put in so much effort to make us aware of their views. It was an important and essential democratic process. It's unfortunate if it created divisiveness. However, the matter will be decided within the next month. I too hope that the energies can then be directed in a positive and challenging way. I'm sure it will.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I'll keep my remarks brief. I'd like to say that I've thoroughly enjoyed listening to this debate. It's been extremely informative and will be most useful to us in our decision-making process. Therefore I only want to cover a couple of points.

I think there's no question that Edmonton needs room to grow for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes. I refer members to two public documents. One is the well known Alberta-Montana study published in September 1977. The other is the HUDAC Department of Housing and Public Works report published August 15, 1978. These documents assessed a number of factors. They really looked at what goes into house prices, why house prices are different in different areas, and the components that attribute to those prices. The Alberta-Montana study — which compared the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge with Great Falls and Billings, Montana — came up with some interesting statistics. You have to bear in mind that these numbers I'm about to mention are from 1977. There's been a lot of inflation and change since then. In 1977 lot prices in Edmonton were \$24,000. This was for a small, standard lot for a 1,080 square foot bungalow. Calgary was \$24,000, Lethbridge \$14,000, Great Falls \$8,300, and Billings \$8,500. One of the conclusions of that report was that the difference in raw land prices directly and indirectly accounts for 46 per cent of the difference in costs of houses between Alberta and Montana.

The report done by the Housing and Urban Development Association and the government in '78 actually went a little further than that and graphed these numbers out. It's interesting that when you plot those numbers, you literally get a pretty straight line graph. I'm reading this off a graph, so my numbers are rough and subject to refinement or correction. In Calgary, with a seven-year land supply at that time, the costs were \$40,000 per acre. In Edmonton, with roughly a nine-year supply, costs were \$37,000 per acre. In Lethbridge, with about an 11-year supply, the costs were \$27,000 per acre. In Billings, with a 20-year land supply, the costs were \$8,000 per acre. And in Great Falls, Montana, with a 25-year land supply, the costs were \$4,000 per acre.

So while there are obviously a number of factors that enter into house prices — including the time for planning.

the time it takes to get a development on stream, servicing and labor costs, and so forth — nevertheless, a major component of house costs is the raw land price. Both these studies concluded that the cost of raw land, and therefore the end cost of the house, was directly related to the raw land supply available to that municipality. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, on that basis I believe Edmonton should have at least a 25-year land supply. When you look at it from today's standpoint, and that we use up so much every year, I don't think we would want to start with just a 25-year land supply. We should start with something greater. I would advocate at least a 30-year land supply, and probably a 40-year supply. So that's a recommendation I feel quite strongly about.

The other factor is agricultural land. I know that that's always a concern to every member of this Assembly. Look at Edmonton. It's located on probably among the best agricultural land anywhere in the world. There has been a lot of topsoil in Edmonton, yet you look around at the soil that's hauled in from outside Edmonton to build up lots, provide garden space, and so forth. The reason for that is that obviously in the past a lot of good topsoil has been buried.

Edmonton is not unique in this. People moved — the settlement of the west. The homesteaders originally came out here in the Red River carts, and then by train. Where did they settle? They settled in the areas of best farmland. They needed service centres. Of course, they didn't have trucks and cars, they had to use horses. My rural friends can certainly correct me on this, but I believe the average town distance was about 9 miles apart across the prairies. The reason for that was because of team haul. How far can you go with a team of horses in a day and haul a load of grain or go into town for supplies? So by the very nature of the settlement, our communities are generally located on some of the best agricultural soil in the world. I don't know if it's possible to do much about that.

I would like to make one comment: in my view, all that is really valuable is the topsoil itself, that six inches, 12 inches, or whatever it happens to be. If you save that, if you don't bury it, then it's always reusable and recoverable. It can be saved. For many years in this city and other places, a number of developers, when they developed a quarter section, stripped and saved the topsoil. It can be used in berms for sound barriers, or mounded into hills that children can use for tobogganing on. But as long as you save that soil, it's always mineable and accessible for the future. Someday down the road we're going to need that land for food production. If you have the topsoil, you can put that on barren ground almost anywhere and grow agricultural products.

So in my view, the key is really the preservation of the topsoil. For example, I think St. Albert is a community that's done a good job in preserving topsoil. I think they've had a policy for years that you don't bury topsoil; you save it. You put it in berms or mounds, but at least you preserve it.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I think that's something that every member of this Legislature should consider very seriously. The key criterion is really the saving of that topsoil. As long as we save that topsoil, then we preserve for the future the ability for agricultural production. Again, if you wished, and if it were economical, you could move that to ground that is not at all productive and grow food. That was a point I really wanted to make.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that this has been a most enjoyable debate, certainly highly infor-

mative, and I look forward to listening to the balance of it.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to take part in this debate, which I regard as a very significant element in the process of determining the future of the larger region of Edmonton, because that's where it's really at. We're now being provided with the recommendations of the Local Authorities Board operating within the frame of reference with which they are seized by virtue of the statute under which they operate. That's been discussed by other hon. members. Subsequent to the issue of this report, I have listened carefully to my constituents, neighbors, and friends, and encountered some interesting differences in view. Some comment has been made about the degree of interest and the degree of expressed interest in this matter. My summary of the views I detect is the very strong feeling expressed by residents of Sherwood Park and St. Albert in particular, a feeling on the part of a good number of the Edmontonians I speak to — and I believe it may even be beyond those boundaries, even overflowing somewhat into Sherwood Park and St. Albert — that there is a recognition of the need for a strong, central focus, for the benefits that can bring to the total population of the region.

I believe, too, that it's not an understatement to say that for a number of months now we have been seeing a very traumatic and emotional situation for many people. I'll read just one line out of a letter I've received: "Our message is simple and straight from the heart ..." Mr. Speaker, I think "straight from the heart" well expresses the very emotional situation we're now in.

In view of all the technical and emotional advice, I have been troubled as to how I should approach the matter. I finally decided that it would be an interesting exercise on my part just to pretend that I was placed somewhat above the whole situation and able to wipe clean the attitudes and emotions, to wipe clean the existing boundaries and say: all right, here's a region; here are 600,000 people; we expect another 600,000 people over a period of a certain number of years; we have a certain number of fixed resources; what is the best way to organize? What's the number one objective?

In my opinion, very clearly the number one objective is that we should have a strong, vibrant city. The city has a leadership role. Unless we go to a multi-tier form of government, it is the one element capable of commanding and focussing the strengths, the vibrancy, the dynamism of the population in this whole region. It is the one element, the one focus which can produce for the population those hard services, water and sewer, and the one element which can produce the soft services, the libraries, the health units, et cetera. More importantly, it is the element that can provide the focus for a stadium, for housing for the less fortunate, for air services. It is even an element that may be able to produce a convention centre, Mr. Speaker. So I really believe that if I had a clean slate to work from, I'd want to assure the vibrancy of a very great city, one which I believe will become even greater.

Thinking of that and of the resources, since I received a copy of the Edmonton regional utility study in 1978, it's been clear that we have finite resources. One of those is water. Whether we like it or not, that imposes on us a sharing and a consideration for the supply of those resources to a region much bigger than we are thinking of, or at least than the Local Authorities Board thought of when it produced this report. The recommendation here

is that water from the North Saskatchewan River be made available to communities as far distant as Vegreville and Calmar. Clearly, in that event we are looking at arrangements to provide those kinds of facilities which, I think it would be agreed, will transcend the bounds of any reasonable city size that might be contemplated at the present time. So we are going to be looking at services provided on a co-operative, shared basis between and among municipalities. Of course, I leave the financing aside, which is going to be provided in part by the provincial authorities and has been for some time.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at this blank sheet with all the possibilities, one has to look at what relationship should exist outside the rather confined, heavy-density population area to the more distant but not far distant area, the Edmonton region which is receiving many services out of the centre of the city. I refer to what we now call the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission. There's no question in my mind that there has to be a fair balance and relationship between the city authority and the regional authority. There's some question in my mind whether the size of the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission as presently constituted really is appropriate, whether in fact some of the area now included in that planning commission region isn't so far distant from the city of Edmonton that it isn't relevant to the decisions that go on here.

Mr. Speaker, the other element is futuristic. My colleague the Minister of Housing and Public Works has just reflected on this. We know we're going to be faced with a very rapidly increasing population. We must have room to grow, and that growth should provide with it an opportunity for choice. Some people prefer to live in apartments. At certain stages in their development, some families prefer apartments; others may prefer condominiums, others townhouses, others single-family dwellings. That opportunity for choice within a reasonable budget is very important. I think it has great importance to the social values, to the life style, which we need to keep in mind.

Given all these considerations, Mr. Speaker, and looking at what I believe history should have taught us, it's pretty obvious that, given time to arrange their own affairs, people gradually prefer one level of government in terms of a region. Even where — and we have plenty of experience in Canada — there has been a multilevel of government on a regional basis, that has gradually evolved toward one level. I think we can find illustrations of that in the United States as well.

Let's make the exercise really interesting, Mr. Speaker, and bring back the minds who have preset ideas, the hearts with the emotion, the boundary lines, the assessment bases, the growth which is here. What should we do about the recognition of the very strong views of Sherwood Park and St. Albert? Importantly, is it essential to the objective of a major, vibrant city that there not be a role for St. Albert and Sherwood Park? In other words, is it essential that St. Albert and Sherwood Park be done away with to achieve the fundamental objective I have?

Mr. Speaker, it's very much like another discussion that's going on at the present time. The beautiful river valley park is a unique feature in Edmonton, one of which I'm extremely proud. But is it essential to the integrity of the river valley park that the city of Edmonton remove from it persons whose homes have been there for years? Do any of us feel deprived when we go down to the park at the present time? How much more would we benefit if those homes weren't there? You know, I think

we need to look at a balance here. We need to look at what we'd love to have if we could work from a clean slate. But if we don't have a clean slate, what is essential, what's acceptable, what's the best decision under the circumstances?

I want to turn to one other point, Mr. Speaker. That has to do with the question of agricultural land. I grew up on a farm and still have one foot on a farm. When I left home, I moved to the island of Montreal. I moved from poor agricultural land to good agricultural land, except the only thing we did with it was live in a house on it. I moved from Montreal to the very best of agricultural land in the Connecticut River valley. From there I moved to Vancouver, on the very best agricultural land in the province of British Columbia because that's where the house was built. Then I moved to Edmonton, obviously in the middle of some of the best agricultural land in Alberta.

In his opening statement, the Minister of Municipal Affairs reflected upon the concern for agricultural land and some of the realities of the situation: the value of land, but also its relevance to productivity. I would like to advance another suggestion, and that is that really what we're talking about is a trade-off in terms of energy sources. Land produces energy in the way of food or, maybe, alcohol if we eventually go to the production of alcohol for the running of vehicles. In any event, it produces energy. We have to make a trade-off. We have to decide in our mind whether we are going to produce more energy by not allowing building on good land near a population centre, or forcing the population out and using energy to bring the population back and forth. In net results, which way are we as a society going to be better off? If we do some thinking about it, it's going to be very close to a decision that is very difficult to make. It's going to be a toss-up. If we're not prepared to make that kind of difficult decision, we ought to be searching our conscience, because we're saying, we're here first; the newcomers will have to fend for themselves; they can go out some distance, on the poorer land. We would say that only because we're here first. We wouldn't be saying that if we were outside trying to find a place to live in or near Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I want to say that I hope the decision will come soon. I think it's time we reached a decision on this matter. I detect an uneasiness among my constituents for the future of the city, a concern that maybe the proposal is too much of a reach in the sense that it bothers residents of Sherwood Park and St. Albert. I believe that uneasiness to exist. On the other hand, there is an equal concern that the city be allowed to maintain the dynamic focus it has been and must be, not only for the citizens of Edmonton but also because it's necessary for the good things in life that the people in Sherwood Park, St. Albert, the county of Strathcona, the county of Parkland, and regions further afield would like.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to make my contribution to the decision that Executive Council must make, based upon the considerations I've just advanced. I think the trade-off is going to be challenging and interesting, but I think it's time it was made, with the criticism it may attract, in order that all interested parties who are now caught up in a very tense situation, if they're main actors in the drama, may begin to build constructively, based on some additional firm information that they don't have now.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, on Monday afternoon the House will be in Committee of Supply for the estimates of the Department of Housing and Public Works. In the evening we propose to consider second reading of Bills. I have had no indication from the opposition that there are any ones they particularly want held. Most of them have been on the Order Paper for some time. So

we'll just go through them in the order they are on the Order Paper, subject only to the availability of the sponsor of the Bill. That will be the order for Monday.

Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 1 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 12:53 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

