

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Wednesday, December 2, 1981 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. COOKSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly Motion for a Return No. 132, which deals with a list of "hazardous chemical spills" from 1974 to 1980. In filing the return, I want to draw to the attention of members of the Assembly that actual legislation didn't come into being until 1977. Therefore, in terms of the definition of "hazardous", generally speaking we've included all spills that have been recorded. I want to draw particular attention to one that happened on August 13, 1980, when 1,200 cases of beer were spilled. Some would consider that hazardous and some wouldn't. [laughter] I won't tell you where, either.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, 16 students from the McKay Avenue school in the constituency of Edmonton Centre. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS****Department of Economic Development**

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta has approved construction of four petrochemical plants in the province of Alberta, with the passage of industrial development permits by the government, on Tuesday, December 1. Total capital costs of these plants are expected to be well in excess of \$1 billion.

The four permits have been issued: to Union Carbide Canada Limited — this plant will be located at Prentiss, Alberta, and will manufacture ethylene glycol; to CIL/Trimac Limited, for the manufacture of polyethylene in Edmonton; to Nova, an Alberta Corporation and Shell Canada Limited, for the production of polyethylene at Joffre; and to the Alberta Gas Ethylene Company, for the manufacture of ethylene at its third plant at Joffre. This announcement also confirms a supply of ethylene for the Petalta project, a joint venture between the Alberta Energy Company and Esso Chemical, for a styrene plant at Bruderheim which had been previously approved.

These projects will benefit not only the immediate areas but the whole province of Alberta, providing jobs for years to come that will have a substantial multiplier effect on the entire Alberta economy. Mr. Speaker, we are hopeful that local contractors will bid on these projects, so that the smaller businesses can take advantage of the opportunities afforded by these developments. The gov-

ernment of Alberta is confident that the sponsoring companies will make every effort to ensure local input. To this end, today I have written to the companies involved, advising them of my interest in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, approval of these projects by the government of Alberta represents another step towards a more balanced and diversified economy, a step that will serve the province and its people well for many years to come.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Heritage Savings Trust Fund Auditing**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Provincial Treasurer is with regard to the production of management letters and the legal document I tabled in the Assembly yesterday, a document which points out very clearly that management letters can be tabled in this Assembly. Has the Provincial Treasurer had the opportunity of reviewing that legal opinion? Secondly, under the circumstances, could the hon. Provincial Treasurer table in this House the documents that are necessary to show complete accountability?

MR. HYNDMAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, certainly we all know that any given number of lawyers can present any given number of opinions on any given matter. Be that as it may and irrespective of what opinions there may be, the fact is that in order to maintain the integrity, quality, and effectiveness of the proven Alberta audit system, it is important that such audit advice letters be kept confidential, so that the auditor will continue to be most candid in his comments, and so that the security system set up to ensure that there are no losses is maintained in its integrity.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question in terms of the Provincial Treasurer's answer. Could the Provincial Treasurer then confirm that the tabling of the documents being requested in this Legislature is by the choice of the Provincial Treasurer and not because of a legal restriction at this time?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, that would not be my conclusion.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the Provincial Treasurer indicate to this Assembly on what basis that judgment is being made? Has the Provincial Treasurer had legal opinions given that show that the legal opinion presented in this Assembly is not conclusive or that there are other opinions that could be supported?

MR. SPEAKER: Before the hon. minister answers, I should express some possible wonderment about this, a little concern. It seems to me we're going back to this topic day after day. I suppose there would be several hundred other topics on which questions could be asked. Some members might think they were important and others might not. Once those questions were asked, the ministers could be asked day after day whether there had been any change in regard to those matters since the previous day or the previous week.

It would seem to me that unless there is something really new in regard to this topic, there should be some very substantial restraint or limitation, whatever you wish

to call it, on continuing to ask day after day with regard to the same matter, covering the same grounds and getting the same answer and, as I said, doing something which could be done to hundreds of other topics of varying importance, depending on members' opinions about them.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. With great respect to your observations, sir, I think it has to be borne in mind that yesterday the hon. Leader of the Opposition tabled a legal opinion as well as an accounting opinion on whether or not the Provincial Treasurer had the authority to table this kind of information on a legal basis: whether it precluded on a legal basis, or whether the preclusion was a matter of judgment on the part of the Provincial Treasurer.

I would say to you, sir, that any assessment of the question period must surely allow questions related to what the hon. Provincial Treasurer has done with that new information which was made available to the members of the Assembly yesterday and which now is quite properly in the public realm, as far as the province of Alberta is concerned, and I would say appropriately part of the question period.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order. I only reinforce the words just spoken, in that I took great lengths — at the expense of my office — and had enough concern to have a legal opinion provided to me by a person not involved in my party, a person I'm not personally familiar with, so that the opinion was objective. As well, this solicitor has the support of a well-known accounting firm in the city.

Mr. Speaker, I felt I was doing my part in providing to this Assembly information that was well thought out and well supported by legal and accounting firms in the city of Edmonton. In response to my questions relative to the matter, I only expect that the Provincial Treasurer would indicate the same kind of concern. That is what I am trying to determine at this point through my questioning: is the government really concerned about the matter? Or, because of the majority they hold on that side of the House, they can ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, if I might make a few remarks on the point of order. I think what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has done is generated, for his own purposes, a certain document. It happens to be a legal opinion. Having had it produced, he shared it with the Assembly. He now takes the position that as a result of his actions, it has some sort of status here that requires some particular treatment different from any other opinion. Surely that can't be so. Everyone knows that generating a legal opinion on any subject determines nothing. It's a matter of opinion only.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make two points. One, it's of questionable good order. If, in question period, it's not correct to examine a minister on a matter of law or the legal opinion of that minister, by extension it should be out of order to examine him on someone else's opinion, particularly when the questioner himself has seen to creating the document which gives the opinion. Maybe the hon. leader should ask himself some questions about it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'm of the same opinion.

MR. CRAWFORD: You're of the same opinion. Then. Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader has expressed his opinion in a voluminous way and on a number of occasions.

The only other point is that I don't quarrel with the fact that documents that may represent new circumstances in a situation might usefully be talked about, whether in question period or on some other occasion in the House, from time to time. My remarks are not directed at the relevance so much as at the weight of what the hon. leader is trying to produce or represent in that respect today. I would have to say to him that the mere repetition, if I could add that, of something in a louder voice than the previous time gains it no new merit whatever.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's a legal opinion too.

MR. SPEAKER: In view of what has been said about the value of legal opinions, I suppose whether they're produced at public or private expense, I'm assuming now that when *Hansard* is read around the province the fees for those opinions will be substantially reduced.

MR. NOTLEY: Maybe they'll ask for more.

MR. SPEAKER: I think hon. members will have noted that I did not intervene when the first questions were asked. I thought they were perfectly in order. They dealt with a new situation, I think legitimately, which arose from the tabling, filing, or whatever you want to call the process we went through yesterday, of some documents that were offered yesterday as public information.

I'm simply saying that we can't continue to ask questions which have been previously asked. I'm asking the hon. Leader of the Opposition, since of course he is the one who knows what he has mind when he's getting up to answer questions before anyone else, to have regard to good parliamentary practice. If he's concerned about reasons, which he has a right to be, I refer him to page 332 of Sir Erskine May's 19th edition, which says that questions which have already been answered should not be asked again. Of course, that's within reason. I would assume that if you ask a question one year, you should be able to ask it the next, or even sooner. But daily, that's something else.

MR. NOTLEY: But they haven't answered the question once.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer with regard to accountability and obtaining information, so that we know the government is accountable. What is the Provincial Treasurer trying to hide by not presenting the documents in the House?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Let's get back to the proper carrying on of the question period. I really think we've had a great deal of latitude. It seems that the impression gets around that if there is latitude on two or three occasions, that establishes a new right. I don't see that. I can see that once in while we're going to lapse into some irregularity, but it should be within moderation. All things, even irregularity, should not be indulged in to excess.

If the hon. leader is concerned about whether there are any reasons that would support what I have just said in my intervention in the question he has just asked, might I

respectfully suggest that he refer to the 5th edition of *Beauchesne*, Citation 359(1).

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary please, Mr. Speaker. Could the Provincial Treasurer advise the Legislative Assembly whether, since receiving this legal opinion, he has had an opportunity to consult with the Auditor General and determine his feelings on tabling the management letters?

MR. HYNDMAN: No I have not, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Provincial Treasurer could advise whether he was able to speak to the Auditor General since the Auditor General appeared before the watchdog committee, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund legislative standing committee. At that time, the Auditor General said he would be willing to table certain portions of the management letters. I ask the Provincial Treasurer whether he's been able to talk to the Auditor General about that aspect, tabling portions of the management letters.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. To my memory, I don't think the Auditor General said he would table parts of the answer.

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, that's not my recollection of what the Auditor General said to the committee.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Inasmuch as the Auditor General said he would be willing to discuss or present portions of the management letters to the watchdog committee, if my understanding or recollection is correct, would the Provincial Treasurer give an undertaking to do the same for the Legislative Assembly?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, that's not my recollection of what the Auditor General said to the select committee on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

MR. SPEAKER: Possibly further questions on that point could be postponed until hon. members have had a chance to check what the Auditor General in fact said. Surely we shouldn't use the time of the question period over a difference of opinion concerning what was said or not said.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question for clarification to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. It flows from the second answer he gave to the hon. Leader of the Opposition which, as I recall, was on whether this matter had been referred to legal opinion and whether the answer the minister gave in the House was as a result of a legal prohibition obtained from consultation with legal opinion or a judgement decision of the government. For clarification, Mr. Speaker, very directly to the hon. Provincial Treasurer: has the government of Alberta referred this matter, either in-house for legal opinion or obtained legal opinion outside?

MR. SPEAKER: That's a repetition of the question asked by the same hon. member yesterday. But if the hon. minister is anxious to deal with it, perhaps he should.

MR. HYNDMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, there's no need to do that. As has been indicated very effectively by the hon.

House leader, legal opinions are just that: opinions. There may be one, two, five, or 10 of them. Very clearly, though, the issue here is the intention of the Legislature when The Auditor General Act was passed. The intention of the Legislature, in the plain English meaning of the words, was that ... [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. minister's remarks are not outside the scope of the questions that were asked.

Public Health Inspections

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's with respect to concern in the city of Edmonton over the number of public health inspectors, and the request of the health department for an additional five inspectors. Considering the concern over slum tenements and the health inspection of those tenements in the city, what consideration is the government giving at this stage to providing additional funding so that additional public health inspectors can be hired in the city of Edmonton?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, in a recent meeting with the chairman of the local board of health, there was general agreement that further to an offer made to the board some months earlier, a management audit would be conducted to determine whether or not the Edmonton board of health was being penalized or short-changed in any way, notwithstanding the fact that the budget for the Edmonton board of health is some \$1.5 million higher than that for the Calgary board of health which, as all hon. members are aware, serves a larger population.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I might also mention that it's my understanding that Edmonton has a larger number of health inspectors than the city of Calgary. But to ensure there is equity, we have offered a management audit. That offer has been accepted, and the terms of reference for the audit are currently being prepared.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. What is the time frame, and when does the minister expect to receive that audit report?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I believe the report will take several months to complete. It will be made available to the Edmonton board of health as well as to me and the department. I have mentioned to officials in the Edmonton board of health that I would want to ensure the material was available in time, so that any changes which are necessary — and it may be. I'll use a hypothetical figure, Mr. Speaker. If there are five recommendations, three of which affect the provincial government or need to be addressed by the province, I have committed that if they are in the area of funding commitments, we will in fact address those. If two of those five recommendations are directed to the local board of health and its administration, it is then incumbent upon the chairman of the board and board members to make those administrative changes.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. What consideration is now being given to amendments to The Public Health Act with respect to penalties? Just by way of background, I understand pub-

lic health fines are between \$50 and a maximum of \$500. The suggestion has been brought to my attention that that doesn't really represent a deterrent to slum landlords where public health standards aren't being enforced. What consideration is now being given by the government to increasing the penalties in the Act?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, this spring, through the provincial Health Unit Association, I invited the 27 local health authorities to review the legislation and to make recommendations to government for consideration as to changes in both the legislation and the regulations. I'm pleased to say that a couple of weeks ago, while attending the annual meeting of the Health Unit Association in Calgary, I was advised that those matters were being discussed at workshops by representatives from urban and rural Alberta and that progress was being made on those major issues affecting legislation as well as the regulations. We are now anxiously awaiting input from the 27 health units, through the provincial association, so that we can determine what legislative changes are required. Along with those legislative amendments, consideration will be given to the regulatory changes.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister able to give the Assembly any time frame for action? He's given a process which involves consultation. Might the Assembly look forward to legislation during the spring session?

MR. BOGLE: It's really too early to indicate, Mr. Speaker. I have not yet received the actual submission from the Health Unit Association. Once that's done, we have a process by which the government caucus, and the caucus committee on health and social services in particular, will be involved in the process. I would certainly hope that if there's undue delay on the larger legislative matters, the regulatory matters might be addressed more quickly. The matter is in the hands of the health units at this time, and we're anxiously awaiting hearing from them.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Has any consideration been given to amending the legislation to allow the municipalities to set the fines, the penalties, in the same way municipalities now set penalties for parking, lost dogs, et cetera? Has any consideration been given to parallel amendments in The Public Health Act that would allow local jurisdictions to set their own penalties? I raise this, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that I'm told that of the 2,600 violations last year . . .

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, I think his question is admirably complete already.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, it's a good question. I hope it's one of the imaginative areas the assessment made by the locally autonomous health units has addressed. If they collectively feel that's something there's a strong reason for proceeding with, then I assume that will be part of the recommendations they will be making to government.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary please, Mr. Speaker. The minister has indicated where the terms of reference of the management audit will go. But in identifying those places, the minister did not indicate that they would go to Members of the Legislative Assembly. My

question to the minister is: will the terms of reference of the management audit be available to Members of the Legislative Assembly?

MR. BOGLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Federal Budget

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer is with regard to the changes made in the federal budget on November 12 with respect to the small business bond. It's my understanding that as a result of the changes to the small business bond, chartered banks are not now making any loans. Has the minister had any representation from lending agents in this province to make representation to Ottawa with regard to getting some changes made in the small business bond so it can be used by the chartered banks?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I've had no representations from them. But those suggestions, together with those with respect to improvements desired to try to get back some of the tax incentives taken away with regard to agriculture and other areas, will continue in the sense that we will again bring those to the attention of the Minister of Finance at an expected meeting on fiscal relations we think he'll be having prior to Christmas.

MR. MANDEVILLE: A supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Tourism and Small Business. Has the minister received any information from small businesses with regard to not being able to use the small business bond? Is the minister anticipating any changes in his program to provide small loans to small business men under the Opportunity Company, as not being the lender of last resort?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, responding to the last part of the question first. The Alberta Opportunity Company is not in the position of providing small business development bonds. Since the federal budget, some concerns have been raised to us relative to the extension of that particular program to December 31, 1982, and the definition of those businesses in financial difficulty. It appears that they've changed the rules in that particular capacity, and that narrows down the business community that would be eligible to receive or obtain the small business development bonds from the financial institutions.

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Premier with regard to the budget and some of the devastating areas hurting Albertans. It seems that MacEachen is giving a little. He realizes more and more all the time that the budget is devastating, and he is doing some giving. What is the policy of the government to make representation to Ottawa? I'm thinking of the capital gains, or banning the annuities and averaging, and many problems. I appreciate that the Minister of Housing and Public Works has met with the minister, but what is the strategy of the government for handling this type of situation?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, that's a very important question. We've done it in a number of ways through representations, as the hon. member has mentioned. Obviously, one part of it was when the Provincial Treasurer and the other ministers of finance and provincial treasurers met in Halifax with the federal Minister of Finance

just a week ago. These matters were discussed, not directly to the same degree as that that involved federal/provincial payments, but it was certainly part of the discussions which the hon. Provincial Treasurer may wish to elaborate on.

The hon. member also referred to the very important areas of concern arising from the federal budgetary measures relative to housing. In discussion in the Executive Council, the ministers are all attempting to make the case, in their various meetings with their counterparts in the federal government, that moves made by the federal government in its budget are discouraging to job creation in Canada — not just in Alberta but in Canada — and that they should reassess them.

I would like to say too that the representations being made and the direction to the ministers when they are involved with this matter is that it's clear that when the Minister of Finance was referring to some of these matters as loopholes, they actually were incentives which were trumpeted by the federal government in earlier years.

Finally, in answer to that question, we are anticipating that the Prime Minister will call a first ministers' meeting on the economy during January or February, and well in advance of the end of February. I would surmise that the situation is such that the Prime Minister is well aware of the views of a number of the premiers on the issue, and I would think that the anticipation of that meeting would lead the Prime Minister to urge his Minister of Finance to make the changes before we have the first ministers' meeting on the economy.

Air Service to Vancouver

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Transportation with regard to Pacific Western Airlines. With regard to the Canadian Transport Commission or the federal Minister of Transport reversing the decision made earlier for Pacific Western Airlines and Time Air to fly to Vancouver from Lethbridge beginning December 1, just yesterday, can the minister advise the Assembly if he or his department are able to take any steps to clarify the matter with regard to the implications to Pacific Western Airlines?

MR. KROEGER: Mr. Speaker, I think the decision on any action would rest with Pacific Western Airlines, since they are responsible for the operation. If an appeal were to be launched, I suggest that they would be doing it. I have requested some information on the mechanics of how the appeal was handled, and I expect to have that information later tonight. That's about as much as I can say at the moment.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that I don't know how many thousands of seats were sold for flights to Vancouver beginning yesterday, and obviously cancelled, has the minister had any representation from the Lethbridge area residents with regard to the fact it has been cancelled?

MR. KROEGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I've had a number of calls. I'm not able to comment realistically on the position on the presale of seats, but I'm trying to get some information on that.

MR. GOGO: Another supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the decision just 24 hours before that inaugural

flight yesterday, has Time Air indicated to the minister — or have there been discussions with the minister and Time Air — if and when they will be able to commence service to Vancouver? I understand part of that decision was that Time Air would now service Vancouver.

MR. KROEGER: No, Mr. Speaker, I've had no conversation with Time Air.

MR. GOGO: Just a final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the government of Alberta owns Pacific Western Airlines, we obviously have a vested interest. As the minister responsible for Pacific Western, could the minister advise the House if there is any way he could use his good offices to encourage Time Air to accept the tickets already sold to passengers in the Lethbridge area, to be used on Time Air going to Vancouver?

MR. KROEGER: As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, Time Air probably couldn't honor the tickets in the time line indicated, because I believe they were going to be starting some time later. But the Minister of Economic Development might like to comment.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I haven't really thought through its ramifications. But if it makes some appropriate sense for me as a minister to become involved in that, I'd make that representation.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the Minister of Government Services would like to deal further with a previous question period topic.

Heritage Trust Fund Advertising

MR. McCRAE: Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Member for Calgary Buffalo asked three questions about the government's communication program of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I would like to reply to those three questions.

In his questions, Mr. Speaker, he referred to a "burst of ... advertising". I want to assure him it was not a burst of advertising but a continuing plan of communication of the heritage fund activities. The answer to the other question is that the program of communications is being jointly undertaken by the Baker Lovick firm of Calgary, the Public Affairs Bureau of the Department of Government Services, and the office of the Provincial Treasurer. The third question related to costs of the program. The specific costs of television advertising, in terms of payments to the television station, is approximately \$250,000.

St. Paul Lakeland Gas Co-op

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telephones. It relates to the misfortunes of the St. Paul Lakeland Natural Gas Co-op. Was the dismissal of the co-op's manager last year a result of a board totally acting on its own, or was it as a result of the specific advice of the consultant engaged by the government?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I would have to review that in my notes. I am aware of the consultant's report; I'm also aware of the dismissal of the manager. But without checking it carefully, the decisions of the rural gas co-ops are made by the boards of directors of those

co-ops. The natural gas co-operatives are autonomous in terms of the management of their own affairs. There's no legislative capacity for the government to interfere in the management of a co-op. Of course, through our business manager program, we assist the co-ops in providing advice on various management matters. In this particular case, that advice could have been provided to the board of directors. I'll check that.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the minister. What assessment has been made by the government of the disallowed grants, I guess would be the best way of describing them, of some \$906,000? In light of the assertion of some members of the co-op that should this money be paid, it would not be necessary for the co-op to sell an \$8.5 million facility to Plains-Western at substantially less than that, was there any discussion on this question between the minister or officials and the board of the co-op?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is inaccurate in describing the amount of funds, \$900,000, as disallowed grants. There were requests from the co-op for funds over and above the very generous grants provided under the regulations of the department. Those were refused on the basis that the grant requirements and the regulations had been met in terms of what is provided to rural gas systems. So all the funds that were coming to the St. Paul Lakeland Gas Co-op were provided to them. There is no doubt that there were extraordinary requests for funds, and those requests were refused.

The second part of the hon. member's question referred to whether or not meetings were held with the board of directors. Many meetings were held with senior officials of the department, as well as me, and the board of directors, as well as three general public meetings of the general membership, to discuss the financial difficulties faced by the St. Paul Lakeland Gas Co-op. The inference by the hon. member at the end of his question, that some part of government was selling the system to a particular utility, is also inaccurate. The affairs of the St. Paul Lakeland Gas Co-op are in the hands of a receiver appointed by the bank that financed the majority of the borrowings of the co-op. My understanding is that there has been no decision as to who might purchase that system.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question. Is the minister able to identify for the Assembly whether any of the overrun of \$592,000 in 1980 was due to the dismissal of the manager in mid-construction year, and that that could have contributed to the problems of the co-op which the government is now not prepared to support?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. At the beginning of this series of questions, I was doubtful that they should be in the question period. As the line of questioning proceeds, it is becoming more and more obvious that the information should be sought by means of the Order Paper, or perhaps by direct correspondence with the minister.

I realize that as we come closer — I didn't say "close" — to the end of the session, it becomes more difficult to get information through the Order Paper because it takes longer. Still, information that is of such detail . . . The matter is really very local, notwithstanding that it is extremely important, and very important indeed to the people who are involved. On the other hand, I do have to have regard to the proper uses of the question period. As

I said, I must express my misgiving on this line of questions.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can put the question to the hon. minister this way: is there now any assessment of the grant structure for gas co-ops, as a consequence of the particular difficulties of the St. Paul Lakeland Gas Co-op?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, we continue to assess the effectiveness of all our programs. We have made a number of changes, and will continue to make changes where they are appropriate.

As for our grant program for capital construction, it is working extremely well in terms of the success of the vast majority of rural gas co-ops. There are about 100 co-ops, and they are operating very, very effectively with the same grant regulations. We'll continue to assess the effectiveness of our program, but it is working effectively.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the hon. member's final supplementary on this topic.

MR. NOTLEY: What assessment has been made by the government of the question of public dollars involved in a gas co-op where liquidation is taking place? Has the minister been able to obtain any information at all, even approximate information he could share with the Assembly, as to the loss of public dollars should the liquidation proceed, as opposed to the request of certain members for the \$900,000?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, that question is going to require a rather lengthy reply, and it may require some indulgence of the members in order to explain to the Member for Spirit River-Fairview how the grant system works.

The grants that are available and the extent of commitment by the provincial government to making natural gas available to rural residents has been approximately \$200 million. Those grants are made available to utility-sponsored co-ops as well as to co-ops owned by farm members or county-owned systems. The grants are there to build the system. I wouldn't like the member to leave an impression, in this Assembly or outside, that that system is somehow lost because of a shift in ownership. Under the present structure, there are a variety of ownership scenarios.

Also, it shouldn't be lost on the hon. member that the membership of the co-op — that is, the people who own it — has voted, at public meetings, to liquidate. We would be sitting here in the Assembly second guessing the individual members who own the system.

MR. BATIUK: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Realizing the financial difficulties that Lakeland Gas Co-op has had over the last few years, could the minister advise whether he has had requests for special assistance and whether the government has bailed out this gas co-op at any other time?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, we became aware of some of the difficulties being faced by the St. Paul Lakeland Gas Co-op in early 1980. Earlier, the member referred to the study that was commissioned, with agreement of the

board of directors, to find out what had been happening with that system. For that year, we provided additional funds over and above what had been received. Those were provided by way of capitalizing certain costs that may not necessarily have been capitalized. As a result, the co-op received an additional grant.

We asked the co-op to conduct their affairs in a different way and to improve their operation, and worked very closely with them throughout the balance of 1980-81. Subsequent to those events, there were additional requests for funds as a result of overspending amounts that had been agreed to between departmental officials and directors of the co-op.

In answer to the member, special assistance was made in 1980 but we were unable to do so again in 1981.

Impaired Driving Penalties

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Attorney General. I gave notice to the Attorney General that it is the case where two young hitchhikers were killed, and the sentence was two months "to act as a deterrent". I'd like to know from the minister if the Crown is considering appealing this case.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not able to answer definitely on that at the present time. It's under review. The sort of thing taken into account, quite apart from circumstances such as those the hon. member describes in his question, is the possibility of success in regard to any given appeal, based on the reasons for judgment and the assessment of the evidence placed before the judge at the hearing. So in this case, the appeal is only as to sentence. A number of things would still have to be considered, in addition to other precedents that would relate specifically to this case. Given those circumstances, I can only say that a full review will be made. I earlier acknowledged the evident importance of that particular case.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. In light of the fact that it seems we're starting to step up our enforcement of dangerous and impaired drivers, is the minister in a position to indicate if any studies are being done in the minister's department as to reviewing some of the cases to find out if other sentences should be appealed, to indicate to the people of the province that we're serious about drinking drivers?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, numbers of cases are of course appealed. Each is done on its own merits. That's the only way legal counsel can actually handle individual cases. As to the question of studies, I'm not aware of any current studies being done at the present time, and I'm not sure they would affect decisions at all in individual cases where appeals might be considered.

Brennan Inquiry

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Attorney General is simply whether or not a target reporting date was included in the terms of reference for the Brennan inquiry.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the terms of reference are and have long been public in a published order in council. However, even if all hon. members have equal access to that, my recollection is that no date was put in.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the Attorney General received any indication when the Brennan inquiry may be handed down to the government?

MR. CRAWFORD: I've received no indication, Mr. Speaker. One hears things now and then. The sort of way the information would come to me would simply be through legal counsel who acted for the government on the case. He would be notified at an appropriate time by the commission counsel, in all likelihood, as to when that might be.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Third Reading)

Bill 66 Senior Citizens Housing Amendment Act, 1981

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 66 be read a third time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address just a few comments to Bill 66 as we contemplate third reading of this piece of legislation. I indicated during second reading and again during committee stage that I intend to support Bill 66. But even though I'm going to vote for it, I think all members of the House would regret the fact that we have to move in this particular way. It would be much more satisfactory if we could encourage the 30 municipalities not participating in foundations in this province to participate voluntarily. I don't think it's a supportable proposition that we leave lodges unsupported. In the final analysis, that's why I come to the conclusion that we have to support an amendment.

But in doing so, members of the House should certainly be aware that we are giving the minister extremely broad power here to say to a municipality: you shall be part of a foundation jurisdiction. Mr. Speaker, that does have implications for municipal autonomy and for the budgets of the municipalities affected. Notwithstanding the fact that the overall public interest of the province on balance, I suppose, demands that they be part of the foundation and we clear this matter, it's only appropriate as we consider this Bill in its final stages to recognize that this is not just a simple amendment, but has implications for local government in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we've been advised that the impact will be relatively minor because of the new support system that the government has developed. As I understand it, if the deficit is under 1 mill, the grant that will be paid by the government to the foundation is 25 per cent of the deficit. If the deficit works out to greater than 1 mill, it'll be 50 per cent of the deficit. So that will mean that whatever the deficits are, Mr. Speaker, probably there will not be an onerous additional burden on municipalities. That is certainly worth knowing.

The other point I thought was brought out during committee stage of this Bill was the concern I had with respect to some of the major repair work required on lodges in the province. As long as we have the assurance that the capital investments necessary to renovate lodges, to upgrade them so that they meet current building

standards codes — as long as that is going to be covered from the financial base of the province, as opposed to being shuffled on the local taxpayers through requisition, then that goes some distance to allaying my concern.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Senior Citizens Homes Association has apparently requested this kind of legislation is another factor that leads me to say that if this proposition is being put to the government by the people who I might just say are doing an excellent job in administering our lodges in the province — and I want to pay tribute to their work in third reading; I think it's important that members recognize the work that goes into operating the lodges. As long as we have the association saying it thinks this is a necessary amendment, and we minimize the impact on the municipalities involved through a new deficit assistance scheme, and the major upgrading which I know is required in certain of the lodges is going to be covered by the province, then I'm prepared to accept the implications in particular of Section 13 of the amendment Act, notwithstanding the fact that I think all of us would prefer that this kind of thing be done on a voluntary basis, as opposed to giving the minister the statutory authority to proceed.

Just one other comment, Mr. Speaker, before closing my observations on third reading of Bill 66. We have seen a good deal of innovation develop in the whole question of senior citizen housing. I suppose the first major change from the lodge program, which was the traditional route, was the self-contained units, then a recognition that self-contained units should be located close to the lodge wherever possible. I believe there are even several projects being contemplated now where, in a 2-storey proposition, you have the lodge on one floor and self-contained units on the second floor. That's certainly an option as well.

In concluding my remarks on Bill 66, I encourage the Minister of Housing and Public Works in the commitment he gave to this House, or at least to the committee during committee stage, that he's going to work with his colleague the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, so that as much as possible we can site these future projects in one place, so that people spend those years — as they go from the self-contained unit, to the lodge, to the nursing home, to the auxiliary hospital — as close as possible to the environment in which they've lived all their lives, and in a milieu they know and understand. I think it makes those last years all the more comfortable and happy for our senior citizens.

So, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the implications of the sections that deal with the rather substantial power we give the minister, on balance I suppose the arguments for participation, for ensuring that every municipality is covered in a foundation area, are such that I will support this Bill on third reading, as I did on second reading.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill 66, I'd also like to indicate my support. As I see it, the number one point is that historically all municipalities have supported contributions to lodges and senior citizens' accommodation. I think the possibility of the government being further involved so that rates are reasonable and senior citizens have good housing and good shelter in the province is certainly very beneficial.

Over the years, the support for the program has been excellent. I cannot recall any municipal councillor, county, or body that has said they're against the program. They don't mind sharing the cost of the operation of these homes. I see the amendment here as supportive and certainly a way that the government can assure senior

citizens that they do have good accommodation at reasonable rates.

MR. SINDLINGER: I'd like to make a few brief comments too, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to this amendment in Committee of the Whole, and I just don't want to go away with any misunderstanding. I think it's a good amendment, and I made some comments about the formula used to share the deficit. I think it's a good thing to start with. If I ever had any reservations about anything to do with senior citizens, it would be that we don't go far enough. I think there are good programs in place today, but we can go even further.

When I look at the heritage fund — and we say the heritage fund is there for future generations. I think we should bear in mind that those things we have here today, from the most simple things — sidewalks, roads, parks, schools, buildings, and businesses: none of these things came here by themselves. They're all here through the efforts of senior citizens, those who preceded us. If we do have a heritage fund, if anyone has a right to that heritage fund, in my opinion it has to be the senior citizens.

This is a good amendment. The only suggestion I could make is that in future considerations we go even further than we have in the past. I also like the idea of senior citizens having more input to the decision-making. Now this amendment doesn't directly affect that, but we did talk about the foundations having more input into the decision-making. I would like to see senior citizens who are most directly affected by legislation such as this having a broader base to channel their desires into the decision-making process so that those things that will be implemented on their behalf will have been desired by them in the first place.

The sole criterion that I like the most, that I've seen over the years, is the one used by the major senior citizens' group in my constituency, Kerby Centre. Kerby Centre has something like 5,600 senior citizens from all parts of Calgary participating in their programs. Their motto simply is: "seniors serving seniors". I think that's a good place to start. If more elements of our population had the same attitude, we would be a more progressive and productive population than we are today.

I just simply say that this is a good amendment. I just hope we have more amendments like this, not only in this particular area but in all areas, and ensure that our senior citizens receive the benefits they so rightly desire from the development that has occurred in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. minister conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support for this legislation by hon. members.

I thought I might take this opportunity to respond with regard to one point. Yesterday in committee, I was asked the size of deficits, and I said I recollected seeing about \$40,000. I was probably thinking of a 1979 number. I had occasion to check the average deficit for 1980, prior to our changing the formula. It was \$1,169 per bed or, to look at it another way, the median deficit was \$1,056. In other words, 50 per cent of the foundations had a deficit of less than \$1,056 per bed. With the change in the formula, not only in terms of deficit assistance but in terms of rental increases, the deficits should be reduced in

a very major way.

As far as input from senior citizens, I can assure hon. members that we get a lot of input. We encourage it from many, many areas: from the seniors themselves, their association, the non-profit groups that operate the self-contained units, and from the committee, chaired by the Member for Edmonton Norwood, which visits senior citizens' accommodation across the province. I think we have a good dialogue with our seniors. I recognize the importance of it and appreciate the remarks of hon. members.

[Motion carried; Bill 66 read a third time]

Bill 81
Alberta Income Tax
Amendment Act, 1981

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 81, the Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1981.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in making a comment with regard to Bill 81, and certainly speaking in support of it, I think one of the good amendments there is with regard to extending the renter assistance credit to Albertans who own a house or mobile home and have it situated on leased land. As I understand the situation today, many housebuilders are leasing the land to adjust to various government and financial programs, so they can qualify for credit so homes can be built. I think the person who buys that kind of home and has a long-term lease of land, should certainly qualify for renter assistance credit. I think we could say with confidence that often it is the lower income people who move into areas such as this, have mobile homes situated on rented land, and they will certainly benefit.

We have said in this House a number of times that the cost of living has increased; that in many cases today, because of mortgage rates, mortgage costs are greater than 30 per cent of the gross income of various families. At this time, I think we as government have a responsibility to do anything we can to assist persons to meet their basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and health care. I can see that the principle of this Bill and the extension of the renter assistance grant can certainly do that. I certainly hope the government moves on it after passing the Bill, so the benefits can be gained by those who are in need today.

[Motion carried; Bill 81 read a third time]

Bill 94
Government Land Purchases
Amendment Act, 1981

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 94, the Government Land Purchases Amendment Act, 1981.

[Motion carried; Bill 94 read a third time]

Bill 99
Legislative Assembly
Amendment Act, 1981 (No. 2)

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading

of Bill 99, the Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1981 (No. 2).

MR. MANDEVILLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments on this Bill, to clear up some misunderstandings circulating throughout the province. It doesn't really come directly from the Bill but relates to it. When I went home on the weekend, someone said to me, I hear you voted yourself a 50 per cent increase. It's getting close to Christmas, and I wouldn't want anybody to get any false illusions that I'm getting more money. The son of my colleague our leader phoned him and said, dad, I hear you're getting a 50 per cent increase in your salary. Of course, he'll be wanting a new pair of skates for Christmas. [interjections]

To clear this up in the minds of Albertans, I would like to say that in members' services, we recommended that there be an increase in the \$10,000, which I thought was a tremendous program. Some members, especially in the cities, were having problems with high rents and staffing their offices. So I certainly agree with this amendment, so that some members who are having problems financing their offices can at least put in supplies without taking it out of the \$10,000. The \$10,000 was recommended by the report several years ago, and I approved it in members' services. I think it was a good recommendation to improve the money made available to these offices. I approved and agreed with the amendment the hon. House leader brought in last year so you could divide the money: use half for a secretary and half for the office, or use it either way, which I thought was good.

I am in favor of the amendment. I hope that when I get home this weekend, people will understand that I don't have to double the money to spend, or 50 per cent, and I won't have to spend all my money on Christmas presents.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo the comments of the member who just spoke. There is a great deal of misunderstanding about the remuneration Members of the Legislative Assembly receive. The first is in regard to our remuneration. Last week I read in the paper a comparison between salaries of MLAs and members of city council. It was said that MLAs' salaries are \$28,000. That's simply not the case. MLAs are paid approximately \$21,000, and approximately an additional \$6,000 for expenses. Those expenses are not taxable benefits to MLAs. In my case — and I'm sure it's the case with most MLAs — that \$6,000 actually goes to expenses incurred in fulfilling the obligations and responsibilities of a Member of the Legislative Assembly. So that is one principal area of misunderstanding about the remuneration MLAs receive.

Following on that is the constituency office. The only place I would disagree with what was just said is in regard to the phrase "my constituency office". There is a constituency office in Calgary Buffalo, but it is not my constituency office. I personally do not need that office; I have another office. I also have an office here. The office in Calgary Buffalo is a constituency office for the constituents of Calgary Buffalo. It is their place, where they can go to interface between myself, the government, and the legislative process; where they can go to place their concerns, requests, or whatever they may be. The office is there, in its entirety, for the constituents of that particular area. They use it a great deal.

I can imagine the situation prior to that office being there. I actually experienced it for one year as an MLA without an office. In many instances, constituents would

say to me that it was difficult for them to get to me and to meet with me, not because I was inaccessible but simply because in many instances they didn't want to trespass on my privacy, which is a common courtesy. They felt a little reluctant to call me at home all the time. But when an office is set aside for that specific purpose, they feel no inhibitions whatsoever. If the office is properly located, properly publicized, and properly staffed, that is an amenity accessible to them at all times, and they've benefited from it as well.

I don't know how the confusion that came out of this arose, but I got similar calls this week as well. A senior citizen called me yesterday and said he was having his rent increased, and what are you folks doing about it? Why don't you have a rent review board with teeth in it? I gave him the rationalization for the elimination of rent controls and told him the government's position, of course as fairly as I possibly could. Nevertheless, this person still wanted to know why I, the M.L.A., am getting a 25 per cent rent increase on my office. When my rent has gone up like that and the government or the taxpayer is paying for that increment, doesn't the senior citizen deserve a similar break? It's a difficult thing to argue. I said, yes. Apropos of my comments a few minutes ago about what I felt was my obligation and responsibility to senior citizens, I certainly agree with that.

When the minister closes debate on this Bill, I'd like him to comment on these misunderstandings in regard to the benefits Members of the Legislative Assembly receive. As far as I'm concerned, I receive only one benefit, a remuneration of \$21,000. The expense money isn't a benefit for me; it's just an offsetting thing for those other expenses I incur in fulfilling my responsibilities as an M.L.A. I can assure the public that the expenses I've incurred on an annual basis always exceed those that come back to me through this means. Furthermore, the office is not a direct benefit to me, although I do benefit in the sense that I can interface with more constituents on a regular basis. But in the main, it's a benefit for the citizens of Calgary Buffalo. They've used it well. As long as I'm there, I'll ensure that it's in place and will facilitate their concerns and desires with the Legislative Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in the debate on Bill 99, I certainly think it is a Bill that none of us should have any apology in supporting to our constituents or, for that matter, anywhere in the province. I think the Member for Calgary Buffalo put it rather well when he indicated that we're not talking about a personal office for members of the House but a constituency office which in its various phases — I presume there are now 79 in the province — in fact belongs to the people of Alberta and offers an opportunity for the people of a given constituency to meet with their M.L.A., to make representation on given matters or, quite frankly, to obtain information.

With respect to the Spirit River-Fairview constituency office, the largest percentage of calls come from people who want information on which government department to go to. With a vast array of provincial departments and agencies now, when someone wants to go to a particular department or branch to obtain information on a particular subject, where do they begin to look? It seems to me that one real advantage of a constituency office, especially in the rural areas, is that you're able to call the office of your local M.L.A. and there you have an inventory of the agencies, phone numbers, and the people to call. Mr. Speaker, probably the largest volume of calls we receive,

at least in that office, are from people who simply want information on where one goes to request information from government.

Mr. Speaker, I find that I receive questions, not only with respect to provincial programs and funds of one kind or another that may be available for housing or what have you, because the average person is not a walking encyclopedia as to the division of powers. It always amuses me as I sit in the Legislature and see these great debates over division of powers. Politicians can become so fraught up, caught up, and excited about these issues. When you begin to deal with the average person, at best they have a fairly approximate idea of what is federal and what is provincial jurisdiction, and what's a municipal by-law. By having a constituency office, it's possible for that person who has a complaint — it may be a federal complaint, but at least they then know that if the province doesn't have a program there is a program available federally, or perhaps it's a matter that has to be taken to the local town secretary.

I note that 53 members now have constituency offices. Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place because while I think the reporting on the Legislature has normally been fair — and I think that needs to be said by both sides of the House — there has been some misunderstanding, at least, of this particular matter. I hear members of the House raising the concerns the two members who spoke before me did, about confusion in the minds of some of their constituents. I had a phone call from one radio station in this province saying, what do think about the 37.5 per cent increase you people are voting yourselves. Rightly or wrongly — I'm not blaming anyone for it — somehow the idea has been abroad in the province that the MLAs here are sticking their hands into the pot and asking for some more money. None of us is going to benefit a dime from this, but our constituents will.

I would like to say to some who argue that this is a wasteful expenditure, Mr. Speaker, that it isn't. As I look at other provinces, other provinces have constituency offices that are even more generously funded than our constituency offices. Members of Parliament now have provision for constituency offices. It is really a way by which those of us who are, if you like, the genuine public servants of this province — there's a difference between the public employee and the public servant; I think there are really only 79 public servants in this province. It is a way that those of us who are elected public servants can make it convenient for our constituents to meet us. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that the constituency office concept is a valuable one, not so much from the stand point of the M.L.A. — it increases the workload somewhat, and that's fair enough. It is a service which is available to the people of our constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, I would just say one other thing to the hon. Government House Leader in closing debate. I hope we might look at some additional improvements that could be considered. I know it's an expense, but I raised this when the matter was brought up two years ago. We now have copies of the statutes in our offices in Edmonton, and we need them here. But we also need them in the constituency offices. I know this might hurt a few local lawyers. Maybe the odd lawyer would be very upset about it. Well, too darned bad. A lot of people come in and want, if you like, not a legal opinion from a member of the Legislature but at least somebody who knows what the statute is, and who can read it over and say this is what it says. I say quite frankly to the Government House Leader that I realize there's an expense involved, but

having a copy of the Revised Statutes of Alberta in every single constituency office is the sort of thing that would again be helpful to the constituents. I think it's one area that the government might well consider.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, as a few comments have been raised across the province relating to this particular Bill, I'd just like to add a few comments too, that normally I probably wouldn't at this stage in the proceeding. In the constituency I represent, which in the last enumeration tallied 31,000 eligible voters, the constituency office has been an invaluable asset in developing communication, which I know has been a benefit to a great number of people within the St. Albert constituency. I agree with the previous speaker, who said that government often is a maze and is very confusing. To have an office available at a closer level than federal offices, for example, a senior level of government, certainly has served well in trying to establish the responsibilities between the respective levels of government.

Before establishing the constituency office, the constituent, not having the capability or time to travel to the Legislature, would have to come to my home and then perhaps be inconvenienced by the dog barking and the telephone ringing, the inconveniences that go on in one's home. It certainly did not make for a very businesslike meeting; a situation you could apologize for, but not necessarily change. The establishment of the constituency office has been a great advantage in being able to meet with constituents on an individual basis.

I think it is unfair that there has been communication and comment across the province that MLAs would benefit directly. In effect, what has happened is that the persons working within these offices are the ones who have been penalized, because we have not had the ability to increase the amounts paid to them unless it was done out of our own pockets. In some cases, MLAs have paid their own salaries to those persons working within the constituency. I don't think our constituents expect that.

Recently I was asked by a community organization, the cost of running my constituency office. I said the total amount we were allowed at present was \$10,000. There was total silence, just total astonishment that we would even try to operate, pay the rent and any type of salary to a person for \$10,000 a year. The public does not realize what we've been trying to do with a meagre amount of money. I think it's important that we try to communicate that the benefit does not go to the members of the Legislature but certainly to our constituents, who in my experience have appreciated having the constituency office.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, just to make a few comments on this very important Bill No. 99. It's interesting that today I'm sitting in the Assembly doing some homework, doing a chrono-type of thing with the number of people who have come through my constituency office in the last two years. I'm up to about 120 right now. The point I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we've had an amendment for supplies and services, and another amendment made in members' services committee where an extra X number of dollars would be allowed for constituency offices.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in my place today and say I'll be a member not taking any of that money either way. I've had a constituency office located in the town of Stony Plain in my constituency since October 1971. That constituency office is not funded by government. It was the

campaign office during the 1971 election, and then I immediately opened it as a constituency office. That office is funded by private enterprise, the insurance industry of this province. I discussed it with the person whose office I'm using, and he said, no, I don't need the extra funds; I have four secretaries here, and they'll look after your phone calls. I think it's worked to advantage.

So constituency offices can be funded in two ways in this province, and I think the way I'm doing it is unique. The only government funding I ask is for the telephone, which I think works out to about \$32 a month. I'll certainly continue that office and the private-enterprise aspect of it, where good participation can be seen between the person who owns the office and the building and me as representative of the Stony Plain constituency.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to get involved in the debate, but . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Since there seems to be a lingering tie, I have to admit that I saw the hon. Member for Vegreville first.

MR. BATIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was prompted to get into this little debate for only one reason: all the previous speakers spoke about their offices. I'm one Member of the Legislative Assembly who does not have a constituency office. What really prompted me to speak was that in making his comments, the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview said that a good office with provision for everything is a necessity if you're going to serve genuinely. I just can't accept that anyone who does not have a constituency office cannot be genuinely serving his people.

When I went on the campaign trail in 1971, I recall one of the many comments I heard: well, the only time we see a Member of the Legislative Assembly is just before an election. Back in 1971, I promised people that if I was elected that would not be a practice. I have been serving all areas of my constituency: eight towns and villages, three hamlets, and four counties. A year ago at my annual meeting, I brought up [the fact] that many members have constituency offices, and asked would they rather I continue to go to my constituency, or would they rather come to me. They indicated to me to carry on in the same way, and that is the reason I do not have a constituency office.

Furthermore, I just can't see that \$10,000 could provide an office, a good secretary, and all the equipment. If you want to have a good office manager or secretary, you just about need all that money for that one person. If you're going to put somebody else, just what money can buy, I think an MLA would not get very much use out of that office. I recently spoke to my Member of Parliament about it. He has two offices. I agree that when he is away so many months of the year, an office would help him. But he already felt sorry that with his large constituency he has two offices, and he had hoped that he would not have started with it.

Mr. Speaker, I am not against this appropriation. I will support it. I can see that \$10,000 is far from enough. But it bothers me when somebody says a constituency will not be genuinely represented if there is no constituency office.

Thank you.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I concur in what the Member for Vegreville says, and I commend him for it. One does not have to have a constituency office to do one's job.

The comments I want to make are relative to two comments made earlier. The Member for Calgary Buffalo made reference to the fact that members receive remuneration. I understand that The Legislative Assembly Act addresses the question of indemnity. Indemnity, of course, is to indemnify against loss and, as I understand it, we are ejected as members of this Assembly to represent constituents and not on a full-time basis. To my knowledge, only members of Executive Council and the Leader of the Opposition receive any form of salary or remuneration. So I would like to correct that. In my view, members are indemnified as opposed to being remunerated.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview made reference to the fact that a second set of statutes should be provided for constituency officers. In all fairness, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Members' Services Committee, we attempt to deal with the needs of members. That has not come to the attention of that committee, and I think that committee could deal with it. But I simply caution that 79 sets of statutes represent a fair amount of public funds, and I question whether it would be a necessary expense to duplicate that. If the hon. member wants to use the statutes available in the government members' offices in 513, by all means he could take his home and use those in my office after hours.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. minister conclude the debate.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I don't recall many previous occasions on which I've actually been invited by other hon. members to say something. Having recovered from the shock of the invitation, I would only say that I don't think there is very much I can add.

I'm certainly pleased to see that members of all parties in the House have chosen to add something on third reading of this Bill for amendment of The Legislative Assembly Act. I think one way I try to describe it to people when the issue comes up is the way several members have described it; that is, it's not in any sense a payment, and it's not money a member receives or has at his disposal. It's primarily a matter between officials of the Assembly and persons performing services in constituency offices. Surely that is a very defensible procedure. I think it is necessary to retain the ability to make adjustments in the level of that support from time to time, so the service can continue to be provided. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see the extent of support for this Bill and, of course, urge all members to support it.

[Motion carried; Bill 99 read a third time]

**Bill 100
Chartered Accountants
Amendment Act, 1981**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 100, the Chartered Accountants Amendment Act, 1981.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Speaker, I'll just make a brief comment about this, please. The way I see it, this amendment identifies a problem inherent not only with this profession but perhaps might be said to be inherent in all professions. There was a major newsmagazine arti-

cle on this subject just last week. Of course it went into the area a bit more extensively than we're discussing here, but it talked about the difficulty employees have in bringing to the attention of management things which require remedy or change. It cited numerous simple examples of instances where employees had identified others pilfering and reported them to management, but rather than the person who had been pilfering being punished, the person who reported them got punished and was dismissed from his place of employment.

This amendment is somewhat along those lines, in that it protects the person who brings to the attention of the council matters concerning other members of that profession, and protects the member who has identified the problem, concern, or whatever it may be from retribution that, I suppose, would seem to be inconsistent with the action taken by that member in the first place. So the principle is quite sound, and it is worth while having that in The Chartered Accountants Act. But I would also suggest that if we are doing that for this particular profession, we ought to consider extending that principle to other professions as well; not only professions, but trades and employment in general, so a person who has the opportunity to bring to the attention of others those situations which could be bettered by reporting them, can do so freely and without inhibition for fear of retribution to him or her in the first place.

[Motion carried; Bill 100 read a third time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

[Mr. Speaker left the Chair]

head: **ROYAL ASSENT**

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

[The Honourable Frank Lynch-Staunton, Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, took his place upon the Throne]

MR. SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has, at its present sitting, passed certain Bills to which, and in the name of the Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK: Your Honour, the following are the titles of the Bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

No.	Title
55	The Wilderness Areas Amendment Act, 1981
61	Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1981
64	Environment Statutes Amendment Act, 1981
66	Senior Citizens Housing Amendment Act, 1981
67	Alberta Hospital Association Act, 1981
70	Mental Health Amendment Act, 1981
79	Regional Municipal Services Act
81	Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1981
85	Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1981
89	Solicitor General Statutes Amendment Act, 1981
92	Electric Energy Marketing Act
94	Government Land Purchases Amendment Act, 1981
95	Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, 1981

No.	Title
96	Cancer Treatment and Prevention Amendment Act, 1981
97	Department of Education Amendment Act, 1981 (No. 2)
98	Technical Institutes Amendment Act, 1981
99	Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 1981 (No. 2)
100	Chartered Accountants Amendment Act, 1981
Pr. 2	The Honourable Patrick Burns Settlements Amendment Act, 1981
Pr. 3	The Dental Mechanics Amendment Act, 1981
Pr. 13	The Calgary Foundation Act
Pr. 14	The Richmond Gate Trust Company Act
Pr. 15	The North American Commercial Trust Company Act

[The Lieutenant-Governor indicated his assent]

CLERK: In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor doth assent to these Bills.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[The Lieutenant-Governor left the House]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply will now come to order.

ALBERTA HERITAGE SAVINGS TRUST FUND CAPITAL PROJECTS DIVISION 1982-83 ESTIMATES OF PROPOSED INVESTMENTS

Department of Hospitals and Medical Care

1 — Alberta Children's Provincial General Hospital

MR. R. SPEAKER: It's been a number of days since we've covered this topic, in terms of Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital. Prior to adjournment the other evening — if I recall right, it was an evening session; there have been a number of day and evening sessions, but I believe it was an evening session — I indicated there were other questions I had to ask in some other areas. As I look at the Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital and read the news reports that Foothills hospital has decided to close 60 beds, which was reported after a decision in July, the hospital confirmed the decision to close its pediatric ward.

Foothills Hospital has confirmed a January decision to close the ward — ending a two-month delay during which trustees agreed to discuss the closure with concerned doctors.

That's really not the issue I wanted to talk to the minister about, but it is just an indicator that what is happening in Calgary is a consolidation of hospital beds. The 130 beds on which money will be spent from Vote 1 under Hospitals and Medical Care — I understand this money will be used to complete the project. But on approval of this

money and on completion of the project, the concern I have is with regard not only to the city of Calgary but the outlying areas of southern Alberta. This hospital is to provide a service for those persons. What is not clear to me at this point is who is co-ordinating children's hospital services in southern Alberta.

For example, we have the new referral centre being built in Lethbridge. How will that affect the Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital in Calgary? Will that hold the number at 130? Will it reduce it? Do we see the projected need so there won't be an effect on the 130? As I understand, the hospitals of southern Alberta will refer certain kinds of cases to the referral centre in Lethbridge. I'm sure that means pediatric medical services as well as adult services in southern Alberta.

With that, I ask the minister how this service in Calgary will be co-ordinated with new programs such as that. For example, the minister has consented to new capital works in the Taber hospital district. I certainly appreciate the decisions the minister has made with regard to that matter. Again, there will be a certain erosion or decentralization of services, but more pediatric and child care services can potentially be provided in Taber in the future; the same in Bow Island. The new facility built in Brooks is certainly very elaborate and can provide good services and care there. But it does affect the future and present use of the Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital in Calgary. Somewhere in the program of things, either the board of the general hospital or persons within the department of government have to co-ordinate the service and the planning that is going on in the future use of this facility and the others in southern Alberta, to assure that we get maximum use as well as quality of use of the various services. It is a concern of mine. That's the first point I'd like the minister to comment on.

Secondly, with regard to the use of the facility, who has priority use? Let's take the hospital in Vulcan as an example. If they wish to refer a young person to the Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital in Calgary, do we have preferential use over the hospitals in Calgary, Foothills or the General, or do they have preferential use? Is there any allocation of beds in the hospital for rural persons compared to urban, or is it on a first come, first served basis? What type of plan is in effect to protect us in the rural areas, or those outside the city limits of Calgary, so we have our fair share of opportunity to use the specialized kinds of services that are here? I would appreciate if the minister would comment as to how that type of thing would be carried out.

The third area I want to comment on very briefly is with regard to outpatient care and how the hospitals outside Calgary co-ordinate their programs with the Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital in Calgary. I know that the children's hospital has not only a health care facility but an educational facility, where persons who are recovering from a certain illness are able to continue their education, have access to courses so they do not lose their educational opportunity back in their home community, or lose a year of schooling altogether because of health reasons. What happens with regard to the outpatient who may only go to the children's hospital once a week or once a month for a certain kind of special diagnosis or certain care? Is there some co-ordination with local hospitals such as in Vulcan, Brooks, High River, Macleod, where educational opportunity is provided for the young person? Is access provided for them, or do the patient and parents look after that matter

themselves? How far does the hospital go to follow up the kind of care that person receives as an — I call them outpatients in terms of being away from the children's hospital and in some hospital outside the Calgary area. What type of program is in place? Who co-ordinates that? Is it up to the doctor and the parents of the child who is in the hospital, or is there some formal way that that matter is handled?

Those are the three areas I'd like the minister to comment on. I don't think we got into these subjects at all the other evening, and are different than we approached at that time.

MR. RUSSELL: Starting with the first matter, co-ordination among hospitals, I guess it's fair to say that the prime responsibility for that rests with the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, and that is in the assignment of capital facilities to any particular community. There are two schools of thought on that. One supports the concept that bigger is better and that if things are centralized in one location and under one roof, that's where the best treatment is provided. The other school of thought says that citizens are best served if they have health care facilities in their own communities, to the extent it is possible.

I think it's well known that this government has leaned towards the latter choice and has tried to provide facilities in communities wherever it's feasible or practical. It isn't always feasible or practical. There are minimum sizes at which things become non-functional, only partially effective, or very extravagant. So there is the question of trying to allocate facilities on as fair a share as possible throughout Alberta, which is still a sparsely populated province and has a large area in relation to its population. There are some obvious problems there.

The second thing that is done is that when a hospital has a capital project approved by the department, they then have a program written for the hospital. The programming aspect is a fairly sophisticated portion of the development of the capital facility. That's when such things as service area, population profile, demography, a look into the future to the extent possible, travel distances: all those things are taken into consideration. After a while, a picture develops as to what they believe the needs are by way of programs to service that particular part of the province.

They differ throughout the province. For example, the programming for the new Fort McMurray hospital, where the average age of the resident is very young, and where there are as yet literally no senior citizens who require an abundance of health care facilities: the profile for that is quite different from a place like Vegreville, which is a long-established part of the province where there are many pioneers who are very, very aged, whose health problems are quite different from young people's, and whose population growth is more stable and growing at a slower rate than the very rapid growth projected for Fort McMurray. I use those two communities as examples to show you how different programs develop. Based on that, an approved capital building program is given to the hospital board. Through architects, they then proceed to design a building that will fulfil the requirements of the program.

Of course, in all this there is the factor of referrals. Obviously — and I don't think I need to go into this — the person in Taber or Vulcan or Stony Plain wouldn't expect to see the kind of facility that's present in a university teaching hospital in Calgary or Edmonton, or

the equipment that goes with it. You come into these levels of programs, which are called Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. There's nothing magic about that. It's simply that basic health care services are provided in a Level 1 hospital; there's a little more sophistication and adaptation for referral at the Level 2 hospital; and then your full range of tertiary care is given at Level 3. Aside from the children's hospital in Calgary, really there are only two Level 3 hospitals in the province; the MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre and the Foothills hospital in Calgary have the full range of advance technology, treatment facilities, teaching facilities, and a research component.

In arriving at a bed count, there's a fairly simplistic way of allowing for the referrals that will happen, based on statistical and empirical data known all around the world. For example, in a population profile of certain given characteristics, you know there'll be so many kids with broken legs who can be treated in the Level 1 hospital. There'll be so many complications out of those that'll require transfer to the Level 2 hospital, and out of that same population count of young children you'll probably get X per cent of cases that require very sophisticated tertiary care.

So it's really done by mathematics and best guess estimates, looking ahead at what the nature of that community or region is liable to be, and based on empirical data which is available to the medical world. That's how decisions are made with respect to what programs should go into a particular hospital. It's related back to the size and nature of the community. The co-ordination among the hospitals then becomes fairly obvious. The doctor in Taber — and at this point, the doctor becomes the key element in the system, rather than the hospital — has to make the decision of which particular facility in his region he will send his patient to, based on medical reasons. Can he look after him in the Level 1 hospital in Taber, or does he think that the kid — I don't know what he might be suffering from — may require advanced care in the referral centre in Lethbridge, so he'd then be sent to Lethbridge. Or perhaps there's something very seriously wrong, and he'd want to send the child to a larger, Level 3 hospital in Calgary or Edmonton. I'm not mentioning the out-of-province referrals, because those happen in any event. As a matter of fact, it's two-way traffic; we get out-of-province children and adults referred to our hospitals here.

There is no priority of use. It's strictly on the doctor's decision. The doctor will refer to a professional associate who has staff privileges in the hospital. As in any hospital, doctors decide within their own bed allotment who is the most urgent on their particular patient quota for admitting to the hospital. So that's how priority of use is determined. It's on the doctor's medical decision. He decides, from among his beds, which of his patients should get in next. They do this by referrals to their professional colleagues, and from their colleagues who don't have staff privileges.

I'm glad the hon. leader mentioned the matter of patient care, because those of you who have had the chance to visit the new children's hospital know that the emphasis there is on outpatient care. We don't have a full year's operating statistics yet with respect to what the ratio might be, but we know that outpatient care will certainly exceed by many, many times the inpatient care in the 128 beds in the hospital. Insofar as co-ordination is concerned, the same thing applies. It's done through the medical fraternity.

The question of follow-up is an interesting one. A very

important segment of the children's hospital in Calgary is what's called a diagnostic and treatment centre. This is separate from the school facilities there, and really separate from the acute care portion of the building with the 128 beds in it. That diagnostic and treatment centre, of course, is where the child's illness is diagnosed. There may be psychological, psychiatric, or physical components to the child's health problem. Those are assessed. Then a very sophisticated program of treatment comes into effect, which may include professionals from a variety of disciplines, and which may include follow-up in other institutions within the city of Calgary or, in the case of children from other parts of southern Alberta, certain things with people back in their own communities. But the outpatient treatment is a very, very important part of that hospital, and one which they emphasize.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, the minister didn't really elaborate on the outpatient care. In terms of outpatient care, is that basically referral to the Level 1 hospital for ongoing work by the local doctor? Is that the main area where outpatient care occurs? Is it a matter of the local public health system becoming involved in outpatient care, or are these cases usually too complex for that kind of outpatient care? Or is it a matter of outpatient in terms of going back to their homes and then coming into the children's centre for weekly or monthly check-ups or treatments at that point in time? Or is it a matter of the children's hospital having a staff component that travels out to the communities where these children may live and be carrying on an ordinary life as much as they can? Are all four of those options, and which one would receive a greater emphasis than another?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe there's a greater emphasis. I'll take two hypothetical examples. These cases are pretty close to facts I'm familiar with. Let's take the young teenage boy with terminal cancer living in Calgary. His parents may bring him to the hospital, say, twice weekly for a variety of examinations and medical prescriptions, send him back home with his parents with therapeutic exercises, a diet, and a medical dosage regime which the parents, perhaps in conjunction with the family doctor, carry out. Then the child comes back perhaps in another week or so.

Perhaps in the case of Lethbridge, you might get the spina bifida child who needs some surgery, comes in, undergoes very sophisticated surgery, then is sent back home and referred to the family physician in Lethbridge, but has to come back perhaps on an ongoing basis for many months for programs of physical rehabilitation and certain training equipment, being equipped with various prostheses and things like that. Of course, along with all these come physical examinations, psychological testing, and obvious things such as lab tests and X rays. As the leader pointed out, when the patient leaves the hospital, a variety of people or institutions, including other hospitals, health units, the local health nurse, the family physician, or perhaps another pediatrician specialist who doesn't have staff privileges in the hospital, may be called upon to participate in the patient's care.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I haven't had the opportunity of visiting the hospital. I certainly hope I can take advantage of that opportunity as soon as possible. But I understand we have some sophisticated type of equipment in the children's hospital. For example, I understand the emission computed tomo-

graphy, the ECT scanner, is the only one in Canada. There's another one in Los Angeles. Are there other kinds of equipment, unique to Alberta, that meets the medical needs of children in the province?

I haven't heard anybody really tooting their horn about that. I know the government's very humble, and certainly the minister's humble about that, but I think the people of Alberta really don't realize they have access to those kinds of things. I found this very interesting item, in doing a bit of research. Are there other items such as that? Are there other things unique to Alberta that can happen at our hospital in Calgary and certainly provide greater opportunity for us in health care?

MR. RUSSELL: That's a difficult question to answer, because the state of the art changes just about every day. The last time I was through the hospital was opening day. I was able to go there early that day and have a fairly complete tour of the facility. At that time, the staff was extremely proud of the array of incredible equipment pointed out to me. Many pieces, the names of which I couldn't even begin to remember, were pointed out as the only one in Canada, the most modern of its kind, or the very latest of this or that. They do have excellent equipment. And one of the things we're requesting here is legislative support for the equipment component of the hospital, which inflated 300 per cent over the time since the hospital was first suggested back in 1975. That's one very important item.

When you ask me if it is unique to the children's hospital, I'm unable to answer that. I put that question of referrals from Edmonton to Calgary, for instance, to the administrator and the board there, and was told that there are very, very few because duplicate facilities are here. I don't know if duplicate facilities means exact duplicates of every piece of equipment. I'd be very surprised if it did. But the member is correct that if there's a piece of equipment that does wonderful things, it's there. We saw them demonstrated and, in our humble way, we're very pleased that's able to be provided.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, over the last year, some concern was expressed by an authority in Calgary in regard to the adequacy of the pathological facilities at the children's hospital. It was brought to the attention of the Member for Calgary Millican, who passed it on to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I wondered if, since the time those reservations about the adequacy of the pathological facilities and services at the children's hospital were expressed, those concerns had been addressed by the minister and resolved to the satisfaction of the individual raising them.

MR. RUSSELL: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I don't understand the member's question.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, there's a practitioner in Calgary at the Foothills hospital who also would be using the pathological services and facilities at the children's hospital. Over the last year, he expressed his opinion that these facilities at the children's hospital were inadequate. It was brought to the attention of the Member for Calgary Millican who, I understand, took it to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I was just wondering if the reservation or concern of that practitioner in Calgary had been ameliorated or at least addressed by the minister. All I'm seeking now, I suppose, is

an assurance from the minister that the pathological services and facilities at the hospital are adequate.

MR. RUSSELL: I believe they will be, Mr. Chairman. About 18 — I was going to say 18 months ago, but I should check on that — I did approve additional shelled-in space to be used, equipped, and finished at the time the hospital did become a complete tertiary care facility. That time will soon be upon us. So additional space for labs, emergency, and admitting has been planned as a result of that decision to approve the extra \$1.3 million at that time.

The other thing they're doing right now, of course, is renovating and refitting the existing hospital building, the old one that won't be torn down but will be put to other uses. Concerns that have been expressed about what might be needed or expanded are being addressed in that renovation program. I know one thing they're looking at is more hostel facilities for out-of-town kids and their families. I know the shopping list isn't complete yet. But as far as we're concerned at this time, this is the final vote for this facility.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could indicate for the members of the committee whether or not a management report was received from the Auditor General in regard to the southern Alberta children's hospital?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, I note that the minister is going through some papers to determine whether a management report was in fact received in respect to the southern Alberta children's hospital. I have some other questions I would like to pursue, but I thought it would be a matter of courtesy to allow the minister to determine whether he had that paper.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe there was a management report. The usual kind of auditor's comments were received, and I believe those were reported in the select standing committee.

MR. SINDLINGER: Mr. Chairman, the question of cost control has come up in several instances in regard to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. During committee meetings, the question posed most often was: once these funds have been appropriated for a specific purpose, what control mechanism is in place to ensure that those funds are in fact placed in the areas for which they are designated?

In certain instances, it's very obvious that the funds are placed where they are intended to be placed. For example, one can see the rail hopper cars going down the railway tracks very easily. That's demonstrable evidence that in fact the funds were used for railway hopper cars. But in other cases it's more difficult to ensure that funds were used for the purpose they were intended. Perhaps this might be one of those areas.

The question was raised in the heritage fund committee and posed to the minister at the time. I have transcripts here from the Standing Committee on The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, for Thursday, [August] 21, 1980, 9:07 a.m. Several members were asking questions in regard to duplication of effort for cancer and heart re-

search projects. One question I posed, trying to get clarification of the responses the minister had made, was:

But do you agree that some sort of control mechanism after the decision has been made to expend funds is necessary within the department to ensure that they're applied in the manner in which they're intended to be?

The response by the minister was — and so there is no misunderstanding, I'm going to quote it verbatim. It's just one sentence:

Maybe [Mr. Beck] could elaborate on that, because, if I understand you, there are the Treasury Board directives as to what guidelines are in place, what percentage of funds can be used, for example, to purchase equipment.

He then goes on to say:

This came up when Mr. Clark was speaking. Is that the kind of thing you mean?

Then Mr. Beck went on to talk about how

Each of these projects now requires a separate accountant.

Further on Mr. Beck says:

We have laid down the accounting rules.

We've seen some instances where costs have gotten out of hand, and for different reasons of course. The most common factor has been said to be inflation. It's understandable; we have had to deal with inflation in any way we can over the last 10 years. The other change has been in regard to changes of scope. I suggest that perhaps there might be a third area where costs have gotten out of hand. That might be in what could generally be termed mismanagement or inappropriate control mechanisms. The most obvious one was in regard to the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre.

There is one quotation here that I would refer to. It is simply that the reporting and checking system failed. That's the problem the select standing committee on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund had been trying to get at for several years: exactly how can the Assembly be assured that once funds are designated for a specific purpose, they are in fact so used, and that some sort of control mechanism is in place to ensure that we don't have the cart leading the donkey instead of the other way around. We want some current obligation, rather than have those with whom we're dealing take a separate tack or at least accelerate their pace and drag us, the Legislative Assembly, along with them. In doing so, we are the ones who have the responsibility for meeting the expenses or costs associated with that acceleration.

As I see it, there's a difficult problem here in that there's a separation between the responsibility and the authority for decision-making. It appears to me that on the one hand the hospital board has the authority to make the decisions, but on the other hand the government has to foot the bill for those decisions. To me that is not the most desirable way things should be.

A management report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly yesterday. It refers to various accounts payable for capital project division projects such as this one. It refers in particular to this vote for hospitals and medical care. It talks about adjustments that had to be made to accounts payable, then goes on to refer to these not as adjustments but as errors. They are errors in the order of magnitude of \$5 million. I'd just like to quote from page 7, section 4.3, of that document:

As a result of work by staff of this Office on three of the capital projects administered by the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care adjustments of ap-

proximately \$5 million were made to accounts payable as at March 31, 1980.

The Auditor General then goes on to talk about these adjustments as being errors:

All of the errors were discussed with the staff of the entities and the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care and Treasury Department and the financial statements of the Trust Fund were amended before finalization and publication of the 1979-80 Annual Report of the Trust Fund.

As well as identifying the problems, the Auditor General goes on to define the reasons for those problems; why those errors in fact occurred. The Auditor General said it was evident that these errors arose because of the following circumstances, and if I could quote the circumstances, there are four. The first one is:

Details of accounts payable brought forward from prior years were inadequate.

Second:

Incorrect amounts were reported by the entities to the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

Third:

Year end instructions issued to Departments by Finance-Operations were not complete or were misunderstood.

And fourth:

Hospital entities did not know [and did not ask] about the determination of accounts payable by the Trust Fund, when the entity had cash on hand and in bank, interest income and receivables from other external sources.

Mr. Chairman, in my judgment these four problem areas substantiate that accounting and control mechanisms for the heritage funds appropriated in this Legislature for specific capital projects are not adequate to ensure that there aren't leakages or seepages of funds. In my judgment, the most telling point is where the Auditor General says incorrect amounts were reported by the entities to the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care. That's the report of the Auditor General. We have to be very thankful that we do have an Auditor General who can identify these leakages and take steps to remedy them.

On the other hand, however, I find it difficult to reconcile the Auditor General's comments in regard to these hospital capital projects with the information given to the Standing Committee on The Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act. I quoted earlier from one of them, and said that Mr. Beck, who was accompanying Mr. Russell at the time — I don't know what official he was — said that each of these projects requires a separate accountant. He also said we have laid down the accounting rules.

I submit that if each project has its own separate accountant and has accounting rules which go beyond what might be termed generally accepted accounting practices, strict accounting rules, these things would not occur in the first place and would have been picked up by this separate project accountant rather than the Auditor General. The thing I'm concerned about in regard to this particular project — and it's a general concern that we'll get to when we get to the W.C. MacKenzie Health Sciences project, because that's where the minister is quoted as saying that the reporting and checking system failed. In that instance, the failure is quite large. In this one, we don't yet know how large the failure in the checking and accounting system was. We now have a change in cost. I believe the initial fixed price contract for

this project was \$29 million, and I think we're now looking at something like \$42 million. So, notwithstanding the fact that some of this cost increase has been attributed to inflation and to changes in scope, there's a third category. We have to ask ourselves how much of this cost increase can be attributed to leakages or errors such as the Auditor General indicated occurred here: \$5 million over just the accounting year ended March 31, 1980. But the construction phase of the Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital has been longer than just that accounting year. Since this is the only management report we have, we don't know if there were other leakages, or — I guess I should use the term the Auditor General used — how many other errors were there before the other two years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is having considerable difficulty following the line of reasoning in the comments by the hon. member. The question under consideration is: should we or should we not vote an amount of \$2.97 million for these particular purposes. I'm having difficulty relating the remarks to that type of vote.

MR. SINDLINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll try to bring them back more on track and summarize what I've been saying. All I'm trying to do is ascertain and get assurances from the minister that there are adequate accounting control procedures which would ensure that the \$2.9 million we appropriate today will in fact go to that which we want it to go to.

When we discussed this the other day — I can't remember which day it was — the minister took great pains to detail the allocation of those funds. I don't have that before me today. But we do have to have some sort of assurance that if that is in fact what those funds are intended for, they will actually fall there, that they will be used for that purpose, and that the department will have in place, as they've said before, a separate accountant with what has been called accounting rules — they say, "We have laid down . . . accounting rules" — to ensure that those funds go there. It's been demonstrated that satisfactory accounting controls and mechanisms have not been in place in the past. On the one hand, there's a leakage or errors of \$5 million for these particular ones. That's about 45 per cent of what's being asked for here today. We don't want to have all that money slip through the cracks somewhere and not know where it went.

So that's . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is now getting into a repetitious sort of discourse. If he's going to continue in that same line of thinking, perhaps he might let the minister respond rather than let the minister repeat the same thing over and over again.

MR. SINDLINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a good point. I would like to let him respond, but I just want to summarize what I said before to ensure that not only do I remain on track, but we keep the minister there as well.

MR. RUSSELL: These particular votes that go to autonomous hospital boards are quite interesting, and the hon. member did refer to that situation. The Legislature is asked to approve a grant of X million dollars to a particular autonomous hospital board for such and such a purpose. Really, in the strict eyes of the law, once we've done that it's the responsibility of the hospital board to

spend it for the purpose that was approved. In reality, though, because of our audit system and the office of Auditor General, the attention paid to the payment of those funds goes far beyond just handing over the grant on an unconditional basis. In the case of the Foothills hospital in Calgary and the MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre here, implementation committees were established several years ago, which are another level of control or watchdog, if I can put it that way, that has been imposed on the system.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

I was a little alarmed at the member's continued use of the word "leakage". It sounds like there's a sieve out there where several million dollars are going in an unaccounted way. Of course that is not the case, and I don't believe he meant to say that. We'd be concerned about three things insofar as the actual disposition of money is concerned, and I'm keeping that separate from the accounting system that's in place. The first one, obviously, is fraud. Is there in fact a leakage or fraud, and are some of these dollars that were intended to build hospitals going someplace else? On all the evidence that's in front of us, we can say a very firm no to that.

Second, is there mismanagement of funds? Have the funds approved by this Legislature been mismanaged in some way so that we're not getting the best dollar value for them? In the case of the children's hospital, the answer is no. In the case of the MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre, I think there is evidence that there was mismanagement. The reasons for it were identified, and corrective measures were taken. So I don't believe we can say we did get full value for our dollar in the early years of that particular project. We were paying more than we should have for some aspects of the thing. The other thing insofar as the use of dollars is concerned — and it haunts any large capital project these days — is the effects of inflation. It's there and it's a fact of life in the world today, and you do your best to manage it as you can.

Those three things deal with the use or direction of money. Separate from that, but of course obviously related to it, is the accounting of the money. Were correct accounting procedures used? If members read this document that was tabled yesterday, I believe that's what the Auditor General was talking about: the accounting of the funds. Mistakes were discovered and corrective action did have to be taken. But the books balance in the end, and the money has been spent for what it was voted for.

MR. SINDLINGER: A supplementary on that point, please, Mr. Chairman. The term used by the Auditor General was "errors", and I used the term "leakage" as a synonym because I did not have more information before me to enable me to specifically define the error or adjustment or whatever. So I suppose we would be better off if we just stuck to the word "errors".

I would now like to ask the minister specifically, since I think in general we agree on the distinction between the direction of money and the accounting of money, and how there could be differences resulting from inflation, from changes in scope, and from mismanagement... The minister referred to evidence of mismanagement at the W.C. MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre. But the Auditor General's document that was tabled in the Legislative Assembly yesterday addresses errors at three of the capital projects. I have to assume that those three capital

projects are, one, the Alberta Children's Provincial General hospital; two, the Walter C. MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre; and, if I remember correctly, the other is the Foothills hospital, as opposed to applied cancer research in the southern Alberta — well, the Southern Alberta Cancer Centre and Specialty Services Facility is the Foothills hospital, I presume. So the question I pose specifically to the minister is whether or not these errors in the order of magnitude of \$5 million at March 31, 1981, as identified in the Auditor General's management report, applied specifically to the children's hospital? If so, in what particular areas, and what portion of the \$5 million can be ascribed to the southern Alberta children's hospital?

MR. RUSSELL: I don't have that information, Mr. Chairman, and I would have to take the question as advice and report back.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I didn't have the opportunity to be in the House until the last few minutes on the 23rd. But I note, in reading over *Hansard* on the 23rd, that some considerable debate took place on whether or not there should be a parallel institution in northern Alberta. I don't intend to take the committee's time to debate that, other than to simply say I think we should seriously consider that.

As I recall, there was a discussion in the Legislature — and my memory may stand corrected; I think it was either this spring or last spring. I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud raised it, or one of the government members, in any event. In my mind anyway, the arguments presented then with respect to a northern facility have not been overcome or satisfied subsequently. So I think the argument could still be made.

But we're dealing with the southern Alberta facility. There are two very quick questions I have for the minister on a matter of fact. Then I have some general observations I'd like to make on this particular appropriation. Page 1787 of *Hansard*:

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, the child health centre project at the Alberta children's hospital in Calgary was originally approved for planning in July 1975 by the hon. Neil Crawford, minister of health.

I don't want to be argumentative on a small matter, but either the date is wrong or the minister is wrong, because my recollection is that we had a new cabinet after the March 1975 election and, in fact, Mr. Miniely was minister. That means either the minister's date of July is the year before, or it was a different minister.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I was reading from a prepared text at that time. That's what's printed in *Hansard*, and that's what I have in front of me. But obviously one is wrong, either the minister or the date, and I don't know which. I'll have to check that, because it is obviously an error.

MR. NOTLEY: Okay. Mr. Chairman, a little further in the discussion in relation to whether there should be a northern facility as opposed to a southern facility, some mention was made of the board. I have a number of general comments and questions. Perhaps to save time I'll put them all together. Page 1789 of *Hansard*:

MR. RUSSELL: Well, that's a rather complex question with many parts. It's true that an attempt has been made in the board structure to regard the children's hospital in Calgary as having a provincial

aspect. For that reason, we appointed a lady from Lethbridge and a young gentleman from Edmonton to serve on the board to try to bring to it more than just a Calgary attitude.

I wonder if the minister would outline to members of the committee just what the structure of the board is: how many members are on it, the composition. The method of appointment, I presume, is by the minister directly. I also ask the minister if he would explain what he means by "a provincial aspect". Is it the position of the government that this is in fact the province's children's hospital, as opposed to the southern Alberta children's hospital? I say that in relation to the remarks that took place last week. In any event, Mr. Chairman, it would be useful if we had an explanation of the composition of the board.

Mr. Chairman, the second area I'd like to deal with is with respect to how successful we've been in attracting pediatricians as a result of this facility. I look at the most recent report of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, 1979-80, and I note that we had just a 4.9 per cent increase in pediatricians that year. As I understand it, the basic argument of the proponents of a children's hospital, wherever one finds it — certainly in Calgary, because we're dealing with that estimate, but the argument has been made equally strongly as far as a northern Alberta facility is concerned — is that a children's hospital is going to bring together specialists, it's going to attract specialists. It's going to be, if you like, a lightning rod to bring in people who have particular expertise in that area. So, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could advise the committee whether — I believe the facility has actually been operating now for some months — we have any figures at all on the impact on the number of pediatricians in Alberta as a result of this kind of investment?

The third area I would put to the minister and ask him to respond on — again it flows from the operating experience we've seen over the last few months — is with respect to the number of nurses in the province. It has certainly been brought to my attention by the UNA that there is a critical shortage of nurses, and that is one of the reasons we've seen waiting lists in some of the hospitals for a number of reasons. But is there any evidence that that shortage of nurses is having any effect on the operation of the children's hospital in Calgary?

Mr. Chairman, one of the submissions that certainly was made to me by the UNA during my travels on the heritage trust fund this fall, is that it's not just a question of salaries but certain other aspects that the government should look at in terms of attracting young women into the market place as nurses. The point was made that, where possible, day care facilities must be made part of hospitals if you want to attract young women as nurses.

Is there any facility in the children's hospital in Calgary for day care as part of that institution? In about three different locations in the province, the UNA came out and they said: don't be silly; if you want nurses, you have to provide day care; those are just the facts of life. It seems to me that in planning a facility of this kind I would presume that in a children's hospital there would be provision for day care for employees. But I would be interested in knowing whether in fact that is true. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I have not had an opportunity to tour the facility, although I will welcome that opportunity as soon as I can.

I would also be interested in what facilities have been developed for the children in the hospital. I don't pretend

to be any expert about it, but I gather that in the Winnipeg facility, for example, there is . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Could we have a bit of order in the Assembly, please. It's very difficult to hear the speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: There might be what one would call social services for the children there. Perhaps to explain for just a moment: play facilities for children while they are waiting, trained staff who would set up programs specifically for children hospitalized in a special area. In Winnipeg, some of the staff visit the children who aren't able [inaudible] as part of the program. I believe the minister was at the reception or dinner that was held by the group promoting a northern children's hospital. One of the major arguments they made for a children's hospital was the social environment. I would be interested in what specific provision has been made not just for the quality care and treatment of whatever the ailment or problem is but the social aspects of the child in the facility.

Mr. Chairman, I have several other questions, but I invite the minister to respond to those four. Just to repeat them again: I'd like to have some indication as to the composition of the board, the method of appointment, the numbers, and to what extent it is geographically representative. Secondly, I'd like the minister to respond to the question of the number of pediatricians in Alberta and whether there is any evidence that this facility will act, if you like, as a draw for skilled practitioners in that specialty. Thirdly, whether or not the question of the nursing shortage, which is a problem throughout the province, has had any ramifications at the Calgary centre; whether, in order to alleviate that possibility, we've looked at day care facilities in the construction of the centre, as recommended by the UNA. Finally, the question of the social aspect for the children that I alluded to a moment ago.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chairman, I'll have the names of the board members in a moment. I've sent for them; I can't recall them all by memory. They're appointed for three years on the recommendation of Executive Council. They're all citizens at large. They're sought by nomination, or sometimes they come forward and volunteer their services. You do as you would in any board: try to get a balance of appropriate interest. You want good, strong business expertise; you want someone who has community interests with respect to children's special problems; you try to get a good range of opinion with respect to age and geography, and balance between men and women. Those are the kinds of things you would obviously look at in the appointment of any board, whether a university or a hospital board.

How are they appointed after they are approved by cabinet? Either by ministerial order or by order in council, and it's different for different hospitals. I honestly don't know which method is used in this case, but I'll have that information in a few minutes. I think I said the board members are generally appointed for three-year terms and are generally appointed for a second term if they indicate a continuing interest. When I mentioned the fact that we wanted to get more of a provincial rather than just a Calgary aspect to the make-up of that board, I think that ties in with comments made earlier in the Legislature, not just by me but I can recall the hon. Premier describing the initial heritage fund health care

package insofar as capital projects were concerned. We thought the rebuilding of the MacKenzie Health Sciences Centre in Edmonton, with the children's hospital and the southern cancer treatment centre in Calgary, gave a pretty darned good total provincial package insofar as capital facilities were concerned for the first projects to come from the heritage fund. On that basis, we really regard the total package of the three projects as part of a whole which is intended to serve the whole province. We have people from outside Calgary on the Foothills board, and we were also anxious to get that representation on the children's board. So the lady from Lethbridge and the gentleman from Edmonton were appointed, and their contributions have been very useful. It's for that very reason that when the trustees sit down and discuss board policy, we don't just want citizens from the city of Calgary discussing their problems. We want the broader aspect brought to it.

The question with respect to the number of pediatricians having been affected by the opening of the hospital is something that changes daily and is information that is readily available from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, which keeps a pretty thorough, ongoing, statistical summary of doctors, by specialties, who come to the province and those who leave, broken down into those already in practice and those who are new graduates, and by country of origin. I can get that information. I know it is too soon to tell whether the opening of that hospital has yet had any significant effect on the supply of pediatricians or the particular quality or specialty interests of those people. I suspect it will be many months yet before we have a good picture of that.

Is the nursing shortage affecting the operation of the hospital? I don't believe so. Of course, it's interesting that the number of registered nurses in Alberta far exceeds the number of nursing jobs. The problem is getting nurses who are willing to work. Some communities and some particular institutions in communities are achieving better success in that field than others. The day care facilities suggestion is one that has been broached before. I'm advised that this year the United Nurses of Alberta has a list of some 200 items, other than salary, that they want the hospitals to consider. Whether or not the boards would agree to having day care centres within the facilities is something I could only guess at at this time. One has to ask why it's more critical in the case of nurses than in any other occupation where women are employed. You look at the way our communities are served by both the publicly and privately operated day care centres now, and you'd have to guess whether or not you'd see a significant improvement in the employee work force if there were

day care facilities within institutions. It's an interesting question. As far as I know, that particular board has not asked for it, and I don't believe they are considering it at the present time.

I think the social facilities and atmosphere in the hospital are excellent, and very much directed and specially designed for children. You can get the full impact of that only by visiting the hospital. Therein is one of the strong arguments in favor of a separate children's hospital. Certainly the architecture, furnishings, art work, and arrangement of particular facilities are all designed for the child. It's not part of a general hospital where they take care of little people, which is the complaint we receive about pediatric wards within general hospitals. Of course, that's balanced by the other programs general hospitals have that aren't available in a special children's hospitals. Therein lies the nub of the debate on that issue.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think the time for this particular day has just about drawn to a conclusion. I wonder if the Acting Government House Leader would move the necessary motions.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, how time flies when you're having fun.

MR. NOTLEY: Get your hand out of the light socket.

MR. KING: I move that the committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, on the next sitting day, being private members' day, we will of course conduct private members' business. The House will not sit tomorrow evening.

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