

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, May 12, 1983 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 52
Optometry Profession Act

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 52, the Optometry Profession Act.

The purpose of the Bill is to introduce new legislation respecting the practice of the profession of optometry in the province and to repeal the existing Optometry Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 52 read a first time]

Bill 57
Public Service Amendment Act, 1983

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 57, the Public Service Amendment Act, 1983. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The purpose of this Bill is to facilitate the redeployment of employees within the public service, to further deregulate by substituting ministerial orders for certain orders in council and, finally, to establish a revolving fund for the charge-back of training costs from the Personnel Administration Office to departments.

[Leave granted; Bill 57 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table sessional paper No. 106, the Gas Alberta Operating Fund financial statement, and the supplemental report of the Gas Alberta Operating Fund, both for the year ended March 31, 1982.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly 90 grade 9 students from Brooks junior high school. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Hartley, Mr. Powell, Mrs. Preston, Mrs. Sekella, Mrs. Tarney, and Mr. Weinmeyer, and by their bus drivers Mrs. Erion, Mrs. Kuiper, and Mr. Schuller. They are seated in the members and public galleries. Would they please stand now and have the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Speaker, I have the honor today to present to you and to this Assembly 20 members from the Alberta Vocational Centre, which happens to be located in the Edmonton Centre constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Margaret Belyea. They are seated in the members gallery, and I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. BATIUK.: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 20 grade 6 students from the village of Ryley in the Vegreville constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Pepper and by supervisor parents Mrs. Capogreco and Mrs. Manderson. They are seated in the public gallery, and I ask them to rise and be recognized.

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, a visitor from the city of Calgary. I know him as the president of the Bow Trail Council, which represents six communities in west Calgary. I particularly want to note that he's a resident of the Premier's constituency, Calgary West. Members of this Assembly will be particularly interested to know that this gentleman is a past president of the Bow Valley Toastmaster Club, and I understand he's willing to supply a written evaluation upon request. He's seated in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon, and I ask you to give a warm welcome to Mr. Ron Leigh.

head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

Office of the Premier

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, as leader of government in this province, I was deeply disturbed with the confirmation that a certificated teacher in this province's schools had been able to transmit, over an extended period of time, views that were clearly racial and religiously prejudiced, and anti-Semitic in particular. Since that confirmation some weeks ago, I've been personally inquiring into the circumstances and assessing the implications and, in particular, have met leaders of the Jewish community in the province as a result of their very natural concern and anxiety.

In addition, this event has triggered subsequent reaction and comment which further disturbs me. Therefore, as Premier, I wish to make a statement to the Legislature respecting this disturbing situation and set forth some specific responses by the provincial government.

Let me at the outset reaffirm this Legislature's unequivocal commitment, as set forth in the preamble to the Alberta Bill of Rights, that

the free and democratic society existing in Alberta is founded on principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God and on principles, fostered by tradition, that honour and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and the dignity and worth of the human person;

and further, Mr. Speaker, that the Alberta Bill of Rights, which has supremacy over all other laws of the province unless expressly declared otherwise, recognizes and declares that there exists freedom of religion and other basic freedoms, without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, color, religion, and sex; and further, Mr. Speaker, that the companion Individual's Rights Protection Act sets forth in its preamble that

it is recognized in Alberta as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all persons are equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age, ancestry or place of origin.

It is apparent, Mr. Speaker, that such legislative enactments do not by themselves eliminate discrimination or bigotry and that, from time to time, they need to be re-emphasized as the fundamental principles upon which the Legislative Assembly of Alberta functions.

Over the past decade, considerable progress has been made in terms of public education and communication, to foster a society that's not just tolerant of minority groups but welcomes them to participate as full and equal partners and members of our Alberta community. The efforts of the Human Rights Commission, the repeal of certain discriminatory legislation, the activity of the Cultural Heritage Council and other programs, are strong evidence of this progress. Members, I am sure, are well aware that in a changing and dynamic society like Alberta's, tolerance is a steady and ongoing process that must continually be supported and encouraged.

Some Albertans have raised concerns that there has been a resurgence of bigotry and prejudice in Alberta. It is my view that this is not the case. Current information from the Alberta Human Rights Commission shows a drop in the number of complaints of discrimination in employment, service, and tenancy relative to race, color, ancestry, or place of origin, from 174 complaints in the year ended March 31, 1982, to 156 complaints for the year ended March 31, 1983. There is some increase in complaints on grounds of religion, but for the full year ended March 31, 1983, there were only 15 complaints. This assessment has to also include the consideration that Alberta over the past number of years has experienced, particularly in the larger centres, a very substantial immigration, with its obvious tensions in welcoming newcomers from all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, this does not minimize the gravity of the matter. History shows that elements of bigotry, such as the anti-Semitism in this recent case, can grow like a cancer if not challenged and vigorously condemned by those in positions of responsibility.

The positive attitude of Albertans towards others is a useful barometer of society's attitudes. Citizen support for aid throughout the world, which is part of our government's international assistance program, is a source of pride. The general involvement in a multicultural community such as Alberta by the various and numerous cultural communities is positive evidence of harmony in diversity. Anyone who has fully participated in the Heritage Festival held each summer in our capital city understands this evolution of the positive attitudes and the spirit among thousands of participants and observers. This is reflected in similar events throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, this is not to suggest that there are not, and will not continue to be, tensions and difficulties. There is, though, often a tendency to leave the matter to legislators. But although we have an important leadership role, which I will return to, it ultimately comes down to the fostering by individual families, as parents and neighbors, to encourage tolerance and respect for others — for their race, their religion, their color, and their ancestry; in short, their ideas, their customs, and their beliefs. I call on Albertans to renew this commitment to such tolerance and respect for others.

There is, however, a specific role for legislators and the

government. Concern over the circumstances of the teacher I mentioned and reaction to this situation has been expressed to me by leaders of the Alberta Jewish community and by other community leaders in the province, including the clergy.

I have therefore set in motion three specific responses. First, the Minister of Labour has been asked to respond positively, within reasonable limits, to the request of May 4 by the chairman of the Alberta Human Rights Commission, to conduct a further public education program aimed at combatting any racism in Alberta and explaining the nature of discrimination and the importance of exposing it, in consultation with the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council.

Second, I've called upon the Minister of Education to have a special review undertaken forthwith of our curriculum, to ascertain if there are any practical changes which could be made that would better foster greater tolerance and respect for minority groups and individuals in our society.

Third, I am determined that we reduce, if not eliminate, the possibility of a recurrence of the recent situation wherein a certificated teacher in the province's school system was able to transmit, over an extended period of time, views that were unequivocally racial, religiously prejudiced, historically inaccurate, and distorted. I am well aware of the danger that new procedures may be so overreactive as to cause serious difficulties in themselves. However, I have asked the Minister of Education to bring forward a series of recommendations or options with a view to establish new procedures in our schools and to provide better communication with our parents, and to reduce, if not eliminate, the possible recurrence of such offensive events. Particularly, I want to reassure our citizens that in the unfortunate event prejudice and bigotry is ever detected again in our schools, it will be remedied as quickly as possible. The Minister of Education has been asked, in developing these recommendations or options, to consult with the various elements of our education community and parent groups.

We also encourage specific suggestions to the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Education, and the Human Rights Commission, in regard to all these responses from the Member of the Legislative Assembly and the public at large.

In the final analysis, though, it comes back to the attitude of individual Albertans, as parents, as neighbors, and as citizens at large. I therefore trust the members of this Assembly will join with me in my call to all Albertans to renew their commitment to tolerance and respect for the dignity, ideas, and beliefs of others.

Thank you. [applause]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the statement by the hon. Premier today as constituting at least some action on the part of this government in this whole sordid affair. But the statement raises as many questions as it answers.

First, why has it taken so long for the Premier to make a public statement which the vast majority of Albertans would have welcomed long before now? I remind people that the Court of Queen's Bench upheld the dismissal of Mr. Keegstra on April 14, almost a full month ago. The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury's views were made public on Wednesday, April 20, fully three weeks ago. Why the delay? And why, apparently, did it take a telegram from an American and an Austrian to convince the Premier to undertake an action which had previously

been urged upon him by thousands of Albertans?

Second, I remind the Premier that actions speak much louder than words. The sentiments expressed today by the Premier are welcomed, but the Premier has it within his power — as was shown on October 16, 1980, re Tom Sindlinger — to go far beyond sentiment. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Premier to take the question of whether or not the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury will continue to sit in this Assembly as a government member to a full meeting of the government party's caucus and request that caucus make a formal decision expelling the hon. member from its ranks.

Honorable sentiments expressed by honorable men are always of worth, Mr. Speaker. But as the history of this unhappy century has shown, honorable sentiments by themselves do little to restrain the wicked or protect the innocent.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Misericordia Hospital Funding

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my first set of questions to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. In his discussions with Misericordia hospital officials this past week, did the minister inform them whether or not they would receive provincial funding to cover their deficit?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker. There has only been one set of discussions, and that occurred Monday morning. The information the hospital gave to my assistant deputy minister, who visited the hospital, is still under review and assessment.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In spite of the minister's stated policy of no extra funds to cover hospital deficits, did the minister order the hospital on Tuesday not to carry through with their plans to cut costs by laying off staff and to hold back prepared layoff notices?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Can the minister advise the Assembly when he informed hospital officials that there would be no increase in funds? Was it before or after his department formally approved the opening of three new units? The hospital consequently hired new staff and, as a result, received some 7,800 more patients than budgeted for.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm a little puzzled by the line the questioning is now taking. Last December all hospital boards in the province were told that we would bring them up to date with respect to the previous year's deficits, that we would cover all the costs of wage settlements that were arrived at by third-party arbitration, and that inflation factors would be added to all those items in the budgets for the current fiscal year. That's been done. But it was made quite clear that we were in no position to assure them that we would continue to pick up deficits and that we were looking at alternative sources of discretionary funding for the boards in the event that they required them. All those things have been done and, as far as I'm aware, no specific instructions have been given

to any individual hospital.

In the case of the Misericordia, they very recently brought to the attention of the department a serious deficit that developed only in the 12th month of their fiscal year. They are going to have to explain how that happened, because at the end of the 11th month, it wasn't there. We are looking at those figures and the information they're supplying. If they have a reasonable case, naturally it will have to be considered.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise why his department approved these three units, when there were not sufficient funds to cover the operation of these units?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea which three units the hon. member is talking about.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, then would the minister look into the three new units and report back to the Assembly? [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Which three units?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unless some more specific indication is given by the hon. member as to what units he's talking about, it would be very difficult for the minister to do that.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister. Whenever he doesn't have the answers, he's always very cute about that. [interjections]

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Get some signals, Ray.

MR. MARTIN: I will just wait until the hon. gentlemen are finished.

Given that the hospital will still have a sizable deficit, even if it collects the maximum amount of user fees after October 1, and will have to lay off staff, what advice can the minister offer the hospital board with regard to cutting costs at this point?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, that question is so fraught with hypotheses, guessing, looks into crystal balls, bad research, and bad question development that it's impossible to answer it. [interjections]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, whenever the minister can't answer a question, he comes back to these sorts of problems. But let me throw it out to the minister — and I will try to make the questions a little more simple, so he can answer them.

Since the hospital already has plans — I think the minister would agree — for bed and operating room closures, what additional measures does the minister expect the hospital to take to get a balanced budget?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I thought I indicated pretty straightforwardly that the Misericordia is being treated exactly the same as every other hospital in the province. At the end of last week, they brought forward figures which showed that they believed they had some special circumstance. Monday morning my officials were over there, meeting with their accountants and administrative people. Today is already Thursday. As soon as we have an analysis of the question and the situation, an answer will be provided.

Mr. Speaker, I don't mind being accused of not being able to answer questions; there are the odd things that I don't know. But when an hon. member rises in his place to ask a question, I do expect that he knows what the heck it means.

MR. MARTIN: Very odd, I might add.

It's my understanding that the procedure for reassessing hospital budgets starts next week. What advice can the minister give the hospital board that would enable them to avoid the layoffs planned for May 24, layoffs the board considers essential for a balanced budget?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. acting leader's question is a repetition of one asked previously; the minister has answered it. I wish he would go on to his next question now.

MR. MARTIN: On a point of order. I'm talking about the meeting he's having. The layoffs would go ahead of that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I suggest that the hon. member go to the next question.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Are the funds tentatively approved for the construction this year of the proposed south tower of the hospital — I take it he's heard of that — and the proposed intermediate neonatal unit, still in the approved category? If so, can the minister advise where the hospital might secure the funds necessary to operate these additions?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, any hospital board that's had a capital project approved is well aware of it. If it's approved, the funds are contained in this year's estimates that are presently before the Legislature. If it's a pending project, we've made it quite clear that there are no new approvals entering the capital system in the hospital field this fiscal year.

Social Allowance

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second set of questions to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It has to do with the shelter ceilings. Is the minister aware of Canada Mortgage and Housing figures, which show that average rents in the city of Edmonton have not decreased at all since April last year?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of addressing the adjustments and modifications to the shelter ceilings that we've put into place, we were aware of a good deal of information, including the current market rental rates as well as the current vacancy rates.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, given that rents are not decreasing at all, despite the high vacancy rate, will the minister review his recent decision regarding shelter allowances and adjustments?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the total package of social allowance changes, I remind hon. members that there were a number of changes, including an increase of 5 per cent on the basic allowance, starting July 1, plus increased earning exemptions. So I think the hon. member should look at the whole thing in terms of a

package. The whole package is what we consider to be a fair package. However, we are monitoring the situation extremely closely to see if there are any situations where unfair cases may arise. In those situations, we will certainly deal with them in a fair way.

MR. MARTIN: I'd say, fair to whom? A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister saying — and I say this deliberately to him — that it's this government's policy that social allowance recipients should move to lower quality accommodation, since it is clear that rents are not going down? That's the bottom line: if rents are not going down, they have to move to lower quality accommodation. Is that government policy?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, when we make the commitment to be responsible for a particular area, particularly in the times of restraint we've gone through, I think we have to look at such things as better management of our resources and cost efficiencies. So in terms of fairness, we think the package is fair not only to social allowance recipients but to the rest of Albertans.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister. Did he actually review average rental trends before announcing the shelter allowance policy? Or did he know what he was talking about at all?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I think I answered that question initially, by stating that we were well aware of the vacancy and rental rates across the province.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Given the recent large increases in the number of citizens requiring welfare, what assessment did the minister make of the possibility that this policy will encourage the expansion of slum areas in our city?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are now into the area of asking for an opinion or a philosophical sort of question.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could advise the Assembly if, in development of the new policy change, there was a review of any variances in rental rates across the province?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, if I interpret that question correctly, we did look at the variances in rental rates within different communities across the province and looked at where the new ceilings would be in relation to that variation. We concluded that the vacancy rates were such that the ceilings were appropriate to those variances.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the Independent coalition has two questions.

Rehabilitation Agencies

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my first question is to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's with regard to the Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres and the need for funding of those centres. I refer to a letter of December 4, 1980, which outlines a policy of the government at that time. It assures the associations that they would have funding so that the positions and salaries of agency personnel would be the same as public service employees in relatively the same kinds of positions. I'm sure the minister is quite aware of

this policy of 1980. My question to the minister is, why has the minister broken that agreement with the rehabilitation agencies of this province and created quite some difficulty with those agencies?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly familiar with the concerns raised by the particular organization he refers to. In fact, I have had several meetings with the president and some members of the organization in Calgary. One of the concerns they raised was the matter of salary adjustments to their employees compared to the salary adjustments to provincial employees. When we had the discussion describing the procedure that was in place with regard to the determination of provincial salaries, I felt they were satisfied.

In terms of a commitment, there were previous discussions which indicated that there would be an attempt over a period of time to try to equalize the salaries paid to the employees in these agencies comparable to what they are provincially. However, I think it's obvious at this time that that's not possible.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. My information is that in the years 1981-82 the salaries were comparable and that the agencies were able to maintain their staff because they were comparable. In '83 there are significant differences. I can give the minister examples where employees of the vocational programs are leaving and going into government positions. I would like to ask the minister, is he aware of those employees who are leaving? Secondly, is the minister prepared to do something so that the private agencies that are using volunteers and saving taxpayers' dollars do not have their base eroded from their program services?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in the discussion I had with the people in that particular organization, we discussed the situation relative to employees. They indicated to me that the employees were not leaving. In view of the current economic employment market, they said there were no difficulties in that regard. However, I indicated to them that it was still my desire to see an equalization over a period of time, if at all possible. I think everyone is well aware of the recent settlements in the public sector, and it's not possible to do that this year.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question in terms of solving the matter. Would the minister be prepared to review the number of employees who have transferred or been lost, and possibly review the policy being enunciated? This policy only refers to these agencies in the province and isn't a broad policy of many agencies. Would the minister be prepared to look at the cases that are evident at the present time, to try to protect these private agencies and to try to do something? Would the minister meet with the agencies as soon as possible?

DR. WEBBER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In terms of meeting with the agencies, I have met with the particular group he's referring to every time they have requested a meeting and would be happy to meet with them again. Again, I must emphasize that they have not brought to my attention at all the concern of losing employees to the government. Their concern has been with regard to the differential in salaries. We had discussions and said that we would try, over a period of time, to equalize them if at all possible.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question with regard to dealing with the various agencies. Could the minister indicate whether the policy across the province is being administered on a consistent basis, or are the regional personnel administering the policy differently from one region to another in dealing with these private agencies?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the provincial government dealing with these agencies, basically there was a 5 per cent overall increase in grants to these organizations. However, one of the reasons for going the decentralization route throughout the province was to try to take into account the local needs and concerns of the particular regions. So I would hope that the regional directors would be dealing with these agencies in their unique circumstances.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. It's with regard to additional funds which are secured by the private agencies because of private contracts they have that they use in the rehabilitation programs. Could the minister indicate whether these private funds secured are deducted in terms of the gross amount provided by the provincial government?

DR. WEBBER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Is the minister saying that private funds so secured are to be used at the discretion of the relative private agency? Is that accurate?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of answering on an across-the-board basis, it's difficult to generalize. Some of these agencies are being funded through the local family and community support services, where we as a province provide 80 per cent of the funding and the local municipality pays 20 per cent. In those cases, the local agencies can raise funds. That doesn't interfere in any way with the amount of funding the provincial government provides.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister, with regard to the agencies that deal with the central region and the Calgary regional offices. I'd like to ask the minister whether those agencies that deal with those respective areas will receive their first-quarter funding at an early date? As I understand it, these funds are being withheld until the agencies complete their negotiations with the respective regional co-ordinators. It's causing great financial difficulty. Could the minister indicate when those funds will be forwarded?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I know that there have been concerns expressed in the past, relative to the timing of the first-quarter payments. However, it's my understanding that the first-quarter payments have long gone out to all these agencies, except in those exceptional circumstances where there may be some difficulties.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister indicate what those exceptional circumstances are? Is the withholding of payment being carried on to force negotiations with the agencies and to make it very difficult for them in the negotiations?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the funds certainly aren't being held back to force them to do anything. In terms of the reasons for any exceptional circumstances, I'd certainly have to check into that. I would be happy to do so and report back to the member.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to that question again tomorrow.

Highway Speed Limits

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'd like to direct my second question to the Minister of Transportation. It's with regard to the announcement that was made yesterday.

MR. WEISS: Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. A point of order, if I may. I believe other members had raised questions. Is there a priority that a second question should be raised by the member?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order. It was my understanding, when my name was called, that you said there were two questions. I'm willing to hold my question until after another member, but I'm open to your direction.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: At the time the hon. leader of the Independent coalition requested permission to ask questions, nobody else had asked for permission. When he rose to ask his first question, I gave him permission to ask two questions. I think that would be proper now.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I certainly don't want to take the time of any other hon. member. I wouldn't want to treat anyone unfairly in such a minority position.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Transportation is with regard to the announcement yesterday, where the speed limits for trucks and cars were made the same. I'd like to ask what evidence his department has, if any, showing that increasing speed limits for trucks does not increase the safety hazard on the highways. Were there some kind of formal studies, or was the decision made just on observations of the minister?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that decision contained in my announcement yesterday was drawn from conclusions reached by staff in my department, among them the director of the safety branch of the department, and by observing other jurisdictions across Canada.

[Disturbance in the press gallery]

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, maybe we should have a moment of pause while the ... [interjections] Yes, somebody pulled the plug. Well, if you can't read, you have to go out and hear it verbally. That's the thing. [laughter] So you must admire the three who remain. That's credibility and confidence.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If we could proceed with the question.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it was just that pause that we needed.

My follow-up question to the minister is with regard to representations that have been made by the Alberta Trucking Association. They have said that increasing

speed limits is a costly and dangerous move. Could the minister indicate whether that representation was made to his department or to him, why the change, and why the attitude of that group was ignored?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I did meet with the executive of the Alberta Trucking Association some weeks ago, and advised them at that time that we had under consideration the announcement I made yesterday. At that time there was some concern expressed by the Alberta Trucking Association but, as I recall, no definitive opposition to the matter. Since then I've had representations — in fact, this week — from the Alberta Trucking Association, to the effect that their organization is opposed to the change we have made.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I've received a good number of representations, particularly in the last 24 hours, from individual truckers and owner/operators across the province who are very supportive of the move. I can say this: it's my view that the vast majority of truckers in this province support the decision which was made yesterday. As time goes on, I think even the major trucking companies will understand that the government has a responsibility with respect to safety matters and that travelling at a speed that will reflect good operational costs, in terms of fuel costs, tire wear, and so on, is a matter that should surely be governed by company policy.

I believe the major trucking companies in this province who desire their drivers to drive at a slower rate of speed are well equipped to train them in that way and enforce that policy. I don't believe it should necessarily follow that the RCMP or the Solicitor General's police should be asked to enforce policies that don't relate to safety. That's why the decision was made as it was, even in the face of some opposition that might have been advanced by the Alberta Trucking Association executive.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question with regard to safety. I wonder if the minister took under consideration some of the safety studies done in the United States — the national highway traffic safety association. Then a report was released just recently in Ontario, the Uffin commission report, which shows that the number of fatalities roughly doubles when speed limits are raised from 45 to 60 miles per hour, and doubles again when the limits are raised from 60 to 70 miles per hour. Was that taken into consideration in the decision, Mr. Speaker?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the report from Ontario was in fact taken into consideration by me personally. The other reports were reviewed by staff in the department. I can say this with regard to the Ontario report: that report referred to traffic conditions in terms of intersectional control and vehicles per day that, in my opinion, were far in excess of what presently exists on the highways we're talking about here.

Mr. Speaker, bear in mind that while I say there will be a general change, effective next Monday, to move speed limits from 90 to 100 kilometres per hour for cars and trucks, both day and night, that doesn't mean we won't continue to have throughout Alberta a good number of slower speed rates where intersections or the condition of the highway dictate that that be so. Indeed there are many highways now where the speed limit is 80 kilometres per hour, and those will remain. The intention is to have the increase only where we believe highway

conditions, the structure of the highway, and the amount of traffic allow us to make that increase. That's generally most of our two-lane highways in Alberta that presently have a 90 kilometre per hour speed limit at night for cars and 100 in the daytime. I can't be more definitive than that, Mr. Speaker.

I should add that there are several hundred individual speed limits throughout Alberta which are posted as a result of authorities that come from ministerial orders. I have asked the department to undertake a complete review of every speed limit that exists in Alberta, in addition to the ones I referred to yesterday, and I expect that review to be completed by the end of August. In fact, we may make several other changes at that time, and there could well be some additional reductions of speed limit in accident-prone areas. In our view, Mr. Speaker, speed by itself is not cause for accidents, as long as that speed is suitable to the conditions of the road, the structure of the road, and the amount of traffic on the road.

Air Quality

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of the Environment. As a result of the air quality directive issued late yesterday to Suncor, would the minister assure the Assembly that there is no health danger to any of the citizens in and around the Fort MacKay-Fort McMurray regions as a result of improper air emissions?

MR. BRADLEY: The answer to that question is that there is not any problem with regard to health in the area resulting from the emissions.

MR. WEISS: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister then assure that there should be no precautionary measures taken by Suncor prior to the June 15 deadline, as indicated in the release?

MR. BRADLEY: No, Mr. Speaker. There is not any need for those types of measures to be taken at this time.

MR. WEISS: One final supplementary, if I may, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister and/or his department offered assistance to rectify the difficulties encountered, and was Suncor advised prior to May 11 of the possibility of the air quality directive?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the specific questions, Suncor has been experiencing some operational difficulties in their plant over the last two years, which have resulted in air emissions exceeding their licence levels. This is basically due to the number of shut-downs they've had, which have created the problem.

What the department has requested from Suncor is further information with regard to the work they are doing to overcome the operational difficulties and the nature and type of practices they're going to put in place to correct this. Suncor has taken a number of remedial measures, and the directive was for the department to get further information with regard to the new practices they are going to be implementing. The department has met with Suncor and the Energy Resources Conservation Board over a period of time to discuss the nature of the problems there. And yes, Suncor was advised that an air quality directive was going to be issued.

Hospital Utilization

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. In light of figures presented to the minister yesterday by the Consumers' Association of Canada, will the minister now table in this Assembly those figures on the basis of which he has consistently claimed hospital use and abuse by Albertans has consistently risen?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had an opportunity to go over the brief left with me by the Consumers' Association, and I don't know what its relationship is to the question the hon. member put before me. But I'll certainly take it as notice.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister. In view of the information presented by the CAC, which indicates ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The minister has indicated that he has not had an opportunity to read the information. It would not be of much value at this time, I would think, to ask questions until he's had that opportunity.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, then. When he reviews the information that says there has been no increase, if they are correct, will he undertake to revoke his plans to impose hospital user fees on Albertans?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, if I understand the two points contained in the hon. member's question, I believe they're unrelated. The point that the Consumers' Association was making with me yesterday was that the rate of utilization of hospitals on a per capita basis in the province was in fact going down slightly over the last few years. The point that is involved with user fees is that although that may be true, there are considerably more people. Even though they're using hospitals at a slightly reduced rate, there are so many more of them and the unit costs are greater in each case, that the net result on the bottom line of the budgets is one of concern to all of us, hence the necessity for the introduction of the user fee program.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I refer to the March 28 *Hansard*, where the minister was talking about and justifying the need for user fees. He says:

I guess it just means that we're all seeing doctors more and, if that is another developing trend, of course that adds to the problem.

That was one of the justifications for bringing in user fees.

What I'm asking is: if this is not the case and the CAC brief is right, will the minister revoke his policy of user fees?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think the hon. member is confusing two things. The medicare plan is the health care insurance plan that covers payment to professionals who provide medical services. He's confusing that with the hospital plan.

The utilization that occurred with respect to medicare last year was alarming. We had a 17.5 per cent increase over the previous year, which resulted in a 30 per cent increase in costs. I thought I made that quite clear in my

remarks, although I can see how the hon. member may have gotten the two programs confused. The question of supporting the financial requirements of hospitals is entirely different.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If I have it confused, then the minister did, because I'm quoting his speech. In view of that fact, can the minister advise what consideration has been given to the fact that hospital deficits which are appearing now do not reflect increased irresponsible utilization but rather the impact of double-digit inflation experienced in the past years?

MR. RUSSELL: I'm having difficulty understanding the thrust of the question, Mr. Speaker. The reason we are bringing in hospital user fees is that we have said to hospital boards throughout the province: we're covering all your known costs, including your deficits of last year; the costs of wage settlements, which represent about 72 per cent of the costs of operating the hospitals; the costs of any new programs that have been approved; plus adding an inflation factor to that; and if you still run a deficit, then you're going to be responsible for covering that deficit yourself. We've established this source of discretionary funding which is available for them should that event occur.

MR. MARTIN: One final supplementary question, then. I refer again to his statement of March 28. Is the minister now saying that increased use — increased abuse by patients — is not the reason we are bringing in user fees on October 1?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using the words "use", "abuse", and "utilization"; he's mixing them up, and it makes it impossible to answer the question. With respect to the hospital system, twice today I've outlined the reason for establishing a program of user fees. I was asked on several occasions: do you believe this will cut down on abuses in the hospital system? I said, yes, it might do that. But I also made it quite clear that that was not the reason for establishing hospital user fees.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motion for a return on the Order Paper stand and retain its place.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

211. Moved by Mr. Jonson:

Be it resolved that the Assembly urge the government to consider setting standards for the management, staffing, housing, equipping, and supplying of school libraries.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start out by acknowledging that there has been considerable government effort in the area of those matters related to school libraries. There has been the heritage book program, the

pending publication of a Canadian encyclopedia, and the improvement in the public and regional library systems of the province. However, Mr. Speaker, I think there are some very, very good reasons for the government entering into the matter referred to in the resolution; that is, the matter of taking a leadership role in setting standards for school libraries. I would like to advance to the Assembly a series of reasons that I think back up this resolution.

First of all, there is on record a long series of studies which have made recommendations for the improvement of Alberta's school libraries. They date from the Cameron commission of 1957, and they extend through the decades up to the present time and the study on school libraries released in 1983. All of them have certain common themes, Mr. Speaker. They relate to a certain level of professional staffing being provided to school libraries, a certain level of funding being provided to school libraries and, thirdly, a certain minimum standard being set for materials, supplies, and facilities that should be available to school libraries.

I might add that one other item that comes up frequently in the reports that have come forward is the fact that again and again a great deal of inequity in the library services available to Alberta students has been found across the province. So my first reason is a historical one, or a research one, whichever way you want to label it. But there is certainly a record of many people having considered the situation in schools of the province, relative to libraries, and having recommended this type of direction.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to dwell a bit on what I would call the reason for current inequity in library services to students. I've observed that as far as school funding is concerned, even in "good times" libraries have not had their proper place in the budget priorities of some school boards. I suppose it's because you're largely dealing with inanimate objects, except for the librarian. When it comes down to the crunch of setting staffing formulas and dividing up and spreading around the funds, school boards, teachers, and administrators tend to put the library aside because there are more vocal groups to be satisfied. I'm not blaming the people who have made those decisions, because I know how difficult it is and how, when it comes down to it, sometimes it is the library that has to be set aside in terms of funding and spending priorities.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a very wise thing for the province to exhibit leadership, first of all, in acknowledging that there is an unfortunate inequity in the opportunities available to students in school libraries in many parts of the province, and it is important for the government to set standards and take the initiative in trying to correct that particular problem.

A third reason supporting the resolution, Mr. Speaker, is that libraries and library services, even in the very traditional sense of having access to books, are becoming more and more popular and important in the life of the province. There's been a tremendous increase in the utilization of our libraries, both public and school. Where we have regional libraries in the province, their business is thriving, so to speak. We're not asking for standards to be set or an effort made for something that is going to fall into disuse or become a white elephant on the shelf in terms of some type of waste. The matter is very clear: people want information. In many cases they are self-starting, they initiate access to this information on their own or under the direction of teachers, and it's a tremendous service in our modern era.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, is a reason I classify as new developments or technological changes, and their application to libraries. I would like to refer to a few of them. First of all, the accessing of data banks in the province is now available and possible through systems such as the University of Alberta's PLATO system. It seems to me that we're falling behind if we don't recognize the tremendous potential for school libraries of providing lines and terminals into an information base of this type. Secondly, the Department of Education has promoted something called the choices career program. I commend the minister for it. It's a program that could be made available in school libraries so that it is easily accessible to students. In most cases, it involves the use of a microcomputer.

That's another type of service that could be put into school libraries, and should be at the junior and senior high school levels if students across the province are going to be able to keep up with career information which is becoming increasingly more complex and greater in amount. I think the whole area of microcomputer use and application is closely linked to that of the library. The library is the logical location for the microcomputer service that would be available to individual students. In the whole business of utilizing microcomputers, we have to emphasize a little more than just basic literacy and its application to word processing.

One of the most exciting and potentially valuable aspects of the whole microcomputer application to education is its potential for offering individual instruction, and extending and enhancing instruction offered by teachers to students in the classroom or individually. I won't go into them all, Mr. Speaker, but in addition we have the cheaper and more readily available VTRs and the programs of an educational nature associated with them, and the long-existing service of microfiche materials which are very, very underutilized in the province as far as school libraries are concerned.

A fifth reason I offer in support of this motion, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to give some impetus to the use of libraries as learning centres. But, if we're going to do that, we have to be sure the facility has the potential to provide good service to Alberta's students. I note that there is a recently released study on education for the gifted in the province, and there are recommendations there for special programs for the gifted that have major cost implications.

I suggest that there are few things we could do which would be of more help to the gifted student than to increase the potential our library services have for the utilization of such students in all parts of the province. To a large degree they are self-starters; they need a certain push or motivation or guidance, but they are the ones who can really utilize the potential of a well-equipped library.

Mr. Speaker, there will be the concern that the provincial government will interfere with local prerogative if it becomes involved in the business of setting library standards. This has to be acknowledged as a possibility. But I think local boards and schools might very well recognize this as good leadership rather than interference. I sense that in the budget deliberations I referred to earlier, school boards, teachers, and other related personnel have — yes — backed away from the proper funding of libraries for other reasons. But this doesn't mean that they in any way feel libraries are unimportant or shouldn't be provided to certain standards. As I said before, I think this initiative would be welcomed and not regarded as

interference from the provincial level. The provincial government has involved itself in similar programs, the similar setting of standards in other areas, and I think it has been well received.

Mr. Speaker, there will also be the concern that the setting of standards translates into demands for expenditure, and that will certainly be the case. There are some areas we should move in in terms of providing support for libraries, and if that translates into dollars, so be it. But perhaps the expenditures are not so massive as one might expect. I'd like to offer some examples of areas in which I think the move should be made.

First of all, there's the investigation and establishment of terminals for accessing central information services such as the University of Alberta's PLATO system, which I referred to earlier. Mr. Speaker, I might also add that many of our understandard, so to speak, libraries are located in smaller schools. If the province were prepared to support this move, this would be an information service which could be equally provided to and accessed by small and large schools.

Along with certain other developments, it also has the possibility of cutting down a great deal on the duplication of equipment and library-type materials that are possible in the current setting. A service of this type might prevent a library from going needlessly into the area of purchasing expensive microfiche or VTR equipment and the related library, because all the information that students need in the schools would be in this particular service.

Secondly, I previously referred to, and I repeat, the need to make the choices program more widely available to help student career selection. Thirdly, I think the government should be looking at providing some incentive — whether it's in the form of actual grants per position, or in the form of incentives for training — to increase the qualifications and background of library personnel. In many previous studies, this has been referred to as a need. People in the school libraries of the province are providing excellent service, but I think the quality of that service could be greatly enhanced.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think we should grapple with the business of setting minimum standards for all schools, in terms of size of facility, amount of material available, et cetera. It's not going to be easy, but I think it's something that should be addressed. The important thing is to assume a leadership role, and clearly give recognition to the importance of the library as a learning centre in schools. We could use a greater focus on libraries. If not, we risk falling behind in utilizing technology and doing nothing about the great inequity that is documented as existing in library service to a significant percentage of Alberta schools.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks in support of this resolution by emphasizing that our libraries are currently well used. The potential for improving the educational program of the province is tremendous, if we just have the fortitude to emphasize some of the things that need to be done to enhance the potential there is in the nature of libraries and the services that can be included in them today. I'd like to finally conclude by mentioning this: next to those skills involved in learning to read, listen, and view, library skills are among perhaps the most important skills an individual can acquire for use in his future life on a broad basis in the society in which we live. I think the skills need to be developed and the facilities need to be there. I ask that the members of the Assembly support this resolution.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we listen to the address of the next speaker, would the Assembly agree that the Minister of Tourism and Small Business might revert to introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**
(*reversion*)

MR. ADAIR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the concurrence of the Assembly in allowing me the opportunity to introduce to you, and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly, 40 bright young students from the McGrath elementary school grade 6 class in the heart of God's country in Peace River. They are accompanied by teachers Mr. Packer and Mrs. Imray; parents Mrs. Sandercock, Mrs. Root, Mrs. Peterson, and Mrs. Maracle; and bus driver Mrs. Mueller. I would now ask them to stand and receive the recognition of this Assembly.

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**
(*continued*)

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the Member for Ponoka for bringing this worthy resolution to the Assembly today. Motion 211 urges the government to set "standards for ... management, staffing, housing, equipping, and supplying of school libraries". I strongly endorse this motion and encourage other members to support the principle.

Canada has been weathering a worldwide economic downturn. Alberta has fared as well as any other area in North America, but the economic situation has re-emphasized the need for restraint in spending at all levels of government, including local school boards. I maintain, however, that school library service is not an appropriate area for school board budget cuts.

Since 1972, the rapid growth of Alberta has given us the opportunity to upgrade school library facilities across this province, and we have responded very well, Mr. Speaker. This government can be proud of the non-conditional one-time grant of \$15 per pupil and \$7.50 a child, given to school boards and early childhood services operators in 1975. These funds went directly to assist school libraries in material development and Canadian content development, as well as audiovisual acquisition.

By the end of this program, Alberta's book-to-pupil ratio was second highest in Canada. That's one thing we can be proud of. However, only about 80 per cent of Alberta's students still have access to library services. This is according to the 1978 statistics by Canada survey. As usual, the federal department of statistics is about three years behind, but it's the best we can offer today.

Our province is composed of large rural areas with relatively low population density. This makes providing universally accessible library services to all students a costly and difficult venture. The result has been that a significant number of school libraries do not receive adequate support from local school jurisdictions. We have a unique situation where some of our school libraries are among the best in North America, while others literally have no library services at all.

As this motion suggests, Mr. Speaker, what is required

is a set of standards for school libraries. This can be achieved by encouraging that certain actions be taken. There is a need for a directive policy at the level of the Department of Education. That's the department that should be taking action. In addition, any co-operation between the departments of Education, Culture, and Advanced Education should be encouraged. The Department of Education could play a key role in co-ordinating and standardizing library procedures and programs. I believe they are aware of the need and will address this issue with some positive action. I hope the hon. Minister of Education will read *Hansard* on that point.

Local school boards need to actively pursue policy direction in library management and operation as well. Evaluation procedures are needed, and more can be done by school boards in recruiting community and private agency support for additional services. Each individual school also has a role to play, Mr. Speaker. The principal and teaching and library staff could clearly set out goals and objectives for their libraries. These objectives should reflect the needs of the students, the community, and the instructional programs carried out in each school. The inclusion of teachers in this process is necessary, as they have the best understanding of what curriculum support is required in school libraries.

Unless government makes it clear that a certain level of school library services is mandatory, school board trustees are free to target libraries as an area for budget cuts and, unfortunately, some do. Presently local school boards are not obliged to provide library services and, as previously mentioned, the quality of school libraries varies greatly, according to the enthusiasm and commitment of the board in that particular area.

The common feeling among teachers is that there's been a deterioration of school library service in the last five to six years, due to financial pressures on school budgets. Education must live within the same restraints as the rest of us, and I repeat that school libraries are crucial and not an appropriate area for penny pinching. Mr. Speaker, I know school libraries will respond responsibly and do a good job if they have their budgets cut, not like some immature politicians who, when their budget is cut a little bit, stand up and say, I quit, and take their books and go home.

DR. CARTER: Only they talk to the press.

MR. R. MOORE: And I see, Mr. Speaker, they've gone home again today.

In today's world, it is essential for students to be familiar and comfortable with information gathered through modern techniques. If Alberta is to continue to lead Canada in economic growth as we expect it to do, we require well-informed students who are acquainted with the most current methods of information processing. I urge members to support Motion 211, as government standards for school libraries will ensure that both rural and urban students, as well as the richer and poorer districts of this province, will share at the very least a minimum standard of school library services.

MR. HIEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to enter into the debate on Motion 211 with regard to improving library services. In debating this particular motion, I suggest that the issue has been one of a long-standing nature. If you speak against it, it's like going against motherhood. However, if one looks at the history of

libraries, both at the regional and school levels, it seems there's a study every second year, discussing the adequacy of the library and possible solutions. I think we have to recognize some of the reasons for this pressure.

We all recognize that we've gone through an explosion on information, and it's put the schools in a situation where they have to continuously update and keep current. I think another contributing factor that has to be examined is the fact that there have been many occurrences where curriculum has been revised and, consequently, a vacuum exists in replacing new or relevant materials. Maybe we ought to examine how often the curricula become revised throughout the province, because it puts pressure back on the local jurisdictions. Maybe that's an area that has to be reassessed at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all recognize the technological advances that have occurred, and libraries now are not considered just a housing of print materials. Rather, we are into the software, hardware, and technology. Much of this is costly, and it has put a great deal of pressure on the local school jurisdictions to keep current. As I mentioned, with curriculum changes and technological changes, there's a lot at stake for some of the suppliers. The publishing companies want to see this type of activity because it's a vacuum they can fill in terms of marketing their products. Sometimes the pressure coming from these particular groups has caused people to look at the inadequacy of their libraries, and they have been trapped into thinking that what they have is always inadequate.

School boards recognize that they have to exercise some fiscal restraint when they're dealing with rising costs. If we look at the overall situation in the province, when we talk about inequity, I suggest that the local jurisdiction has made that prioritized decision, and some of the responsibility rests at that level. In terms of the people promoting the upgrading of libraries, I would like to put forth the challenge another way.

For example, I wonder if the staff is prepared to forego one staff member, take those same moneys, and convert it into purchasing materials and upgrading their library. There are alternative resources involved in this particular issue, and I'm not sure that school boards have always made the appropriate decision in allocating funds for the libraries. In the overall budget, it has to be balanced with the human resources as well.

DR. CARTER: Why don't we fire the principal instead?

MR. HIEBERT: Good idea.

I also suggest that we've also had many commissions and studies over the years. We can go back to 1957 when the Cameron commission addressed the question of library collections and usage. You often find the accessibility factor being one of the prime concerns with libraries, whereby the management and the orderliness of the library sometimes is primary to what the library should really be doing; that is, giving service and allowing students to access the information.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

From time to time, we've seen recommendations with regard to renewing or maintaining grants. We can all recall that some years ago there was a one-shot injection of \$15 per student. It would be interesting to know precisely how many of those dollars actually did find themselves refurbishing libraries. In some instances, I know the \$15 didn't end up there.

Certainly there is a need for co-ordinating library services, not only within the schools but within the framework of regional libraries. The adequacy and the wide variety of materials and information required by students today cannot be housed solely within the school library. That is an important need insofar as serving the needs of the students today.

We can all recall that in 1972, the Worth report came out and described many schools considering the learning resource centres as the key issue of the '70s. Once again, the report indicated that libraries were not adequate in terms of where education was going during the '70s. Recommendations were made in the Worth report with regard to the utilization of learning resource centres, the development of network information systems, and the idea of trying to interconnect and integrate learning resource units with public libraries. In some instances, it has worked. In other cases, it has been a disaster.

As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, in 1975 there was a one-time grant to try to accommodate inflation and to bolster Canadian content. Also, it was a time when audiovisual materials seemed to be the focal point of library purchases. Certainly that injection of funding was welcomed, but I have had some direct experience that it was not always well expended in terms of a one-shot effort. Many times the commercial publishing companies did a job with regard to what materials ought to be ordered, and I know some unwise decisions occurred at that time.

The Member for Ponoka indicated the injection of the Alberta heritage learning resources project. With regard to teaching language arts, social studies, and sciences, that was certainly a welcome resource for the people in the schools. We've seen the development of the Canadian encyclopedia, and hopefully that particular venture will find its way into the schools and across not only the province of Alberta but Canada.

The present situation is one of trying to live within the fiscal restraints school boards have. I know there is a demand for more and varied materials, Mr. Speaker, but I think we have to recognize the fact that local school jurisdictions are primarily responsible for setting the standards and the prioritization of their funds with regard to library development.

There is another issue, and it is with regard to the personnel operating in the libraries. If you get into standards, they quite often become the minimum. I'm not so sure that all jurisdictions would want to live within the scope of the minimum standard. We know we have the issue of teacher/librarian versus library technician. Sometimes the vested interest groups try to put forth their causes in a positive way insofar as the adequacy of libraries is concerned, and sometimes it is self-fulfilling.

In my view, if we were to take the moneys that are expended for a teacher/librarian and hire a library technician instead, the differential could make more dollars accessible for materials. This is an issue that is being promoted in terms of what kind of personnel we need to have throughout the province in terms of a standard in our library system. I am not so sure all jurisdictions would want to accept that.

I think the library service in the school has to be integrated with the curriculum and that the staff, in general, have a responsibility with regard to being involved in the selection of materials, the prioritization of where the funds will be expended, so that the students' needs are being served rather than the library becoming an entity unto itself. I recognize that extra time and

demands are a part of that package, but I think if a person is going to be effective as a teacher, he also has to be responsible for the development and accessing of the resources required in the program.

I know that in many large schools, the libraries have become a decentralized function, whereby the materials are actually located outside the library centre. That makes them more accessible to the student. In cases where the materials are out there, I would suggest that they're a lot better in the hands of the people than sitting on some shelf gaining dust, which invariably happens in library management. The concern is sometimes more for managing the books rather than seeing that they get out to the student.

At issue, with regard to the motion, is: who is responsible for the library operation? What should be the role of the school library? I recognize that it requires some degree of shared responsibility between Alberta Education, school boards, and the school principal and staff. But I think we have to be consistent with all policy-making within our schools, in terms of how we have program development and the delivery of such a program. It rests on the shoulders of the school and the local school jurisdiction.

I think the library situation should be very consistent with what we are doing in other areas. I think it would be a mistake to set something like the library as unique, because we are opening up many other areas that require additional funding. For example, I could use the whole extra-curricular program issue. What kind of funding is required in terms of such a program which is unique to the different jurisdictions?

Insofar as evaluation and selection of materials is concerned, as I mentioned before, I think that responsibility rests with the teaching staff and the library staff working together. I am not convinced that we need to have people that are highly skilled in library training. I know that Grant MacEwan college has a program whereby they have developed library technicians. They seem to be serving very adequately in our schools and, consequently, I think school boards should be looking for this type of personnel in their libraries, rather than looking for someone with several degrees.

Insofar as funding is concerned, Mr. Speaker, is there a shortage? I guess it's like every other department or estimate, there is always a dollar restraint. People have to live within the dollars provided. But I suggest that the issue is no different than any other program delivery system. Where are you going to put your funds? Where are the dollars going to go? I think that is a local decision and that prioritization has to occur at the local level, not at the departmental level.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I think we have a situation where the quality of library services ought to be reassessed and re-examined. In those jurisdictions where there is an inadequacy, I think it's up to the people in the local area to make their officials know that they are concerned as to what's happening in their schools with regard to the library program. Maybe an injection of funding would be helpful to raise the common denominator for all jurisdictions. But sometimes this can be a bottomless pit and, as I mentioned before, it can lead to unwise decisions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that hon. members contribute to the debate. I would like to listen to what viewpoints they have with regard to this motion.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest to the previous three speakers with regard to Motion 211, especially since two of them are quite intimately involved in the whole matter of education. I would like to offer a few comments as a layman.

The motion is one which I think all of us could support: "that the Assembly urge the government" — in this case I would assume, the Department of Education in particular, although it would have ramifications for Advanced Education and possibly for Culture — "to consider setting standards for the management, staffing, housing, equipping, and supplying of school libraries" in the province. Of course, this indicates a broad spectrum of concern and has many ramifications. The matter of housing collections of library material would vary from urban to rural areas but also has a diversity of impact within urban areas.

For example, there are some parts of Calgary where enrolment is so high that every nook and cranny, even hallways, is used for classrooms. So it's much more difficult in those situations of high population, where high student enrolment occurs, to be able to have adequate facilities, just in spatial terms alone. In other parts of the large urban centres, we're faced with the issue of declining enrolment and the possibility of school closures. In most of those cases, the schools have obviously been in operation for some time. Hopefully the libraries have been enlarged over a period of time, so one not only has better space but probably a better ratio of books to student population. All of those things should be examined were such a study to take place in the Department of Education.

I am somewhat disappointed — I suppose is the word — to hear that there are some pockets throughout the province where the library situation is not only less than adequate but substantially less than adequate. For a moment I could reflect that perhaps that occurs, in some instances, in portions of the northern part of the province, with respect to some of the Metis settlements or native communities in the more isolated rural areas.

I remember — it's almost 30 years ago — that for a short time I taught in a one-room schoolhouse just north of the Cypress Hills where there were nine grades in one classroom and where I, without any formal training, was sort of sent to the hills and was supposed to function. [interjection] To respond to the comment of the hon. Member for Cypress, where the Cypress Hills are located, yes, that was one of the things that did have an impact on me.

Without the resources, without sufficient background training myself, and without any kind of a library in that one-room school, I realize how difficult it is to try to impart and share education and the excitement of reading and learning. If you don't have the resources, either in personnel or library support systems, not only is it difficult but it is damaging to the young people committed to your care.

In 1972 in the province, we had the Worth report, which provided a very useful analysis of where inadequacies were to be found within the system. I think it is more than fair to say that substantial progress has been made in the past 10 to 11 years. As other members have pointed out, in that same period of time there's been another kind of explosion in education: the whole impact of micro-computers, the electronic invasion, if you will. So those other kinds of devices — whether it be tapes, tape recordings, or old-fashioned things like phonograph records and the kind of information that would have come from them

— have escalated immeasurably.

We've almost reached the stage — not quite, but very shortly, I suspect — when books will really be a very archaic form of imparting information. That, of course, has serious ramifications not only for teachers and students but for authors in general. The whole matter of pirating of information and copyright is there in terms of the xeroxing of material. Members of the Assembly oftentimes send energetic pages scurrying to the Legislature Library to xerox and violate the copyright of various books and publications so that we might have immediate access to them to help in preparation either for question period or issues in debate. We have not yet been able to fully analyse the long-range effect not only of the copying machine but of microcomputers and word processors. We really don't know what the full impact of the electronic revolution will be. But we do know that we have to reach out and try to deal with it.

So it is in the motion as framed by the Member for Ponoka. It's one that does have within it the matter of equipping libraries, housing — because if you have to house electronic equipment, especially sophisticated electronic equipment, you're talking about a different type of housing which has to be dust-free to a far greater degree than a library as we have traditionally known a library. Obviously, of course, when it comes to the matter of computers, terminals, minicomputers, and word processors, there's not only the initial high cost of equipment, there's the other substantial cost of software and training operators, as well as then having to deal with how many units one would have to provide within a so-called electronic library area.

In recent years, the heritage learning resources project has been very well received throughout the province. That was a very interesting project which took place over a number of years and helped in many ways, not only in school areas but also in senior citizen accommodation. That project, as many hon. members know, has been very well received throughout the province.

Also, we look forward to the fact that the Canadian encyclopedia is yet to be published. That will also become another resource book. There are so many books in print that it's a challenge for any librarian to sift and sort what is necessary, over and above the rapid changes that take place with curriculum dictates.

No matter how many resources one would have, Mr. Speaker, whether it be electronic or printed form, we still have some other issues which have to be dealt with. You still have to get the student to go into that facility. It's the old business of trying to get a horse to water and getting it to drink. It's good to have the facility. If you can come up with some way of scheduling that they be there, all too many students find that they're bored spitless. Part of the reason they get bored is that oftentimes the group clustering is too large. I'm sure that since some of the members here are principals and school teachers, they know far better how to deal with these mechanics. Oftentimes if you have too large a clustering, it's difficult to communicate the intimacy or excitement of what is involved in opening a book to discover what is really there, what was the stimulation that persuaded the author to even get involved in the topic, let alone to go through the gruelling process of research and writing the document.

It's necessary and very useful that we get the students there and teach them how to locate books, going through whatever the decimal system might be or some other system, teaching them how to organize, analyse, interpret, evaluate, and deal with the material, whether it be print

or electronic. But in the end, it comes down to motivation. If the teacher/librarian, the person in charge of the library — whether it be full-time personnel or augmented by volunteers — doesn't really have that kind of excitement about books or microcomputers, then we're never going to be able to communicate any kind of legitimate excitement and search for adventure to the student in that area.

Of course, the other thing goes back to each one of us in terms of our families, our young people. If we ourselves have not been great readers over the course of time, we're less likely to be able to communicate that kind of skill to our children. If we don't, we allow them to become that much poorer in their whole intellectual development. Again, there's that relationship, which is there — not only in terms of the person in charge of the resource centre but in terms of the teachers in the classroom, and also in our homes — to help stimulate the search for knowledge.

One other area which I think has been neglected in our resource centres is that teachers in the system as well as librarians fail to realize that you can invite people in from the community to just sit and dialogue with the students, whether it be in a library arts block, social studies, or some other area. By way of example, I think most MLAs have probably been invited into classrooms at one time or another to talk about the role of an MLA or provincial politics. They can then sit and just respond to the questions of the staff and students.

I recommend this with respect to this motion. In learning resource centres, more use can be made of other people in the communities. Given the fact that Alberta today has a tremendous number of authors, playwrights, and poets, they too are oftentimes willing to be invited in to share some of the excitement of what is involved, in addition to the work, of constructing a novel, an historical research document, or poetry.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the mover of the motion for bringing it forward for our consideration. In addition to the departments concerned taking note of the motion and adjusting their systems thereby, I hope that many of us in this Assembly will also take care that we encourage young people with whom we come in contact to become not only 'microcomputeroholics', in this generation, but there's still something to be said for being a 'bookoholic' as well.

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this motion because I firmly believe that a clearly articulated statement from the province of Alberta on the role of the library within the instructional program of a school would be beneficial to overall school library development throughout Alberta. I remember that 30 years ago in Alberta public schools there were no libraries. At that point, there were perhaps 10 books for teachers to teach reading to classes of up to 30. I can remember at that time also, going to the public library and getting 50 books which I could have for a month. Then I would have to go back and get 50 books. These were to be shared with the whole school. Conditions like that have long since gone because of our fantastic explosion of information, as other speakers have already discussed.

I think another factor is involved here. At this time, it isn't only written information that we must be collecting and cataloguing in our libraries. While I will never downplay the importance of a book in the hands of a child, I feel that our schools must now take increasing responsibility for assuring a level of visual literacy in

children. For that purpose, we need video tapes; we need film. These are expensive items in any budget, and I feel that there must be a push to help our students realize how to read film and visual images, every bit the same way as we have, to this date, with printed words.

I also feel that there's a great lack of books in homes. I'm talking mainly about the kinds of books that we as adults sit down with for pleasure. That isn't the way in all homes. I know that statistics indicate that the average person in Alberta reads less than one whole book a year. That isn't very many. I am sure the members of the Legislature are not average people and read far more than that. I also feel that by following this motion, we are making an investment in the literacy of our children. Books in a school library are an application of the actual tools and skills the students are getting in their regular work in all the subjects they take.

I'd also like to discuss for one moment the responsibility of libraries. At this point, I believe libraries in schools are totally dependent on the feeling of local jurisdictions and their priorities. I don't think we can afford to do that in this province. Local boards are re-elected every three years. Unless we insist on it from the provincial level, there isn't a chance for development of long-term policies, for consistency, that will make this type of material available throughout Alberta.

On the Alberta scene, I feel we're very fortunate because of the heritage book project that was undertaken, the encyclopedia that is presently being completed, and many of the awards we have made to Alberta authors to encourage us to have Alberta books. We also have a production called *Mountain Standard Time*, a kid's magazine that promotes student writing and interest in magazines and periodicals. So I feel that we're fortunate in the kind of impetus provided by our government for schools in Alberta.

But I also feel we have to do a bit more to make sure that those standards are definitely available throughout the province. I believe libraries should promote intellectual curiosity, desire for lifelong learning, a love of literature, and books for leisure reading — all those things that we have done before. In addition, I feel that a library is an integral part of the curriculum and, with the changing curriculum, we must ensure that those resources are there for the children.

I am also concerned about the standards across the province. It's not just the number of books in a library. I guess that can be enforced and budget provisions made. I think the larger problem is in the selection. Lists are available. There's a list provided by the Calgary Board of Education; there's a professional book list that's circulated; there are the school library journals. All these lists have book reviews, and selections can be made that way. We also depend a lot on teacher choice at conventions. In a way, it's a bit haphazard. The lists are compiled according to different needs, and to just depend on what teachers wish, doesn't really help an individual school to improve its library collection. They need a broader source of reference than that.

I believe we could do a great deal through the province by promoting a sharing, a networking, automation — as some of the other speakers have mentioned — in getting titles, cataloguing, the choices of books and literature available. By this networking, we could also share some of the resources in some of the smaller jurisdictions. I feel that these would be economy measures that could well benefit us in the long run.

I am concerned though that these could not be under-

taken without some strong guidelines and support, some direction, from the province. It's interesting to know that in the funding of libraries, the operational grants, there are no moneys specifically designated for library improvement or upgrading. I feel that is an important measure that also could be implemented if some type of guidelines were provided by the province. I think professional direction is critical in the implementation of an effective library program. Without professional direction in the libraries, I feel that choices can be made that children in future years will pay for. These choices must be made with good knowledge of what is available in the market.

The other problem I see, that could perhaps be alleviated to some extent, is in regard to funding. In most schools, about a third of the budget is spent on the cost of books for the library. We have the textbooks. We have the materials that are needed to support the regular program, but approximately a third of the costs go into supporting the library. With these costs, the teacher has a fair degree of choice.

In a survey that was conducted recently in Calgary, it's estimated that about \$13 million is spent in Alberta, \$150 million in all of Canada, on book resources. It's a big budget area. But of the \$13 million spent in Alberta, it's estimated that about 56 per cent of that goes to other countries, with only a very small portion of that, about 1 per cent, as the handling charges. The ordering is not done in Alberta because, when one looks at the catalogues, the glossy pages reveal the prices to be much less in other countries than from our Canadian suppliers. But this is a false, misleading statistic, because it doesn't support the freight and handling charges incurred in getting the books and the reading material from one place to another.

So I feel that a lot of our hard-earned tax dollars are going through this system of purchase outside of Canada, perhaps needlessly. It's estimated that 70 per cent of the trade goes to foreign countries. I hope we could encourage greater support of our Alberta libraries, more Alberta produced and Alberta sold materials.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I feel that the role of our school libraries will be increasingly important in years to come. I would very much like to see the House support this motion.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, I had intended to speak on this motion today. It's obviously a very laudable motion, and I congratulate the hon. Member for Ponoka for putting it forward. My intention today was to chronicle some of the history of the library.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The member can do the history next time it comes up. The time for the debate has now concluded.

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

**Bill 215
Alberta Scientific Research
Foundation Act**

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce for second reading Bill 215, the Alberta Scientific Research

Foundation Act.

It's interesting to note on the Order Paper that this Bill is a companion Bill, if you like, to a Bill moved by my colleague from Edmonton Sherwood Park, or the member from Sherwood Park, as he is fond of referring to himself. That Bill would provide for the creation of a department of science and technology. I think the two ought to be thought of as companion Bills. They work hand in glove. They're a recognition of the importance of science and technology in our lives, and perhaps a suggestion that we're not doing enough.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should start my presentation this afternoon with a short introduction on the main features of the Bill and what it proposes to do, and then explain how it would affect members of the Assembly. First of all, it's modelled on the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. In this case, we've set up a foundation with a board. We're suggesting that the board be made up of representatives of industry, the two main universities that do research — the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta — and the Alberta Research Council, which has a very fine staff and a good reputation. These people would come together and create a board of management.

The board would have the ability to create a scientific or technological board, which probably would have expertise in certain areas the foundation might like to work. These might be world-class people from around the world, much as the medical research foundation has done. They're bringing in people from all over to assist them in making sure that projects being tackled are world-class projects, that research is up to world standards and, secondly, that we're not duplicating the kinds of research being done in other jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, we have not set out in the Bill an amount of money, an endowment fund, that would be needed to sustain activities, but perhaps a level of funding similar to that of the medical research foundation would be appropriate. We're trying to assemble a critical mass and get a number of projects going. So that's the general background, the structure of the foundation.

Why do we need research and technology? A lot of folks have the attitude that research and technology are things done in a university or a lab that are secretive, difficult to understand, and esoteric — it doesn't mean anything to me; it has no direct relationship to me. Frankly, that's not the case. It's absolutely vital to jobs. A lot of economic researchers have shown a very direct relationship between economic growth in the United States, Japan, or western Europe and science or research and development.

Economists in Canada estimate that about 35 per cent of the economic activity in the last decade was directly attributable to new products and new technology. Economists suggest that figure is probably 45 per cent of the new economic activity taking place in the United States. In Japan, the ministry of international trade has an industrial strategy, which we do not have in Canada, that outlines a package for the 1980s, which basically concentrates on science and technology as the way out of an energy-dependent economy, something the Japanese do not want to have.

Mr. Speaker, the Japanese believe so strongly that research and technology are the answers to their long-range economic problems that they're now graduating almost as many engineers as the United States does, with half the population. It should be worth noting that there is almost no unemployment in Japan. Today Japan is

generating a lot of new products, new technologies, that are in demand worldwide, and they have virtually no competition. No one has developed the technology or the product that is being sent to the market place. They can command a premium price — high-quality, interesting, creative jobs.

I think it's important for us in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, to look at research and technology and ask ourselves where we are, taking inventory of our situation in 1983, and then ask what we ought to be doing. A report by the planning and research secretariat of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower in 1980-81 suggested that about \$377 million was spent on research in Alberta by government, universities, industry, and boards and agencies. Compared to any other province, that represents a little better average per capita in terms of expenditures.

In Alberta, we spent about \$175 per capita in 1979-80. That contrasted with an average expenditure of \$161 per capita in the rest of the country. So we're doing a little better than average in Canada. But in Canada we spend less than 1 per cent of our gross national product on research and development, on the creation of new ideas, new technologies, and new products. That's about one-half of the average for OECD countries, members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

We are doing about half of what other major industrial democracies are doing, half of what they would do in the United States and Germany, and much less than half of what they would do in Japan. I think that speaks to the point that Canadians have traditionally complained that in the world economy they are relegated to the role of hewers of wood and drawers of water. We supply natural resources as products to the rest of the world; that's all. We provide coal, grain, oil, and gas, but we don't upgrade those things and provide jobs here at home.

It seems to me that Alberta has been addressing this kind of problem for a long time. We've been asking ourselves what we're going to do when our natural resources run out, when our oil and gas aren't there. What is our economic future going to be? We always talk about economic diversification. Mr. Speaker, the key to economic diversification in most industrial democracies is research and development. We have a little better than average track record in Canada, and Canada has about the worst track record of any OECD country. We're doing a little bit better than average in a country that is way below average. That's not a record to be especially proud of.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps some of my friends from rural areas should consider a few facts. Here are some concerns I would flag. In Alberta, we spend about \$31 million per year on agricultural research. I'm told that agriculture represents about a \$6.1 billion industry in this province. We're spending less than half of 1 per cent of our agricultural domestic product on research and development. That's half of an already pitiful record on research in this province as it stands. Agriculture is one of our base industries, one of the most important industries.

You might reasonably ask, so what? We'll just get our research from somewhere else; the United States Department of Agriculture has a lot of ...

AN HON. MEMBER: Private enterprise.

MR. COOK: Together, private enterprise and the government spent \$31 million. That's not government ex-

penditure; that's everything. So private enterprise isn't doing it, and the government isn't doing it. No one's doing it.

Mr. Speaker, I'm so concerned that a couple of years ago I went down to the main United States Department of Agriculture research station at Beltsville, Maryland. I sat down with the chief research organization that looked into research in grain genetics and asked them a couple of questions. What would you do if you were setting up a research program for a climate like Montana's? What's important to develop in Alberta or Montana? They said, probably some of the greatest research opportunities you have are in winter wheat. If you could develop winter wheat strains in Alberta that would survive, you could increase your productivity in grains by about 50 per cent. The seed you sow in the fall germinates, gets an extra head start, and produces more grain next summer when you harvest the product. The people at the USDA were saying that if you could produce winter wheat for the market in Alberta, that would be one of the best things you could do.

You could probably do the same thing with fall rye. That's another area you might work in. Some important work is being done in genetic engineering for agriculture. You can graft genetically the blueprint for the structure of the plant. For example, you can graft nitrogen-fixing capabilities onto cereal crops. Work is being done on that now in the United States. In short, Mr. Speaker, you could have a grain that produces its own fertilizer, because it would fix nitrogen, something we spend a lot of money on. Natural gas is used to produce fertilizers, and it's very expensive. Our farming community is telling us that energy inputs are some of the biggest expenditures for modern agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, those are just a couple of good examples of what research in agriculture could do. It could pay big dividends. Productivity in cereal grains could be increased by 50 per cent if we developed strains of our cereal crops that could be planted in the fall and would survive over the winter and be alive and growing in the spring.

Our friends might say, they're doing that for Montana, so why worry about it? We'll simply import the technology from the United States. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, that's not going to happen, because the United States agriculture research budget is being slashed. My Republican friends who supported Mr. Reagan might be interested in knowing that in the last couple of years the Reagan administration has had one of the worst track records of any administration for research and development. They've slashed the R and D budgets for almost all departments. Agriculture Department officials were telling me that not only are they not going to do any research for Canada, but they're not even able to extend the range of winter wheat in their own climate. They've stopped doing that; they can't afford to.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is a good example of what we might be able to do. We're spending half of 1 per cent of our gross domestic product from agriculture on agricultural R and D, and the dividends are there. There are incredible things we could be doing. We could be developing new pesticides and herbicides that are perhaps less energy intensive. They would be less costly, and those are big-ticket items for a farmer considering his overhead. We're not doing enough.

People will say Farming for the Future is the answer to that; that's Alberta's contribution to agricultural research. It's a very good program, and it's doing a lot of very

important work. But last year they spent about \$8 million, I believe, and most of the projects Farming for the Future outlined require a pay-off within five years. They cannot have any long-term research programs with that kind of design. For example, you can't breed cereal grains like those we're talking about in a five-year stretch. You need a much longer period of time to experiment and develop new projects. Mr. Speaker, we need a long-range view.

I've used agriculture as just one sector of our economy to illustrate the point. There are other things in agriculture we should be looking at as well. Irrigation is a very important concern. We could be developing new technologies to use our water resources more efficiently. The Israelis and people in California are starting to use trickle irrigation, which uses much less water.

AN HON. MEMBER: And a lot more pipe.

MR. COOK: It has more pipe. But the point is that in some places they're now starting to develop trickle irrigation. I understand you can sort of roll the hoses out, and it just drips. You just roll hoses out and roll them back up again. It's a glorified garden hose that we used to put on our lawns when I was a youngster. But technologies like that are fairly simple and can improve the efficiency of our industry.

Mr. Speaker, I was at a school in my riding, talking to some grade 9 students. I told them that Canada is running a foot race and we're losing. It's much like the foot race you and I might have run in the schoolyard when we were in grade 9, 10, or 11, only this race is with kids from Japan, Germany, and the United States. They're training harder, working harder, and doing better, and we're falling behind. In Alberta, we're about average for Canada, and Canada has a very sorry track record.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of other things we could be looking at, putting on the agenda, if you like, for research and development in this province. A couple of obvious examples in energy — and we're doing a pretty good job in energy. We're spending almost half of all the research and development dollars we spend in this province, about \$197 million in 1980-81, in the energy field. The departments responsible for AOSTRA, some of the heavy oil programs, and enhanced recovery are doing a good job, and so is the industry. But there are a lot of other things we could be doing there as well.

I'll give you a couple of quick examples. Forestry could be a very significant contributor to our provincial product in the long haul, when the oil and gas have run out. Today in British Columbia and the United States, geneticists are searching forests for superior trees. They take rifles out, shoot down the limbs from superior trees, and gather the seeds. They use those seeds as a seed bank or a genetic bank, if you like. They gather the traits, the qualities, of trees that are doing much better than their surrounding neighbors, identify those characteristics, develop a seed bank, and in their nurseries plant huge numbers of seedlings that will be straighter, grow better fibre, grow faster, and be adapted to the particular climate.

In speaking to some people in the forestry department at the University of Alberta, they made the point that you cannot import seeds from another jurisdiction, because they're not adapted to our particular climate or soil. You cannot import Douglas fir seeds and expect them to do very well on the Eastern Slopes of the Rockies. Generally

you have to use strains of trees native to Alberta. We're not doing that at all. In this province we just gather seeds from the forest floor in the fall and use them for our nurseries. We don't have any quality check at all for the genetic characteristics of those seeds.

We take run-of-the-mill trees, and we get run-of-the-mill nursery programs and run-of-the-mill seedlings. We're restocking our forests with mediocre seedlings. Our competitors in that foot race, Mr. Speaker, are doing a better job. They're outthrusting us. They're working harder. They're getting more productivity, better returns. This is a resource area we're looking at. It's a natural strength for us, and we're not doing anything in it. Coal is another area. We're starting to do some research. The Alberta Research Council has a good project going. But this is another area where we are not spending very significant amounts of money. The list goes on.

I want to wrap up, but let me tell you a story about Japan. I used this in my throne speech debate contribution, and I'll restate it. Japan went through basically four energy cutoffs or shocks. The Arabs would withdraw oil to the whole western economy as a bargaining tool, and Japan is virtually a captive of the Arab oil market because they don't have any energy resources at all. They don't have coal, oil, or gas. They're hostage to international supply disruptions. The Japanese got kind of fed up with this in about 1979. They scratched their heads and said, what are we going to do about it? Industry and government sat down together and worked out a strategy for the '80s.

Peter Drucker, who's a pretty conservative economic thinker, Mr. Speaker, refers to Japan as the superpower of the next century. His argument is that the shift in economic power is going over to the other side of the Pacific. North America is going to be left behind. The western industrial democracies are going to be uncompetitive. We've seen that historically. The level of cultural/economic activity has shifted from the Mesopotamian area to Egypt, Greece, Rome, northern Europe, and North America. Drucker is saying that it's going to keep moving right on west to Japan, Korea, China, and Indonesia. Those are going to be the powers, unless we get our act together and start to respond to the competition.

What is Japan doing? A few years ago, Japan decided they were going to go whole hog on a science and research technology program. They had a science policy, an industrial policy. Incidentally, this province does not have a science policy. This country does not really have a science policy. We don't have any goals or objectives in this province yet. We're developing one, but I haven't seen it yet.

Mr. Speaker, Japan has started to co-ordinate the activities of industry, education, and government. They decided to double the output of their engineers. They decided to target them in electronics in large measure. As I referred to earlier, Japan has gone out and said, the key to economic development, to a stable job future, is to create products and technology that no one else is doing so you don't have any competition. You produce a Sony Walkman, and no one else is doing it.

For example, Japan has increased the capacity on a memory chip — a little piece of silicon which is basically just refined sand — 64 times. They can put more memory and data on that little chip than American computers can. Consequently, Japanese computers can run faster and more efficiently with less energy. So when you're out selling a Japanese computer, you're more efficient than

IBM. According to the Japanese strategy, IBM is going to go the way of General Motors and Ford. Think of what the Toyotas or Hondas were like in the 1960s. We didn't see them around here. In 20 years they've outstripped North American production and technology. They've invested in research, and they do a better job.

Mr. Speaker, they're going to be doing the same things to us in computers and information technology. They're shipping young Japanese engineering graduates to Thailand, Indonesia, or Brazil, and they're setting up technology centres. They're glorified extension courses that Japanese industry and governments fund. They teach young Thais, Brazilians, Indonesians, or Filipinos how to improve their economy, their way of life, and their standard of living. But in so doing, they teach them about Japanese technology. They tell them how to access Japanese materials. What happens? The Japanese industrialists start landing the contracts, because they're educating the work force in that third world country. We're not doing that.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, last night at the fund raising dinner for the Progressive Conservative Party, our Premier suggested that Albertans had to start thinking about the world picture. We have to stop being parochial, thinking just about Alberta. We have to have a world view. We have to think of what's going on in Riyadh. We have to think of what's going on in Brazil. We have to think of what's going on in Indonesia. That's where our market is. So that engineer in Japan is doing what we ought to be doing for engineering in Alberta.

Peter Drucker tells a story of a large refinery project going up in Saudi Arabia. Initially the Japanese sent architects and engineers to Saudi Arabia. They got the client's specs, worked out the general plan, went back home to Tokyo, and they had conference calls. What they did was bounce differences or changes in design off satellites with computer terminals. They'd work with the client.

Mr. Speaker, what they're doing now in Japan is what we ought to be doing in Alberta. They have engineers who basically commute a little bit to the client country, the company. They'll sit down over the telephone with a computer terminal and work out the specs for a new building 2,000 or 3,000 miles away. Then they'll simply run off the blueprint changes on the computer and give them to the client. Working out of an office in Tokyo with a client in Riyadh, they can be just as effective as being on site.

In short, Mr. Speaker, they're centralizing all their engineering services, and they're now providing a service function worldwide. Japan is becoming a knowledge-oriented country. Science and technology are providing clean, attractive, and exciting jobs. Japan is in a much worse position than we are. They have virtually no natural resources. All they have is the native ingenuity and intelligence of their people, and the certain knowledge that if they don't hustle, there isn't going to be any food the next day because they don't produce enough domestic agricultural products to sustain them. They have to import their basic resources to maintain their economy.

Mr. Speaker, we have to shift gears. I don't want to suggest that this foundation is the be-all and end-all. I think the proposal from my hon. colleague from Edmonton Sherwood Park to set up a department of science and technology is a very good one. We have to start looking

at incorporating all our activities and changing our thinking. We have to encourage the development of more young graduates from our engineering and science faculties at the university. We have to develop a greater emphasis on computers. We have to overhaul our agriculture, our industrial activities, petrochemicals.

We have to rethink almost everything. Because if we don't, I offer the same observation I offered those grade 9 students a couple of weeks ago: we're going to lose that foot race. When we lose, we're going to be very sorry, and probably — as our socialist friends do — we'll blame the Americans and the multinational oil companies. But we're going to have absolutely no one to blame but ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude by saying that the research foundation is simply one tool as part of a larger need for a science policy. It's not going to solve all our problems; it can't. But we have to just about double our expenditure on R and D in this province. If we fail to do that, we fail to measure up to the demands to diversify our economy and to be on the cutting edge of the world economy our Premier spoke about and that we have to participate in. That is why the foundation Bill is before us.

Thank you.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I read the remarks I made in response to the hon. member when he brought this Bill in some 18 months ago. Like the hon. Member for Barrhead, I was going to suggest that if you read my last speech you've got my reply. [interjections] In this wonderful age of technology and new development, I wish somebody would come up with a simple solution for a common cold that would help some of us who are suffering from one.

I would like to make a few comments, though. I want to compliment the hon. member for bringing this subject back again. Obviously it's more topical than it was before, and I can't support it for the same reasons I gave before. As chairman of the science policy committee of cabinet and of the Alberta Research Council, I can sympathize with many of his objectives and desires. There are a few things I would like to point out, though.

Right now in the province of Alberta, we are spending approximately \$240 million a year on research and development. That includes money spent in the universities, the Research Council, the medical heritage foundation, Farming for the Future, and several other agencies. I personally have a concern about whether this money is being well spent for the citizens of Alberta. I have no way of saying it is or isn't, but in 1974 we were spending approximately \$70 million. So in the intervening years, we've increased it substantially.

I would also like to point out that the hon. member has certainly brought something to my mind. Tomorrow morning I'm chairing a full board meeting of the Research Council, and I'm going to bring this forward. I would like to point out to the hon. member, among other things, that we have a program called biotechnology, which is new frontier science. We are looking at ways of improving frost tolerance of plants and reducing fertilizer losses by using microbes. We're working with a private firm called Bio Logicals to develop new processes using enzymes. This is the program he was talking about, that people suggested would be fitting in Montana. It's under way here at the University of Alberta right now.

He mentions that we're not spending very much money. Right now, the medical heritage foundation

generates over \$30 million a year into medical research. We are in the process of completing a \$77 million facility in southeast Edmonton, which will be the new home of the Alberta Research Council.

I have a magazine put out by Exxon — I hate to admit this. I will give it to the hon. member, because it's got a lot of articles on Japan. He will find that everything in that country isn't as wonderful, happy, and prosperous as he seems to imply. One thing I think the hon. member should be aware of is that while the Japanese are great copy cats, I guess you could say — or people who have taken ideas and technology from the Americans and improved on them tremendously — they are not original thinkers. The Nobel peace prizes are still won by Americans and Europeans, and very few are being won by the Japanese. I think that is significant, particularly for the future of our country.

I'd like to mention one other thing. I can assure the hon. member that the science policy will be coming forward in the not-too-distant future. I would like to quote briefly from a speech by the Hon. Don Johnston, a Member of Parliament. He said recently that a new technology policy is being promoted by the federal government, with four objectives. The policy of the federal government was to try to promote new science and technology awareness in all departments: Communications, Environment, Agriculture, Energy, Mines and Resources, Fisheries and Oceans, Health and Welfare. They have four objectives in their program.

First, they want to see technology policies developed that will strengthen the Canadian economy. Second, they want

to manage the process of technological development so that Canadians are aware of both the opportunities and the problems that might arise.

They want to

ensure that the benefits of technology development are shared equitably among all Canadians in every region.

How they are going to do that is beyond me, but I'm glad they have that objective. And last, but by no means least, they want to

encourage a social climate that places a premium on scientific and technological excellence, curiosity and innovation.

In my recent speech with regard to women's affairs in the province, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that one of the problems we're facing in the scientific world in western countries, particularly North America, is a lack of women involved in science. I'm glad to see that the vice-president of research at the University of Alberta, who is also a member of our Research Council, is also concerned about the lack of women coming forward at the university level in particular. The only way we are going to achieve this is by the hon. Minister of Education making sure that young people in the elementary grades are being introduced to science, and that it proceeds on through the years.

I'd like to go back to Mr. Johnston's speech. He says:

One area we are looking very closely at is communications. Canada has a world-wide reputation for excellence in communications.

He goes on to mention that they are going to develop a task force that will try to take people from the industry, universities, and the government to assess the viability of a communications institute for the government of Canada. That's one of the things I'd like to communicate to the hon. member. He convinced me today that I am

certainly going to take up the challenge and see that he is better communicated with, particularly in regard to what is happening in the Alberta Research Council and what our aims and objectives are.

I'd like to briefly mention some of the difficulties we as a nation are up against. I guess most of you read an astrology column in your newspaper. I like to read it at the end of a day to see what wonderful things were supposed to happen to me during the day. You all know that if you go into jewellery stores, there are signs of the zodiac everywhere — in gold, dressed up with jewels, and all the rest of it. Frankly, I see more gold charms representing the signs of the zodiac than gold crosses representing Christianity. I think it's a challenge to us as citizens that we should be wasting time and money on such pursuits.

In 1974 the American academy for the advancement of science estimated there were 20,000 astrologists in the United States of America. At the same time, there were 2,000 astronomers. It is estimated that in the United States, \$200 million a year is spent on astrology consultations. In France, economists estimate that more money is spent on astrology than on scientific research or the steel industry. Recent surveys in Canada and the U.S. show that 75 per cent of the adult population consult the daily horoscope program. Surveys of Canadian attitudes for 1981 indicate that 45 per cent of our population think astrology is plausible. Two thirds of the daily newspapers in the United States run a daily astrology column.

A weekly column on astronomy, launched in California by scientists and scientific writers, collapsed for lack of support. City editors maintain that such columns are not popular to justify a weekly feature. Some recent improvements — those of you who read *The Globe and Mail* will know there is now a weekly column on technology development. The *Edmonton Journal* recently started running a weekly full-page column on Mondays, under the editorship of David Cooper. I think both these papers are to be commended for an attempt to bring to our citizens knowledge of the technological age we're entering.

Going back to the American scene, the *Washington Post* of July 13, 1980, reported that Nancy and Ronald Reagan read an astrology column every day. I just hope he isn't running the United States based on what he reads. One of the sad things right now is that Halley's comet will be coming into orbit in 1986, yet astronomers in our two countries can't any money to study the effects of its return.

Scientists denounce astrology as a waste, because it has not been able to meet the criteria of scientific inquiry. For those of you who read it every day and put a little bit of faith in it, I hate to spoil your fun, but I should tell you something. A good astrologist maintains there are five things you have to know: the day, the month, and the year you were born — those three things are there now — and also the hour and the precise geographic location. The latter two points are missing in most daily columns, so you can see that astrology columns you read every day are not quite as accurate as they claim to be.

What I am getting at is that we need help to educate our public. We have to try to upgrade scientific reporting by hiring specialist journalists. We have to have more science columns in our daily newspapers, and obviously they have to be more interesting. In the last three years at the Alberta Research Council, we have hired people to do public relations work. Obviously they're going to have to do more so I can inform the hon. Member for Edmonton

Glengarry. I agree with the hon. member that the technological age is making many changes in our lives, and more are coming. I agree that this Bill is important — not so much whether we have another institute but the fact that he's brought this subject to us, that there is a tremendous challenge out there.

I suggest that before we support the idea of building any more institutes or any more ventures in science in Alberta, we review what we're doing now with the universities, the public, industry, and the government services involved. Then perhaps we can say this is the direction we should go. By that time, perhaps the federal government will also have their new programs in place, and we'll be able to direct it better. I agree with the hon. member that if we are to maintain our standard of living — all one needs to do is read any speech of the president of Bell-Northern. He will convince you that if we don't, our standard of living will continue to decline and we will become less than hewers of wood and drawers of water. We will suffer severe economic disaster in our country, unless we do as he suggests.

Thank you.

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how to react to this present situation. I had hoped to speak to the motion at length. Yet at the same time, I'm being encouraged by the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont to make it short so he can get his licks in too. But I must confess that it will probably work out in my favor both ways, because as I read the contents of Bill 215, I alternately run hot and cold on the subject.

I indeed want to speak to the Bill in terms of a number of issues relative to the proliferation of agencies throughout our governments and our departments, thereby making efforts of duplicating and triplicating research activities much more apparent. I also want to speak in terms of the report that made its appearance through a Commons' committee, relative to the projection that 2 million jobs would be lost because of the advancement of technology.

However, in the few short minutes I wish to take at this time, initially I would like to draw hon. members' attention to section 6(3), which reads: "The Foundation shall not be operated for the purpose of profit or gain." I hope to spend some additional time in speaking to my own Bill in establishing a ministry, as to why I would disagree with that particular segment. Mr. Speaker, I would like give two specific examples of where an Alberta scientific research foundation could be of tremendous assistance to types of activities undertaken in the province.

First, I'd like to speak very briefly to an organization in existence here in the city of Edmonton, called the Phoenix corporation. It is a project developed and headed by Dr. Hank Ziel of the University of Alberta, who I believe is still a member of the Faculty of Education. Over the last two or three years, he has developed a program to assist severely handicapped individuals to seek their own economic independence in the work place through the use of computers and computer programming. In this particular instance, high technology is very costly. It is really no different in terms of providing the necessary equipment for such a program to function properly.

I had the opportunity to visit the corporation in the company of Dr. Ziel. I was amazed at what is happening there. I saw severely handicapped individuals learning accounting and drafting through the use of computers. But one of the problems experienced by Dr. Ziel and his staff — a very dedicated staff, as you can well appreciate

— was that there was a need to modify a lot of this sophisticated equipment in such a way that it could be used by severely handicapped individuals.

In this respect, I think a foundation that has access to public and private funds could direct some of that to assisting what I deem to be an extremely worth-while program. Certainly the initial capital cost requirements are high, but I think if you consider the long-term benefits for the individual concerned, it will pay for itself.

The development and production of physical aids for the blind, the hearing handicapped, and those requiring special mobility or daily living aids could be assessed by the foundation in a similar manner. This could be regarded as seed money, not only for the research and development necessary to produce the equipment but also to assist in getting it into commercial production in such a way that it becomes easily obtainable and within the financial reach of people requiring such equipment.

Secondly, I'd like to inject a slightly different perspective on the role of the foundation. This is with regard to what I call the backyard inventor; others might call him a mad scientist. In this respect, I have had some collaboration from a very good friend, who fits in neither of those categories. Mr. Speaker, I think the Industrial Revolution, as such, is over. The information revolution is what we're really faced with at the present moment. In these quickly changing times, I believe it's paramount for society to develop its mineral resource base, as well as its physical resource base.

Just as the Industrial Revolution expanded the physical capacities of humans, the information revolution will magnify the power of the mind. Unlike the Industrial Revolution, which depended on such limited resources as oil and iron, the new information age will be fueled by a limitless resource, the inexhaustible supply of knowledge and ideas that we as Albertans hold. Fortunately knowledge and ideas can be encouraged. This is the base the Alberta scientific research foundation should act upon, not only to continue to view in a proper light the research and development efforts of large companies but also to initiate a concentrated effort to genuinely encourage and assist the genius of the backyard inventor.

This is not a new concept, Mr. Speaker, and it has proven successful in the United Kingdom. Conscious of backyard inventor genius, the British government set up a special agency for these inventors after World War II. It was named the National Research Development Corporation. Its mandate was to ensure full and proper use of British inventions. In 1981 the National Research Development Corporation invested some \$23 million in promising projects. One of its most famous funded ventures was the hovercraft. This came about only after the inventor spent three years attempting to persuade the private sector to fund him. There is little doubt that an inviting and well thought out call to backyard inventors would dovetail nicely with the hon. Premier's expressed desire to turn Alberta into the brain centre of Canada.

An interesting footnote to this, Mr. Speaker, is that research by the United States Department of Commerce indicated that of this century's major inventions, 50 per cent were formulated by backyard inventors. As well, independent invention laid the ground work for computers, lasers, and photocopying.

Aside from potential economic benefits from such a program, it would also hold well that Alberta is boldly looking into the future by recognizing the need to see innovation and invention as an important step in the continuing development and maintaining of individual

enterprise in a healthy, thinking society. Along these lines, Mr. Speaker, it will be important to monitor the spinoff of efforts by the Ernest C. Manning Foundation. This foundation was recently established, and plans to present \$75,000 cash awards to promote discovery, recognition, encouragement, and rewarding of innovative persons in Canada. Perhaps the Alberta scientific research foundation could look at the example set by this one.

According to information from the Manning foundation, awards may be in primary resource and services development, processing and manufacturing, human resources development, or public policy. Although the Manning foundation, which is supported by a group of businessmen through a federally chartered non-profit foundation established in 1980, is taking a step in the right direction, there are some other possibilities this government could reflect on to foster innovation and invention in Alberta.

One that comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, is a one-stop provincial government agency, staffed with people in the know, that has all the pertinent information about patenting and can serve in a co-ordinating capacity for inventors. Second, an evaluation program for inventors, perhaps similar to the one at the University of Oregon which is now being used at universities and innovation centres across the United States. Third, another area they could look at is the fact that inventing is expensive. I think it's next to impossible today to sell something that exists only on paper, and prototypes can cost upwards of tens of thousands of dollars, even for a consumer product. Perhaps a provincial foundation formula could be worked out for backyard inventors. Fourth, a high-profile advertising campaign to let people know what assistance is available.

According to recent figures from Canada's Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Mr. Speaker, in 1978-79 there were about 21,000 patents granted in Canada, which is only a slight increase from 1975. However, just under 1,800 of these were granted to Canadians, with only 82 to Albertans. There would appear to be room for improvement.

In short, Mr. Speaker, indifference to new ideas surely cannot be tolerated in these quickly changing times. I believe the time is at hand to do everything possible to rid Canada of its poor reputation of driving innovators into exile. There is a leadership role here for Alberta. It is not beyond the realm of possibility to propose the idea of Alberta as the Mecca of North America for inventors.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, there is this to consider: one day the 19th century English inventor Michael Faraday was visited by Sir Robert Peel, the British prime minister at the time. Peel, viewing a prototype of Faraday's famous magnetoelectric generator, asked, of what use is it? Faraday engaged his prime minister with a cynical stare and replied: I know not; but I wager some day your government will tax it.

Thank you.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise and participate in the debate on Bill 215. I'd like to commend my colleague from Edmonton Glengarry for introducing this Bill to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on, I think it's in order that I draw to the attention of all members the absence of our opposition members. The opposition benches are deserted. I think one of the problems that was raised by the NDP opposition in regard to inadequate funding for their

researchers may be solved as a result of today's question period. They're probably all being fired at this time.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to look at another aspect of this Bill: the importance of education. Obviously, with the research and development being proposed in the Bill, there is going to be a great need for people to adequately prepare this type of research. In this province, we certainly cannot go on counting on imported brain power.

When I refer to education — it's rather unfortunate that my colleague from Edmonton Norwood isn't here, because I'd like to make reference to some of his campaign promises. In a debate prior to the election, some students at Grant MacEwan Community College asked the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood about the party's position on education. Of course he said it should be free. He uses the word freely. They seem to have no concept as to who will ever pay for all these things. He told all these postsecondary students that education would be free. If you make education free, what is going to bind these people to stay here?

I think the best example is education behind the Iron Curtain, where it is indeed "free". We can see the problem those people have in keeping their more intelligent or sophisticated thinkers. I think the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood would have trouble identifying anyone who ever defected to the Soviet Union. I think the last individual to do so was Lenin.

So the talented people, the brain power, are always going in this direction. Whenever the state formally educates someone, it's at a great expense. When these people leave their countries — whether it's Iron Curtain countries or third world countries — they're losing tremendous potential. As such, we have to maintain an extremely high level or quality of education so that the research and development proposed by the Bill can be carried out and maintained here in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Glengarry mentioned diversification. Certainly, if we're looking at the long-term goals or prospects of this province, diversification is the alternative we have to measure. The non-renewable sector is only going to have its limited potential. As we can see by the results of the last 18 months, they are often unpredictable. So diversification — in the sense that future Albertans will have a solid base to rely on. The problems with diversification are many, particularly in light of Alberta's position geographically and Alberta's population. There are many, many matters that have to be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, before I go any further into the matter, in view of the hour, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it agreed that the hon. member may adjourn debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, this evening it is proposed to deal with Executive Council estimates in Committee of Supply, other than the Energy Resources Conservation Board and the Public Service Employee Relations Board. In view of that, I move that when the members assemble this evening, they do so in Committee of Supply, and that the House stand adjourned until such time as the Committee of Supply rises and reports.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You've heard the motion by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader. Are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 5:29 p.m.]

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

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

Before consideration of the estimates of Executive Council this evening, may the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs have permission to revert to introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a terrific group of young people to introduce. Before I ask them to stand, I'd like to say a few words about them. First of all, their leader is Linda Ciurysek. They have five chaperones; when you look at them, you can't tell who the chaperones are. There has to be something good about that. When I was their age, I can't ever recall a chaperone who looked that young. However, there is Michael Connolly, Blair Stolz, Karen Hebson, Cameron Laux, and Cameron McNamee.

This group belongs to the Forum of Young Albertans. I found out tonight that they have been active for five years. Also, a very interesting little bit of information that Linda provided us all with is that one of the founding members is a member of this Legislature, Brian Lee. I think he did us all a service in helping to start an organization that I think over time is going to contribute a tremendous amount to this province. I understand that Linda — she's a terrific young lady — was under age when she began this organization. Linda, I've been figuring out your age; you can't be more than 23.

Mr. Chairman, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce them, not only because I have a young lady from my constituency but there are 47 young people from all over Alberta. They've been involved in the political process. They've been to city hall; they've heard different political parties give their pitch; and they're now in a position to start the process of making up their minds where they stand in the political spectrum. I understand that tomorrow — they've already divided themselves up into government and opposition parties, and the government party is working on a Bill. I can imagine the debate that will ensue. My young lady said to me that she now has an appreciation of the kind of process we must go through in caucus and the Legislature. There are only 47 of you. I don't know how many are in the government caucus, but you know how long it took you to reach a

consensus. So you have a fair idea of what happens in this Legislature, and indeed in the government caucus.

Mr. Chairman, without any further ado, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to ask all our young visitors, their chaperones, and in particular their leader, Linda Ciurysek, to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(continued)

Executive Council

1 — Executive Council Administration

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has the Premier any opening comments?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate tonight. I suppose when one begins it, there should at least be one note of unity, and that is our collective hopes in the hockey game this evening. I'm sure we can all agree on that.

Having expressed the feeling, I suspect, of both sides of the House, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to deal with a number of issues which, in my view, should be properly raised during the estimates of Executive Council and, in particular, the estimates of the Premier.

I was pleased today to hear the statement by the Premier on the question of anti-Semitism; I think it was long overdue. I reiterate the comments made by my colleague today, that the kind of firm statement we heard this afternoon should have been presented somewhat earlier. I'm pleased as well to learn that there will be a massive education campaign on the evil blight of racism. Again, Mr. Chairman, that is something which we feel is overdue.

This matter has been raised before in the House. I recall raising the issue of discrimination against East Indian people in our province. At that time, the suggestion was made that it was an exaggeration, that we really didn't have racial bigotry. The sad commentary that one has to make, Mr. Chairman, is that there is bigotry in this country, and there is bigotry in Alberta. Those of us who oppose racism, which I presume to be the members of this Assembly in total, must speak out against any evidence we see of racial discrimination, of intolerance, of the kind of bigotry which, sooner or later, leads to the kind of massive historical evil which we saw during World War II.

Mr. Chairman, unless we are going to see that kind of thing happen again, unless we are prepared to allow history to repeat itself, all of us have a moral obligation to be on guard in defence of racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance. That's why my colleague, in his response to the Premier's reply this afternoon, raised our view that this matter should have been clearly stated by the Premier, by the head of government, very soon, within days of the Keegstra incident. Mr. Chairman, I think most of us can at least agree on the principles contained in the Premier's ministerial statement. But I want to dwell on other aspects of democracy in this province, because it seems to me that there are some important issues which we should reflect upon for a moment as we consider the estimates of Executive Council.

Last fall, this government went to the people of Alberta and sought a mandate. In seeking that mandate, very important elements of the spring agenda were somehow

overlooked. There was no mention of user fees as the Conservative candidates crisscrossed the province. I watched with care, as an opposition political leader would, the comments attributed to the Premier in the daily press. I did not see any assertion that user fees would be introduced. I did not hear government members, especially in labor areas of Edmonton and Calgary, argue the case for extending compulsory arbitration. I don't recall hearing the Minister of Labour argue that case among the voters of Edmonton Jasper Place, or the Minister of Education eloquently state the case for extended compulsory arbitration among the many workers in Edmonton Highlands.

Mr. Chairman, much of the legislative agenda which we face during this session has been sprung on the people of Alberta. I didn't hear Conservative candidates, hon. members sitting in this House, argue that we needed to increase medicare premiums, nor was there going to be any strong statement, at least that I could discern, during the course of the campaign that we would have the Bill introduced by the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care that we'll be debating in several days' time.

Had the government laid all the cards on the table and campaigned from one end of the province to the other on the principles of Bill 44, on the principles of user fees, on the principles of reducing the shelter allowance for welfare recipients in this province, there could be at least some moral justification for coming to this House and saying, this is what we must do. Mr. Chairman, last fall all we heard from this government, as they raided the Heritage Savings Trust Fund to buy their way back into political office, was one rosy announcement after another.

Mr. Chairman, there was no question about the success, but I say to members of the committee tonight that what we see in the spring session is a totally different legislative agenda than the promises made to the voters of Alberta when they decided to vote for the Tory party on November 2. The other day during his comments, the hon. Premier said that perhaps one of the things people took in mind was the difference between our view of guidelines for former cabinet ministers and the government's view. I suspect that rather more relevant was the mortgage program, with the various other programs the government came out with, and the publicly sponsored and paid for telecast of early September 1982, conveniently just a few weeks before the election.

We saw this government, that has so much trouble finding money — we had the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care stand up in the Legislature the other day and say, in a very self-righteous way, where's the money going to come from for this palliative care unit — that in three weeks could take out full page ads in *Alberta Report*, in all the rural and urban newspapers, very expensive television advertising: all paid for by the taxpayer.

Mr. Chairman, as committee members I think one of the underlying things we should reflect upon for a moment is the ethics of politics. I say to the members of the committee that a political party which goes to the people on one program and then does at least a 90 per cent about face and comes in with a totally different agenda for action, has a lot of explaining to do. Our job in the opposition, our responsibility — and I make no apology for it — is to take the time, whether or not the members like it, to examine some of those areas where in our judgment this government has a lot of explaining to do.

Let me deal then with the question of the Brennan report, because in my judgment, Mr. Chairman — I'll get into the Ram Steel issue in a little more detail in a moment — the Brennan report is perhaps the starting mark for a discussion on ethics in government. On April 6, 1982 — and I'd like to quote for members of the committee — the Premier said:

However, Mr. Speaker, to the limited extent that corporations, groups, or organizations have hired or may in the future hire former cabinet ministers to make representations, it is my firm view — and I concur with Mr. Justice Brennan — that any preferential approach should not be allowed, and that it is unfair to other citizens or interests. Mr. Justice Brennan notes that "it is clear from the evidence of those cabinet ministers who testified before me that they like to hear from all sides of an issue before making a final decision".

I have accordingly directed the members of Executive Council to this effect — and will, in due course, confirm such a directive with written confirmation

... We were told, I believe on Monday of this week, that written confirmation in fact did not go out. It was simply recorded in the minutes of Executive Council, and that presumably was enough. Well, Mr. Chairman, we're going to discuss the effectiveness of the minutes of Executive Council in a little while, but we had the commitment made on April 6 that we would have written confirmation.

I think the government should have gone somewhat further. The arguments for a set of guidelines have been well made, and probably most eloquently argued in the federal House of Commons by the now Leader of the Opposition, Eric Neilson. I'd like to just draw members' attention for a moment to page 56 of the Brennan report.

The evidence in the Inquiry made it abundantly clear that former Cabinet Ministers have a very distinct and definite advantage over other lobbyists or persons who wish to present their views on a particular matter to members of Cabinet. A former Cabinet Minister has no problem arranging to meet with a current member of Cabinet. Indeed, it is obvious from the evidence, that such meetings can be, and are frequently held without any prior appointment but by simply dropping in at the office of the Minister one wishes to see.

No one is going to argue with that. If you've been colleagues for some time, friends for many years, that's undoubtedly going to be the case.

But as Mr. Justice Brennan observes, once a former cabinet minister becomes a lobbyist, that familiarity becomes a tremendous advantage. On page 56, he goes on to say:

It does seem to me that to allow this situation to continue is unfair to those persons who desire, and have a right, to present a case to members of Cabinet, but do not have the wisdom or ...

and this is important, Mr. Chairman,

... the wherewithal to retain the services of a former Cabinet Minister to do this for them.

A former cabinet minister can drop in at any time to see his colleagues or friends in Executive Council without prior appointment. Mr. Justice Brennan makes the observation, and properly so, that there is some genuine concern.

Mr. Chairman, I think what the government should do to clear the air is bring in a policy with respect to guide-

lines for ministers. I know there is some reluctance to follow the proposals of the federal Liberal government. I think it's also fair to say that I would stand in my place at this time and support the concerns expressed by the federal Conservative opposition in what appears to be the breach of the federal guidelines in the case of one former Liberal cabinet minister. But at least there are guidelines.

I have here the federal guidelines at the moment. One of the provisions is that in any official dealings with former office holders, ministers must ensure that they do not provide grounds or the appearance of grounds for allegations of improper influence, privileged access, or preferential treatment. Let me just read that again so we underscore the significance of it: they do not provide grounds or the appearance of grounds for allegations of improper influence, privileged access, or preferential treatment.

Mr. Chairman, we already have the notation on page 56 of the Brennan report that access by former cabinet ministers is very easy, and logically so. But it raises the question that if it is easy, should we not have a cooling-off period set out in guidelines so former cabinet ministers do not become well-paid lobbyists for groups that have cases to be made before the government of Alberta? I know it will be argued that somehow this is an infringement on the good old free-enterprise system. That's sophistry and nonsense. If free enterprise is so weak that we cannot have strong post-employment guidelines for former cabinet ministers, then indeed we are in very serious trouble. This government can and should move with a clear-cut policy on guidelines for ex-ministers.

Mr. Chairman, that brings us to the issue of Ram Steel. When we get to the discussion of the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, we'll certainly get into the wisdom of sinking \$8 million of Alberta public funds into a plant which is now not operating. The government says it has an inventory problem; no question about that, Mr. Chairman. If you've laid off all your production staff, it's self-evident that you've got an inventory problem. The argument for getting into this loan is: we're diversifying. This loan was well after Ram had been established in 1980. Two and a half years later, they finally got the loan from the government of Alberta. As a matter of fact, as I understand it, the Canadian Commercial Bank was about ready to call its loan. So what we had was the Alberta government coming along, through the aegis, if you like, of the Alberta Opportunity Company, to provide \$8 million to bail out Ram — a sort of minor but nevertheless the same principle as the Dome bailout. I think I recall hearing Conservatives argue that they didn't like the Dome bailout. I didn't like the Dome bailout either. But if Conservatives are arguing against bailing out Dome, I wonder what in heaven's name they would call Ram Steel, when it has laid off its production staff and now is sitting idle. What kind of deal is that to get into, Mr. Chairman?

I notice as well with great mirth that we had members of the government amused yesterday that the minister was able to stand up a day later and say that the promoter of this particular scheme had gone to the government in 1977 and obtained an order in council for a \$370,000 direct loan and a \$650,000 guarantee. As I read over *Hansard*, Mr. Chairman, the only problem was that when the question was raised, it didn't appear that either the minister responsible or any of the rest of the front bench knew anything about it.

Mr. Chairman, the Premier says that his written communication to cabinet ministers wasn't necessary be-

cause he raised it in Executive Council and it became part of the minutes of Executive Council. We have the order in council, too, where the government authorized this loan to the Mustang firm, which went bankrupt a year later. But the fact that an order in council was passed by Executive Council didn't seem to cause any warning bells to ring on the \$8 million loan to Ram.

Mr. Chairman, I say to members of this committee that if this government wants to clear the air on the Ram issue, it should be prepared to see the Public Accounts Committee investigate every aspect of Ram Steel. Why did we get into an \$8 million venture through the Alberta Opportunity Company? The government says, oh, we can't provide the letter that was sent by Mr. Peckham to the Minister of Economic Development because that would be conflicting with commercial confidentiality. So we hide behind all kinds of huffery and puffery about being businesslike. It's not very businesslike to sink \$8 million into a company that's just laid off its production staff and has what the minister calls an inventory problem. These shrewd businessmen across the way have a rather interesting approach to normal business procedures. The fascinating aspect of this entire Ram issue is that we have business rhetoric being used by the government so they don't have to lay their cards on the table about public money which has been loaned to this firm through the Alberta Opportunity Company.

Mr. Chairman, I don't expect some of the newer members to remember this debate, but the Member for Little Bow will recall it very well. In 1972, when we established the Alberta Opportunity Company, many of his colleagues expressed concerns about an agency where there could be political manipulation, particularly when cabinet had the authority to approve or not approve loans over a certain amount. *Hansard* will have recorded those concerns that were well expressed by members of the then Social Credit opposition.

Mr. Chairman, what do we have today? We have no firm evidence of wrongdoing, but we have a link which, in my view, somehow has to be properly explained because we're dealing with public funds. We have the admission in the House that Mr. Foster, a former member of Executive Council, who certainly won all kinds of acknowledgment in the Brennan report for his activity, had seen the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, the Minister of Economic Development, and the Premier at a Conservative fund-raising event in Red Deer. We then find that a company which was not able to get loans from private banks was able to go to the Alberta Opportunity Company, and we sank \$8 million into a firm which has now ceased production activities.

Mr. Chairman, if the government were prepared to release whatever documentation they have — the Woods, Gordon report, which they claim argued the case for investment in Ram — and lay on the table information which would allow the public of Alberta to know what went on in this particular case, then I as Leader of the Opposition would say, fair enough. But we haven't got that yet from this government. What we have is a government that is hiding behind commercial confidentiality, and whenever one raises questions, we get rhetoric about somehow being against the private sector. We are talking about public funds.

Mr. Chairman, I want to move from there to deal with two other issues that in the view of my colleague and I are very important. One is the general area of economic development. The other is the question of what we would classify as anti-people legislation.

Mr. Chairman, let's look at economic development. It's pretty obvious, a dozen years into the Conservative administration, that all the concerns this government took to the people of Alberta in 1967, '68, '69, '70, and '71 about lack of diversification is just as true today, if not more so, than it was in 1971 when they assumed office. We find a budget, which we are now considering in the Committee of Supply, which is more dependent on non-renewable income than it was in 1971. We find that a larger percentage of our gross provincial product revolves around the activities of the oil and gas industry than it did 15 years ago. So the basic argument of diversification — of course, one can cite examples here and there of successes. But the fact of the matter is that we have not significantly moved to a more diversified economy. I say to members of the committee that if we are not able to do it now, when we have all kinds of surplus oil and gas revenue, how in heaven's name are we going to do it when we run out of oil and gas?

I think I vaguely recollect the Minister of Education when he was still a bit of an idealist, before he became something of a promoter for the federal Conservative cause. I remember well that in 1972 when we were talking about increasing oil royalties, certain members of the House were arguing against increasing oil royalties. The Member for Edmonton Highlands at that time — earnest, very sincere, always an effective debater — stood up and made quite a thoughtful little speech, I thought: we don't want in time to become the Nova Scotia of Canada; we've got to have the funds to diversify and strengthen our economy because we wouldn't want to see our whole economy fall flat when oil and gas went, just as Nova Scotia fell flat when they stopped sailing the clipper ships around the ocean. I remember that speech, Mr. Member. It was a very thoughtful speech. The only problem is that a decade and several years later, we still haven't made much progress. The Minister of Education has made all kinds of speeches in the intervening time, but we have not moved measurably to achieve the goal of a genuinely diversified economy.

Mr. Chairman, that raises the two questions I want to deal with at the moment: natural gas exports on one hand, and the government's approach to grain freight rates, the so-called Crow rate, on the other. I want to juxtapose the two positions, because the government's failure to come up with an overall economic strategy has locked us into what we consider to be a questionable approach on both issues.

I'm not going to repeat the arguments I cited in Committee of Supply the other day with respect to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, but we have a position on export which is based, it seems to me, on a little fact sheet, Important Facts About The Canadian Natural Gas Trade With The United States, produced by the Independent Petroleum Association, the Canadian Petroleum Association, and the government of Alberta. As I mentioned to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, I don't quarrel with any of the statistics set out in this little information package, nor with the basic information contained in the ministerial announcement of April 11. What I question, Mr. Premier, members of Executive Council, and government backbenchers, is the wisdom of the government's final position with respect to those companies that have solemnly signed take-or-pay contracts, that providing they meet 50 per cent of the volumes, we are going to provide an incentive price which is \$1.10 per MCF below the base price.

Mr. Chairman, I do not accept that position. What we

should be arguing for is the governments of British Columbia and Alberta, since these are the two provinces that produce the bulk of the natural gas in this country, together with their federal conferees going to Washington and instead of saying, have we got a deal for you; if you're only partly in breach of contract, we're going to give you an incentive price — I think the proper approach is for us to say very firmly that take-or-pay means precisely what it says, and that as Canadians we expect the United States to live up to its obligations.

Of course you're going to have people in Congress — we're coming close to an election — arguing the case for lower prices and attempting to respond to lobbies in their particular states or congressional districts. But, Mr. Chairman, the United States and Canada have been friends for a long time, and that friendship has to be based on some mutual self-respect. It seems to me mutual self-respect cannot be part and parcel of a bigger partner rejecting contractual arrangements with a smaller partner. Friendship has to be based on mutual self-respect. I say that this particular policy of bargain-basement pricing for natural gas is not in anyone's interest — not in the interests of the oil and gas industry in this province, and certainly not in the interests of the people of Alberta — because we're going to see ourselves pushed into a pricing structure which inevitably is going to mean lower returns to those of us who owned the gas in the first place.

Mr. Chairman, I note one of the interesting observations in the speech of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources — I don't know whether we're going to take the Brick Warehouse approach to selling oil now, too. But he's talking about shut-in oil, and I'd just like to quote page 865 of his remarks in *Hansard*:

... recognizing the need to sell that crude oil which is clearly surplus to present Canadian needs.

Then he goes on to say:

However, the fact remains that in the month of April, the shut-in of light and medium crude and some modest amounts of heavy crude was in the order of 200,000 barrels a day ... We simply have to be market competitive in a world where there are, at the present time, abundant supplies of energy. As well, we have to set the appropriate mechanism in place to allow for term sales; we can't simply rely on monthly sales.

Mr. Chairman, as I look at those words, it seems to me that this government is opening the door to a very significant rollback in prices for export oil. I wonder whether that makes any sense at all.

The reason I want to link the natural gas and oil question to the freight rate issue is that over the long run, our failure to diversify has stemmed from our inability to place sufficient emphasis on the renewable resource industries of the province. Because we have been so tied in with the interests of the oil and gas industry in this province, somehow it has swept us along, preoccupied the attention of Executive Council, and focussed almost all the interest on oil and gas, to the exclusion of forestry and agriculture. The net result is that we aren't able to look at some of the possible trade-offs.

We have the current Pepin plan. Whether one looks at the plan as it was originally devised, based on the Gilson report — which, in our view, was a recipe for disaster — or slightly modified by the Act as it's now being discussed in the House of Commons, the fact is that over the next 10 years, grain farmers are going to have to pay significantly more, probably at least five times Crow by the end of this decade. Mr. Chairman, the argument is very

simply put by those who argue the case for ditching the Crow. If we want to have a livestock industry, a packing industry, and agricultural processing, we have to stop the cheap export of feed grains in particular. We have to bring down the price of feed grains so we can make our packing industry competitive.

Mr. Chairman, what this policy is based on is a principle of destitution in the grains industry in order to provide subsistence in the livestock industry. That's basically what it's going to result in. As I look at the cost/benefit figures, I see that the loss to the grain farmer is going to be greater than the increase to the livestock producer, even assuming there's going to be some secondary processing, some increase in the packing industry in this province.

I wonder why in heaven's name we've gotten into this ridiculous situation. Apparently we have accepted the Snavely report as to what this so-called Crow gap is, a report which is based on the most unrealistic concept of what the railroads should have as a return on their investment — a greater return than any businessman I know of, a greater return than the private utility companies, which, heaven knows, are well looked after in this province, and even a higher return than TransAlta and Alberta Power.

Mr. Chairman, I think the answer was contained in this document, the Hall commission report in 1977, which came as a result of hearings right across the west. I remember the hearing in my little community of Fairview. Some 200 people came. The chamber of commerce and the farm organizations were there. Mr. Justice Hall had hearings like this in almost every community of any size at all in western Canada. The basic argument is that we retain the Crow but look at preferential freight rates for certain types of commodities — livestock, boxed beef, rapeseed meal, rapeseed oil — the kinds of things we produce in this province, indirectly at least, from the production of grain.

Mr. Chairman, had we followed up on the recommendations of the Hall report, two things would have happened. First, the federal government would have had to come up with an awful lot more money than they are offering with the Pepin plan; no question about that. This Hall report would have been significantly more expensive for the government of Canada. The second thing, Mr. Chairman, is that it would have provided reasonable rates for us to get processed agricultural products to market, not at the expense of the grain farmer but at a price which would have made us competitive in the world market place.

I can well see why the federal government wouldn't want to do this. We got into an energy agreement we signed in 1981. It wasn't the government's policy. To be fair, the government's policy always was that we should have market pricing. I admit that. But they signed an agreement in 1981 that they would accept 75 per cent of the world price for oil, with a formula for natural gas pricing that has been described by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources in this House. Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that if Alberta and Saskatchewan were going to shield energy prices in this country, what was wrong, as a trade-off, with asking in return that we get the recommendations of the Hall report? That would be the basis of a new national policy.

This government party was founded on the basis of Sir John A. Macdonald's national policy. What would be wrong with a new national policy that would recognize the problems of a landlocked part of the continent getting

its product to market and, at the same time, recognize the special difficulties of a cold climate, where energy costs are going to be higher and distance makes energy a more significant part of the final production costs? But, Mr. Chairman, we chose not to do that. I would say in retrospect that had we had the firm commitment of this government, as the strongest part of the west at the time, to take the initiative on this kind of proposal, we'd be a lot better off than we are today.

In the Pepin plan, we're asking our grain farmers to accept a five times Crow rate in the middle of a continent, competing against American farmers that have the Mississippi River system — we all know water is much cheaper — competing against Australian farmers that are 50, 100, 200 miles at the most from the ocean, competing against farmers in the Argentine that have a far more lucrative arrangement than the Crow to move grain in that country. Mr. Chairman, what this government has failed to do, by standing with Saskatchewan and Manitoba and saying to Mr. Pepin, let's go back to a sensible system, or even going beyond that and arguing the case for this important report, is that we are consigning many of the smaller farmers to bankruptcy.

MR. SHRAKE: Doom and gloom.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, someone said "doom and gloom". It was rather interesting the other day to hear a comment attributed to Mr. Snavely, who authored the report on what the Crow gap was. He said, the NFU actually had it right; many of the smaller farmers are going to go broke under this Pepin plan; it's all right for the bigger farmers who will be able to take advantage of the faster shipping this may provide, if all goes well.

Mr. Chairman, for those who think that doing away with the Crow rate is going to usher in all kinds of secondary manufacturing, all one has to do is drive through Montana or North Dakota. One sees the prosperity the first time you go into the very first Montana town; gold in the streets compared to the poverty in Canada. Nonsense. We know perfectly well this kind of policy in the United States has not led to agricultural processing in the states that are far away from the Mississippi River system. What it has done is just create another obstacle for the smaller producer.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with one more issue tonight. That is the question of anti-people legislation. I don't know how this government could have the unmitigated gall to bring in something as outrageous as user fees without a mandate from the people of Alberta. If they got the mandate, I'd have to stand in my place and say, I don't like user fees. I think user fees are a violation of the spirit of health care in this country. We would argue that case in the House. But if the people of Alberta had given a mandate to this government on the basis of user fees, we would have had to accept their judgment even though we disagreed with it.

Some may say, why should we make health an issue? I want to tell you that we got into health care in this country because in 1960, the government of Tommy Douglas in Saskatchewan had the courage to make medicare the issue of the election campaign. It was almost the exclusive issue of the 1960 election campaign which returned that government to office. If this government had wanted to set the clock back by bringing in user fees, they should have said so. Oh; some could argue that we had the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care flying a few kites and balloons. But he'd been flying balloons and

kites for so long, it was hardly the sort of situation which constituted a platform. None of my colleagues in the Legislature that I could discern seized upon that particular winning issue during the election campaign.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we've got ourselves into a fine spot. The federal Minister of Health and Welfare wants to meet with our provincial minister, because she's not sure whether we are in breach of the provisions of the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act, and we could lose a quarter of a billion dollars a year. I hope we don't. With the deficit this government is already running up and we're dealing with in the estimates, we can ill afford to lose another quarter of a billion dollars.

Surely, Mr. Chairman, it would be reasonable at this stage for this government to ask itself whether this proposal shouldn't be held over. What possible advantage is there to bringing in a concept which will turn the clock back as far as health care is concerned — a concept that will lead us to the most useless, bitter, and fruitless kind of confrontation with the federal government. I'm told by some, who may be more cynical than me, that the reason this government is doing it is that they think there will be a change of government in Ottawa within a year, and a new government of Canada would let Alberta play around with user fees.

Mr. Chairman, I just remind members of the front bench that the Trudeau government, whether we like it or not, has almost two years in which to stay there if they choose. Between 1974 and 1979, when the polls did not look promising, that's exactly what they chose to do.

I would also like to know, Mr. Chairman, whether in this little committee the Premier heads — where the various supplicants for Alberta's delegation come and check — the question of the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act is being discussed, and whether we will extract from the Joe Clarks, the Brian Mulroneys, the Crosbys, and whoever else shows up for this little committee meeting, commitments that a national Conservative government is going to gut the principle of medicare. If that's part of the agenda, then Canadians would like to know. I suspect not all Conservative Canadians would agree with that point of view.

The other major issue we are dealing with in this legislative session is Bill 44. I don't want to get into the details of it, but I would say to members of the committee that if this government wanted to bring in the principles of Bill 44, they should have clearly said before the electorate, this is what we propose to do. Mr. Chairman, I doubt that certain members in this House would be here if they had said they were going to bring in the principles of Bill 44, because the margins weren't that large in some ridings. We could in fact have had a few more on this side. It might not have changed the government, but it would have made a few more on this side of the House. But no, we didn't have that kind of forthright approach. Instead, we have Bill 44 brought in after the fact. I think that's completely wrong.

We have the Premier telling us on some of the arbitration awards — they're obviously not very happy — that arbitrators don't live in the real world I'm in; it's clear to me that we have to reassess the process, because I don't think it's satisfactory for an arbitrator to ignore what's going on in the non-unionized private sector of the province. Mr. Chairman, as we heard in representation after representation before the Public Affairs Committee, we are really dealing with different time frames, and most of these awards that the government was so exercised about were for a time frame when private-sector awards were

considerably higher.

But what puzzles me, Mr. Chairman, is the quickness of the government to pounce on the arbitrator's decision because they don't like the awards to AUPE members in this province, yet the apparent silence on the issue of Public Utilities Board increases. As a matter of fact, we have board order E83001 with respect to TransAlta, and here is the observation: although the board is aware of the present economic conditions and the heightened opposition of all customers to any rate increase under such circumstances it cannot impose any arbitrarily determined limit such as 5 or 6 per cent on the amount of any rate increase it will approve. However attractive such a simplistic approach may seem, it would be arbitrary and beyond the powers of the board.

We can complain and make all kinds of statements about arbitration of settlements for organized public employees for time frames where private-sector settlements were higher. But where was the Premier on the Public Utilities Board question? Where were members of this government on the matter of the Public Utilities Board increases, where these rates have gone up and up? I don't know, unless hon. members have different constituents than I have in my riding. I tell you that one of the continuing areas where I get a large number of complaints, probably the largest group of complaints, during the winter months especially, is in the area of utility rates. Why is it that we've been so silent? On rural power issues, whether it be REAs or utility rates, I get far more complaints in my office than I do about the salaries of public employees in Fairview, Spirit River, Peace River, or Grande Prairie. And I get many hundreds of complaints a year from different people in this province, particularly in the Peace River country. I assure members of the committee that far more have been focussed on utility rates than on the salaries of our public employees.

Mr. Chairman, I want to draw my remarks to a close by saying to the members of the committee that what we have here is an entire session which, in a sense, has been thrust upon us by a government that concealed its real intention last October. I suppose you could call it political misrepresentation on a massive scale. As one member of this House, but as the leader of the New Democratic Party in the province of Alberta, I am not prepared to stand by during the discussion of the first minister's estimates and sidestep what we consider to be the inconsistencies between the program last fall and the agenda this spring.

Mr. Chairman, for that reason, we intend to take whatever time is allotted to explore fully the first vote of this particular department.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: For the hockey fans, the score is now 5 to 2 for the Islanders.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for the opportunity to make remarks on the Executive Council estimates. What I would like to do for a few moments this evening is look at two areas that I think are of concern to Albertans. They're general more than specific: first, in terms of the spending pattern of the government; second, with regard to the treatment of local governments that come out of the budget placed before us in the 1983-84 fiscal year.

When I look at either the spending pattern or the local governments, to make a judgment on these matters one of the things you must do is go back to commitments made by a government at an earlier date. A number of times we

have raised the 1967 pamphlet of the Conservative Party that set certain objectives when they were going to become the government in this province. With regard to priorities — and we have heard that many times from the leader of this government — it indicates that priorities must be established and there aren't funds to spend on every item. I want to examine that question this evening.

Secondly, with regard to local government, we also read in this pamphlet that the present government "believe in local government in the province wherever practical," and that there should be "a return of the decision-making process by local councils, school boards, and other municipal authorities", indicating that greater autonomy, self-determination, and self-government should exist in this province.

The only way to really judge those matters is to look at the trend that has occurred since 1971 when the Conservative Party took over its responsibilities. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to illustrate it by the use of a few graphs.

MR. MARTIN: Make it simple for them.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I am. Sometimes a few pictures are as good as many words. I always like to be of few words, if I can.

The first illustration that I have before the Assembly indicates the trend of expenditure of this government. It's a continuous growth pattern, a continuous expansionary direction that starts in 1971 with, as we all know, a \$1 billion budget. It increases rapidly to over \$8 billion, with a bit of a decrease here in the expenditure trend caused by the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. But we note that deficits in '81, '82, '83, and '84 do exist by this government. I only illustrate that to show that the expenditure trend is a continuous increase. As we received revenue, the government spent more and there was greater expansion. We end up with a multiple number of cabinet ministers, each looking after their empire, attempting to expand.

MRS. CRIPPS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, we can't see a thing.

MR. NOTLEY: There's no question about that, Shirley. You can't hear, either. You can't hear and can't see.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, that is good for the record. I'm pleased the hon. member has admitted it to all of us, finally.

MRS. CRIPPS: Maybe there's nothing there.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'd also like to indicate that in 1971 this government, by a submission to the Assembly through a motion for a return, showed that there were 17,574 civil servants. Let's look at the growth of that government in that period of time until 1983. The Provincial Treasurer's report indicates 32,500; the Public Service Commissioner, over 35,000 civil servants in the report tabled yesterday in the Legislature. Statistics Canada indicates that this government is funding nearly 64,000 civil servants. It indicates the rapid expansion that has occurred. I know everybody here feels a little embarrassed about how big this Conservative government is, how it's gone out of control and is just doing everything it can to spend and spend money, without any direction.

That's my first point. This government has never estab-

lished priorities but just continued to expand its spending, trying to please everybody in the province. That's why the last election ended up being an \$8 billion promise to Albertans just to be re-elected, not because it was going to stand on the question of priorities but it stood on the question of, how do I regain power? That's not a responsible way to demonstrate leadership in this province.

As well, to the Premier of this province: we should look at what is happening to the surpluses and deficits of this government. In the good years, the boom years of the oil resource revenues, we had surpluses. We all know some of that went into the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. But let's look at what has happened in the last two years, for example, at the enormous amount of deficits, which is a discredit to this Conservative government. We lift this chart and note that the Heritage Savings Trust Fund cushioned the deficit; if we don't consider it in the budget it doesn't look so bad. But, Mr. Premier, the facts are there. The picture is there. The deficit is over \$3.1 billion, and that is shameful.

The other thing that's very shameful is that within one or two fiscal years, there will no longer be a Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It will all be used up to meet the expansion and rapid and uncontrolled spending of this government that does not set priorities, which it promised to the people of Alberta. Well, Mr. Chairman, that's the story of priorities, and I think it's incumbent for the Premier to indicate to this Legislature what type of strategy is going to be put in place to bring that kind of expenditure under control.

The Premier can say, the Provincial Treasurer is the fellow who presents the budget. We all know that the Premier of this province, the leader of the party, sets the direction and establishes which programs receive priority attention and which do not. I think it's incumbent upon the leader of this party to tell us whether this is the trend that will continue on expenditures or whether that will not be the trend; whether there are some priorities that will be established that the people of Alberta, as indicated in this 1967 charter, were promised.

Mr. Chairman, that leads to my second point, with regard to local governments: hospital boards, school boards, and municipalities in this province. At the present time and with the attitude of this government, they are the three bodies which are taking the criticism of the actions of this government. People at the local level are blaming hospital boards, school boards, and municipalities for overexpending. But the blame lies with this government, a government that has not established priorities. I'd like to demonstrate that again by some charts showing that this government has not placed an emphasis on local government but has placed a greater emphasis on developing their own central control and bureaucracy.

First of all, I'd like to illustrate it by a chart on the Department of Municipal Affairs. Here we see the grants and allocations that have been made to the municipal and county bodies across this province. Certainly those are dollar values that are different from the blue line, which is a line that talks about the growth of the departmental administration in this province. You can see that the growth of grants and moneys made available to municipalities has increased from the base of 100 per cent to just over 800 per cent, eight times. At the same time, the departmental support or the central administration of the Department of Municipal Affairs has increased from 100 to 1,400 per cent, some 14 times, which is significant.

What does it do? It indicates the attitude of this government, that it was more important to place an emphasis on central government, the department of government, rather than on the municipal bodies of this province. I'm sure that line indicates an erosion of autonomy, self-determination, and self-government in this province.

I'd also like to illustrate the same point by using a graph on the Department of Education, which only illustrates the point to a greater degree. If you look at the graph, assistance to schools is increased from 100 per cent to nearly 500 per cent, five times." But at the same time, if you look at the support that has gone to the central department or the departmental administration, part of the first vote of the Department of Education's estimates, you'll note the percentage has gone from 100 to 3,000 per cent. In other words, 30 times the moneys have been given to the central department. Again, is it necessary to have spent that many more dollars to administer education in this province? Is the priority really local school boards in terms of economy? I don't think so, and I think that's a very important priority that the Premier should answer for in this Legislature.

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

The other area I'd like to illustrate in the very same way indicates the same principles and the same concern. Support for health expenditures in this province has increased from 100 per cent to above 600 per cent. At the same time, the central departmental administration of the departments have increased from 100 per cent to over 6,200 per cent, some 62 times, indicating that the priorities of this government are on expending money for their central programs, central administration, and the growth of their own central civil service, rather than on the hospitals and local governing boards in this province.

When we talk about priorities in government, and when the Premier was elected in 1971, in the campaigns prior to 1971, and in the administration of this department since 1971, it was the expectation of the people of Alberta that priorities would be put in place, that local governments would have first priority in this province. I don't think they have, Mr. Chairman.

At the present time, we see local governments, with a 5 per cent increase, facing very difficult financial times. But we ask the question: did this government cut back in terms of its own civil service, in terms of its own staff establishment? Well, it hasn't. I only illustrate it very quickly by a couple of the manuals that contain all the names and lists of the civil servants in this province. This is the manual printed in 1976 and 1977. We compare that — the same paper, same print-out — to 1981-82. This is the kind of growth that has gone on in this government. This is the number of civil servants in government proper. Mr. Chairman, if I put the volumes in between the lower one and this top one, you'll see a progressive growth in the number of people that this government has hired. I would say very candidly from my point of view that it has only gone in one direction: continuous expansion, without cabinet or the Premier establishing any priorities as to what is important and what is not. Everybody who wanted to spend money spent money.

I think we've come to a time, Mr. Chairman — and I think the Premier is answerable to us here in this Legislature at this time — when we determine what kinds of things are the priority of this government. Is it local government? Or do we continue to spend in other areas? Are we going to place a higher priority on municipalities

that are facing difficult times? Hospital boards — we're answering that by user fees. Schools boards are going to face difficult times.

I think that's not the answer. I think we have to go back to some basic fundamental principles about the administration of government. The good times in expending money in government are over. It is time for this government to make some difficult priority decisions. I hope that in this year, in the next fiscal budget we are faced with, this government will make some difficult decisions. I've indicated by resolution in this Assembly that one of the areas we can start in is housing. We've got over a billion dollars there where we can cut some expenditures. I think it's time we do something like that. We've already debated the reasons why that can be done. That's one suggestion. There are others. But it is time we look at government and cut back in terms of its large size and the large pressure it is placing on many Albertans at the present time.

I indicated there would be some questions to the Premier. First of all, how will the priorities of this government change in the coming year? Secondly, what programs will be cut, if any? Thirdly, how will the government change its attitude towards hospital boards, municipal boards, and school boards? Fourthly, what is the future of the heritage fund, or is there a future of that fund?

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I too would like to rise to participate in the Executive Council estimates. If I have to repeat what some of the hon. members have heard — it's nice to see the Premier in the House. I'm sure he's just sitting on the edge of his seat to hear every word I have to say.

I would say, quite frankly, since the election of November 2, we really seem to have accentuated the "Conservative" in Progressive Conservative. My colleague wondered if the Amway salesmen had taken over the government. I hope not, but I think they'd be very proud of the government. Somebody even mentioned the other day that this government might even make Ronald Reagan blush.

It is a little frustrating, Mr. Chairman, because in the election — if we sound a little bitter, maybe we are. I would like to really stress what my colleague said. On November 2 and the month preceding, when I was running in that election and won by that overwhelming majority of 74 votes, I do not remember the Conservative candidate talking about bringing in higher medicare premiums. Elect me and we'll bring in higher medicare premiums. Elect me and we'll bring in user fees for the hospitals. Elect me and we'll start talking about private hospitals. Elect me and we'll do nothing for job creation. Elect me and we'll bring in one of the most regressive labor Acts around. Elect me and we'll cut off shielding for municipal governments. Elect me and we'll attack the lower and middle income at a time when they're unemployed, and then we'll cut back on shelter allowances. I do not remember that. I do not remember them saying, elect me and we'll have a \$3 billion deficit in March.

No, Mr. Chairman, the only thing I can remember is the Premier going around the province talking about the negative people. He was a doer; the doers of society — and if you stick with us in the Conservative Party, it will only be a matter of time and things will turn out all right. We're on the beginning of a turnaround, he said, and you'll see it next month. Well, some turnaround. That's

when we had 70,000 unemployed. The turnaround has now given us 136,000.

MR. NOTLEY: That's performance.

MR. MARTIN: That's the spring, when most people are employed. The point we make is that they must have known in the election that things were not in a turnaround. Most people were predicting it. Unfortunately, because the Premier is a very good politician, a very good television performer, they stuck with him one more time. This is what we're getting now. I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, it is an immoral government that campaigns on one thing — we've seen Trudeau do it before, but unfortunately we see it right here in Alberta.

The tragedy of unemployment, as I've said in this House many, many times — and I get, oh well, you know, what about it? — is that we're talking about real people. I wish some of the Conservative people could come out a little more around the riding to see some of the working poor, some of the people who are unemployed and worried, and some of the people who are now employed and are not sure whether or not they're going to be.

I'd like to come back to the Premier and say to him, unemployment is economically stupid because we're losing a lot of money in terms of unemployment insurance, in terms of welfare. We have a \$200 million increase in the welfare budget, which makes no sense at all when you're not doing anything for job creation — handouts, but not jobs. But the tragedy is not only the economics and the lower purchasing power — and Alberta bankruptcies soar. We know we're leading the country there too. If we look, it won't get better.

We see the small business group saying that Alberta is in the darkest part of gloom. I know they're supposed to be doers, but the NDP wasn't saying this; this is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It says the number of Alberta companies imposing restraints, reducing salaries, and laying off workers is considerably higher than the national average. The most telling statistics may be that 13.3 per cent of Alberta employers plan to employ fewer workers in 1983. I repeat: that's from their statistics.

The tragedy is not only the economics, and we're losing billions of dollars there. I'd like to say this to the Premier. In the United States, they've researched what the social cost is on unemployment. The research, from *Perception* magazine, found that for every 1 per cent rise in unemployment, 4.3 per cent more men and 2.3 per cent more women are admitted to state mental hospitals for the first time; 4.1 per cent more people commit suicide; 4 per cent more people are put in prison; 5.7 per cent more people are murdered; 1.9 per cent more people die from stress-related chronic ailments over a six-year period. When you take those people and deal with the children of those people, that's the tragedy of unemployment.

Frankly, it's not good enough for the government to sit around and say, we're going to wait for the private sector. The private sector is shrewd. They can look at what's happening, as the Canadian federation of business is doing. They're not going to invest in a province that has no hopes at the particular time, a province that's strictly on OPEC's tails, a province that's waiting around for the Arab nations to get their act together. Mr. Chairman, they're not going to invest until the price of oil goes up again. Are we just going to sit and do nothing? That seems to be a good Conservative line, just do nothing.

The other point we have to make and make clearly is that the government and the Premier were taking credit when times were good in the '70s. We said it very clearly at the time. Obviously not enough people were listening. But why were we so well off in Alberta in the early '70s just when the Conservative government came is that OPEC got its act together and drove up the price of oil. We were fortunate because we happened to have oil and gas at that particular time. I remember the Premier saying in 1966 — and we have quotes of him in the Pincher Creek by-election — that we are too reliant on the oil and gas industry. At the time, he quoted that 40 per cent of our revenues come from the oil and gas industry, and we're going to have to diversify the economy. Mr. Chairman, that's what the Premier said. I remember him clearly saying in the early '70s that we have a decade to turn the economy around — a decade. Now what do we find? We find that over 50 per cent of our revenues are now from oil and gas according to the Treasurer's last budget, with the dream of diversification virtually dead.

So what's the answer? The Member for Little Bow has pointed out that we have a serious financial problem. We had a \$3 billion deficit, by the time you take out what we took out of the heritage trust fund. So in typical Conservative fashion, when we don't have any ideas — a tired old government, Mr. Chairman — what we're going to do is attack the people services. I mentioned before that this is exactly what Herbert Hoover and R. B. Bennett did in the '30s. It didn't work then, and it's not working now.

What we have now is higher medicare premiums, and they have the nerve to tell us there's no increase in taxes. What are higher medicare premiums if they're not an increase in taxes? But they are a regressive tax; the person who makes \$10,000 pays as much as Peter Pocklington. That makes no economic sense at all. We have user fees.

What we're slowly doing is dismantling all the people services that have been built up and attacking the poor and the middle income. Oh no, we won't attack any of our rich friends and make them pay their taxes, because they might not donate money to the Conservative Party next time. The point we're trying to make is that it didn't work in the '30s, and it's not going to work now. You can call us negative, or whatever reason they want to give, but there has to be a better way. And there will be a better way. This government's not going to be here forever. They're arrogant now. They think they'll be here forever, but I can assure you that the people of Alberta will have a longer memory next time.

There's one other issue. I'm always amazed. When we've brought up the cruise missile, one of the backbenchers — I know they don't get much chance to speak — called me a Russian sympathizer because I felt strongly about cruise missiles. I hope the Premier is a little brighter than the backbenchers. I don't think he would say that. The biggest moral issue we have today is cruise missiles, Mr. Chairman. What have we heard from the Alberta government? Nothing, absolutely nothing. They say, oh no, that's a federal issue. That's rather amazing coming from a government that's fought the federal government over almost everything and has agents general all over the world playing the big-shot role, trying to be the federal government.

What when we ask them to take a stand: oh, we don't have a stand. They do not have a stand one way or the other on the biggest moral issue of the day? I find that hard to believe. [interjection] Well say it. They haven't said it. Do you support it? Thank you. There, one of the

backbenchers supports it. We finally got a backbencher to say something. Great.

The point we're trying to make, Mr. Chairman, is that there's a small opposition here, but there are many things wrong in this province. Before the government gets too cocky and the backbenchers start shouting too loudly, remember there are a lot of people who didn't vote for this government last time. In the end, a lot of people stayed with the devil they knew. But governments are not there forever, not even the one the Premier runs.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I say to the Premier, and I say this clearly, the mark of a government is what it leaves behind for the people. It's not whether it gets re-elected all the time. Conservative governments find it easy to get re-elected because things only get worse gradually. People are afraid of change, so they stay with the old horse they know. What history judges is what you leave behind for the people. I suggest that this government is going to be judged very harshly in the future, Mr. Chairman. Basically, we are going to leave behind a legacy of user fees and potholes. Unless this government turns it around and starts reacting to the people, being honest with the people, and changing some of their policies, it will not be that long either.

Thank you.

Agreed to:

Vote 1 — Executive Council

Administration:

1.0.1 — Office of the Premier	\$528,068
1.0.2 — Administrative Support	\$1,636,282
1.0.3 — Office of the	
Lieutenant-Governor	\$95,580
1.0.4 — Project Management	\$653,930
1.0.5 — Protocol	\$537,987

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, before we leave Vote 1, with respect to the heritage research foundation — since we are dealing with Vote I, the Premier's estimates, and the matter of the foundation was brought into the House by the Premier. I'd like the Premier to advise the Assembly where things stand on this matter now. I've received complaints from researchers that in fact we are not properly funding the research aspect of it. We have money for capital equipment, student fellowships, and visiting professors, but the category of grants is not set up in such a way that we're really getting the research done.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Chairman, before I respond, perhaps the hon. leader could just confirm that he's referring to the medical research foundation of Alberta?

MR. NOTLEY: Yes.

MR. LOUGHEED: Well, I'm very interested in the question but unable to answer. I refer the hon. member to the legislation. I do not have it at hand, but I believe the fundamental principle of that legislation was that we establish a foundation at arm's length. That foundation had a considerable period of time before any inquiry was to be made by this Legislative Assembly. I believe it was seven years, but that would be subject to checking. As I recall, annual reports were required under the legislation, but there was no process for legislative review.

I point out to the members, Mr. Chairman, that that matter was debated at length during the establishment of the Bill that formed the medical research foundation of Alberta. In becoming involved personally in the estab-

lishment of that legislation, I travelled extensively and discussed it with many who were involved. For those members who were not in the Legislature at that time, perhaps it is worth while to just take a moment to refresh your minds about the background that is there with the medical research foundation.

As I travelled and discussed the establishment of this important foundation, which I believe is going to prove to be one of the important economic diversification projects among many that we have, we established that it had to be a foundation at arm's length. Researcher after researcher, scientist after scientist, said to me in my discussion: it is extremely important that it be at arm's length from the Legislature, that we not be on the roller coaster that we're on with regard to federal medical care grants.

It was interesting to me that just this previous Sunday I was in Nova Scotia with a leading scientist, Dr. Genest from Montreal, who said to me with regard to the medical research foundation that he thought it was one of the most forward steps he had heard from any provincial government. I asked him why. He said, because I've fought a lifetime trying to get some steady, solid position in medical research funding from the federal government of Canada. They did not appear to respond to me, Dr. Genest advised me, because it was always political; it was up and down like a roller coaster. He said, you know what's great about the way you've established your medical foundation? It won't become political. They have seven years, I believe, to do the job and to get established. When you're asked about it in the Alberta Legislature at some time prior to those seven years, you'll be able to respond to the questioner and say that the way we've established it is the way it should be established: at arm's length.

Isn't it interesting? It is under a week that I was asked that very question.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to follow that up and put another question in another area. No one is arguing that the operation shouldn't be at arm's length, and I recall the debate that occurred in this Assembly. However, during Committee of Supply I think one has the obligation to raise concerns. One concern I've had brought to my attention by medical researchers at the University of Alberta is that notwithstanding the foundation, the total amount of money which is being allocated to research is down. I just say that seven years or not, when we hear that that concern exists, it seems to me appropriate that it be properly raised in the House. If the Premier is not prepared to respond with this new-found, hands-off approach — I wish we could take the same approach with the Alberta Opportunity Company — I hope at least the members of the foundation would read *Hansard* and perhaps publicly respond at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, I want to put to the Premier the final question that my colleague raised. That is with respect to the cruise missile. I have not heard a position taken by the leader of government in Alberta on that issue, other than that it's federal jurisdiction. As my colleague noted, this is one of the major, moral issues of our time. If this government is in favor of the cruise missile, so be it. Let them say so publicly and strongly. But let them put on record the position of the government of Alberta.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Chairman, the position of the government of Alberta is recorded in *Hansard* and has

been expressed previously in this session by the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 2 — Executive Council
Administration

\$3,451,847

MR. NOTLEY: Just a moment. Basically, what we got, as I recall the debate before, was that we're hiding behind federal jurisdiction. I want to know where this government stands on this issue.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Chairman, I can just repeat myself.

MR. MARTIN: No stand.

Agreed to:

Vote 2 — Occupational
Health and Safety:

2.1 — Program Support	\$1,050,537
2.2 — Worksite Services	\$4,608,416
2.3 — Occupational Health Services	\$3,445,417
2.4 — Research and Education Services	\$2,666,215

MR. NOTLEY: Before we vote the entire appropriation, we'll just take a moment or two. I would hate to see the hon. minister not have an opportunity to bring this committee a full report on what his department has been doing and why he is asking for \$11,770,585.

Now, Mr. Chairman, when it comes to occupational health and safety, that's a crucial issue. That being the case, I would like the minister to take a few minutes to outline clearly to the committee what he did in the last year, what he plans to do for the next year, and we'll go from there.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity. I accept the challenge from the hon. Leader of the Opposition and want to just briefly indicate that the occupational health and safety division is governed by three major priorities for services provided: response to imminent dangerous situations, investigation of all fatal accidents and selected serious incidents, and response to requests for assistance related to hazardous situations.

To operate within the parameters of these priorities requires planning. In developing strategies and priorities for prevention, we recognize the tremendous amount of work done by agencies in other provinces and other countries. The division maintains a liaison with counterpart agencies in all other provinces and federal/provincial liaison is ensured through division participation in the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation and the federal/provincial advisory committee on occupational and environmental health. The occupational health and safety division is also represented on the council of governors of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

The staff of the division is involved extensively with technical and steering committees of the Canadian Standards Association. Through all these activities the division is encouraging the development of uniform occupational health and safety standards across Canada. Within Alberta, the occupational health and safety division is committed to managing its resources efficiently and effectively through good planning. I have reason to believe the planning process and control measures used

by the division are second to none.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 2 — Occupational
Health and Safety

\$11,770,585

3—Workers' Compensation

MR. CHAIRMAN: No breakdown of this vote: \$16,698,400.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, just a moment, just a moment. It amazes me how some people get excited about having a vote go through without a proper explanation from the minister. We're going to hear an explanation, are we not, Mr. Minister?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, the appropriation is the same as the previous year, \$16,698,400, which funds the pensions that were awarded prior to 1974, that were provided in the 1974 legislation.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, just a minute now, members. This vote allows us some opportunity to discuss what this government plans to do with the Workers' Compensation Board in the province. Perhaps the minister could outline tonight what proposals this government has with respect to the Workers' Compensation Board; what changes he sees in the composition of the board, if any; what decision will be made with respect to a special select committee to review workers' compensation; whether or not he sees any legislation that would change the benefits provided by workers' compensation. In short, the Committee of Supply is the only opportunity the Legislature has formally, outside legislation, to hear a report on the activities of one of the more important boards of this government.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, in short, as promised in the Speech from the Throne, a select committee will be appointed, and this will be done. With regard to some of the other areas the Leader of the Opposition has raised, time will show that we will be bringing forward, no doubt, a report by the select committee. It isn't expected that the report will be done this spring but in due course. I hope it will be the fall sittings of 1983.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I gather that the minister would like to give the Assembly some indication as to when we will have a motion on the Order Paper. I don't recollect seeing one yet; I could be mistaken. Presumably the minister intends to chair this again. The minister has indicated that we should not anticipate a report until next year. However, I would just say to members of the committee that the normal approach, as I understand it, is to re-evaluate the Workers' Compensation Act every Legislature. We have seen some useful changes made in the last decade from the various reports of select committees. Undoubtedly, there will be proposals from this select committee. Perhaps the minister could be a little more specific as to when we might see something on the Order Paper.

Beyond that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know whether there are any proposed changes in the composition of the board.

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I can only repeat part of what I've indicated. In time, as promised in the Speech from the Throne, the government will make the announcement of the select committee composition and invite participation of the opposition, as has been traditional.

With regard to any change in the composition of the board, that is under review. At this time, I am unable to make any specific remarks on it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly whether it's the government's intention that the select committee will follow its normal procedure; that is, to hold extensive public hearings throughout the province?

MR. DIACHUK: Mr. Chairman, I see the same practice that has been carried out in the past continued this year, other than as was mentioned. I believe there would be no intent to travel beyond Canadian borders.

4 — Support to Native Organizations

12 — Financing of Native Venture Capital Corporation

MR. PAHL: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The few opening remarks I'd like to make regarding Vote 4, support to native organizations, are simply that committee members will note that this year's proposed vote reflects both the hold-the-line requirements of our government's overall fiscal direction as well as our continuing commitment to the native people of Alberta; that is to say, there's a 5 per cent increase in grants proposed for the 1983-84 estimates over the 1982-83 estimates. There are no staff increases.

On the grants available and proposed to assist the native people of Alberta to move and to more fully participate in and benefit from the mainstream opportunities of Alberta, we have held with the 5 per cent increase as well.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of new programs reflected in the estimates before the committee, I draw members' attention to Vote 12, which covers a special warrant of \$2 million drawn in late 1982 for start-up funding for the Alberta Native Venture Capital Corporation. This organization is in the final start-up stages and is a unique private-sector/government initiative aimed at providing patient or seed money in the form of equity investment in potentially economically viable native business ventures. Funding for the Alberta Native Venture Capital Corporation, as I mentioned, will come from both the private sector and the provincial government, with matching funding to a maximum proposed of \$5 million, although the membership on the board of directors will be heavily weighted towards the private sector.

Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding the need for public accountability, we think that in this instance, investment decisions made at arm's length from the political process hold the best chance of enduring as competitive entrepreneurial ventures for the benefit of native Albertans.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, in looking at the elements, I see general grants to native organizations, not specified. Normally we've had that information specified. Would the minister give us the details, organization by organization, please?

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased to provide general categories. I would indicate that the very nature of the funding the Native Secretariat undertakes

would hardly lend itself to being that definitive. In general terms . . .

MR. NOTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I think the minister should be aware of the fact that in past years, we have had the specific grants. I would say to the minister that it would be useful to follow the normal procedure in this House.

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I have taken my responsibilities seriously and reviewed the minutes of past meetings. I will endeavor to follow the spirit of the request and be specific where I have an opportunity, subject to the approval of these estimates. The intention, in general terms, would be to provide in the order of \$466,000 to the Business Assistance for Native Albertans Corporation, colloquially known as BANAC. Indian organizations would be in the range of \$250,000; Metis organizations, \$660,000; isolated communities, \$120,000; native women's organizations, \$75,000; native communications organizations, \$710,000; native friendship centres, \$300,000; urban referral programs, approximately \$240,000; and we've got one called miscellaneous funding, \$91,972.

MR. NOTLEY: We have the forecast summarized; we don't have the changes. Mr. Chairman, could the minister advise the Assembly of the figures, according to the category — forecast as against estimates — to determine whether it was just a 5 per cent increase across the board or whether in some cases there was more or less than 5 per cent, so we have some idea of what is happening with the funding for these organizations?

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, I can answer that quite definitively. The estimate for 1983-84 is a precise 5 per cent increase over the comparable 1982-83 estimate.

MR. NOTLEY: For every group?

MR. PAHL: That's for the grant group, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Metis organizations, what is the breakdown between the Metis Association of Alberta and the Federation of Metis Settlements?

MR. PAHL: Mr. Chairman, until the estimates are approved, it would be a little premature. The general breakdown for the committee — it should be noted that generally speaking, the Native Secretariat does not involve itself in what you would call traditional program funding, although there is an element in the categories that I mentioned. The funding that flows to the Federation of Metis Settlements would be under the vote of Municipal Affairs.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, we've talked about specific details, first of all, on the breakdown of organizations. While we have the minister, I'd like to reflect for just a moment or two on more general issues. There are several issues I have raised before in the House. I'd like the minister to bring us up to date, for example, with respect to the whole question of land claims. Let's take for a specific example the Lubicon claim. Where do things stand on that particular issue?

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, I'd like the Minister responsible for Native Affairs, rather than waiting until we get to Municipal Affairs or the Attorney General, to bring us

up to date tonight on the mineral claim of the Metis settlements in this province, where that matter stands, and how much closer it is, if any, to final resolution. It seems to me that if we don't resolve the matter sooner or later — it's dragged on for so long now. The order in council was 20 or more years ago. We should be expediting that as quickly as possible. I'd like the minister to bring the committee up to date on that particular matter.

Then we have the special ARDA agreements. Money has been made available to other provinces. British Columbia, I know, has received a fair amount of money under the special ARDA agreements; so have Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I'd like to know exactly where that matter stands as far as this administration is concerned.

Those are the main questions, Mr. Chairman. Certainly BANAC is a step in the right direction. Every year I've gone to the general assemblies of the Metis Association of Alberta. I know the interest they have expressed in economic development over the last decade. While BANAC is a small step in the right direction, it strikes me that the money we're providing is rather modest compared to the funds that I think would be available, unless my figures are wrong, were we to sign the special ARDA agreements. It seems to me there would be a good deal more funding available for northern native settlements, especially.

Rather than just sliding over this estimate — we're dealing with a very important matter — the Assembly should take some time to reflect upon the issues. I've just indicated several that come to my mind, but I think there are probably others that we may explore as the evening progresses.

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to ask one specific question about an area in Edmonton Kingsway that deals with the minister's responsibility. Before I do that, I would like to formally congratulate the minister on his appointment. I have known the minister for a number of years, and I know very well that he will do tremendously in his portfolio. I know that since the election, there have been a number of very, very positive meetings with native groups throughout the province.

Mr. Chairman, my question deals with Ben Calf Robe school situated in Edmonton Kingsway. This is a unique school that offers education to approximately 80 native students. It is part of St. Pius X school in the Edmonton separate school district. It has been in existence for approximately two years and has been growing by leaps and bounds. Specifically, could the minister respond as to whether this program will be continuing? Secondly, a unique facet to this school is a hot lunch program that is part and parcel of the program. I would ask the minister to comment whether that would be continuing as well.

Thank you.

MR. PAHL: First, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the Member for Spirit River-Fairview for giving me the opportunity to perhaps update the situation with respect to the involvement of the government of Alberta on the land claim of the Lubicon Indian Band. As members are aware, according to the natural resources transfer agreement of 1930, the province is obliged to provide unoccupied Crown land to the federal government to enable Canada to fulfil its treaty obligations to the Indians in Alberta. The province is willing to honor those obligations. This has already been illustrated by the recent involvement of our government in negotiations with the

Cree Band in Fort Chip, which was also referred to, with respect to their treaty entitlement claim.

With respect to the Lubicon Indians, you'll recall that an action was initiated in 1980 in the federal court of Canada by the band and the members of the Cree community of Little Buffalo against the federal and provincial governments and, I think, 10 or so oil companies. The plaintiffs claimed land in northern Alberta based alternately on unextinguished Indian title and unfulfilled treaty entitlement claims. It was subsequently decided by the federal court that the plaintiffs could not sue the provincial Crown and the oil companies in the federal court.

Following this procedural court decision, the Lubicon Lake Band made a treaty entitlement claim to the office of native claims in the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In December 1981, the Hon. John Munro indicated to the province of Alberta that the federal government believed that the band had a valid treaty entitlement claim.

Subsequently, there was a meeting held between the federal and provincial officials to generally discuss the entitlement claim. At that time, the federal officials were reminded of Alberta's policy regarding the process for resolving treaty entitlement claims. Mr. Chairman, because of Alberta's legal obligation pursuant to the Natural Resources Transfer Act, 1930, which is to the government of Canada, Alberta's policy does not provide for formal, tripartite negotiations or discussions. It was agreed in that meeting that Alberta would be formally notified of federal validation of the treaty entitlement claim by the Lubicon Lake Band. In addition, the province was to be sent copies of the federal documentation, including population figures that were used to validate the claim. This was never done, Mr. Chairman.

During February '82, a second action was filed in the Court of Queen's Bench against the province and 11 oil companies by the Lubicon Band and the Cree community in Little Buffalo. Alberta was subsequently notified that the band had decided not to pursue its treaty entitlement claim under the province's entitlement process. The lawsuit is currently before the courts. Consequently, I am unable to comment on it beyond the information provided in the press that one more step had been pursued by the Lubicon Band moving themselves toward a day in court.

I believe the second question, Mr. Chairman, was asked with respect to the progress on the Metis settlement association claim that lands within the settlement create an entitlement for the minerals. This action, as the member pointed out, is proceeding very slowly and is still at the discovery stage. I would note that one of my colleagues has made an offer to settle out of court. This was rejected by the Federation of Metis Settlements. As a provincial government, we are paying legal costs of both sides of the action, and it's proceeding very slowly.

[Mr. Purdy in the Chair]

With respect to ARDA, Mr. Chairman, the Native Secretariat in Vote 4 or 12 has no funding related to the ARDA agreements. I could indicate to the committee that my discussions with federal officials on special ARDA have been met with a rather distinct lack of enthusiasm for blanket programs, but a considerable amount of enthusiasm for specific projects. One example I might give to the committee is an agreement with the community of Fort Chipewyan to do an economic study

on alternate resource exploitation opportunities that are jointly funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Native Secretariat.

In conclusion, I would like to respond to the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway's points, thank him for his kind remarks, and acknowledge that he showed appropriate dedication by joining me at the second annual powwow for the Ben Calf Robe school held last Saturday. It was a successful event, and I would say that if other people who are involved in the sponsoring of the Ben Calf Robe project of Pius X school were as impressed as I was, I'm sure it will be continuing. As the member pointed out, our funding has been related to the pilot project of providing a hot lunch. It is not a policy or an intention of the Native Secretariat to undertake ongoing projects. If the fancy dancing contest we saw last Saturday was an indication of the funding pay-off of support for their dancing cultural programs of two years ago, I'm sure we would be favorably inclined to look very carefully at their application for future funding.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 4 — Support to Native Organizations	\$4,392,484
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Total Vote 1 — Financing of Native Venture Capital Corporation	—
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Total Vote 5 — Personnel Administration	\$19,462,146
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Total Vote 6 — Natural Sciences and Engineering Research	\$19,950,000
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MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Vote 7 is going to be held.

Vote 8 — Women's Information

MR. MARTIN: I have a couple of questions in terms of Alberta women's information. We've had a lot of literature into our office inquiring why we could not have a more definite portfolio, one particular ministry, dealing with women's portfolio, similar to the federal ministry and some others. We've had a number of letters. I wonder if the minister could perhaps update us on that, if there is some indication that the government is looking at this. I guess I'm talking about putting it at a little higher profile.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Advanced Education is responsible for the status of women, and I am responsible for the Women's Bureau. Over the last approximately 18 months, there has been a growing feeling in the community from quite a number of women's organizations to form a council on women's activities. I believe my hon. colleague has responded to that question in the House, that he certainly has had representation and they've made some good points. He's also had representation from other groups who perhaps do not feel that the time is right.

For the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, I would just like to tell you right now what the duties of the branch are, as probably a lot of the members in the Assembly are not aware. The main duties of the bureau are to collect and compile information, opinions, and other material on matters of particular concern to women, including information, opinions, and material on the cultural, social, legal, public, and other rights, responsibilities, interests, and privileges of women in Alberta. Over the past few years, we've been very fortunate to

have as a director of the Women's Bureau a lady by the name of Phyllis Ellis, who has compiled some outstanding publications. Over the past year, I have shared some of them with the members of the House; for example, *Laws for Albertans* is an excellent brochure that's been put out. A *Guide to Probate Procedure* is another one that has been compiled by the Women's Bureau. She has done material on labor legislation. She represents and attends many functions throughout the province and at the national level on events concerning women.

If the hon. member would care for further information on what he's referring to as a council for women, perhaps he'd like to address that question to my hon. colleague the Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, among the issues before a government, clearly the one which affects women in our society is more and more becoming one issue where clear statements of policy are necessary from any government that wants to deal with not just issues of gender but issues of social reality, which in fact are becoming more critical in terms of the interaction of people, government interaction with various groups. I guess the concern which governments must take is the way in which they deal, in which they communicate, in which they allow various groups to shape the policy and the legislative opportunities before us.

I for one would suggest that the present policy which the government has adopted, one of having a rotation between ministers over the past four to five years, has not been effective in allowing a specific form of communication to have been established between groups and between the government itself. I think in that sense, there is a great need for us to re-examine ways in which communication takes place with government. One objective I would like to see us pursue would in fact be a more specific set of communication and interaction structures to be established between various groups across the province and with the government. Frankly, there's a lot to be gained from that, and there's an awful lot in terms of the ways in which our policies could be shaped as a reflection of the needs and demands of those who are on the receiving end of some of the policies we are outlining and articulating.

I think it is also fair to say that this government has in fact been responsive in many ways. We have not shut our eyes to the kinds of concerns and problems which have been experienced across the province. We have not foreclosed opportunities for input into policy decisions, nor have we neglected in terms of responses by allocation of resources or legislative changes or in fact empathy with many of the concerns which have been expressed. I think, however, there is a need in any big institution, such as a government the size of the province of Alberta's, for us to sharpen our ways in which we deal with these matters.

Several options have been presented to us. First of all, the option of a women's council has been one effective recommendation given. In my view, there's a lot to be said for that recommendation. There are obviously some concerns which could be suggested; I won't go into the concerns. The concerns would reflect the representation, the way in which they interact, and what official role is given to a council of this order. But these sorts of things can be sorted out, and we can find a resolution to them. I think there have been some fairly substantial recommendations given to us by certain women's groups across the province as to how the women's council could in fact operate.

On the other hand, it may well be possible for us to sharpen the existing institution which we have in this province. That is an institution where all MLAs act as the spokesmen for certain key issues. Ministers themselves, with respect to portfolio responsibilities, respond and have good input from certain groups across the province. Moreover, as a committee structure the government responds to the social needs which are at the heart of many of the concerns expressed. In that sense, as I said, we have been fairly effective in addressing some of the problems facing us.

In terms of the more specific areas, I'm not one to cite statistics. I think we should do more in terms of offering better job opportunities to women within our own organizations, within certain managerial classifications in particular. Although the record is fairly good, I think much more can be attempted in the way in which women can participate at the senior management level within our government, for example.

In terms of other problems, we have already heard a motion with respect to the battered wives question. In that sense, a co-ordination of our policy through the Minister of Social Services and Community Health has in fact addressed some of those matters. We are addressing the question of funding to shelters. In that sense, there is a response taking place.

I don't know that I need to put forward all the options before us. I think there are two possibilities; probably others will be recommended. In my view, it's now at this point where our government has to examine what could be effective ways to sharpen our communication opportunities. In the case of the council, I'd simply note that I think there are some great advantages to that council, because of course once the council starts having inputs to government policy, they then become spokesmen for the policy as well. In that sense, they are also advocating some of the positions which are jointly developed. In my view, there is a lot to recommend that option.

At the same time, there are certain women's groups across the province who are not in favor of the council and would like to see perhaps a better reconciliation of the conflict between those groups before we come down with a policy. In that sense, Mr. Chairman, I would simply add that additional comment. The discussions before us: we're in the process of re-examining several options in terms of how we deal with the status of women in the province of Alberta. I'm sure there'll be an opportunity in the future for us to outline more fully our recommendations.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: If I could supplement, we in the social planning committee are looking at the entire role of the Women's Bureau. What I relayed to you earlier is what is laid down in the Act. But I think the time has come to review what the Women's Bureau is doing, and we are addressing that issue.

MR. MARTIN: I have one further question. I take this opportunity to compliment the Minister of Culture on the film she showed the other day, *Not a Love Story*. It certainly brought home to many people pornography and the dangers. I know the Solicitor General told me about the wonderful pamphlet they have called *Lady Beware*. That's all right to recognize we have dangers. But I wonder if the minister in charge of the Women's Bureau would consult with the Solicitor General and perhaps look at another pamphlet to go along with it called *Rapist Beware*, and look at a pamphlet in terms of

education.

Lady Beware is a booklet that really puts the onus for protection on the victim, and that's about the only crime I can think of where we actually do that. I understand that in the city, we live in the real world and you have to do this. But following up from *Not a Love Story*, there should perhaps be some different pamphlet dealing with the rapist and an educational process towards men, because it does bother me when we have to put out pamphlets like that. I know everybody here thought it was a good idea. I say again: it's the only crime I can think of where we're putting the onus for prevention on the victim. I hope the minister in charge of the Women's Bureau would look into that and perhaps have some discussion with the Solicitor General on it.

MRS. LeMESSURIER: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton Norwood has certainly brought up a very good point. The crime in our cities and on our streets is completely deplorable, and I think we all should be addressing ourselves to that issue. I know the Women's Bureau is very concerned or else they would not have taken the opportunity to present that film to us. I'm sure that with the Solicitor General and Attorney General, we will try to come up with some additional material for the people in the communities.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 8 — Women's Information \$195,800

9.1 — Program Support \$3,804,800

9.2 — Development and Production \$6,549,000

9.3 — Media Utilization \$5,779,200

Total Vote 9 — Multi-Media Education Services \$16,133,000

Vote 10 — Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response:

10.1 — Program Support \$916,350

10.2 — Disaster Preparedness \$1,575,000

10.3 — Emergency Response \$80,500

10.4 — Dangerous Goods Control \$838,100

MR. MARTIN: Just one quick question to the minister before we finish. I'm sure he was aware that there was talk at the recent VIA Rail accident around Carstairs and some discussion, at least in the media, about the response time. I wonder if he is satisfied with the response time by Disaster Services in that accident, or if anything could have been done. The other thing I would ask: has the minister had any discussion with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care regarding a province-wide ambulance service? I know it falls into his area. But certainly if we had a province-wide ambulance service, I'm sure the minister would agree that it would make this department work much better.

MR. M. MOORE: In answer to the first question, Mr. Chairman, Disaster Services was not involved in any way in the response to the VIA Rail accident. That response came from various organizations: police forces, ambulances, and so on. I'm not aware that there was any inordinate delay.

In answer to the second question, as the Minister responsible for Disaster Services I have had no discussions with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care regarding province-wide ambulance services. I did have in my previous capacity as Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 10 — Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response \$3,409,950

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Vote 11 will be held, and Vote 12 has been done.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 13 — Public Affairs \$9,163,651

14 — Water Resources Advisory

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to make a few comments on this particular matter.

AN HON. MEMBER: A few comments?

MR. NOTLEY: As a matter of fact, I could be enticed, as a result of the campaign from the backbenchers, to go on for an hour and a half.

MR. MARTIN: Better keep the boys quiet back here or he will do it.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can put them to sleep, and that will be their most useful contribution to the Assembly for some time. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Can we have some order, please.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to put to the minister some comments and questions about the Water Resources Commission. I might just outline my observations, first of all, by saying that when our chairman of the commission was Minister of Transportation, I must confess he was an excellent Minister of Transportation, as I said last night in Grande Prairie. I don't always agree with him on water resource policy, but he was probably the best Minister of Transportation we had in the Peace River country for a long time. I hope his successor follows through and doesn't get caught in the vice of restraint here, because we still have lots of roads to complete.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the water commission, there are really three things I'd like to say. The first is that I think it's important that we have some kind of process set up by the commission so there will be ongoing public input through public hearings. I think that's very important. I would argue that there's probably some strong reason for the establishment of a commission to co-ordinate the various branches of government departments into one general strategy for water development. I think it is important that part of that strategy involve ongoing access by the public, not just filtered access through carefully selected appointees by this government but public access through public hearings.

The second thing I would say, Mr. Chairman, is that during the debate of 1981 in this House, as a result of copies of documents which came by the by to some of us on this side of the House, it was obvious that if there's going to be any strategy for water development in Alberta, the data that are compiled and the information prepared should be made public. I think it's wrong to have various committees operating behind closed doors, planning a strategy, and then orchestrating a public relations approach to selling any idea, whether it be water conser-

vation or water diversion. I think we have to have a commitment, secondly, for the release of the data and information compiled by this commission.

The third thing is that I think a lot of concerns about the commission would be eased if we had a firm statement from the chairman of the commission that there is no question at all about massive interbasin transfer. I know we had a debate in 1981. We had the Premier standing in his place at that time. But what troubles many of us looking at the bits and pieces of evidence which were compiled at the time — the most damaging piece of evidence by far was the letter by Mr. Melnychuk, indicating that the Dickson dam was sited specifically so that it could fit into the province's eventual objective of water diversion.

I want to tell the chairman that while all of us in this House support the sensible and prudent utilization of our river systems basin by basin, I for one remain unalterably opposed to the kind of interbasin transfer envisaged by the PRIME project, which would cost literally many, many billions of dollars.

Mr. Chairman, I think it would be useful — I know it's late in the evening, especially late for some of our government backbenchers. Nevertheless, it's not too late in the evening for this Assembly to have an opportunity to discuss this very important issue. That being the case, I'd like the minister to tell us where things stand at the moment with respect to the operation of the commission, what provision there is for public hearings, and what provision there will be for release of information. Finally, I would ask the chairman to give us an unequivocal commitment that the PRIME project is dead, it's buried, it's no longer part of any strategy on the part of either the government or the water commission.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would the member like to respond?

MR. KROEGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would. Responding to the first point the hon. leader brought up, there is a provision for public hearings in the Act which is before the House and hasn't been approved yet. So there is a prescription for doing that. Secondly, on the release of information, there's also a provision in the Act for a report to be developed each year, which will be placed before this House.

Thirdly, on the request for a commitment, obviously there isn't any way anyone could make that kind of commitment, simply because our capacity is to advise. We have no power to implement, so anything the commission as a body might decide to put before government would be in the way of advice to government. Any decision to respond to that advice would come from cabinet.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 14 — Water Resources

Advisory \$254,800

Total Vote 15 — Designation,

Regulation and Licensure of

Professions and Occupations \$546,000

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that votes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15 under Executive Council be reported.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1984, sums not exceeding the following for Executive Council for the purposes indicated: \$3,451,847 for Executive Council administration, \$11,770,585 for occupational health and safety, \$16,698,400 for workers' compensation, \$4,392,484 for support for native organizations, \$19,462,146 for personnel administration, \$19,950,000 for natural science and engineering research, \$195,800 for women's information, \$16,133,000 for multimedia services, \$3,409,950 for disaster preparedness and emergency response, \$9,163,651 for public affairs, \$254,800 for water resources advisory, and \$546,000 for designation, regulation and licensure of professions and occupations.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, are you all agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is so ordered.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow it is proposed to continue in Committee of Supply following question period, and to conclude the Department of Manpower and move to the Department of Municipal Affairs. As members are aware, the Department of Social Services and Community Health has been designated for Monday afternoon.

[At 10:25 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

