

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTAhead: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Title: **Friday, November 25, 1983 10:00 a.m.****Northern Housing Allowance**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file Motion for a Return 129.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I have the honor to submit a discussion paper on the proposed revisions to the Wildlife Act. My intent in tabling this discussion paper is to seek public comment on some of the major policy changes contemplated for inclusion in the proposed new wildlife legislation and associated regulations. It is my sincere hope that interested individuals and organizations will take advantage of this opportunity to contribute toward the direction of this important legislation.

Public notice on the availability of this document will be widespread throughout the province. Copies will be made available to each member of the House, and I would encourage members to seek the views of constituents in order to contribute to the development of this important legislation.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file five copies of two recent Northern Alberta Development Council publications. The first is the final report, *Alcoholism: Strategies for Northern Alberta*; and the second is the workshop report. These reports are the culmination of a one-year research process.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, this morning I have the pleasure of introducing to you and to members of the Assembly 50 grade 6 students from the William D. Cuts school in the city of St. Albert. These students are accompanied by their teacher Miss Welsh, by Mr. Hugh Campbell, and by their bus driver Mrs. Apoll. They are sitting in the members gallery. I would ask them all to rise and receive the recognition of the Assembly.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to Members of the Legislative Assembly a group of 40 grade 6 students from the J.E. LaPointe school located in the town of Beaumont. They are accompanied by their group leader, Dianne Hutchison, and by Gisèle Bérubé. They are located in both the public and members galleries, and I would ask that they all rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me today to introduce to you, and through you to other members of the Assembly, 45 grade 10 students from O'Leary composite high school. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Bouska. I would ask them now to rise and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the hon. Minister of Housing. It is with respect to his recent letter to the president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, concerning staff housing in northern communities. Is the minister able to advise the Assembly what policy considerations led the government to de-designate — which I guess is the bureaucratic term used — certain communities, such as Spirit River and Fort McMurray, for the northern housing allowance program?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, consideration of the staff housing policy has been going on for a number of months. A variety of factors went into the decision with respect to changes in policy.

I should note for members of the Assembly that the staff housing policy does not apply to northern Alberta; it applies to the entire province. On previous occasions, communities have been de-designated. Most recently — I believe about two years ago — 20-plus communities were de-designated. The decision to de-designate a community is based on many factors, including availability of housing, vacancy factors, and a number of others that go into that decision.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In that process of deciding the de-designation of communities, were any studies done to compare average salaries of provincial employees in de-designated areas with average home prices and monthly payment costs, in an effort to determine whether employees will be able to afford to buy the homes they now rent?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, a variety of studies are undertaken from time to time by the Department of Housing with respect to relative housing costs, availability, and affordability. Those go on throughout the year. Principally, CMHC undertakes studies for the major centres, and we undertake studies for the balance of the province. Those are done at least once a year.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In determining that rental rates in homes that won't be sold will be 100 per cent of the average market rate by 1986, did the studies that the minister alluded to compare the quality of these government homes with other houses in the province, now that we are going to 100 per cent of the market rate?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, one of the factors that goes into determining market rental is the type of unit that is being considered. Certainly some of the factors are the condition, the age, and the size. A number of factors go into determining averages for the province. So those factors will be considered when average rents are determined.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. Is the minister in a position to confirm that the provision of low-cost housing is part of the agreement with many northern employees, and could the minister advise the Assembly what assessment was made of that agreement before the government developed its new policy with respect to de-designation of a number of northern communities?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows, the wages and benefits of employees are subject to negotiation. I am sure that those matters will be discussed when the next opportunity arises. In the case of all of Alberta, we have examined the private sector and other public-sector employers who have found that these provisions are no longer appropriate. We have examined our agreement, and it is not part of the agreement that this is something that is discussed at the bargaining table.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Housing. My question relates not to the market conditions but to the comparability of wages and whether or not, in reviewing this policy, the government examined the average salaries of provincial employees in the de-designated areas with the average home prices, as opposed to the market conditions, before announcing the policy.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, in my earlier response I indicated that a part of the work that has been done over the past number of months in reviewing the staff housing policy . . . I should note that we are not de-designating the entire province. There are many communities and isolated areas where staff housing will remain available and will be provided by the Housing Corporation. But affordability is one of the items that is looked at in the course of our annual review. It should also be noted that the process of de-designation will occur over a lengthy period of time — three years — and that the individuals who are living in staff housing units that are being de-designated will receive significant opportunities for discounts off the market price of those units, should they wish to purchase them.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. What consideration, if any, was given? The minister indicated that it wasn't subject to bargaining. But given the fact that we've had this policy in effect for some time — and people have gone north on the basis of the housing program — what consideration, if any, was given by the minister to reviewing this proposal of de-designation with the AUPE prior to announcing the program, in a consultative rather than confrontational approach?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the words of the Leader of the Opposition are his words, and not necessarily appropriate to the question. The allegation has been made that this is a confrontational tactic. I believe the Minister of Housing would be quite prepared to supplement my remarks and indicate the contacts and consultation that have gone on.

But I would say that the employees who do not have housing or do not have the opportunity to work in those locations where such housing is available, have expressed concerns that they are not in the same situation as those employees who did have that opportunity. As the minister has indicated, some areas of the province will remain, and some employees will continue to have the opportunity.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that we have indicated and updated our present policies with regard to those employees who choose not to take advantage of the opportunity to acquire those houses that are available to them over the period of time and under the terms the corporation has indicated. We have updated those so that those employees will receive assistance to relocate in the same community.

MR. SPEAKER: The question was quite out of order. Under the circumstances, I certainly couldn't intervene and prevent the minister from dealing with it.

Apparently the hon. Minister of Housing wishes to supplement the answer.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to supplement the answer of my colleague with respect to consultation, because it's an important question.

The largest community with respect to number of employees, in terms of impact of the change in the staff housing policy, is Fort McMurray. At the invitation of staff members at Fort McMurray, I met with them, received a brief, and discussed the issue extensively. As a result of their advice and input, the process of de-designating and gradual movement toward average market rents was directly as a responsibility of input from union members.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question. Is the minister telling the House that the advice he received from the bargaining agent was to move to de-designation? Or is the minister telling the House that during the process of consultation, in which the minister indicated that de-designation was a preferred route, certain recommendations were made to him as to how it might be done?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, the discussion revolved around how best to achieve a gradual movement. This was the position that we discussed. In terms of the advice we received, we didn't of course respond positively to all the recommendations. But many of the recommendations we received were incorporated in the policy, and that was the result of that discussion with the union membership in Fort McMurray.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to either the Minister of Housing or the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. Prior to the letter of November 18 to Mr. Booth, was any formal initiative taken by the government — any of the responsible ministers of the government — to discuss with the bargaining agent, not how the de-designation policy might be implemented but the merits of the de-designation policy?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, no. I indicated in my first response that we began the process a number of months ago. The process was begun for a number of reasons, and I indicated them earlier: the changing availability of housing throughout Alberta, higher vacancy rates, significantly changed housing conditions and market availability, and also the cost factors involved, which are very important in terms of the cost of staff housing programs to the user departments. These were all factors that went into the examination and review. It should be noted as well that this review has taken place previously and, as conditions warrant, from time to time communities are de-designated.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Then can the Minister of Housing give the Assembly an estimate of what the savings will be to the taxpayer by phasing out or de-designation of the areas identified, and undoubtedly the savings to the taxpayers that will be assumed by the employees? But could we get some kind of figure that the government is using as a yardstick for this policy?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the exact figures with me, but I can certainly provide them to the hon. member. The savings are substantial and significant over the period of the three years, bearing in mind that the movement toward market rent will not occur immediately but will occur gradually over a three-year period.

MR. NOTLEY: Savings that the employees will keep in mind when they bargain, I'm sure.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

Public Lands Study

MR. NOTLEY: Could I put the second question to the hon. Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife, Mr. Speaker, and ask the minister to indicate why the departments of Energy and Natural Resources, Agriculture, Environment, Municipal Affairs, and Transportation are undertaking a joint agricultural land base study at the same time that the Environment Council of Alberta is conducting a major series of public hearings into the same topic?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very evident that we are searching for views and input from the public with reference to all policies for the use of public lands, and therefore we are encouraging any organizations that want to suggest ideas to come to either body.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. Given the government's restraint policy, is there not some danger of duplication? As opposed to having one agency, we now have apparently one agency plus departments doing the ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We're definitely in the realm of opinion.

MR. NOTLEY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: That's not a matter of fact.

MR. NOTLEY: It's not opinion at all. It's a question of whether or not the minister has assessed the costs to the people of Alberta of the duplication of the ECA hearings by departmental assignments.

MR. SPEAKER: That's quite a different question and doesn't justify the previous one.

MR. SPARROW: Primarily, Mr. Speaker, the ECA is the main body that we're looking to for public input. They're having hearings throughout the province. A good portion of the work we're doing is internal with other departments, making sure that all the departments within government have a say in the matter and get that information to a committee, thus saving the expense of our departments going to the public hearings themselves.

MR. NOTLEY: I see. Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could ask the hon. minister whether or not we are going to have a public report as a result of the land base study which is being undertaken by these various departments.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the ECA is primarily looking at the use of agricultural land and the protection of agricultural land in the future. It's not designated primarily to look at all Crown lands and the use of all Crown lands. We are continuously working on plans on IMPs within Energy and Natural Resources, with all the other departments, and doing the integrated management planning throughout the province on all Crown lands, not specifically designated toward just agricultural lands, as the ECA is looking at.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. What assessment has the department made of the proposal presented yesterday by the former Deputy Premier to the ECA in Grande Prairie, with respect to Pioneer Two, a new pioneers program? Has there been any review of the suggestion by the former Deputy Premier that there are 10 million acres of arable land in Alberta?

MR. SPARROW: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I have not been able to read that report that was presented; I'm looking forward to reading it. The current situation is that the province is putting into the agricultural field about 200,000 acres a year and, in some years, as high as 300,000. Over a 10-year program, that would be in the magnitude of about 3 million acres. There are 26 IMPs, integrated management plans, being done throughout the province right now, 12 of which I hope will be finished this year. They are continuously designating agricultural land within each area. Those areas will be well designated and planned and, at that planning stage, there is a lot of public input in each local community.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. By the minister's reckoning, it's going to take 35 years for us to reach the [former] Deputy Premier's objective. Perhaps I could direct this to the Premier. Has the government considered changing policies with respect to land development, to quicken what is a very conservative pace?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I haven't read the former Deputy Premier's submission, but I have heard him on many discussions on the matter right in this Legislative Assembly. I am sure that the minister responsible will give due consideration to the presentation the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to and their joint representation.

Right to Privacy

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, who signed Regulation 375. This has to do with the protection of privacy of individual records. In light of the fact that Revenue Canada was seeking information from a municipality, can the Premier indicate to the Assembly why the regulation was passed by this government, allowing access to vital statistics records to other governments or, in some cases, to individuals?

MR. LOUGHEED: I'd refer that question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is referring to some amendments to the regulations of the Vital Statistics Act. The amendments were not very significant, in that information had in the past been going to certain areas in the federal government. I'm struggling to remember the details of the amendment, but they were not very significant. It was simply a modification of information going to several other areas it hadn't been going to in the past. I would be happy to check up on the details of that and report back.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister about the section where the information could be made available to researchers. I would like to know from the government what safeguards are in place not only to indicate that the information should be kept by the researcher, but what mechanism is there in place to make sure that that information is kept confidential?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, again I'd have to check the details of that. If there is a reference to information going to researchers, it's my memory that that can only occur [with] the approval of the director of vital statistics or the minister, but again I'd be happy to check back.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister also check to find out, and inform the Assembly, if there are any penalties to make sure that the information is kept confidential? It's fine that the director can say to the researcher that it must be, but can the minister indicate to the Legislature the policy guidelines to make sure the [information] is kept confidential?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to check that as well, although I think the hon. member himself could check that in the regulations or in the Act. But I'd be happy to do that as well.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I can check it, as I have the regulation. But the thing is, I want to know what policy there is in place, Mr. Minister, to make sure the information is kept confidential, because there are a certain number of people to whom this information can be made available.

DR. WEBBER: I don't think that requires a response, Mr. Speaker. I indicated that I would look into it.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to supplement the point that's been raised, if I may. I think this refers to questions raised earlier in the week by the hon. Member for Clover Bar. As I indicated at that time, the government of Alberta has made representations to the government of Canada to ensure that records and materials supplied by the government of Alberta to the government of Canada be retained as confidential while we are in the process of developing a clear policy to comply with information supplied by our government to the government of Canada pursuant to the new legislation at the federal government level; namely, the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. I can assure hon. members that we share the concern now expressed by the Member for Clover Bar and, indeed, that concern was expressed to the government of Canada in my letter of June 30, 1983.

I could point out that there are penalties available in the federal government legislation, Mr. Speaker. But I don't think it would be appropriate for me to enunciate them here in the Assembly, because they are a matter of public record.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary question to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. I wonder if the minister could indicate to the Assembly, or get the information for the Assembly, as to what the government of Alberta has in place to ensure that information given to local hospital boards or local health authorities is also kept confidential. Can the minister indicate what that policy is?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated the other day, the letter I sent was a letter which referred not only to the government of Alberta but to municipal or regional governments or agencies and emanations of the government of Alberta and to institutions, where specifically mentioned, which would cover hospital boards.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Camrose, followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

MR. STROMBERG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to defer my question until Monday, if I may.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wainwright, followed by the hon. Minister of Social Services and Community Health, who wishes to supplement some information previously sought.

Russian Tractors

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development. I wonder if the minister has made any representation to Comrade Hazen Argue on the statement he made that Alberta farmers should be buying Russian tractors because we are selling them wheat. [interjections]

MR. PLANCHE: No I haven't, Mr. Speaker. It was a press report I made, not a direct quote of the senator. Perhaps my colleague the Minister of International Trade would like to comment.

MR. SPEAKER: The reference just made by the hon. member has been going around in my mind for a moment. I guess it's marginal. I can't say it's really out-and-out parliamentary, but of course it's a reference to a person who is . . .

DR. BUCK: It's worse than "puppets".

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: A senator?

MR. SPEAKER: It's a reference to a person who is not in the Assembly and has no equal opportunity to answer that implication.

Prescription Drug Costs

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday of this week, the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood raised a question related to a study of the Saskatchewan prescription drug plan by a group called Associated Health Planners, with some references in that study to some drug prices in Alberta.

I indicated on Wednesday that the Department of Social Services and Community Health had no responsibility with respect to determining what drug prices should be throughout the province of Alberta. I also indicated on Wednesday that the Department of Social Services and Community Health annually negotiates with the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association to determine what should be paid by the department to cover the costs of drugs for social allowance recipients and child welfare recipients. So that is the process: we do negotiate for our clients. However, the Pharmaceutical Association, not unlike the Dental Association and other groups, does determine their prices, and there is a monitoring or auditing going on across the province to determine whether or not the pharmacists stick within the guidelines set forth by the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association.

I want to indicate that there is an individual in the community health area that has had a look at the particular study. He has some concerns about the statistics in that study. At the same time, the author of that report has indicated that the report itself had been misinterpreted by the news media. He has written a letter to the editor of the *Edmonton Journal* with respect to a particular article.

One of the misconceptions in the article that I wanted to clear up was the fact that there was a reference made to a

guideline of 25 per cent above wholesale costs that would apply to the retailers. That is not accurate; that is, the wholesaler and retailer together cannot charge any more than 25 per cent above the manufacturer's price. That's a very significant difference. In terms of our responsibilities in the department, we do negotiate with them, and we negotiate the dispensing fee on top of the wholesale price to the retailers.

U of A Building Standards

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, just before we leave question period, I'd like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. It's a follow-up to questions I put before with respect to the Earth Sciences Building, the old agriculture building, at the University of Alberta.

Has the Minister of Advanced Education had an opportunity to review the conclusions of Fairbairn Brimsmead Ziola, the architectural firm hired by the University of Alberta, which concluded that existing conditions pose a serious and real threat to the students and staff in the building?

MR. JOHNSTON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. As a result of the review of that report, has the minister come to the conclusion that changes should be made, or does he share the position of the Minister of Labour that they are really quite minor deficiencies?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it is my view that there need to be some corrections to the Earth Sciences Building. I may disagree with what the minister said, that students don't sleep in the building. There may be some dispute about that. But I would simply indicate that in my budget process, we are including for this current year an amount to renovate that building. There is some difficulty with the amount which was targeted by the university and the amount which has now been agreed to. But none the less, it is included in the capital budgeting process.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear that we are going to put some money into renovation of the building.

A supplementary question to the hon. minister. Have there been specific discussions between the minister and Mr. Phillips, the vice-president of facilities and services at the University of Alberta, not only with respect to the Earth Sciences Building but with respect to other buildings where there have been some concerns expressed about the adequacy of the structure and the safety of the people in it?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have not had discussions with Mr. Phillips. That would of course be done at the staff basis. But what should be clear is that the department has had a continuing discussion with the university at various levels. I should restate as well that the view now held by the department, in conjunction with discussions and with the University of Alberta itself, is that some of the renovations may not be as extreme as required in some other studies which we have on our desks.

The point is, we've negotiated a reasonable understanding as to what kind of renovations should take place. I have been in communication with the president of the university. It is at the urging of the board of governors that we made the review, and that would be the initiation of any capital budgeting request.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs wishes to supplement concerning a topic previously raised in the question period.

Prescription Drug Costs (continued)

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was only a very brief supplementary to the information provided by the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. I too received some information from the author of the report that was under discussion and some calls from the Consumers' Association, Mrs. Sally Hall in particular, and we've had discussions. I'm going to undertake to review the information provided by not only Social Services and Community Health but the Consumers' Association.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

29. Moved by Mr. Crawford:
Be it resolved that the *Standing Orders* of the Legislative Assembly be amended as follows:
 1. *Standing Order 4(1) is struck out and the following is substituted:*
4(1) The presence of at least 20 Members of the Legislative Assembly is necessary to constitute a meeting of the Legislative Assembly for the exercise of its powers, and in counting the number of those present, Mr. Speaker, if present, shall be included.
 2. *The following is added after Standing Order 11:*
11.1(1) If the Speaker is absent or unable to act, the Deputy Speaker shall take the Chair until the end of that sitting day or until the Speaker returns, whichever first occurs.
(2) If the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are absent or unable to act, the Deputy Chairman of Committees shall take the Chair until the end of that sitting day or until the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker returns, whichever first occurs.
(3) If the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Deputy Chairman of Committees are all absent or unable to act, the Clerk shall so advise the Assembly, and the Assembly may elect one of its members to take the Chair and preside over the proceedings of the Assembly until the end of that sitting day or until the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, or Deputy Chairman of Committees returns, whichever first occurs.
(4) If Mr. Speaker finds it necessary to leave the Chair during a sitting of the Assembly, he may call on the Deputy Speaker or the Deputy Chairman of Committees or, in their absence, on any member of the Assembly to take the Chair and preside over the proceedings of the Assembly for the remainder of that sitting day or until Mr. Speaker returns, whichever first occurs.
(5) A reference to Mr. Speaker in these *Standing Orders* includes any member acting as Speaker pursuant to this standing order.
 3. *The following is added after Standing Order 29:*
29.1(1) Questions arising in the Assembly shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast.
(2) Mr. Speaker shall not vote on any motion except in the case of a tied vote, in which case Mr. Speaker shall cast the deciding vote.
 4. *Temporary Standing Order 36.1 is repealed and the following is substituted as a permanent Standing Order:*
36.1 A member may have two notices of Motions other than Government Motions in his name on the Order Paper at the same time.
 5. *Standing Order 51.1 is amended:*
 - (a) in suborder (4)

- (i) by striking out "Thursday" and substituting "Monday", and
 - (ii) by striking out "the following Monday" and substituting "the following Wednesday";
- (b) in suborder (5) by striking out "Thursday" and substituting "Monday".

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think a few words in support of the motion are probably in order, although it's relatively straightforward.

The first proposal deals with the question of a quorum in the Assembly, a matter which has been dealt with in the past by the Legislative Assembly Act. When that was redrafted, it was thought appropriate that the *Standing Orders* be the source of direction to the Assembly on that point. The next paragraph really clarifies something which would seem to make sense and be a very practical approach to who is acting as Speaker on each occasion when the Speaker or the Deputy may not be there. Clause number 2 covers that in full detail. In respect of number 3, I don't think any explanation is required. It's the long-understood view of what would happen in respect of a vote in the Assembly, but it should be clarified by being placed in the rules.

Number 4 changes something in respect of private members. There has always been the rule, at least in recent years, that a member of the opposition might have two notices of motion under Motions other than Government Motions, but under the previous temporary *Standing Order* that did not apply to government members. The proposal is that that now be applied to government members as well. The fifth one is self-explanatory, Mr. Speaker, changing the day and date of designation for occasions when the Leader of the Opposition might designate estimates to be considered in Committee of Supply.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments on the motion we have today. First of all, I think it's worth reflecting on why we had the decision to allow opposition members the prerogative of having two resolutions on the Order Paper. In 1975, when the government was re-elected with a large majority, there was at least some degree of chivalry left in this government — not much, but some. One of the agreements at that time was that in an effort to accommodate the smallness of the opposition — smallness in terms of representation in the House; not in terms of voters out in the general population, because there are many hundreds of thousands of Albertans who don't agree with this government. But the "first past the post" system means that a relatively modest number of votes can mean almost every seat in the House. So in 1975, we changed the rules. The reason we changed the rules was to make sure that opposition members, even though there were only six at the time, would have an opportunity to get their concerns expressed in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, what hon. members will say is, all we're doing now is giving that same right to everyone. The only problem with that argument is that there is only a certain amount of designated time for private members' business. The net result is that if we have two resolutions from 74 members of the government, we have 148 resolutions. There are four members of the opposition. The chance of opposition resolutions coming up as frequently as they do now will be reduced. Of course, we have the designation option, which we have exercised from time to time. But that is going to mean that the only practical route for opposition resolutions will be the designation route. What that also means is that since designation is something the Leader of the Opposition has the right to do — and we would obviously want to consult with our Independent colleagues, as

they consulted with me when they were the Official Opposition — the fact of the matter is that there is no right in the standing rules that any of these resolutions will be designated. If I were to be mean minded enough to say only the resolutions put in by my colleague or me will be designated, too bad for the Independents.

I think that is really quite unfair, Mr. Speaker, because we should not redraft the rules in such a way that the capacity of opposition members to present their case, which was universally accepted in 1975, is in fact reduced. That is precisely what is going to happen with this particular change. It's almost similar to the changes that are being thrust upon us with respect to the working agreement we had on the boundaries commission, where there was parity. Now that's thrown out the window, and we find that we have a different approach in the boundaries commission. We now find that an approach which was acceptable and which was agreed to in 1975 is changed in this particular resolution. Mr. Speaker, I would say to members of the government: really, what are you worried about? You have lots of opportunity to get your points of view across, in terms of government designated business. Why, then, do we restrict the already limited opportunity of a small opposition?

Frankly, I might have been prepared even to accept that — I don't think it's a good principle, and it's a change from what we did in 1975 — if we had been able to go one step further. You may recall debate in this House some years ago, when members of the opposition argued that we should perhaps follow the procedure in other assemblies, where a private member's resolution or a private member's Bill actually comes to a vote, so we don't get this business of talking out resolutions which are politically embarrassing. We'd have to take a stand. If we had had that kind of consultative process where the government caucus had come to the two opposition caucuses and said that maybe they would give everybody two resolutions on the Order Paper but that we're going to have a procedure for a vote, then I might have had to say: well, we'll balance one off against the other.

But all I see in this resolution is a departure from the gentlemen's agreement — or perhaps in deference to all members of the House, the gentlepersons' agreement — of 1975. Instead of having that kind of understanding carry through, we now find that we're going to be flooding the Order Paper with all kinds of private members' resolutions. Mr. Speaker, I really suggest to members of the government that at the very least, it's not particularly chivalrous at all.

Most of the other proposals are not terribly significant. I note that in section 5, we're dealing with slight changes in terms of the designation: "the following Monday" to "the following Wednesday". In my view, those are not overwhelming problems at all. But the major one, as I see it, is that we as an Assembly are shifting away from the agreement we had in 1975.

I want to make one final comment, Mr. Speaker, in discussing the rules that are on the Order Paper. I personally believe it is time to formally strike a committee, representing both sides of the House, to review in total the standing rules of this Legislative Assembly. I think there are elements in the standing rules which are archaic. I think there are areas that need to be expanded. I think we can learn from other jurisdictions. In my judgment, the rules of the House should be the property of the entire House. From time to time, there is a good deal of merit in having a thorough review: not a review by a few people sitting in a caucus, whether it be a government caucus or an opposition caucus, but a review formally undertaken by both sides of the House.

I've seen this work on occasion. In 1973 there were major changes in the rules of this House. Mr. Speaker, they came in

as a result of a committee representing both sides of the House. I certainly appreciated some of those changes. You may recall that before 1973, there had to be a seconder for every motion. As a solitary member of the House, one would have to find courtesy seconds. I don't know whether that embarrassed members of the government or the opposition caucuses so much that they agreed to do away with the seconding provision; perhaps it did. Nevertheless, there was a certain amount of chivalry, and we eliminated the seconding provision. We did that as a result of consultation. I remember that I was approached, even though I wasn't on the committee, to give my view as to the applicability of that particular provision. We also made changes. We changed the amount of time that members could speak. It had previously been 40 minutes, which was perhaps unnecessarily long, so we reduced it to 30 minutes, again as a result of consultation and the good work of a committee representing both sides of the House.

What we have in this particular Order Paper resolution is a new approach, where the government makes a decision, comes in with changes, and we're asked to swallow it. I suggest that that is just not the appropriate course to follow. I say to members of the government caucus: I will vote against this resolution, simply on the basis of section 4. I have no quarrel with most of the other sections but, because of section 4, I don't really think I can vote in favor of it. In my judgment, it represents a complete, unilateral departure from the agreement of 1975.

I would say to members of the government that it's time for us to strike a committee, representing both sides, to review in total the *Standing Orders* of this House. That might be a more co-operative way to handle something which is the property of every single member, government or opposition, in the Legislature.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to say a few words on this particular motion, which I support, I take some exception to the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition. First of all, he states that we could very well have 74 motions on the Order Paper. As I as a member of this House for over 12 years now understand the situation, cabinet members cannot put a motion on the Order Paper to be debated. It has to be put under Government Business. So that leaves the rest of the private members, of which there are about 44 of us on the government side, who are allowed to do that.

I think it's a good move, under section 4, to allow government members to make that move. I had one particular resolution on the Order Paper this 20th Legislature. I want to have another one but can't do it until such time as that particular resolution of mine is cleared from the Order Paper. I agreed with the hon. Leader of the Opposition when he said we should have more votes, because I would have liked to have seen my resolution on seat belts, which we debated yesterday, come to a vote.

Speaking about designation, I recall that for all the Thursdays that we met in this Assembly in 1983, the opposition only designated about three times. One of them was my particular [motion] on seat belts, which was designated on April 21. The other designation we had last week was on my Bill 240, on Sunday shopping. So I'm quite popular in having motions designated by the opposition.

I think it is a good move. I will certainly support the amendment brought forward by the Government House Leader and would urge other members of the Assembly to do the same.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I also would like to speak on that point, and I agree with the member who just spoke. The reason I disagree with the Leader of the Opposition is that I

get tired of debating the same motions. If there were more motions on the Order Paper, I'm sure we wouldn't be debating motions that have already been debated earlier in the year. If you take a look at the Order Paper, there isn't a motion that hasn't already been debated once, and maybe some of them have been debated more than once. For that reason, I certainly support the change.

I agree with the Member for Stony Plain. If you have a motion on the Order Paper and have another good idea, you are disallowed from putting it on the Order Paper. Certainly from March until October, times change, interest changes in the constituency. So an issue which would be well advised to be debated in a private member's motion which may arise in October — under the old rules, you are not able to put it on the Order Paper unless you can talk one of your colleagues who doesn't happen to have a motion on it into doing it in his name. So I really would support the change.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in debate on the changes now before the House, let me first say that I'm one who particularly recognizes the importance and necessity of the Official Opposition, the opposition in general, and the parliamentary process. Indeed, I believe that that opposition always has to have an opportunity to correctly express itself on behalf of the percentage of the population that is not represented by government, and to propose ideas and scrutinize legislation. Let me also indicate that it's my personal opinion that these changes in no way whatsoever detract from that.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has made the suggestion that this is a way of having the government place more of its concerns on the Order Paper. The fact of the matter is that Tuesdays and Thursdays in this Legislature are private members' days, whether they be government members or opposition members, when individual members are concerned either with issues related directly to their constituency or with issues that have not yet become government legislation and maybe never will become legislation. They have an opportunity to bring those concerns and those issues to this House. Indeed, as chairman of the House strategy committee for the government side — and this is one reason I was one of those recommending this change — throughout this year it's been apparent that because this House has not chosen to vote on their motion, or because for some reason it's been impractical to do so, many members with good, solid ideas have been unable to bring an idea on behalf of their constituents to the Assembly again on the day that's designated for that particular purpose. Already the hon. Member for Stony Plain has outlined that in fact the designation that's possible, in terms of usage for the opposition, has seldom taken place during this sitting; in fact, my recollection is once during this sitting of the Legislature, and I stand to be corrected on that.

If one looks at the current Order Paper, out of 19 motions you will find four from opposition members; half of those that are allotted to those members. I suggest that with the use of the designation, there would be no fewer opposition motions likely to be debated next year. I suppose that at the end of the year, we can assess that and see if that's in fact the case. Regardless of that, I believe that on private members' day, every member should have equal opportunity to represent their constituents, apart from government policy.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke about passage of motions. If he goes back to the record, I would suggest that this fall we've passed more motions than we have in the time that I've been a member of this Assembly. I think that's been a recognition by members of the Assembly of the need to move on many of these issues and the inherent merit they have.

In short, Mr. Speaker, I do feel it's both fair and chivalrous, if one would like to use that term. I don't believe it takes away at all from the opposition's role in this Assembly. I believe it only adds to the role of the individual members of this Assembly; therefore, I wholeheartedly support it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a word or two on the resolution. I feel that this government is just taking the parliamentary process for granted, and I say that with great hesitancy. But surely when we are changing the rules of this House, there should be some consultation. I want to apologize to the Government House Leader if there was some notice that somehow I, my colleague, or the Leader of the Opposition missed.

I would like to know from the Government House Leader if there was any consultation with both sides of the House. Was there consultation with the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker? Because at this time, I'm sure the greatest Conservative champion of the protection of parliamentary procedure, the Rt. Hon. John Diefenbaker, a man who felt that Parliament should always be supreme in all matters, is trying to claw his way out of that frozen ground in Saskatoon overlooking the [South] Saskatchewan.

Both sides of the House should be treated equally. There should be full consultation on changing the rules of the Assembly. Unless I missed something, that consultation was not there. I was pleased to hear the hon. Member for Calgary Currie indicate that he had expressed his concern and was responsible for this. Surely the hon. Member for Calgary Currie could have said to the opposition side of the House: this is what we're looking at; let's sit down and discuss it. After all, it's not a little government caper that we're pulling off here, hon. Member for Calgary Currie. This is something that will change the rules of the House. When you're changing rules of the Assembly and the method the Assembly operates by, then surely there should be full consultation from both sides of the House, including the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that there has been a miscarriage of justice here and a high-handed approach. I am trying to say that benevolently, Mr. Government House Leader, and not maliciously. I am just trying to say that if there was some consultation, I must have missed it. I really think the government should at least show that token bit of courtesy. We know that they are going to make the changes, but let's at least go about it like honorable gentlemen and ladies who have been elected to this Assembly should.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I feel that the Government House Leader certainly owes us a very, very clear explanation of what they are trying to do.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. Government House Leader conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, perhaps just a few remarks in connection with some of the things that have been said. First of all, there are two resolutions on today's Order Paper with respect to the *Standing Orders*. In due course we will deal with resolution No. 30. The changes there are very extensive, and full consultation was undertaken by Parliamentary Counsel with both the opposition and the government with respect to that. In that respect, a great deal of time and effort was put into it. Perhaps I should make those remarks under Motion No. 30, but I thought it might be worth noting that now.

As well, when I moved Motion No. 29, perhaps I should have made the point that the first three paragraphs are all really

a direct consequence of passing the new Legislative Assembly Act and do not represent any change in the government's view with respect to how the *Standing Orders* should make provision for these things. They retain a principle which I think has been assumed over the years by hon. members in the Assembly in all three cases: references to quorum, to the presence of the Speaker, and to how the counting of the votes might be done if there is a tie. Those are three things which have always been treated, in one way or another, by either the Legislative Assembly Act or the *Standing Orders*. These provisions change nothing in principle; however, they add greatly to the clarity.

Mr. Speaker, in respect of paragraph 5, I suppose I should have consulted with the Leader of the Opposition. In that respect, perhaps I could note for him now that in the government's scheduling of a session, with the experience we have with respect to this rule for the designation of estimates by the Leader of the Opposition, it has been found that Mondays are more likely to be a legislation day. If that was going to be the practice throughout the spring sittings, we would effectively deprive the Leader of the Opposition of the value of having a rule for designation. I say again that surely I should at least have called him about it. But in the result, we will be able to assure that most Wednesdays — particularly if there is a specific request — would now be dedicated to estimates during a period when estimates are before the Assembly. We didn't feel able to make quite the same undertaking with respect to Mondays.

On the other matter raised, Mr. Speaker, which is under paragraph 4, I think all hon. members have sufficiently addressed that. I would only underline the principle expressed: that a private member, whether in the government or in the opposition, is treated equally under that rule with respect to his proposals for resolutions.

[Motion carried]

30. Moved by Mr. Crawford:

Be it resolved that the *Standing Orders* of the Assembly be amended in accordance with the recommendation tabled by Mr. Speaker on November 18, 1983, and that the Parliamentary Counsel renumber the *Standing Orders* to remove decimalized numbering and prepare a new index.

And be it further resolved that the amended *Standing Orders* come into force on January 1, 1984.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should say that having in effect, if not effectively, already spoken to the matter, I need say no more.

[Motion carried]

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 71

Condominium Property Amendment Act, 1983

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, my colleague was almost going to handle my Bill for me. I apologize for being outside for a moment.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to move second reading of Bill 71, the Condominium Property Amendment Act. There is only one principle contained in this Bill, and it has to do with the condominiumization of bare land. I am very pleased to present this new concept, because a number of people throughout the province, through either organizations or their

contact with this concept in other jurisdictions, have brought this idea forward.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that this Bill was brought forward for first reading in the Legislature in the spring session this year. I made it patently clear that I would be consulting with all jurisdictions in the province and those people interested in this particular concept. To that end, I wrote to every municipal authority in the province, as well as to a number of others who had indicated an interest in the concept. I received an overwhelming response in terms of tacit approval of the concept, but certainly contained in those responses were a number of concerns with respect to the possible loss of jurisdiction by municipal authorities. While I thought I had made it perfectly clear that municipal authorities would have to be consulted and approve if this concept were to go forward in their particular jurisdiction, that didn't seem to be clear to them on their reading of the Bill. This observation was made by most of the municipalities, as well as the regional planning commissions, that responded.

I also received some feedback, all very positive, from developers and would-be home-owners. But I think we have to recognize that there are two sides to this issue when we get into the planning aspect of it; that is, while municipal officials are very concerned with the application of the Planning Act, a number of developers, particularly represented by the Housing and Urban Development Association, have some concerns about the possible extra obligations that would be placed on this type of development by the Planning Act.

But I want to make it perfectly clear now that the Planning Act does apply, that no development will take place without the approval of the municipal authority. Should there be concurrence by all those parties involved that there should be changes to the Planning Act that would facilitate this type of development in a slightly different manner, that would have to be done under the shepherding of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who has agreed that he will entertain suggestions as to how this type of development may take place.

Mr. Speaker, I had a number of meetings with those people who are interested — the manufactured housing association — who are very supportive and believe they can probably advance some proposals with the Planning Act as it stands. I guess one could describe it as a chicken-and-egg situation. Certainly some proposals will have to be brought forward so one can ascertain if the Planning Act is indeed suitable in its present form to support this kind of proposal. I am assured by many people that they believe it in fact does lend itself to facilitating this new concept. But I would advise those people who have raised planning concerns with me that those concerns will, on the passage of this Bill, be more properly directed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

I would certainly thank the MLAs who have received representations and passed them along to me, as well as those who have spent time either through submitting briefs or indeed meeting with me. I should also mention the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association, who have been very supportive but believe some amendments may have to be made in future.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I move second reading of Bill 71.

[Motion carried; Bill 71 read a second time]

Bill 114
Public Service Employee Relations
Amendment Act, 1983

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 114, the Public Service Employee Relations Amendment Act, 1983.

This Act consists of five minor changes to the Public Service Employee Relations Act. The first change will allow for two

alternate chairmen. The present Act only allows one. The reason for this is that they have numerous meetings, the members are part-time, and occasionally there are meetings in Calgary and in Edmonton.

The second change re-enacts a clause which was repealed inadvertently in Bill 44 last spring. This is determination of whether a person is included in a bargaining unit, and it's quite important where there's more than one union in the case of, say, hospitals, where you have AUPE and CUPE involved.

The third change — due to the wording, the present Act includes in the bargaining unit persons training to be a member of a profession. This will exclude them. I think this was requested by the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta.

The fourth change will allow for a run-off vote where there's more than one trade union applying for certification. The last change is just to strike out the word "arbitral" throughout the section, because in this case the employer does not determine what is arbitral. This is determined by the board. Of course there are some items that are not arbitrable at all; for instance, pensions or the number of employees an employer would have.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this Bill will correct some of the problems in the Public Service Employee Relations Act, and I commend this Bill to the Assembly for second reading.

[Motion carried; Bill 114 read a second time]

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Third Reading)

[It was moved by the members indicated that the following Bills be read a third time, and the motions were carried]

No.	Title	Moved by
91	Pacific Western Airlines Act	Crawford (for M. Moore)
92	Environment Statutes Amendment Act, 1983	Crawford (for Bradley)
99	Property Tax Reduction Amendment Act, 1983	Crawford (for Koziak)
100	Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2)	Hyndman
102	Planning Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2)	Crawford (for Koziak)
103	Libraries Act	LeMessurier
104	Treasury Branches Amendment Act, 1983	Elliott

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the magical qualities of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources will enable him to arrive, if the Assembly can just wait a moment. He's now here.

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)
(reversion)

Bill 115
Natural Gas Pricing Agreement
Amendment Act, 1983

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I never want to disappoint our House leader, and I'm pleased to see that we haven't done so on this occasion.

Mr. Speaker, in moving second reading of Bill 115, I would first of all simply underline the purpose of the Bill as enunciated

a day or so ago when it was introduced. It is to establish a formal mechanism by which the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission could administer an incentive natural gas marketing program in Canada, one such program being the incentive interruptible industrial natural gas marketing plan that is presently under consideration by the province of Alberta to enhance our natural gas sales *ex Alberta* in Canada. In that regard, the Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Dr. Mellon, travelled to eastern Canada this week and met with his counterparts in both Ontario and Quebec to try to refine the details of such an incentive program.

I should make it clear that the mechanism being put in place here is broadly stated. The incentive plan we are presently considering would fall within it. It is our hope that if we are able to finalize the technical aspects of the incentive proposal, we would be able to implement it early in the new year. The fact of the matter is that in the absence of this legislative amendment, there simply would not be the mechanism to facilitate such a program, and that is why it is being brought forward to the Assembly for its consideration.

I think that is the essence of the amendment, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to its consideration by the Assembly.

[Motion carried; Bill 115 read a second time]

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**
(Committee of the Whole)

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the committee please come to order.

Bill 106
Oil Sands Conservation Act

MR. CHAIRMAN: The first Bill we have for consideration is Bill 106, the Oil Sands Conservation Act. There is an amendment to this Bill, which has been circulated. Are there any questions or comments regarding the sections of the amendment?

[Motion on amendment carried]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. ZAOZIRNY: I move that the Bill as amended be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill 108
Summary Convictions Amendment Act, 1983

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions or comments regarding the sections of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 108 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill 112
Provincial Court
Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions or comments regarding the sections of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 112 be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. APPLEBY: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole Assembly has had under consideration the following Bills, and reports as follows: Bills 108 and 112, and Bill 106 with some amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it's not yet clear whether the Assembly will be sitting on Monday evening. Maybe the way to put that is: if necessary, but not necessarily.

The business of the day in the afternoon will begin with committee study of Bills. We would begin with Bill No. 81, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act. Other Bills that have been given second reading today would also be available for committee study. If there is time, others on the Order Paper that are shown in Committee of the Whole at the present time will be dealt with. Other than the few third readings that will also be available on that day, Mr. Speaker, that would be the business for Monday.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 11:28 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30]