

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Thursday, July 17, 1986 2:30 p.m.**

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. KROEGER: In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, representing the federal constituency of Crowfoot, is Mr. Arnold Malone.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly two distinguished Members of Parliament who have been meeting this morning with members of the government, both of them representing the Progressive Conservative Party in the federal House of Commons: my long-time friend the Member of Parliament for Medicine Hat, Bob Porter, accompanied by Paul Gagnon, the Member for Calgary North. I would ask that they rise in the members' gallery and be welcomed by the House.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to introduce my counterpart from the province of British Columbia, who in addition to holding the portfolio of Education in the current British Columbia Legislature was at one point the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Minister the Agriculture, and the minister of energy. I would ask Jim Hewitt to rise and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 210****Code of Ethics and Conduct Act**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 210, the Code of Ethics and Conduct Act.

The Bill would establish a code of ethics and conduct for cabinet ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, senior Executive Council staff, and heads of Crown corporations.

[Leave granted; Bill 210 read a first time]

**head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am filing with the Assembly today copies of the releases by the Department of National Defence and the Strategic Air Command, as requested by the hon. Leader of the Liberal Party.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to introduce through you to the members of the Legislature a special guest in the public gallery. The guest is a cousin of mine from Italy, Mrs. Ester Mancabelli. It's the first time that

our two families have made firsthand contact since her parents left Canada in the 1920s. This week we have had a very interesting time through an interpreter comparing backgrounds and family heritage. Accompanying her today is my sister Doreen Skretting and, as well, Mary Webber. I'd be very pleased to have them stand at this time and be acknowledged by the Assembly.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce through you to the Assembly a group that is visiting with us today. They are seated in the members' gallery. Sponsored by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, they are involved in a cultural exchange between the provinces of Quebec and Alberta: some 58 students accompanied by Mr. Michael Perry and Elizabeth Holt. I'd ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, an individual in the members' gallery who is well known to many of the people of this Assembly. He's the director of the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society and the Calgary Vietnamese association. He is a gentleman committed to the ethnocultural community in Alberta. I would ask that Mr. Dat Nguyen stand and receive the warm reception traditional in this Assembly.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege today to introduce to you and members of the Assembly some very special guests seated in your gallery. They are in Edmonton attending the Canadian Teachers' Federation convention. I had the privilege of having dinner with them last evening, and I would like to introduce them to you. Firstly, from the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Mr. Frank Garritty, president; Miss Sheena Hanley, president-elect; Mr. Brian Shortall, past president.

Also with us today are presidents of provincial teachers' associations from across Canada, one of whom will be familiar to all of us, and that is Nadene Thomas, the president of our Alberta Teachers' Association. With Mrs. Thomas are 13 of her colleagues from across Canada. I would ask them all to stand, please.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce as well some very distinguished international visitors who are also attending the convention in Edmonton. They are Jim Killeen, president of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession; Mr. Norm Goble, secretary general; Mr. Adam Urbanski, the American Federation of Teachers' vice president; Mr. Robert Richardson, the president of the National Union of Teachers of England and Wales; Mr. Randall Peteni, the president of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa; and Mr. Tom Bediako, who is the general secretary of the All Africa Teachers' Organization.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure also to introduce to you and through you a group of 50 individuals, with their teachers and parents, from the Rural Youth Seminar. I would ask if they would rise and the Chamber would extend the traditional warm welcome to them. They are in the public gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: If I might beg the indulgence of the Assembly with respect to a statement concerning ministerial responses after question period. If we might read that into the record before we commence with the hon. leader.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair also notes the number of introductions today. I'm sure all members of the Assembly are somewhat taken aback that the galleries are entirely filled, and perhaps all members might take into consideration this innovative technique that we should meet all summer long every year.

#### **Statement by the Speaker**

MR. SPEAKER: This statement concerning supplementary and delayed answers to oral questions will be immediately passed out to all members of the Assembly. The Chair has convened two meetings of House leaders representing all parties represented in the Legislative Assembly to consider the matter of supplementary responses to answers given earlier and responses to questions taken as notice.

The House leaders have unanimously agreed that ministers should be allowed, at the end of Oral Question Period, to briefly supplement answers given previously and to respond to questions taken as notice. The House leaders have further agreed that the member whose question has received a delayed response may ask one further brief supplementary question and the minister may respond to such supplementary question.

Strict adherence to procedural rules would require the unanimous consent of the House on each occasion when this practice is undertaken. The Chair has, however, noted that House leaders have unanimously agreed to this provision and will assume the House has given unanimous consent unless any member voices a contrary opinion.

#### **head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

##### **Cost Over-runs on Government Projects**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. There has been some discussion in the Assembly this week about wasteful spending, and I'd like to ask today about some real big-ticket items, like the 75 percent current projected cost over-run for the Oldman dam from \$200 million to \$349 million. My question is: has the Premier issued a directive or ordered a study or done anything at all to try and get some control over massive cost over-runs on government projects?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, obviously that would be something we'd be doing constantly. It doesn't require a particular directive. It's something that has been expressed to all members of the government, both elected and nonelected, and to the public service.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. It's obviously not working very well when we have these types of over-runs, and there's a history of this, Mr. Premier. Let me be more specific. Has the Premier given any consideration to asking one particular member of Executive Council, such as the Deputy Premier, to be responsible for developing measures to prevent cost over-runs on large government construction projects? I believe there's an example of this in Ontario at this time.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's a suggestion I will give consideration to, but as I said earlier, we are working on these matters constantly on an everyday basis.

MR. MARTIN: Let me shift over to the Minister of the Environment. As the minister is responsible for overseeing the construction of this particular dam, I wonder if the minister of dams could tell us if any disciplinary measures have been taken in his department as a consequence of this huge jump in the projected cost of this project.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm the Minister of the Environment. I'm not sure if he wants that question directed to me or not.

MR. MARTIN: I said Minister of the Environment at the start. Don't waste a supplementary.

MR. KOWALSKI: First of all, Mr. Speaker, there's been no cost over-run. The innuendo alluded to by the Leader of the Official Opposition in directing his first two questions to the Premier suggested there was a cost over-run. It was very, very clear in the comments made by myself in the Assembly on Wednesday last that the original estimate talked about in August of 1984 was a preliminary estimate. It was based on information provided to Alberta Environment as a result of studies conducted in the early '70s by PFRA. We indicated at that time that when the former Premier made the announcement, it was an estimate of costs. The figures that I made public on Wednesday last are projected costs as of July 9, 1986.

MR. MARTIN: It's a very interesting answer, Mr. Speaker, because in question period on July 10 the minister was asked if he was doing anything to curb these alarming cost over-runs, and the answer to the question was an emphatic yes. So he agreed that there were over-runs at that time.

To be more specific, flowing from that answer, could the minister briefly tell us what specific steps he has taken, or if he cannot be brief, which is very difficult for this minister, will he undertake to table a written report this session on the specific steps that he has taken?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, July 10, the "yes" response that I gave was the result of a second question directed to me by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry. In the second of three questions he directed to me, he had another innuendo that caused me to respond "yes" to a two-part question. When I responded last Thursday, I said that I had this matter under hand. I intend on having this matter under hand, and I intend on being very, very vigilant about cost security with respect to this project. If the hon. leader would like to refer in *Hansard* to the comments that I made on Wednesday, July 9, I made emphatic comments with respect to certain concerns that I had. I also pointed out that I would be assured as the years go by that all Members of the Legislative Assembly would not escape an opportunity to point out to me any variance in the \$349.6 million attached to the Oldman River dam. I also indicated at that time that I would be very vigilant with respect to any cost over-runs beyond \$349.6 million that might be brought to my attention by officials in the department.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to either the Provincial Treasurer or the Premier with regard to expenditure control. Could the Premier or the minister indicate whether the government has a policy at this time whereby if increased expenditure is requested either by the government or other parties in this Legislature or by the people of

Alberta that there's a policy in place that indicates that that policy to be implemented by an increase in expenditure must be a trade-off of expenditures in other places of government?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I guess the way the hon. Member for Little Bow has placed that question he is really describing what you go through when you are preparing a budget or considering additional expenditures. We don't have all the money in the world, and therefore we have to make a series of choices based on priorities. He is right that when you select one, or if we have one suggested from members of the opposition or anywhere in the House, it would normally involve dropping something else. We do not have all the money we would want to have, and therefore we constantly do the very thing he described.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. In view of the fact that a rather sloppy type of supervision seems to be showing up here in supervising costs, particularly in dam building, is the Premier in a position now to announce, as he said he was considering earlier, a commission to investigate costs, very much the same as the federal Nielsen commission, that would be in charge of going through departments paring costs?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member raised that issue with me several days ago, I responded that I thought his suggestion was one to give consideration to. Obviously, the federal government did, and I know some other provincial governments have considered or are considering such moves. But as I responded to him, we will think about that, but we want to be certain that the things we are doing now are not working, and it's my judgment at this point that they are working.

I tell him that the lead-up to his question was incorrect. This is not a matter of sloppy handling of construction at all. This is a matter, as the Minister of Environment said, of an original estimate that was used in the House. I suppose the members might have wanted the information not to come out at all until the final engineering estimate was completed, and then they wouldn't have had the original estimate to compare to. Nevertheless, the estimate done on a detailed engineering basis has been announced by the hon. Minister of the Environment. It was significantly different from the original figure used that we had another independent engineering evaluation done just to confirm it, which it did. It confirmed that there were a series of things involved with the subsoil and so on and to have this dam built in the safest most effective way involved the kind of expenditure the minister announced.

MR. GOGO: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Has the minister had representation from either farm organizations or municipal governments in southern Alberta not to proceed with the Oldman dam?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, water management in southern Alberta and economic diversification of the southern part of the province are high priorities with this government. I've certainly had no representations to reject either of those two objectives.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. The Chair was a bit slow, and the question was really not related to the main issue with regard to cost control.

MR. MARTIN: I'd hate to see what the over-run would be if the system wasn't working.

#### Meeting with Alberta MPs

MR. MARTIN: My question is to the Premier and has to do with his meeting today with his colleagues the Alberta MPs. I take it that the Deputy Prime Minister and the minister of external affairs were there. My question to the Premier: was any firm commitment given on behalf of the government of Canada that the full amount of loan guarantees for the Husky upgrader project will be provided this year?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, to advise the hon. member, the Deputy Prime Minister was in attendance. The minister of external affairs was not able to be there. However, there was a large turnout of Members of Parliament. There is some interest in this on the part of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I should tell him that it was a very good meeting. We were able to discuss matters of interest to all Albertans represented by the people in the meeting.

He should also know that the Husky upgrader is proceeding as planned. The construction decision which needs to be made will be made in 1987. I feel confident that at that time we will be able to announce that it is going ahead and will provide a large supply of future resources to the people of Alberta and Canada.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I was asking about commitments. I'm glad the Premier feels so confident, but he's felt confident before and it hasn't work out. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we should hire Mr. Moores, ex-premier of Newfoundland, to advise us on how to get loans in Alberta.

My question to the Premier: rather than just a nice discussion, were they able to come to any commitments? Obviously not the first one, but did the meeting result in any commitment to an early end to the PGRT; say, before the end of this year?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition would probably expect, the discussion between ourselves as caucuses was not one which you would expect to have a government announcement come from. I felt we had excellent discussion that will lead to commitments that I feel very confident the people of Alberta will be pleased with.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary, Mr. Premier. I'm very glad that you had a nice chat with your friends, but we're in the crisis situation. I'll turn to one other industry. Was any firm commitment given on a federal deficiency payment to support grain producers in this province? [some applause]

MR. GETTY: I gather the applause is for phrasing a question correctly.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of a deficiency payment for grain producers was discussed. As per my previous answer, I feel that the discussion was very productive. Should events happen that would make that something that should be done to assist our agricultural industry — and other things that would be needed for assistance for our agricultural industry — the people in that room would work very closely and vigorously to have those things happen.

MR. MARTIN: That just makes me feel warm and fuzzy all over. Obviously there are no commitments, and they had a nice chat and some tea I suppose.

The previous Premier one time had to be very strong with the MPs from this province because he didn't feel that they were taking up Alberta's interest in the proper fashion. My question is: did the Premier take any similar action during this morning's meeting which indicated this government's concern about how Alberta has been taken for granted since the Conservatives were elected federally?

MR. GETTY: I would assume, Mr. Speaker, warm in the tummy and fuzzy in the head.

MR. MARTIN: That's the best answer you've given me.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we did have a good discussion on how we relate with our federal colleagues, and I feel that the messages that were necessary to be passed to them were.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the leader — the Premier. A Freudian slip. If he keeps up his present activity, I'll send him an honorary Liberal membership.

We'll see if he can phrase the answers as well as the questions. Could he tell us whether or not the equity package proposal for small producers which the Premier and the Minister of Energy have talked about with some pride for nearly three weeks now was discussed with his federal cousins?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if I were to accept an honorary Liberal membership, I hear I'd be the first who would accept one.

Mr. Speaker, the whole matter of assistance for the energy industry was considered. We aren't particularly married to the equity plan the member has mentioned. It is one option that we mentioned in the House. There are others, though, that are being considered. We think we have put in place the mechanism under which we will be able to develop the one that will work in this province.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the Premier. It's relative to the Alberta farm credit program. Was that matter discussed with the representatives of the federal government to assure Albertans as well as the government of Alberta that the federal government will not withdraw from certain credit programs in the province of Alberta because of the Alberta farm credit program that we're going to implement fairly shortly I believe?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it wasn't dealt with in quite that way, but I must say that we did deal with the fact that we have made such a large move to reduce input costs to our farmers in the cost of money, as the member mentions, the cost of fertilizer, and the additional cost of 64 cents in the matter of energy. However, it is fair to say that in our discussion it was clear that moves we made as a provincial government would not lead the federal members to advocate or allow the federal government to pull back with their own programs.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. In the last federal budget Ottawa introduced the Atlantic enterprise program which was to have \$1 billion in credit available to the Atlantic provinces for tourism and primary industry development. Can the Premier tell members of this Legislature whether he has found out whether the billion dollar

Hibernia loan is part of that Atlantic enterprise program, or is it an additional \$1 billion over and outside of that billion dollar budget program?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I shouldn't answer for the federal government on their programs; that's not my responsibility. But in terms of raising the matter of any Hibernia assistance, I think I can advise the House that there has been no decision or commitment of any kind on the Hibernia area as alluded to by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary. It would appear then that it's over and above if it's a promise. In yesterday's meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, did the Deputy Prime Minister promise to try and secure a similar billion dollar line of credit or a promise for the west?

MR. GETTY: The meeting was today, Mr. Speaker, and the discussion was along the lines of developing what is needed to assist Alberta, and I'm sure consideration would be given for other parts of the west. But we are working on the things that are needed in this province, and we feel that others may work to their own benefit. In discussion between ourselves and our colleagues and between myself and the Deputy Prime Minister, I am sure that we will be able to develop the federal/provincial co-operation to come up with that type of program.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It seems that it may be for years; it may be forever. A simple yes or no: did the Premier receive a commitment from the Deputy Prime Minister that he would work to abolish the PGRT as soon possible?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it would be comfortable to give a yes or no, and when I do, I notice that members sometimes don't particularly like it. I had a feeling that all of us in the room were working in that direction.

MR. TAYLOR: A final supplementary to the Premier. He often asks for constructive suggestions. Could the Premier discuss with the federal government the possibility of setting up a \$700 million program from which both small and large producers would be eligible for funding in lieu of dropping the PGRT — just a little \$700 million charge account?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't think we should have the PGRT period. If we develop other programs — and we will; we are working on them — that are necessary, then we will announce them to the House as quickly as possible. But I don't think we should accept the PGRT in any event.

MR. PASHAK: To the Premier, Mr. Speaker. What did the Premier indicate to his federal counterparts in the meeting today that would be of benefit to the west and to Alberta in particular?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we had a discussion for some three and a half hours in which many things of advantage to this province and to the people we all represent were discussed. I don't think my going into the details of that discussion would be helpful to the results we hope to obtain.

### Farm Credit

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my main question is to the Minister of Agriculture. It's relative to the question I asked of the Premier earlier with regard to the Alberta farm credit stability program and also the program of the Farm Credit Corporation of Canada. In the 1985-86 annual report of the Farm Credit Corporation, they show losses of some \$121 million in operating and \$190 million in loan losses. My question is: can the minister advise us in this Assembly whether the Farm Credit Corporation loans are able to be refinanced under the Alberta farm credit stability program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, in responding to the hon. Member for Little Bow, let me indicate that provision will be there whereby in the event that individuals wish to roll over the funding they presently have under the Farm Credit Corporation to our program, that will be available to them.

Let me also indicate to him, though, a very important point as it relates to the federal government. With every decrease of one percentage point in our interest rates, the farming population saves somewhere in the vicinity of \$240 million. Unlike the two main parties opposite, we are concerned, along with our federal counterparts, that interest rates be at a lower level so that our agricultural sector can take advantage of it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate at this time how much that possible refinancing will cost if the Farm Credit Corporation loans are all rolled over into the Alberta farm credit stability program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, in responding to the hon. member, can I again underscore what I mentioned quite some time ago. I have suggested to our counterpart at the federal level that he drop the interest rates within the Farm Credit Corporation to 9 percentage points. In the event that interest rates are dropped further than what they already have been, because they have dropped interest rates within the Farm Credit Corporation to date, the possibility of that happening would be that much smaller. But in a direct answer to the hon. member, I can share that there is somewhere in the vicinity of \$900 million borrowed in Alberta under the Farm Credit Corporation.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In terms of the answer provided by the Premier and in terms of the minister's responsibility to protect the Alberta farm credit stability program for a cross section of farmers in Alberta and also the information given that approximately half of the \$2 billion could be taken up by farmers who have Farm Credit Corporation loans at the present time, could the minister indicate what steps could be or are planned to be implemented to prevent that from happening so that new money can be available for the farmers of Alberta?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I indicated earlier to the hon. member that I made representations to our federal counterpart with the hope of their lowering interest rates. Since they have been so successful in lowering interest rates on a Canada-wide level, we're hopeful that they can follow through with the Farm Credit Corporation so that there will not be too much of a rollover. As it relates to what type

of rollover there will be, that is so hypothetical I would hate to even guess as to what amount will be transferred.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Certainly as a farmer I would think that if you can get 1.5 percent less in interest, you're going to roll over your loan. Could the minister indicate what commitments the federal government or the federal minister have given with regard to this? Are further discussions planned prior to the final implementation of this program in the province of Alberta?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, there are ongoing discussions with our federal counterpart on a continuous basis. I look forward to sitting down with the federal Minister of Agriculture when we gather together with him and the other provincial ministers of agriculture in the week of August 24. We are looking at the entire area of farm financing, trade, and a number of other issues and initiatives that both levels of government are involved with. We're looking forward to his response, but to date he has not responded to my suggestion. When he does, I would be more than happy to make that response available to the hon. member.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Recognizing that the rate at which treasury bills are trading at is significantly lower now than it was when the program was announced some four months ago, will the minister take the bold step of announcing a lower, more helpful rate for this program?

MR. JOHNSTON: I was very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to learn that the prime rate did in fact drop today to 9.75. But all the concerns and input in terms of the cost of borrowing must be reflected in any decision to change the 9 percent rate. I'm not prepared at this point to make any announcement in response to the Member for Vegreville.

### Rental Rebate Cheques

MR. NELSON: I'd like to address the minister responsible for housing. Mr. Speaker, I've been given information that some senior citizens and possibly others who receive rental rebate cheques from the government have not received these cheques as yet and are being told that they are just late. Last year they were received in June. I wonder if the minister could confirm that these rental rebates for our seniors and others are being sent out late and, if so, why?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, actually the process is the same as in previous years. The process takes from about the middle of June to the end of August to complete, because people make applications. Perhaps the ones who applied in June last year applied later this year. About 60 percent of the cheques have already gone out.

MR. NELSON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that it appears that these cheques were received at an earlier time last year, could the minister examine the department in light of this unfortunate situation, as I determine, to ensure that these cheques are sent out at an earlier date and keeping them on a consistent basis in the future?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly always be glad to examine the effectiveness of the process and the getting out of the cheques, which is certainly very important. In making that clear, I would also want to point out again

that the process is no different from in previous years, and applications must be received. This is mid-July; the balance of the cheques should be out within about six weeks. The first of them did go out about one month ago.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Premier. Can the Premier indicate if any discussion has taken place in cabinet to ensure that when cheques go from one level of government to another, the cheques go directly to that lower level of government, let's say the municipality, rather than go through the MLA's office?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, matters discussed in cabinet are not discussed publicly. If he is making a representation in that regard and finds that there are problems with the way it's currently being handled, if he lets me know, we'll give it a review.

### Impaired Drivers

MR. CHUMIR: A question to the hon. Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. There have been several tragic deaths in the last few days in Calgary and Edmonton in which impaired driving charges have been laid. Citizens' groups have been critical of the government's inaction in dealing with the impaired driving problem in recent years. The question is: will the government finally take action as recommended by these citizens' groups and by the Canadian Bar Association and provide direct funding to police services to increase the number of Check Stops, since the current risk of apprehension is in the range of only 1 in 2,000?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I too am appalled at the tragedies that seem to happen through impaired driving. The Solicitor General's department does presently fund Check Stop. The city of Calgary police force has an intensive program through Check Point. The city of Edmonton police force finds that they have a tailor-made program not called Check Stop, that has the same effect. Our department is open to any suggestions in helping to alleviate the problems through impaired driving and would welcome the comments of the member opposite.

MR. CHUMIR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to either the Solicitor General or the Attorney General, since there may be overlapping jurisdiction. What does the minister plan to do to improve the government's mediocre record in finding and prosecuting those drivers who are continuing to drive while their licence is under suspension as a result of conviction for impaired driving?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Attorney General may wish to supplement my answer. Through the motor vehicle division we have presently on our computer indications whereby people have their licences suspended, and then during any infraction, if the police officer has the time to go back to his car and call in and check through the computer, he can then detain and probably arrest the person. I might mention that this is in fact happening and that we are finding numerous people that are driving while suspended. I think the police forces are doing a superb job in pursuing it.

MR. CHUMIR: I would hope it would be made a matter of policy and not haphazard, Mr. Speaker. The citizens' groups have also been critical about the fact that the

government has been soft on repeat offenders. A supplementary to the Attorney General: will the minister undertake to toughen enforcement of laws against repeat offenders by seeking the 14-day prison sentence against all such offenders rather than just those in which the second offense has been committed within two years of the first, as at present?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo, who is a lawyer, that it is not the government that passes sentence; it is the courts. The matter of repeat offenders is dealt with by prosecutors in the courts asking on a regular basis for the strictest possible enforcement of the law relative to all offenders, particularly in view of the express concerns of all Albertans, except those who seem to lose control of themselves when under the throes of alcohol.

There is one point that I would like to add by way of perhaps supplementing the answers of the Solicitor General, and that is that consideration should be given, we believe, and is under review now by the federal Department of Justice and the provincial governments, which have responsibility for enforcing those laws, as to the desirability of changes which would permit the impoundment of vehicles of those who may be impaired. That is something I think would merit close review and consideration. In fact, I think is one of those suggestions that has been made by those people who are concerned about the rising incidence of impaired driving.

Mr. Speaker, I think the adjudication and determination of these matters must be left in the court's hands. It's up to the government, through the Crown prosecutors and agents of the Attorney General, to seek and demand as best we can the strictest enforcement of the law.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I require no lessons in law from the Attorney General. It is his department which is responsible for instructing prosecutors, and he should know that.

A supplementary to the Premier. Will the government begin to show some basic leadership in its own house, Mr. Premier, by encouraging government employees to designate nondrinking drivers at their social functions, something the government tells the rest of the community to do but doesn't do itself?

MR. WRIGHT: To the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. Can the Solicitor General assure us that he will take all such steps as may be necessary to ensure that the consequences of failure to take a breathalyzer test when required to do so will in all cases be the same as conviction for impaired driving so far as suspension of licence is concerned?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, presently if you refuse to blow — the common vernacular — you stand to be suspended for three months, whereas if you are over .08, you are suspended for six months. I believe that is presently the way the federal law reads under the Criminal Code, and that is presently the way our suspension reads. I might inform the House that we are investigating the factor of making both of them a suspension for six months, but that policy has not been finalized yet.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. In light of the accidents we've been having, can the Premier indicate that we will have a free vote on mandatory use of seat belts at the summer session of this Assembly?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's a matter that I'm giving very serious consideration to.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Solicitor General. The city of Calgary police service feels they need some \$775,000 to administer their Check Stop program. Could the minister indicate what steps he is taking to obtain funding to ensure a more effective Check Stop program is available to the police service of Calgary?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the funding the province gives for policing throughout the province is \$18 per capita in the instance of a municipal police force. We do not have a provincial police force in this province. Therefore, the Solicitor General's department is only contributing to the cost of policing, and each local police commission is under charge of the particular policies and procedures of any police force.

The city of Calgary receives \$18, the same as the city of Edmonton. If they wish to conduct a Check Stop program, that's certainly within their jurisdiction. If they wish to expand it, they should work it in with their budgeting. I'm open to having discussions with anybody on the cost of policing, but we have a limitation on our particular budget as well.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I have supplementary information as chairman of AADAC. I wonder if I might provide some supplementary information in response to the question raised initially by the Member for Calgary Buffalo. There are currently two programs that are being carried out which may be of information to all members. One is the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Co-ordinating Committee, which has a chair under AADAC and includes members from the departments of transportation, the Solicitor General, the Attorney General, as well as representatives from People Against Impaired Drivers and the Alberta Motor Association and two private citizens. I expect that that report will be available shortly to the ministers, and I'm sure it will lead to some interesting recommendations.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the former chairman and the AADAC commission for establishing, with the support of this government, the IMPACT program, involves repeat offenders and leads to counselling services for those repeat offenders, who go through the program. That program was just commenced last fall, and I'm pleased to report satisfactory progress so far.

#### **Farm Credit Stability Program**

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, and it concerns the farm credit stability program. This program continues to both tantalize and frustrate farmers, who are anxious for an announcement of details regarding the implementation of it, and sometimes this information appears in unusual places. Will the minister confirm, as announced by the Member for Dunvegan a couple weeks ago, that small trucks will be excluded as the purpose is considered under this loan program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member would love to have more details, and we're working as quickly as we possibly can. As soon as we have those details ready for publication — and I can share with the hon. member that we're working on the brochures so that we can have it available to the farming sector very quickly

— we will release all the details in a very comprehensive way, not only to the hon. member but to the entire agricultural sector in Alberta.

MR. FOX: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Some of it's apparently been published. The Member for Dunvegan also announced several repayment options. Will the minister confirm that borrowers will have either the option of blended equal principal and interest payments or be able to make principal payments and then interest on the declining balance under this program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as I responded to the hon. member earlier, we are going to in a very detailed way — and we hope to do that in a very short while. I'm sure he can appreciate the complexity in offering \$2 billion worth of credit to our agricultural sector at a reduced rate of interest, the complexities involved in getting this onstream with the various lending institutions. As I indicated to him, we are processing all materials so that we can in a very comprehensive way make this available not only to him but to all of the agricultural sector.

MR. FOX: Don't feel bad; he scooped the Premier on the telephones announcement during the campaign.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that in the four months since the program was announced several producers have incurred much greater debt, many through trade accounts, will the minister comment on my suggestion to him several days ago that provisions of this program be made retroactive to the date the program was announced?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that, when the full details of this program are announced, they will be very widely accepted by the agricultural community. It's obvious that the hon. Member for Dunvegan is doing his homework, because the majority of those details have been made available over the period of the course of the discussions. We want to make sure that we have all that information available to the farming sector in a very detailed way so that there will be no misunderstanding. I can leave the hon. member the assurance, as I'm sure the hon. Member for Dunvegan will do, that when he does indicate something, he usually knows what he's talking about.

MR. FOX: I'll send it over to you. I'll be more general in my final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister indicate whether ...

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the time for question period has expired. Is the House willing to give permission for the completion of supplementaries on this issue?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. FOX: Has the minister instructed lending institutions that universal standards of conditions and repayment and considerations by which loans will be made are recommended, or will the institutions have their own guidelines to determine these sorts of things?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, those guidelines are being set down by this government so that they are offering greater latitude than the present lending procedures from our traditional financial institutions. We wanted to make sure that

the spectrum of this program offered more opportunity to our agricultural sector than what the traditional lending institutions do offer.

I might just indicate to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk of commitment, this government lives up to the commitments it makes.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. Although he operates with the speed of a glacier, could he tell me whether besides not only blending principal and interest, he will consider in the repayment plan the suspension of payments if the farmer is not at a positive cash flow that year.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, all suggestions given by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon are given serious consideration, and I will take his representations very seriously, and I thank him for those representations.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary in terms of the implementation of the program. Is there any new news relative to the date of implementation of the program? If not, what seem to be the major stumbling blocks at the present time?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Provincial Treasurer has indicated that this program would be available by August 1. It's a commitment that we are very hopeful we can live up to. It might even be sooner. We're very hopeful, and we're working very hard to make sure this program is available as soon as possible to the agricultural sector.

MR. SPEAKER: According to the statement announced earlier this day, first, we have a statement, and perhaps a response, by the hon. Minister of Community and Occupational Health. The second series of statements and responses will be given by the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications.

#### **Sanitary Landfill Sites**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to two questions put to me yesterday by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

The first is regarding what systems might be in place to make sure there is no leaching of materials from sanitary landfill sites. I wish to advise that local boards of health are empowered to restrict what materials may be disposed of in any landfill site in the province. As well, they may require that monitoring wells be put on that site and prescribe the frequency with which these wells will be sampled for leachate. The Public Health Act waste management regulation prescribes that no hazardous waste may be deposited in a landfill site. As well, no person may deposit any kind of a waste that has not been approved by the Department of the Environment. As for monitoring, Mr. Speaker, a public health inspector inspects all municipal landfill sites at least once a month. They are assisted by officials in Alberta Environment in the sampling of the monitoring wells that are on those sites.

The second question, Mr. Speaker, was about the monitoring system in place at summer resorts. The role of the Department of Community and Occupational Health is to provide consulting services to those health units on matters relating to public health engineering practices. The plumbing and gas safety services branch of the Alberta Department

of Labour ensures that sewage systems at summer resorts are correctly installed and functioning properly. Alberta Environment monitors surface water areas to make sure that this water is not contaminated from private or industrial sources. Finally, local health units carry out a regular water sampling program as well as a routine inspection of public outdoor toilet facilities.

#### **Research Council**

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, as I undertook yesterday, I am responding today to questions raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition concerning the co-processing of oil and coal in a bench type research project involving Hydrocarbon Research Incorporated of New Jersey, the Electronic Power Research Institute of California, and the Alberta Research Council.

Mr. Speaker, the project costs a total of \$2.5 million, and the Alberta Research Council's share is 10 percent. That share is contributed by laboratory research being done at the Alberta Research Council. In fact, no funds cross the border north to south or south to north. This is a collaborative project combining the leadership advantages and strengths of each one of the three research groups. I might say the research activities are slightly different for each of those groups. It will provide each partner with the research results. It reflects the international esteem in which the Alberta Research Council is held. It confirms its leadership position and is the least expensive way to gain access to state-of-the-art research results for the Research Council. I wish to commend the Council and hope that all other members of the Assembly would join me for this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the second portion of the question, which was quite different, I cannot extend the same generosity of answer because I couldn't understand the question. I would invite the hon. Leader of the Opposition to read it. If he has some guidance that he could give as to what he thought he was talking about, we would try to respond.

MR. MARTIN: I'm not sure which question he's even talking about to go over it with him, Mr. Speaker. But I'll come back and ask one question that I did ask. We're told the University of Calgary engineering department is involved in development of two-phase pipelines. My question that wasn't answered was: did the Research Council approach the University of Calgary to see if they might be interested in undertaking this type of research?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I checked that point. That's the one I'm having difficulty with. The Alberta Research Council is in no way involved with any two-phase pipeline research that's ongoing. I don't know what the hon. member is asking about. If the University of Calgary is undertaking it through the engineering department, they're perfectly able to do so, subject to the funding requirements that are involved.

Mr. Speaker, could I suggest that under the rules for Oral Question Period, these kinds of questions are stretching those rules extensively. On matters of this kind of detail, they should more properly be put as written questions or advance notice given to ministers to be able to respond to that kind of detail.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Now what are we onto? Are we onto a point of order?



MR. MARTIN: I don't know how I could make the question much simpler. I will write it out in big words and do it slowly, and then the minister can watch my lips so he understands. The question that I ask is: we were dealing with an example ...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. leader, perhaps both yourself and the minister involved can have a discussion outside the time of the House, because it's taking up an inordinate amount of time, especially when we've done our utmost in consultation to try to shorten this whole process. I would assume that the hon. minister will take note of your comments today and perhaps do additional research into the subject as required.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the House. Having now read the Blues, including my rather ambiguous and unclear statement on a point of order yesterday, I want to withdraw the statement and say that I did not intend any imputation regarding the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, with respect to that matter. The Chair appreciates the sensitivity of the matter and the generous way in which the member has acted in that regard.

Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this House, a distinguished visitor, Mr. Eugene Hiscock, who is a Liberal member of the House of Assembly of Labrador. Mr. Hiscock represents the riding of Eagle River. He has been a candidate for leadership. He's a member of the select committee on the new provincial flag for the province, and he's the critic for intergovernmental affairs. May I ask him to rise in the gallery to receive the welcome of this House.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would move that Written Question 150 and motions for returns 153, 154, 155, and 157 stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader, does the Assembly agree with the motion?

[Motion carried]

#### head: **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

151. Mr. Gibeault asked the government the following question: In each of the calendar years 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985, and for the year 1986 to March 31, how many tonnes of sulphur originating in Alberta were shipped to the Republic of South Africa?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file the answer to question 151.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I missed question 152. May I move that that question stand too. There's some information that has yet to be received.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader, does the Assembly agree with the motion?

[Motion carried]

#### head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

CLERK: Motion 156, Mr. Younie.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, we would accept the question, and I wish to file the response for Motion for a Return 156.

MR. SPEAKER: The Assembly appreciates the alacrity of response. Perhaps the hon. member would care to move the motion.

156. Mr. Younie moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of

- (1) the water quality directive issued by Alberta Environment to Luscar Sterco (1977) Ltd. of Edson on or about February 11, 1985, and
- (2) the progress reports submitted to the director of the pollution control division of Alberta Environment on or before April 1, 1985, June 28, 1985, and November 29, 1985, by Luscar Sterco (1977) Ltd. pursuant to the terms of the water quality directive.

[Motion carried]

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry I'm so quick, but the government would certainly accept the question, and I wish to file a response for Motion for a Return 156.

#### head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

209. Moved by Mr. Fox:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government, as quickly as is practicable, to implement a program to reimburse Alberta hog producers who would normally ship their hogs to either the Gainers plant in Edmonton or the Fletcher's plant in Red Deer but who, as a consequence of the industrial disputes currently under way at those two plants, are forced to ship their hogs to market elsewhere, the full difference between the shipping costs they would normally incur in the shipment of their hogs to Gainers and/or Fletcher's and the shipping costs they incur in moving their hogs to other markets:

and be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to maintain any such program in place for the duration of the industrial dispute and make its effect retroactive to the commencement of the dispute.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the beginning that I'll resist all temptations to refer to Tory pork-

barrelling in general in discussing this motion that involves hog marketing in the province of Alberta, as I think it's a serious motion about a serious problem in the pork industry.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that in some ways this is an unusual motion. There is some concern that it might set a precedent. I hope by some of the arguments I advance today to demonstrate that this is a very unusual situation that requires some unusual measures to deal with it.

The dispute has been going on for approximately six weeks, and I contend that the hog producers in the province of Alberta are innocent victims in this dispute. I think the dispute did not come about through normal means, the kind of friction that can occur during normal labour relations. I contend that it was aggravated by laws that this government has passed — and some that it hasn't passed — to help create a very unhealthy labour environment within which this confrontation takes place.

When we consider this motion, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we look at the whole history surrounding it. I don't think it's sufficient just to consider this labour dispute as something that occurs in a vacuum. We have to see what has transpired in the hog industry over the last few years and just how this might fit into it. In a question I asked some weeks ago in the Assembly, I realize I provoked some emotion opposite, and my motives were impugned, by asking questions about how this might relate to the hog wars that were current in the province some six months ago. I want to assure hon. members that the connection is very real, that these two situations, the labour dispute at Gainers right now and the hog wars that were prevalent in the province in the late summer and early fall of last year, are closely related, that when I bring up these matters it's with the very best of intentions, and that I think that we've been consistent in our attempts to defend the rights of pork producers in the province of Alberta.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

One of the questions that arose out of that series was a question to the Attorney General regarding whether or not prosecution would be brought against people in the pork wars if events should arise again. I'd like to explain that a little bit. Last year there was a situation where producers were actively encouraged on public television by the owner of the plant to break the law that requires producers to deliver their hogs directly to the Pork Producers' Marketing Board for further disbursement. There were no charges brought against the individual who publicly advocated breaking the law, and yet this year when we have a labour disruption at Gainers, the police force is used as sort of a private police force to protect scab workers ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair is having some difficulty recognizing the operative part of the motion, which is to implement a program, and referring to a matter which is currently in dispute.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, what I'm trying to do is background the dispute, because as I said in my opening remarks, I think this is an exceptional case that requires exceptional consideration, but I'll try and relate it to the specific motion at every opportunity. I'm trying to explain why I think pork producers should be compensated for the losses incurred during this labour disruption.

The Pork Producers' Marketing Board was established in 1969 through a plebiscite of producers in the province, and it was overwhelmingly supported by over 80 percent of the producers. It was established because there was an obvious need felt by producers to defend their interests in the marketplace. Until then pork producers, like producers of some other agricultural commodities, had only the hat-in-hand method of securing returns in the marketplace; that is, Mr. Speaker, where they would take their hat off and go up to a buyer and say, "Please, sir, what will you give me for what I've produced?" The pork producers, recognizing that a stable industry needed to be built on something more solid and reliable than that, established a marketing board that would co-ordinate the delivery of hogs in the province of Alberta and try wherever possible to secure the best price. That's the mandate of the board.

I maintain that they've been doing their job to the best of their ability, that the board has resulted in returns being greatly enhanced and stabilized to producers in the province, and that in the six weeks since the labour disruption occurred, they have lost some \$1.7 million in extra costs incurred by shipping animals out of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think we also need to recognize that in spite of an attempt to stabilize the pork industry, there are some real concerns about the future of the industry, as there are with all agricultural sectors, that the agricultural industry as a whole has suffered some very great hardships these last several years and that the hog industry is not immune to those. I think it's unreasonable for us as a government to expect that hog producers would be able to absorb this \$1.7 million loss without some form of compensation.

I think there may be concern expressed by members opposite that this is too much money, that we can't afford it. I remember the member for Stony Plain suggesting in response to an earlier issue that lowering interest rates further would be a frivolous use of government money. But I contend that \$1.7 million paid to hog producers to compensate for losses is not unreasonable and that it's not expensive, because unlike some of the things that we tend to do with our money, or that this government does with money, that investment would be returned many times in rural Alberta and in the economy of Alberta as a whole. Since we've been elected, we've seen the government commit some \$600 million to the oil industry. I don't think it's unreasonable to ask for \$1.7 million to compensate hog producers for losses incurred.

I think what makes this situation unique, Mr. Speaker, is the breakdown in the normal process involved in a labour dispute. I think we have to view the hog industry as involving three parties: the producers, the packers, and the people who work there. I think what we'd like to see in every case is that those three groups, while advancing and trying to pursue their own best interests, always keep in mind what's best for the industry and what's best for others as well. When that balance or that dynamic gets bent out of shape, then problems occur. Ideally, in a labour disruption there is a balance of power on both sides: the workers in the dispute feel some economic hardship, and the packer feels some sense of economic hardship. But I submit that because of the laws we have now, we don't have that balance, that economic pressure is not exerted on the employer. Hence, there is no incentive for him to seek settlement in this resolve, and the hog producers continue to suffer losses as an innocent third party.

In spite of some of the comments made by members opposite in the debate the other day on anti-scab legislation,

I don't believe there is balance in our industry right now in terms of negotiations in a labour dispute. I think one only needs to look at what's happening to see that there isn't. We all decry the violence; it's a frightening thing to see and observe. I think we have to recognize that the laws this government has in place have in some very large way contributed to that violence. It's put Albertans at risk. I think we as a government need to accept the responsibility we have in this dispute, and that's why I'm moving Motion 209.

I might also mention, sort of backgrounding, why the board was established. In the late '70s the Pork Producers' Marketing Board instituted a class-action suit against several packing companies in Canada, claiming that they'd lost \$73 million due to collusion, price fixing. I'd like to put on record here, Mr. Speaker, that since that time all but one of the packers involved in that dispute have settled out of court — tacit admission to guilt, I think. Had the board not been there to defend producers' interests, similar losses would have been accruing to producers on an ongoing basis.

I think we also have to look again at the history of the hog wars last year, when the board whose mandate is to try and secure the best price in the marketplace for hog producers was attacked in a very direct and vicious way by the party involved in this labour dispute. That was Gainers Inc., who spent some \$1 million on advertising trying to portray duly-elected representatives of the Pork Producers' Marketing Board as puppeteers with malicious intent who were manipulating producers and working people to their own best interests. It was a malicious campaign and totally unjustified. I think we have to recognize that that has some bearing on my motion, Mr. Speaker, because the same party is involved. The dispute was resolved in part, or at least put on the back burner, and now we're witnessing a dispute between this employer and the people who work there.

I think we all recognize how business works, Mr. Speaker. As a businessman, the owner of Gainers Inc. has to try and lower costs wherever possible, and I guess from his point of view he has two ways of doing that: either pay producers less or his workers less. That's his aim and objective, and I don't quarrel with that. I think it's wrong, and I think it builds an unhealthy industry when he pursues it to the degree he has. If he were a fair employer, I think he'd recognize that his employees contribute to his well-being and he'd want to see that they're fairly treated. In addition to that, he would like to see that hog producers are fairly compensated for their production.

It's noteworthy too, Mr. Speaker, that during the hog wars last year when this employer was complaining that he was paying too much for hogs, the price in the Alberta marketplace was the lowest in North America. He was paying the lowest price in North America, and it was still too high. That has a parallel to this situation too, because interestingly enough he has the lowest overall industrial wage rate in the meat packing industry in Canada and still feels it's too high. There are just so many parallels here that I think it's important that I provide this background.

I'd like to comment briefly, too, on the body that oversees the Pork Producers' Marketing Board, which is the board that would be charged with the responsibility of distributing any moneys that would accrue under the passing of this motion. They're administered by the farm products marketing council. As I mentioned during the estimates debate, there was a fairly provocative statement made by the chairman of that board during the hog wars last year

that the system should be changed so that producers would have the freedom to market hogs as they choose, the freedom to deliver hogs directly to Gainers.

I take issue with that, Mr. Speaker, because I cherish my freedom. I'll defend the freedom of Albertans to the end, but I think we need to see what sort of dynamic is involved here. We need competition in the pork producing industry, but the kind of competition we need is where the packers come to the producer and compete with one another to buy the product, not the kind of competition where you have individual producers going to the packers and competing with one another to sell the product. Both are types of competition, but one benefits the industry as a whole and the other benefits only the packer. I think we need to be very clear on that.

It puzzles me; I guess there's a philosophical anomaly in having a Conservative government trying to administer an orderly marketing program like the Pork Producers' Marketing Board. That's perhaps evidenced by the comments made by the chairman of the farm products marketing council. I think we need to recognize that the board has done an effective job of living up to their mandate of trying to secure the best price possible for producers and that the very hard-pressed pork producers in this province have been severely injured by this labour dispute as innocent third parties. We should consider compensating for those losses.

I should mention, Mr. Speaker, that when Motion 209 was first introduced, both plants in Alberta were not operating. The situation has changed now, because Fletcher's has settled. I know we're all glad of that; it has relieved to some extent the burden and the extreme pressure on hog producers in the province, because there is at least an outlet. They don't have to hold back as many hogs, and the industry is starting to function in a more normal way. I don't think that invalidates the need for this motion. Considerable losses have been incurred in the last several weeks, and indeed the situation has not returned to normal. The Gainers plant is not operating in a normal way, so the returns to hog producers are still lower than they would otherwise be.

I think it might be argued by members opposite in speaking to this motion that it's redundant, because the price of hogs has gone up. It is true that when I brought in the motion, the price for hogs was around \$70 per hundredweight, and it has since climbed to about \$90. But I think it's important to note here, Mr. Speaker, that that has absolutely nothing to do with the situation in Alberta. It's not something that has been caused by conditions here. It's a direct result of market conditions in the United States, and I don't think we should confuse these two things. Also, I don't think we should begrudge our producers their time in the sun. So often the price our producers receive for their products is less than the cost of production. Now that hog producers are able to enjoy a higher than normal return on their hogs, at least in the short term and hopefully for the long term, I don't think we should confuse that with the intent of this motion.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that might be argued against this motion — I'd like to try and anticipate what arguments might come against it, because due to the conditions of debate here, I don't think I would have a chance for rebuttal — is that this would be seen as some sort of toploading of the tripartite stabilization program. I just don't see that being the case. It doesn't violate the spirit of the tripartite agreement, and I don't see it as toploading, because what we're dealing with here is the survival of the industry in Alberta. I just can't see the relationship there, and I think

it would need to be explained in quite an oblique way to see this as interfering with the tripartite stabilization program.

The other concern that might be expressed is that it would result in some sort of retaliatory countervail from the United States, which is a market for a considerable amount of our export. I'd like to say in response to that that if the Americans were to consider this an unfair trade advantage or try and bring in countervail because of this, they could define the whole tripartite stabilization program in that way. I think this sort of shows us some of the difficulties involved in running holus-bolus into bilateral free trade negotiations with the United States, rather than pursuing a more balanced multilateral freer trade arrangement. I don't believe that retaliatory measures could fairly be taken against the pork industry if producers were compensated for losses in the way that my motion suggests. I would hope that that wouldn't be argued.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to emphasize again that I think hog producers are an innocent third party in this dispute. They've suffered dramatic losses: \$1.7 million in extra costs incurred in shipping their hogs to markets outside Alberta during the time this dispute has taken place. I think it well and proper that we as a government vote in favour of this motion, recognizing our responsibility here, recognizing that the laws we have and don't have in place have created an imbalance in the normal negotiation process and have contributed in large part to this dispute, recognizing that it need not be so and that we've got to live up to our responsibility. I would hope that we would have support from both sides of the House on this.

Thank you.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, in dealing with Motion 209 before us under the hon. Member for Vegreville's name, I want to indicate at the outset that I'm only going to take a few moments of the House's time.

When we're debating the motion as it relates to transportation costs to a very important sector of our agricultural economy, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I find it somewhat surprising that the hon. member feels it necessary to involve himself in free trade discussions and labour relations. He goes on, and he's not intent on dealing with his motion. As I mentioned to him in the House the other day, he wishes to tear at a scab that has long since been healed. And he's not content to let ...

MR. FOX: A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The hon. minister is trying to impugn my motives, and I was very clear that my motives in bringing up this sort of thing are ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Would members of the House have the courtesy to sit down when another member rises on a point of order. Member for Vegreville, do you want to continue?

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I challenge the minister for impugning my motives. I bring forth the suggestions I do with the best of intentions, and I think he should recognize that. I don't believe that it's permissible in this House to impugn the motives of another member.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member feels so guilty about my very rational statements, I'm surprised, because it appears ... [interjections] Did he not use the word "scab" in his presentation? Did he not use ...

[interjections] The hon. member should have the courtesy — I didn't interrupt his presentation. If he has any concerns, I would hope he would raise them after I'm finished. Again, I am deeply concerned when this party, on its traditional basis, wants to create divisions, divisions within the various sectors of our Alberta way of life.

MR. MARTIN: On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. If you look in *Beauchesne*, to say that one party is trying to bring about divisions is clearly impugning motives. This minister may be used to the House of Commons, but he'd better recognize that that's clearly out of order, and we are not going to accept that. I'm tired of accepting that sort of rhetoric from this government.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, if I might, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not happy with being Leader of the Opposition; he now wants to become Speaker of the Chamber. In the event that the Speaker indicates something to me, I'm more than happy to abide by his rules, unlike members opposite. But I might ask what good it does to bring up difficulties that we've had in the past. We, as this party, want to look to the future. We've resolved that difficulty. They are intent on looking to the past, bringing up difficulties that we have encountered. We want to conciliate and draw together the various factions so that we can work together, so that our pork industry is much more productive.

At the outset, I too want to take this opportunity to commend the Pork Producers' Marketing Board for having done a super job, not only in this instance as it relates to making sure that there was delivery of hogs during this difficult period during the strike, but during their entire mandate.

And as I indicated, Mr. Speaker, we as a government would have great difficulty involving ourselves in absorbing these shipping costs, because we would have all groups involved in any type of labour negotiations coming to us, whether it be the individuals on strike, the management affected, or the various commodity groups affected. We are deeply concerned about the precedent we would set by offering compensation to one sector and not the other.

The hon. member can make his arguments as he wishes relating to the tripartite program. We feel that this would be some form of toploading, and in the event that it was interpreted as such, it could have more of a detrimental impact on our hog sector than the amount of money the hon. member is indicating we should offer to the hog producers to offset their transportation costs.

Mr. Speaker, just in closing, it's important to underscore our commitment to the pork industry. One has only to look at the record of this government, and I wish to review that record very briefly. Some time ago there was a \$10 million grant to the pork producers' market insurance plan. We also gave a \$10 million payment for their loan guarantee. And as all hon. members in this Chamber are aware, we also contributed \$5.5 million to the debt retirement of Fletcher's Fine Foods. I must share with the hon. members, too, that there are a number of other programs that our hog sector can directly benefit from: our farm fuel allowance program, the feed grain market adjustment program and, again, the red meat stabilization program.

Mr. Speaker, this government has committed millions upon millions of dollars to our pork industry. We want to leave them with the assurance that we're going to continue to have their concerns uppermost in our mind, as we always

have, and we look forward to a continued close working relationship with not only the marketing board but the pork producers themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that we, too, are delighted that pork prices are going up, as the hon. member who introduced this motion indicated. We don't begrudge our pork producers whatsoever, because they have gone through a number of difficult periods. We're hopeful that these prices will remain good so they can benefit from the labours they are involved in.

Just one final statement, Mr. Speaker. In the event that we would give consideration to offering some type of transportation system, I'm sure that no one would deny for a moment that it would be extremely difficult for us to determine exactly the amount that we would offer for assistance, in view of the fact that whether there is a strike or not, some of these hogs would have been shipped outside of the province. I recognize the good work that the pork producers' board has done in putting together the figure of \$1.7 million. We're delighted that they saw fit to tabulate this information, but I thought I should just share with you that additional reservation so that it is on public record.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to say just a few words on this motion.

MR. HERON: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. Member for Vegreville used throughout his motion the word "scab." I draw this to your attention in looking through *Hansard*. I also draw to your attention the words "coolies" and "wetbacks" used by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I seek your guidance in averting the degeneration of this Assembly by discouraging the use of negative terms and name-calling.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair appreciates the comments and advice by the Member for Stony Plain. The Chair, in due course during the debate, will have the opportunity to look at *Beauchesne* to see if in fact the point of order is contrary to the rules of *Beauchesne*.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against this motion brought before the House by the hon. Member for Vegreville. But before I do, I'd just like to make a couple of comments. In his opening remarks he talked about the laws of this province. I would like to say to him that I have had many phone calls and letters from my constituents claiming that the laws in the province as they are now are fair. I just wanted to bring that out to him.

Now the business at hand, Mr. Speaker. I feel that it is important to emphasize and reiterate the position our hon. colleague the Minister of Agriculture has already stated in the House. I am concerned about the difficulties that labour practices at packing plants have caused hog producers in the province, but at the same time, that difficulty is negligible when weighed against the danger inherent in providing any compensation to producers. "Danger" is precisely the correct description, because compensation paid to producers because of labour disputes imperils programs and principles that have far more damaging effects than a labour dispute. Government intervention into a labour dispute is restricted to mediation assistance, and the disputes inquiry board has already submitted a report to the Minister of Labour. Any other intervention by the government would set a hazardous precedent. All sides in any labour dispute, and perhaps even the employees and employers in this particular case, could then turn around and demand com-

pensation for their economic disadvantage. Labour disputes which go as far as a lockout or a strike by their nature cause economic disadvantages. That's a brutal truth that has to be lived with.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very concerned about what assistance to producers would mean to the red meat stabilization agreement. As we should all be aware, getting such a program into place took some very tough and long negotiations. The program is a step toward solving some long-term problems in the entire Canadian red meat industry. We do not need any torpedoes to sink what has already been done toward the implementation of a truly national plan which will benefit not only all red meat producers but also all red meat consumers. As well, I am deeply concerned with the ramifications that any compensation to producers might have on pork exported to the U.S. It is more than likely that the U.S. would slap a countervailing tariff on that meat, something which would be far more damaging to our hog producers than this labour dispute.

I'll conclude my remarks with these thoughts, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta government already supports hog producers in very specific ways and in a general way open to all Alberta farmers. Unlike farmers in other agricultural sectors, hog producers are currently enjoying a market high. The last price I heard was just over \$.90 a pound. I can remember when I was in hogs myself that they certainly weren't anywhere up to that. Now that's a few years ago, but still, I think this is a record high for it. I believe this government already provides sufficient support to our hog producers. To single out hog producers who are on a market high while other producers struggle with low commodity prices would be a flagrant wrong in my mind, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I also speak on Motion 209, supporting compensation for the loss of income by farmers due to transportation costs. I am very surprised to hear the government members reacting like they are to what I think is a very justifiable demand made by the hog producers of Alberta that they, as an innocent third party in this whole dispute, be compensated.

We as members of this party are not proposing here that we intervene in the whole labour dispute or that we set a precedent in this situation. We are only saying here that there is an injured third party. Farmers of Alberta have always been victims in the system by which this government operates the farming industry. It's about time we realize that if we want to save the family farm, if we want to save the hog producers in this province, we must address the situation that when farmers are victims of prices or disputes, in order for them to be able to continue surviving in this very tough economy they are always in, the government — like the government does for the oil and gas industry ... I find it funny that we have members of the government standing and up saying that they cannot afford \$1.7 million to compensate the farmers for their loss of income, for extra costs that they had to bear in this labour dispute, but they are prepared to subsidize the oil and gas industries when they are suffering marketing problems in this province. If justice is due to one sector, then justice must be due to the other sector, agriculture in Alberta.

What we propose in this motion is that hog producers be reimbursed for the substantial losses they incurred at the height of the crisis. We propose that producers should not continually get caught in the middle through no fault of their own. We propose that producers be reimbursed the

full difference between the shipping costs that would normally be incurred and the shipping costs they were forced to pay and, in some cases, are still forced to pay. Even though a member has indicated that the price has recovered in Alberta, farmers are still the lowest in North America, and they are still having to pay extra transportation costs because Fletcher's and the strike-bound Gainers are not able to market all of the hog production in Alberta. So the problem still keeps on.

It is definitely not our intention to come down on one side or the other in the labour dispute, which is a very complicated industrial dispute. I have heard concern expressed that perhaps it is our intention to relieve pressures on producers. This motion is simply designed to prevent producers from getting caught in the middle of a very nasty situation. Producers must not be put in the difficult situation of crossing picket lines in order to sell hogs at great danger to themselves. Incidentally, it is not our intention to ship money into other provinces or into the United States. This motion does not violate the spirit of the tripartite agreement. It should not and would not be seen as toploading but rather as an attempt to ensure the financial survival of numerous producers during exceptional situations.

Again, I think it relates to the whole fact that in this province, when we have emergencies in our agricultural sector — I think this definitely could be called an emergency situation in the agricultural sector — we must have in place government programs that spell out how these emergencies should be taken care of by this government. I repeat, the farmer is always the victim of the type of economic situation that he has to exist under. He is not capable of asking what price he will get for his product; basically, he is told what he will have to pay for all his input costs and how much he will be paid for his product. Until that issue is finally addressed by the cheap food policies of the United States and Canada, governments must put in place emergency programs which will answer the needs of farmers when they are put in the situation that has just recently taken place, or hail, drought, or whatever. There should not be a political type of dispute every time farmers suffer under the present marketing situation that exists in our country.

This motion can hardly be seen to be a reason for the United States to retaliate. I keep hearing the argument from the government side that everything you do to help the farmers is a reason for the United States to retaliate. I can see what you're doing: you're actually getting the Americans to react the way you want them to, because you keep saying it so often. If this government would stop using this excuse in all their support programs to farmers, maybe the Americans would not take this line in their present negotiations in terms of tariffs.

Instead of always finding excuses, I think the government should be taking the leadership in this whole issue of free trade and retaliation instead of creating more reason for the Americans to take our words out of context. If they want to, U.S. producers can blame the weather for creating tariff barriers. I think what the farmers in Alberta have to fight are all the natural disadvantages compared to what the Americans have to face, in terms of their closeness to market and the climate they have to operate with, which is much more conducive and much cheaper than we have here. They have a lot lower heating costs in winter months than the Alberta hog producers have to face, for example. These are all the kinds of things they could be arguing with the Americans in terms of saying that we are not providing an undue advantage to Canadian producers but

are only trying to provide equal competition with the Americans.

We have to basically make the choice to make a decision, make legislation, on behalf of a vision for the future of our farmers. To impugn, as some opposite government members indicated, is simply inflaming the issue as opposed to really addressing the issue that this motion tries to rectify.

In concluding, I would urge this government to start treating the farming sector the same way they are already addressing the other sectors in this economy but to also take into consideration that agriculture and the hog producers have lost a lot of natural advantage over the past number of years in terms of maintaining their viability in our Alberta economy. Alberta was the number one producer of hogs in Canada 10 years ago. What have we allowed to happen? We have allowed the markets for hog producers to be eliminated, whereas other provinces have a creative program which has been more favourable than the program we have in Alberta.

Instead of blaming Quebec and other provinces for the problem we have here, it's about time that — if we want to provide leadership, we should not be fighting that battle off the backs of our farmers, like some members seem to be suggesting.

Thank you very much.

MR. R. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I hope you'll let me make a couple of comments related in a way to the motion and yet not related, because you gave the mover of the motion the opportunity to speak on many other areas not related to his motion. I hope I am clear to you, Mr. Speaker.

One concern I have is when I hear people referring to Alberta hog producers getting the lowest prices in Canada and relating it to the labour dispute. The prices that hog producers get for their hogs is the responsibility of the hog marketing board, not through labour disputes. I felt that was something that was just put on as sympathy.

The other thing that bothered me and made me very sad was to think that we have people here in Alberta that we refer to as good Alberta citizens, and the only thing they do is go out and look for work to supply their families with the things of life — the unemployed citizens of Alberta. I find it very, very sad to hear people call them scabs. To think that we have those kinds of people — I just can't accept it. It makes me sad, but I guess we have those kinds of people. Fortunately, they aren't on the government's side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, this motion should be rejected for a variety of reasons. There can be no doubt that Alberta hog producers were faced with losses during the strikes. Nobody questions that. It is my understanding that there were fairly high losses, in the vicinity of \$20 per hog. However, that was limited to the first week of June 1986, when it was often impossible for a replacement worker to get across the picket lines.

The situation eased soon afterward, especially after Fletcher's in Red Deer and the UFCW settled. The losses have become quite small, and although they are regrettable, are certainly not of a magnitude that would justify a program as asked for in this motion. One also has to take into consideration that due to a shortage of hogs in the United States, hog prices at the moment are higher than they have been for several years.

Although producers can fetch more for their animals in the absence of a strike, this high price level guarantees a profit to practically all producers, except maybe some cases.

of marginal ones whom this program wouldn't help anyway. A program of the kind asked for in the motion could have dangerous implications that go far beyond Alberta's borders.

Contrary to the hon. Member for Vegreville, there is a distinct possibility that such a program would violate the terms of the national red meat stabilization program which Alberta has recently joined. One of the main thrusts of this agreement is the abolition of toploading and a whole variety of provincial subsidy programs. Mr. Speaker, could not this compensation, as suggested in this motion, be interpreted as a subsidy?

The compensation program could also have negative impacts on our foreign trade relations. Alberta hog producers are already faced with a countervailing duty on live hogs which go to the U.S. market. There's no reason why U.S. hog producers should not engage in another countervail suit in which they would argue that the suggested compensation constitutes an unfair subsidy.

Acceptance of the motion would also weaken Canada's position in the crucial free-trade negotiations with the United States, the positive outcome of which is so crucial to all red meat producers who wish to secure access to the huge Pacific northwestern market. The hon. Member for Vegreville should understand that very clearly, coming from a farming community.

Finally, the motion should be rejected as a matter of principle. It would be a dangerous precedent if this government compensated a specific group which is suffering indirectly through a labour dispute. There is no question that in any labour dispute, costs have to be borne by outsiders. If a car plant goes on strike, part suppliers suffer. If an airline goes on strike, the travel agencies lose business. In this case the businesses adjacent to the struck meat plants have had losses. There is no reasonable way any government can reimburse all those affected by a labour dispute on a fair and equitable basis. This option is just not realistic.

I'd like to just make a suggestion to the hon. Member for Vegreville, a really realistic alternative to having the taxpayers compensate for these losses in a labour dispute. There's a small business group that is promoting the following idea, and I really support it; that is, that labour legislation be changed, that both the employer and union be required to post bonds to protect the public and third parties from damages during lockout or strike. I think this is a good time for the New Democrats to get behind such a piece of legislation, and we'll protect all third parties.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hesitate... To the hon. member during the debate... Time has run out for consideration of this item. Next order, please.

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

**Bill 207**  
**An Act to Amend**  
**the Local Authorities Election Act**

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, Bill 207 is An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Election Act. The amendment in the Act would be to create permissive legislation to allow municipalities to put a lid on the amount of money spent

on a municipal election and then call for disclosures after the election.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill was first brought to our attention by our former colleague from Calgary North Hill, Mr. Oman. As a matter of fact, Mr. Oman has had two private member's Bills in this House in former years and was pursuing the topic again this spring. As Mr. Oman is no longer one of our colleagues, I have agreed to present Bill 207 on his behalf.

Historically though, Mr. Speaker, election spending has not been an issue in rural Alberta. As a matter of fact, I ran in municipal elections for six terms but was never involved in an election. I was always elected by acclamation. As a matter of fact, my first experience in a municipal election was when some of my neighbours convinced me to sign a nomination as a candidate. Their argument was: "There are two people running against you. We would would like to have you run in this election, but you might not win it." They also told me that I would probably have to attend one council meeting a month. I was a bit apprehensive about that, but I thought: "Well, what the heck. If I only have to go to one meeting a month and if I do or don't win the election, it's not that big an issue."

I went down to pick up the mail one night, and the postmistress said to me, "I hear you're our new councillor." I said: "No. Did they announce the election?" She said, "No, it says in the paper that you were elected by acclamation." That was in October 1965, and I went through five further municipal elections without being challenged. The fact of the matter was that the first week I was involved in municipal government, I went to five daytime meetings in the week, so my neighbours that convinced me to do this didn't quite have their facts straight.

That's the way it has been in a lot of rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker. It was in those days, although it has changed some recently. It is still not a major factor in rural Alberta, but that's not quite so in some of our urban municipal elections. I understand that people have been discouraged from running for mayor or council in some of our larger urban municipalities because they didn't have the financial ability to win an election over some of their more wealthy opponents. A candidate for mayor or council should not be judged on his ability to finance a high-cost election campaign but rather should be judged on what his intentions are to represent the people in that area.

The issues of contributions and expenditures with regard to municipal elections are not addressed in the local authorities Act. As a matter of fact, it's silent on that. The city of Edmonton passed a resolution several years ago that required disclosures of all money or services valued at over \$100. This was rarely adhered to because, as I understand it, it was not enforceable without some kind of provincial regulation.

In November 1984 our former Minister of Municipal Affairs appointed a committee to see if there was in fact a conflict of interest in municipal elections by campaigning without the requirement of disclosures. The committee was opposed to blanket disclosure provisions, but they certainly recommended permissive legislation allowing municipalities to pass bylaws to require disclosures of campaign contributions over \$40. They also recommended legislation to allow for penalties if there was a breach in their bylaws. That's quite an important topic, as they may be accused of conflict of interest where there are no disclosures, in particular when there were certainly some high contributions to a municipal election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, in all provincial and/or federal elections disclosures are mandatory. Municipalities are another level of government. I'm not saying there should be mandatory disclosures, for the simple reason, as I said earlier, that there are a lot of rural municipalities that do not have major funded campaigns. But in municipalities where there is concern over financial discouragement of candidates or where there could be a conflict of interest because of election contributions, we should have legislation to protect a bylaw the municipality might want to pass.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all members will support this Bill.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support Bill 207, and I commend the Member for Bow Valley for introducing this Bill. I only hope that my support for the Bill doesn't get him into trouble with his own caucus. I think there are some important reasons for supporting a Bill like this. I only wish it was a government Bill, because it would have a better chance of seeing the light of day. But let us go beyond that.

The Bill is trying to make some improvements to local elections to bring them closer in line with the provisions that already exist for provincial and federal elections. Mr. Speaker, I think the election rules we have for disclosure at the provincial and federal levels are important, because it allows for Canadian citizens, electors, and taxpayers who have concern about the political process to get information about who in fact is supporting the various parties and candidates that run in the electoral process of this province and country. I think a Bill that would provide a similar kind of disclosure provision at the municipal level would certainly be a large step forward.

Why do I say that would be such a good improvement over the present situation? Mr. Speaker, I have taken the trouble, as I suspect many interested students of the political process have, of following the reports that are already available on record. For example, this submission by the Progressive Conservative Party of their 1985 contributions provides some interesting reading to students of politics and the political process. Maybe just a few very brief references would help us understand why I am supporting a similar kind of provision for election expenses and contributions for municipal elections.

When we look through this document, we see how interesting it is. For example, we have donations from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, headquartered out of Toronto. If we look at the other banks as well — The Bank of Nova Scotia and the Bank of Montreal — this tells us that all of them have made similar contributions.

[Mr. Musgrave in the Chair]

We have the Commerce at \$4,000 last year for the Conservative Party, a year in which, by the way, there was no election. Yet at the same time, this is the very same bank that tells us they can't afford to settle with the VISA workers at their centre in Toronto. Mr. Speaker, this kind of information is really helpful for those of us who want to follow the political process in this country at the provincial and federal level. For example, this kind of information tells us exactly which party is in the back pocket of the banks, especially the banks of eastern Canada.

Then we go along a little further and we see other interesting tidbits. For example, if we look at other contributions in the report that was filed for 1985 — all kinds of interesting reading — we see those members who use

the services of Pacific Western Airlines and charge expenses back and forth at the taxpayers' expense. Those of us who have to use it for business and personal reasons perhaps wonder why Pacific Western Airlines is charging the kinds of rates they are, even after they had lengthy lockouts of their employees. Despite those difficult economic circumstances, we see they can afford a \$2,500 donation to the Progressive Conservative Party, no doubt out of their petty cash fund.

We again take a look at more banks. We see another eastern bank, the Royal Bank of Canada, headquartered out of Montreal, obviously controlling the political affairs of the province of Alberta with generous contributions. Then we go on further and we see that the *Edmonton Sun*, that publication directed from the Premier's office, I'm sure, donated \$675 to the Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker.

MR. OLDRING: A point of order. Mr. Speaker, we're here this afternoon to discuss municipal legislation, not reference to provincial campaigns.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Go on, hon. member.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I know the truth hurts, but I think these are important references to illustrate just how important this kind of legislation is. I would suggest that Bill 207, which talks about providing disclosures for contributions specifying the persons who are eligible to make contributions, is very similar to the kind of legislation we have provincially and federally. These remarks, which I'm bringing to a conclusion very briefly, are in fact very germane to the discussion.

So just to make another reference or two, for those of us who have to get our groceries in places like Safeway stores, when you wonder at your food bill you can see that out of that, whether or not we agree politically, all of us were forced last year to make a contribution of some \$3,900 to our friends, the Conservative Party donation fund.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say again that this is legislation I wholeheartedly support, and I commend the Member for Bow Valley for bringing it forward. I hope the members of this Assembly will allow this Bill to come to a vote so that we can see exactly where the members opposite stand on this legislation. Thank you.

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Member for Bow Valley for sponsoring Bill 207, An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Election Act. The second reading debate on this Bill has brought forward to this Assembly an issue that should be of great interest to every Albertan. The proposed amendments to the Local Authorities Election Act would enable municipal governments to enact bylaws to set spending and contribution limits for candidates and to establish rules of disclosure for both campaign contributions and expenses.

This Bill would provide the legislative teeth necessary for municipalities to pass effective bylaws to control their elections. I support the general principle of this Bill. Federal and provincial politicians are faced with disclosure requirements, and there is no reason for municipal candidates to be treated differently. As long as there is an opportunity for municipal candidates to have large contributions to their campaigns without the public's knowledge, local government will continue to be plagued with rumours, unfounded most of the time. I think we can all agree that the character of municipal candidates is such that it is not in fact happening



to any extent, but both candidates and the voting public alike should be well served by disclosure requirements that would clear the air.

A second aspect of the proposed Bill which I favour is that it is permissive rather than compulsory legislation. This Bill places the issue squarely in the municipalities' hands where it belongs. Every municipality, rural and urban, north and south, is unique. They're different. They know better than we do what specific requirements and limits are appropriate for their elections. Once they have made this decision, it is they who must eventually answer to the electorate. The Alberta government's role is to empower municipal authorities to make bylaws, if they so choose, which carry the weight of provincial law. We are not dictating limits to municipal governments, but we would be opening a door for them.

Although I generally support this Bill, I do have several concerns. Firstly, I do not think it adequately addresses the rise in urban parties and alliances, which we are now seeing in larger centres. I am not sure how to enforce personal disclosure by candidates that receive their contributions indirectly. However, unless this problem is corrected, the Bill could in fact encourage the formation of urban parties. The provincial government should not shape the municipal elections and the process in this way.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that any requirements that are adopted by a municipality would be sensitive to the need to attract quality people to public office. The last thing we need is to increase the number of hurdles it takes to enter municipal politics. A reasonably high limit should be adopted before disclosure of contributions or expenditures would be necessary. Of course, this limit would fluctuate between urban and rural centres. A curb on expenses might encourage more people to try for public office, but I think this would also require an upward adjustment in the percent of the popular vote necessary to regain a deposit in order to deter frivolous candidates.

These are all decisions that municipal governments would be faced with. I agree with the Member for Bow Valley and his attempt to provide the provincial Legislature with support necessary for municipalities to effectively administer their own election campaigns. I believe that with some refinements and some input from municipalities, this Bill would benefit municipal governments right across the province.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak on this Bill. They've had a motion through most city councils through the province at one time or another on this very same thing. I think this old chestnut has been through here a few times, and it is a good motherhood type of motion. I think we should all speak in favour of it, because it sounds good on paper. But there are some little problems.

First off, it's mighty hard to get those donations in the municipal elections. You don't get the big unions coming and pouring money into these municipal elections, because they don't have labour legislation. You usually don't have your responsible aldermen or people walking on the picket lines and taking one side of an issue. As far as the big corporations and so on, the only trouble I had with their donations was that I never got any from those guys, but that was my own little problem.

There are some other sides to this. We don't give out a tax credit for the municipal government. So if we're going to go to the one step into this disclosure, it's hard enough now to get donations for a municipal election. If we're

going into this area, then let's at least go the next step in this thing and say, "Okay, let's treat them the same as we get and as our federal counterparts get." For example, if they give me a \$100 donation when I'm running for alderman in the city of Calgary or Edmonton or wherever, then that guy can get \$75 straight off the top of his income tax next year. It's a little easier to get that old \$100 bill out of the person then. It makes it a little sweeter and nicer. If you're going to put this type of thing through, you should seriously go the next step too. If you're going to be fair, then let's be fair on both sides of it.

I guess we have those who are for this motion, and I've seen this in city council in Calgary, and I guess Edmonton had it and pretty well every other city. You always get them splitting, and it's usually those who have the donations that are against putting through such legislation. Those who don't get any donations are usually for putting this legislation through.

As far as limiting expenses, it has a lot of merit, especially if you're an incumbent. If you're an incumbent, you've got the name recognition and you've had the three-year or four-year term. In the case of the alderman, it would be a three-year term to have attended meetings and gone your way. You've got the name recognition and maybe even had it in the old newspaper once in a while or a little interview on TV. So you do have an edge. The challenger is coming in. He has to acquire the signs and materials, and he has to try harder because he's coming from behind. If you're the incumbent, you can usually recycle your old signs one more time. I don't know where that would show up on your expenses, but I think there's a slight edge there.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Before we charge through on this, I would like to see this go back. First off, a \$40 donation. A lot of people don't mind if they're hit up. They say: "Okay, I'll give to this guy. He's pressed me hard, and he wants to run. I guess I should do my civic duty in assisting some nice-looking candidate, a guy who looks like he's going to be good." Or you squeeze some company, and this other guy says, "Okay, I'll make this donation." But if the guy knows his name is going into the paper, maybe he does a little business down at city hall. You get the other side of the coin then. He says: "If I support this guy and he loses, and it comes out in the paper that I gave this guy a \$50 cheque, holy smokes. The other guy that comes in is going to hate my guts, and when I go to city hall, will I get that fair shake?" That will cross a person's mind. They are a little nervous and get a little skittish.

If I were an architect and had to take my architectural plans in front of city hall to get land reclassified, get zoning changes, and so on, I'd be a little scared. I think I would start looking then and say: "If I'm going to give out a \$50 cheque, never mind who's the best candidate, let me find the winner. Ol' Bobby Hawkesworth looks like he's winning. I'm going to send him a \$50 cheque. That other guy doesn't stand a chance. He doesn't get the \$50, because I sure don't want that to show up in the newspaper." So when I take my land classification down to city hall, that guy spots that, and he knows I gave his opponent a \$50 cheque and he may not vote for my project. It could have that effect.

Before we put anything such as this type of change through, I really think we have to give a lot of hard thought to if we're going to limit it. You've got to spell it out

very carefully, and the top limit should be opened a little bit. It has to be high enough that if a person wants to go in and challenge an incumbent, he has to spend more money. The other thing is that if we're going to make them disclose these donations, then we'd better say they can get a tax credit off their income tax. I don't find it in this particular Bill 207, so I don't think I'd support this.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I once again have some concerns with this Bill, and I hope I don't spend this entire session speaking against Bills of my colleagues. The problem I have with this Bill is that once again it has more regulations to be imposed by one level of government over another. I agree, though, that it is a good Bill from the point of view that the legislation is permissive and leaves it up to the local municipalities to determine if they want to put it in.

As a candidate that ran in three civic elections, I never did know who contributed to my campaign in terms of cash. We never got more than \$1,000 in cash and probably not much more in benefits. I think it was the second time I was in council that a developer came in one day. As the hon. Member for Calgary Millican said, this chap had a beautiful model of a high rise apartment he was going to build on the edge of Mount Royal, which is one of the more fashionable districts in Calgary. I said, "Good grief, is that your project?" He said, "Yes." By the way, this chap had given me an office for our campaign. I said, "I guess I should have stayed home today." He said, "I wish you had." I said, "Well, tough luck." So I voted against his project, and naturally I never got any more support from that chap.

However, I worry that some people think that if you spend a lot of money, you're necessarily going to be bought. I know that not in the last provincial election but the one prior, one candidate spent some \$50,000, which was seven times as much as we spent on our campaign. He garnered the lowest turnout in the province and lost the next election. So much for the big spenders.

I have some concern about people saying that mayors have a lot of influence. Most of us, and particularly those who have been in city hall and those of us who suffered under Rod Sykes, know that he only has one vote. Granted, he has a lot more public appeal and public appearance, but he still only has one vote.

I appreciate that it is much more expensive to run a campaign at a civic level today. I also appreciate that, in spite of what some members say, parties have not developed at the local level, and many people are pleased about that. Others have some concern. But it is harder to raise money. The local candidates don't have the advantage of bulk printing or bulk advertising. They don't have support through the federal income tax system. Because of these controls, I think it's perhaps time we took a different approach.

The Deputy Premier mentioned some years ago that it might be an idea at the local level of government that the campaigns for legitimate candidates should be financed out of the public purse. I think this is something that should be considered. I would suggest that if we're going to change the Act, we should be doing it in such a way that communities could pay the election expenses of legitimate candidates. For example, if an alderman or a councillor in a small community was able to obtain a signature of 200 bona fide citizens, he then could be supplied with a fixed sum of money to run a campaign. Similarly in the case of a mayor in a large community, if he could secure, say, 1,000 signatures, then he would be able to get a campaign fund

to run an election. The municipality could set limits on how much would be spent, and if the spending was exceeded, they could also provide fines that would be penalties to be borne.

In this way I think all legitimate candidates would have an opportunity to run, and no one would be in financial jeopardy, as anyone who has read *Hansard* or has talked to former members of this Legislature — such as Ed Oman and the liabilities he faced when he ran for mayor. They wouldn't be put in this situation. I think the community should pay, because it would benefit from getting candidates who may be very bright and very honest, but their abilities to raise money may be very limited. I think it would be good for the community if we could have a broader appeal, more candidates, and have the community bear the cost. After all, I think democracy is worth paying for.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to rise in the House at this time and lend support for Bill 207. Unlike the Member for Mill Woods, I'm not going to spend an awful lot of time talking about provincial contributions, although I do of course want to make reference to the thousands of dollars of union contributions the NDP has received in the recent election. But then I'm not going to spend a lot of time in talking about my pleasure in hearing the story of a union member in Ontario who successfully sued his union for donating his hard-earned membership fees to a party not of his choosing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Member for Bow Valley for bringing this Bill forward. It certainly isn't a new debate for this Assembly, and I found reading the past debates on this topic most interesting. Like the Member for Bow Valley and a number of other members in this House, I have a considerable amount of experience at the municipal level of government. Having campaigned and won four successful municipal elections, I feel I am well qualified to contribute to the discussions here this afternoon.

As I understand it, Bill 207 would basically change the Local Authorities Election Act in three ways. One, it would enable municipalities to enact bylaws establishing limits on expenses incurred by individual candidates during a municipal election. Secondly, it would enable municipalities to establish maximum limits on contributions to individual candidates. Thirdly and the one which I believe is the most important, it enables municipalities to establish laws requiring full disclosures of contributions received and expenses incurred by individual candidates.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Bow Valley has already pointed out that it is permissive legislation that we're dealing with this afternoon. Given the variance in municipal councils across this province, I believe it has to be permissive for optional legislation. For example, the types of bylaws appropriate for the cities of Edmonton or Red Deer might not necessarily be appropriate for the town of Mirror or the summer village of Grandview. The municipal structures of cities, towns, villages, summer villages, counties, and IDs vary considerably, and all are unique in their own way. I believe this Bill recognizes these differences, and I support the permissiveness of this legislation as opposed to making it compulsory for all municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I admire the persistence of the former Member for Calgary North Hill, Mr. Ed Oman, in trying to bring forward similar legislation in the past. I was pleased to see that the Member for Bow Valley has picked up the ball on this issue. I think persistence must be a characteristic of former and current municipal representatives, persistence

in this instance, though, because they are right. This proposed legislation makes absolute and complete sense. All we have to do is ask ourselves why we have provincial and federal legislation of this kind. I would suggest we have this type of provincial and federal legislation because we feel it's necessary to protect the interests of those very important individuals, the voters and the citizens of this province. These kinds of laws are in place to guarantee the interests of the citizens of this province without the risk of conflict. Moreover, it is these very same citizens who also elect municipal governments. Therefore, I believe it is essential that we protect their interests in the same manner.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not suggesting there have been any wrongdoings in any form whatsoever in any municipality in this province that I am aware of. But let's look at the situation as it stands today. Provincially as an MLA I represent one vote in 83. Federally an MP would represent one vote in 282. Municipally it was one vote in nine. In some towns and villages it's one vote in even less than that. Of course, in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton it is one in a few more.

Mr. Speaker, my point is that at the municipal level you have a small number of individuals dealing with major decisions that may have an effect on this province as a whole. Municipal government is big business. Calgary and Edmonton are dealing with billion dollar budgets. If I can quote the Member for Calgary Millican, "I'll ol' Red Deer" is dealing with a multimillion dollar budget. Today municipal governments are dealing with major corporations from across this country and throughout the world. They deal with developers who, through a zoning request, can turn a quarter section of pastureland into a multimillion dollar subdivision, a dilapidated residential property into a valuable commercial site, and single-family sites into multifamily sites, decisions that can have considerable impact and influence in determining the values of properties.

The city of Edmonton is currently conducting negotiations involving large-scale incentives, a concept to encourage major development. These negotiations are with major corporations and developers and again involve millions and millions of dollars. Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not by any means suggesting that wrongdoings have occurred; I am only emphasizing the level of responsibility that municipal representatives hold and the magnitude of their decision-making ability.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not hung up on the parts of this Bill that deal with limits on contributions or even limits on expenditures. I believe the real key to this Bill is the requirement for full disclosure of campaign contributions. Full disclosure will limit both the size of contributions and the expenditures of the candidates, and I think that is good. On the other hand, as has been alluded to earlier in the afternoon, I think we also need to be careful not to make the laws so restrictive that we discourage good people from running in elections. Full disclosure to the citizens and voters of this province, though, is the key.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I have already outlined my reasons for the need for permissive legislation. If this Bill is passed, I hope all sizable municipalities will adopt bylaws calling for full disclosure of campaign contributions.

Mr. Speaker, I see this Assembly as having only two choices: we either give this Bill or a similar Bill our full support or we rescind the legislation calling for full disclosure

by provincial candidates. One way or the other, let's remove the hypocrisy. If it is fair, appropriate, and necessary for provincial and federal governments to have this kind of legislation, then it is even more important for municipal governments.

The cities of Calgary and Edmonton have already tried to regulate disclosure, but they can't without the legislation. The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association is on the record for supporting the changes, as are the majority of major cities throughout this province. Let's quit [not reported] around with this issue. We owe it to the voters and citizens of this province. They deserve it.

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. What was the statement I heard in the last three minutes, please? The language ...

MR. OLDRING: I withdraw the comments, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. OLDRING: We owe it to the voters and citizens of this province, Mr. Speaker, to quit pussyfooting around with this issue.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak in favour of the adoption of Bill 207, introduced by our colleague from Bow Valley. I guess one of the first experiences I had that convinced me of the need for legislation of this kind occurred the day after I was first elected alderman to the city of Calgary in October 1980. I won that election, having defeated an incumbent. I think it was unexpected to quite a number of people because the day after I was elected, a gentleman who had at one time been appearing before city council in order to get a development permit ended up in my committee room with a cheque. It was a contentious issue in that ward. Two days later I opened the mail, and some more cheques had arrived. A week later they were still arriving. I made a decision at that point, Mr. Speaker, that all the cheques from individuals and businesses that were conducting business with the city of Calgary were not money I ought to be accepting, seeing as they all arrived after the votes were counted and it became clear that I had won the election. In fact, I returned close to \$600 in unsolicited campaign donations which arrived in my office after I had won the election in 1980.

That experience convinced me that there was some need to regulate or adopt rules similar to those that govern provincial and federal campaign donations. There are rules set down, and people know what those rules are before they run as a candidate. Parties know what those rules are, and they make very, very careful records to ensure those rules are adopted or practised within their own party. They have gone a long way, Mr. Speaker, to assuring the public that campaign donations for federal and provincial elections and parties are aboveboard and in good order.

So I would say to the members here this afternoon that there are a number of reasons why we should also see this kind of election funding implemented at the municipal level, which is the only level of government that does not yet have these kinds of regulations or rules governing elections. As my colleague has just said, the major cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and so on are now doing multimillion or billions of dollars of business a year. And they are big business; they are big government.

I think we need to adopt this Bill, because it's going to do a number of things. One, it will encourage people to run as candidates. Two, it will prevent or at least discourage potential conflicts of interest. I think it's worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that many of the reforms that came about in election disclosure and financing at the federal and provincial levels occurred in the early '70s as part of the fallout of the entire Watergate process in the United States and what that did to people's understanding of the conduct of business in the United States. As a means of counteracting that feeling, major reforms were implemented to assure the public that campaign disclosures are in good running order. Thirdly, this is permissive legislation. It doesn't require or compel an individual municipality to implement.

My preference would be that this is something that ought to be compulsory at the municipal level, but I'm willing to set aside my particular preferences to support what's here and see how it works. I'm one who believes that if you can show me it's working, great, then let's do it. If it doesn't require any further fixing, don't fix it. I'm quite prepared to see a permissive Bill adopted and used at the municipal level of government, and if it works, great.

Four, it puts a curb on expenses. It puts people on more or less a similar kind of footing. I guess it is also a way of ensuring that election financing and election expenditures don't get out of hand. Fifthly, it discourages what I would call frivolous candidates. That is, if you're serious about getting into the political arena, serving and representing people at the local level, there are certain kinds of financial, accounting, and expense procedures you're going to have to adopt. So it's going to ensure that people who do get into election campaigns at the municipal level are doing it because they know what they're doing, and they really do want to serve and represent the people in their community.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think the most compelling argument in favour of it is that we have these sorts of disclosures and regulations governing our federal and municipal levels of government. I have not heard anybody here today say that they have found this to be a problem. If they've not found it to be a problem at the provincial level, why would they expect it to be a problem for candidates at the municipal election? People who run for provincial office do not disclose their financial contributions under duress. They do it quite willingly and openly. I don't believe any of them would admit or feel that it was needless regulation. In fact, I'm sure every member in this Legislature would agree that legislation at both the provincial and federal levels has instilled a greater degree of confidence in the public that their financial houses are in order when it comes to the federal and provincial elections.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been introduced three, four, or more times. It has received wide acclamation from most people who have ever spoken about it or to it. It seems to have a fair degree of nonpartisan support throughout this Legislature. My question is: why has it never been adopted? Surely the government has received sufficient input to recognize that it would be making a very popular step to introduce it as a government Bill. I would urge that that occur.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak in support of Bill 207 and congratulate the mover of the motion for bringing it before us. As a civic candidate on three different occasions, I experienced perhaps the same kind of support that my colleague made reference to. There are those who

cover all bets, that make contributions to all candidates in the event that there's a need to pull a string sooner or later after the campaign is over and the elections are concluded. As a candidate I ran for a civic organization, not necessarily a party but certainly an organization, the Edmonton Voters Association. Part of their Constitution prohibits the acceptance of contributions from certain sectors in the communities. Part of our platform was that we would indeed support total disclosure. Indeed, we voluntarily disclose our contributions to our campaign.

That's why there's no difficulty in my rising to support this particular Bill. I think the limiting of expenses on a municipal election has a number of favourable things. It certainly permits candidates to seek election who perhaps may not be able to do so because of their financial position; they don't have access to moneys that are required to run a large campaign. If you don't put a stop to this soon, our campaigns are starting to take the form of the American-type hoopla. You lose the impact of the campaign, and it becomes more of a charisma type of show. We shouldn't get ourselves into that position, and I think limiting expenses on campaigns might very well do that.

It of course follows then that if you limit the amount of contributions, I'm sure that will have an impact on the amount that will be spent. There are suggestions from time to time, and I'm sure we've all heard them, that certain people paid for the election of certain candidates and so on in the municipal case. I think that by limiting a contribution, we'd remove those kinds of allegations and that kind of suspicion that may surface from time to time.

The declaration of contributions is of course important. I think I've spoken to that. I do have a problem with 115.1(d) in this particular Bill, where it's specifying the person who is eligible to give a contribution. I'm not sure how that could be done. How could you go out and specify who can and cannot make a contribution? The penalty suggestion is also somewhat questionable, but I think we can live with that. The other problem that's really been alluded to is the fact that there are no tax credit provisions for those that want to contribute to a municipal campaign. I think that surely must be done if this is adopted, and the next step has to be that we make representation or whatever the procedure is to include it so that tax credits can in fact be granted to those who make contributions to political campaigns.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that covers my comments. Thank you.

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to speak on this Bill after hearing so many other people and the points I have down. You know, I'm usually last in everything — first in some things, but last in other things. This time I'm last, and most of my points have already been mentioned. I certainly can't see any reason for this Bill not to go through to control the amount of money on municipal elections. It seems that we control it in the provincial election and certainly federally. So I can't see anything the matter with this Bill.

I certainly would be against it being compulsory for a municipality to pass a bylaw or anything that would compel them to do this. It being discretionary, I have no quarrel with it. In the province of Alberta there is every size of municipality, and there are no municipalities the same, whether they be urban or rural.

In most small rural municipalities and also in urban municipalities the largest expense the incumbent has is to

go around his area and try to find somebody else that will let his or her name stand for nomination. I've often seen that happen in small villages and sometimes in small towns. But in larger municipalities candidates, both rural and urban, do spend a considerable amount of time and funds in order to get elected. It just doesn't seem fair to me that you could be defeated at the polls just because you haven't got the finances or possibly the time, because in a lot of cases . . . We hope everybody in Alberta works. With the way our government is bringing in work programs, I'm sure that will happen in the next year or two. I would hate for some candidate to in fact be defeated just because he has a job if the other candidate does spend a lot of money.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be repetitious in all my remarks, so I think I'll close. Thank you.

MR. WRIGHT: I move the question now be put, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, before that motion is put, I would like to spend a minute or two speaking to this Bill.

MR. WRIGHT: On a point of order. This is not a debate on an amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion that the question now be put?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Drumheller.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I do favour the principle that this Bill creates a local option situation. I certainly don't think we should be forcing the idea of spending limits, disclosure, and everything else on every municipality in the province, because as it has been pointed out by my hon. friend for Dunvegan, there is a great deal of difference in the traditions, size, experience, and methods that people have in selecting their municipal councils.

I must say, however, that I am philosophically inclined to agree with the hon. Member for Calgary McKnight when he points out that this is really creating a situation where we're allowing municipalities to further intrude and make life more regimented and controlled than it has been up to this date. I don't know for sure. I don't think it has been made perfectly clear to me that the changes in the electoral financing laws of this country have really improved the situation in the last 10 years. It seemed to me that as soon as the federal government put limits on spending, those limits then became the target that everybody wanted to spend in their election campaigns. I know in my first election in 1968 when there were no limits — and there weren't limits in '72 or '74 — all those election expenses in those campaigns were substantially and significantly less than the situation and the expense I found in 1979. I spent almost the limit in 1979. The spending of money doesn't seem to have the desired result, because 1979 wasn't my most successful election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time is approaching the time of adjournment, so I move that this debate now be adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Drumheller, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, by way of advice, I think hon. members have been informed that this evening in Committee of Supply the Department of Labour will be under consideration. I can advise members of the Assembly that tomorrow morning in Committee of Supply it is proposed to deal with the Department of Tourism. I would move that when the members reassemble at 8 o'clock, they do so in Committee of Supply and the Assembly stand adjourned until such time as the Committee of Supply rises and reports.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader that when the members reconvene at 8 p.m. they will be in Committee of Supply, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any?

[The House recessed at 5:30 p.m.]

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

#### head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Committee come to order, please.

#### Department of Labour

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Department of Labour is found on page 243 of the budget manual and page 95 of the elements manual. It's day 12 of the estimates.

Hon. minister, Dr. Reid, would you care to make some opening comments?

DR. REID: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make some opening comments. Some of them will be general, and some will be related to the specific votes in the department. I suppose I should say before I start that I've had an interesting and stimulating introduction to the department in the last few weeks and have learned a lot about things that I didn't know much about before.

The Department of Labour as it is now constituted includes the previous Department of Labour, the responsibility for personnel administration and also, of course, the responsibility for professions and occupations that was discussed under Executive Council estimates earlier.

I'd like to briefly go through the department relating it to the votes in the estimates, starting first of all with the department's support services which in this particular department as well as supplying financial, research, library, communications, personnel, and systems services to the department

also supply those services for the Labour Relations Board and the Human Rights Commission, which are somewhat independent of the department itself. That support services group will, of course, also supply support for the review of the labour legislation, as has been mentioned in the House on several occasions since the beginning of this sitting.

The second vote in the department, that of labour relations, really deals with three areas which assist in creating and trying to maintain a positive labour relations environment in Alberta and trying to minimize confrontation so that the climate is as undisturbed as possible with the collective bargaining process. I might add that this government supports that collective bargaining process. As we know, in the vast majority of cases it functions well and smoothly, to the benefit of both employees and employers.

Under labour relations there is the employment standards branch, which administers the Employment Standards Act and looks after the Industrial Wages Security Act by adjudicating disputes and investigating such disputes, by educational programs which are necessary in Alberta, workshops, seminars, taking part in conferences, to try and make sure that both employers and employees are aware of the requirements of those statutes. Also, of course, there are the special employment programs that are required for those industries — and we have some in Alberta — where strict compliance with the Employment Standards Act may be somewhat difficult because of geography, time requirements, 24-hour operations, et cetera.

The mediation services that are included under the labour relations division of the department are, of course, only brought into action when they are requested by the parties to a dispute. Their attempt is to give assistance to those parties during the collective bargaining process and also to assist in the establishment of effective relationships between employers and employees or the agents of the employers and the employees. The preventative mediation program promotes effective and responsible collective bargaining and is an educational function of the department.

The third division of labour relations is the pension benefits branch. Members will of course remember that at the last sitting of the 20th Legislature my predecessor introduced Bill 12, which was a new Act in relation to private-sector pensions. The branch makes sure that pensions comply with the terms and conditions that are required under the pensions Act, registers pension plans that do comply, and makes sure that over a period of time they continue to comply with the regulations and the requirements of the statute.

There is also, of course, a reciprocal arrangement with other provinces, necessitated by the very nature of Canada in that many companies, corporations, and unions spread across provincial boundaries. There has to be provision for the mobility of the work force that is indeed part of the makeup of Canada.

Vote 3, Mr. Chairman, is for general safety services. This particular division of the department has a wide distribution around the province, being in some 13 locations in addition to the head office in Edmonton. It is responsible for ensuring as much as possible the safety of life and property of Albertans. We try to encourage and facilitate the acceptance of standards that will ensure safety through the different parts of the general safety services. I'll mention them. They are the boiler and pressure vessel operation, which in Alberta with the multitude of oil refineries, petrochemical plants, and pressure vessels of all kinds is in

actual fact larger than our population would otherwise justify. We are indeed regarded as being in the vanguard of ensuring the safety of pressure vessels and boilers.

The building standards branch: I think everybody who has built a house has been involved with that. It, of course, is to ensure that the construction standards in the province, materials and requirements, are satisfactory to ensure the safety of people in the buildings.

The plumbing and gas safety group: their responsibility is to make sure that gas fittings, gas lines, and other plumbing lines are up to standard. It was mentioned by the minister responsible for community health and workers' compensation this afternoon in his addendum to the question period.

The elevators and fixed conveyances group is responsible for looking after elevators. Members may remember the time when every elevator in the province had to have affixed to it a certificate of inspection and safety. That necessity has been done away with in the recent past, but the inspections continue, and the requirements for standards of operation and safety continue. That responsibility extends, of course, to fixed conveyances of other types, which include amusement rides. It's that particular responsibility that came to the fore in the development of the inquiry into the tragic accident at West Edmonton Mall with the big rollercoaster.

Electrical protection is a necessity with the changing technology. One only needs to think of the development of aluminum wiring in the '50s and '60s and the problems there were from that to realize how important electrical safety can be. We unfortunately do have tragic accidents every year when people either break regulations or do not take sufficient care when dealing with electrical installations and appliances.

The last part of the general safety services division is the fire prevention function, which is crucial to safety in all buildings but especially public buildings and high-rise buildings. They have a responsibility that exceeds that and are responsible for setting standards for fire barriers, safety around boilers and operate the Alberta Fire Training School in Vermilion.

Vote 6 applies to the previously separate responsibility of personnel administration, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to make some further remarks in that regard, as the government in this case is not only relating to individual Albertans through the labour relations part of the department but also has the responsibility as an employer. I think that like all employers the Government of Alberta likes to think of itself and does indeed regard itself as being a good employer, interested in the employees as individuals and collectively, and we fulfill that role in many ways.

Before I get into those, I should like on behalf of Albertans and the members of the Assembly to express our respect and thanks for the good services that are delivered to the population of Alberta by the employees of the government. One does receive some complaints; I'm sure all MLAs do. But when one thinks of the multitude of interfaces between individual Albertans and members of the public service that occur every day of the week, the number of complaints is minuscule in relation to the number of contacts. When they do occur, they are looked into, of course. But with the vast extent of services rendered by the public service and the number of contacts with Albertans, I think all Albertans recognize that we have an excellent public service.

Among the responsibilities of the personnel administration office under vote 6, we include the personnel systems to

aid our employees. There's training and staff development, where there is, incidentally, a very high demand from departments for the courses that are offered through the PAO, both in training and in development. Indeed, in 1985 over 8,000 of our public servants attended courses that varied from one to six days in length on subjects as diverse as administrative skills and the senior secretary, management time, and women entering the management role. These courses are in many cases subsidized for the employees so that the full cost of the course is not a charge to the employees, to encourage them to take such courses — for their own benefit, of course, but also to upgrade the services they deliver to the people of Alberta.

We also have an interesting program of secondments and rotation of employees from different parts of individual departments or from one department to another. Not long ago in our previous roles, you at AADAC and me as Solicitor General, we had an exchange of a senior officer in the AADAC organization. I think he is still working with the Solicitor General's department. As I said, the ultimate outcome of these courses and development activities is both the improvement of the individual employee and of course a more effective public service for the benefit of Albertans.

I'd like, Mr. Chairman, to address some specific remarks in relation to the programs for women in the public service of Alberta. These programs have been developed to try and provide assistance to women in the public service to achieve their career potential and to enable them to progress through the public service to whatever degree they are capable of or wish to achieve. Rather than implementing the mandatory compliance type of program, the public service of Alberta has approached the women's programs in a positive light, by one of encouragement and trying to attain employment equality and equity as much as that can be done. As an example, in 1977 when women comprised 47 percent of Alberta public service, they were only 6.3 percent of the management positions. Women now are some 52 percent of the public service employees, but those in management have approximately doubled; they are now in excess of 12 percent in management. Over that same period of time, from 1977 to the present, the percentage of the annual male salary achieved by the females in the public service has increased from 63 percent until it is now over 68 percent of the male salary. That is not a discrimination in salaries. It is related to the roles the female employees occupy within the public service.

There are some more encouraging statistics that can be found within the employment groups that are really the feeder groups for management. Indeed, in the three highest-paying-on-average occupational groupings, the percentage of women has increased between 1977 and 1985 respectively from 24.8 percent to 35.7 percent, from 21.1 percent to 51.7 percent, and from 30.5 percent to 42 percent. I think when one looks at those numbers it's fairly obvious, Mr. Chairman, that in the future ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me minister. Order please. Could the members tone it down about one and a half or two decibels so members of the committee who are interested could hear the minister.

DR. REID: As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, I think when one looks at those numbers it is fairly apparent to anyone that in the future the number of women in the management levels of the Alberta public service will increase significantly,

and that will be by training and positive approaches rather than by setting mandatory limits. It's also interesting that when we analyze the statistics, the ratio of successful female applicants to total female applicants on competitions within the public service was equivalent to that of the men.

There are several other initiatives I should perhaps mention in the women's program: the review of personnel policies and procedures to ensure that there were no barriers to equal opportunity — that review has of course been completed in most cases; the training programs that are specific for our women employees and which were taken by some 2,000 women last year; the resource centre established, which offers some 250 work-related books and 20 cassette programs specifically addressed to women's interests and requirements; and the information brochures that are put out all the time about office automation and the way to achieve advancement within the service. Mr. Chairman, I think these programs that I've mentioned very briefly are an indication of this government's commitment within the public service to both the equal treatment of women and the equal opportunity of women within the public service.

The personnel administration responsibility covers much more than that, especially in relation to such matters as occupational health and safety. One has to remember that government operations includes some quite hazardous situations by the very nature of the responsibilities the government has and also in relation to its many research functions. There is the joint committee that is operated by the provincial government with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees on occupational health and safety. That committee is a great asset to the employees of the provincial government and has worked very well in the past and continues to work well at this time. We also, of course, have the special placement program within the public service for those who have disabilities, and that program also has been quite successful. Indeed, it placed some 117 people last year.

The other two votes I would like to mention before concluding my initial remarks, Mr. Chairman, are related to the Labour Relations Board, which is somewhat independent of the government. That's vote 4. It functions in many ways as a quasi-judicial entity. In addition to its accepted role of certifying bargaining agents and also on occasion cancelling such certifications, it can direct collective bargaining and investigate and hear complaints from those who feel they have been improperly dealt with in the labour relations field. It can grant remedial orders, and on many occasions does so when it is felt that an employee has not been dealt with properly, sometimes in dismissal cases, and also has to adjudicate in instances where there is an allegation of lack of good faith in either the collective bargaining process or in dealing with employees.

The Labour Relations Board also issues directives and deals with unlawful lockouts and strikes. That prerogative is one not only of the courts but also of the Labour Relations Board, and that sometimes is forgotten about. The board can also register employee associations where those exist, and it can of course supervise strike votes or other votes that may be held in the labour relations field.

The final vote I would like to address initially is vote 5, the Human Rights Commission and human rights matters. Mr. Chairman, it is some time since this Legislature passed the Individual's Rights Protection Act which with amendments over the years guarantees in Alberta the right to equal treatment and opportunity regardless of race, religion — or at least religious beliefs, not necessarily a specified

religion — colour, sex, physical disabilities, place of origin or ancestry. I think there is considerable confusion in some people's minds about what those rights mean, especially since we now have the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The rights in the Individual's Rights Protection Act are true rights. They are available to every Albertan as a matter of right. They are not freedoms, which, of course, frequently carry associated responsibilities. The Human Rights Commission has to adjudicate and enforce when there have been infractions of the Individual's Rights Protection Act. That enforcement and adjudication process has to be triggered by a signed complaint, and the process is to attempt to find a settlement without a formal hearing. But if there is not a settlement reached that is acceptable to the commission staff, then there is a formal hearing by a board of inquiry.

The Human Rights Commission has another vital function, Mr. Chairman, and that is an educational one. If one looks at the people who are appointed to the commission, there is no doubt whatsoever that they are quite capable of that educational role. They come from many segments of our society. Indeed, it's proper to note that there is no majority group in Alberta; everybody in Alberta belongs to some minority. Therefore, all the members of the Human Rights Commission represent or belong to some minority. But when they're appointed to the commission, their function is not that of being a representative for the minority group or groups they may belong to. Their function is to represent all Albertans and to take to that responsibility their experiences as Albertans. I myself think they perform that role admirably. I'm sure no Albertan agrees with every decision of the commission, but I think we all know that they function in an absolutely fair way and do indeed represent the responsibilities and cover the requirements of Albertans in the human rights area to a very satisfactory extent.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to mention the subject of the review of labour legislation in the province. Part of that review has already been completed with the long review and hearings to do with pensions that resulted in the tabling of Bill 12 in the last sitting of the previous Legislature. That was a part of the labour legislation, undoubtedly. The next area it is my intention to address as minister is that of the Labour Relations Act. That review will take place over the next period of time so that we can involve members of the employee and employer groups in the major segments of our private sector and some areas of the public sector. Specifically, we will obviously have to involve the manufacturing industry and certainly the construction industry, where due to the very nature of the industry, the mobility of employees from one employer to another and the use of the union hiring halls in many cases, the requirements are somewhat different from ongoing, steady employment in the manufacturing sector. There are some public employees who are covered by the Labour Relations Act, and we will have to involve representatives there as well.

The process itself, I should make clear at this time, has not yet been determined fully, but it is the intention to look at it in broad terms, not only with regard to perceived deficiencies of the present Labour Relations Act but also to look at whether there are other concepts in other jurisdictions which could usefully be adapted in Alberta to try and produce a harmonious, nonconfrontary relationship between employers and employees as much as that is possible.

We in this province all know the effects that swings in the economy have had on labour relations during the last

decade, since the present provisions were first brought in. It would be the intent of myself and the review to see whether or not there are any possibilities that can be found that would try to minimize the effects of the swings of the economy upon the swings of labour relations. I think that would be in the best interest of all Albertans, especially the employers and the employees who have been involved in the results of some of those somewhat disturbing swings.

There are, of course, other labour statutes that will have to be reviewed, but I feel that the next priority should be the Labour Relations Act. It is my intention, Mr. Chairman, to carry that review out once the House is adjourned, and I would welcome any suggestions members may have to assist with that review.

Mr. Chairman, I think that's all I need to say for initial remarks, and I'm now willing to listen to the remarks and questions of the members.

MR. STRONG: Mr. Chairman, in preparing for this department's budget estimates, I couldn't help but notice the responsibilities of this ministry as outlined on the first page of the estimates for Labour, and I quote:

The ministry is responsible for the management of programs designed to assure a high degree of safety for the public through standards, inspection, research and education; to encourage the development of effective and responsible relationships between labour and management; to ensure the protection of rights of employees and the human rights of individuals; all of which will contribute effectively to the attainment of the social and economic goals [for Albertans].

This statement echoes what I have always believed to be the high ideals and standards that should be the rights of all Albertans.

Firstly, I would start by congratulating the minister on his re-election and his appointment as the Minister of Labour for the province of Alberta. I trust my hon. colleague will endeavour to ensure that Albertans' rights are indeed protected and that the \$39,293,479 budgeted for this department will ensure that protection.

In light of this government's commitment in the throne speech for a full review of labour legislation in the province of Alberta, I do not see in these estimates money dedicated to this much-needed and long-overdue review of labour legislation. Although the minister did address in his opening comments that this money would be taken from vote 1, I believe, I have some further questions in that regard. Could the minister outline where the money to conduct this review will come from, which area, and what the cost of such a review will be. In addition, is it the minister's view that this funding will be derived from the existing estimate or from another source? This review should be — and I think it has been indicated by the minister that this will be — a priority of his department. But this review does not deserve to be undertaken on a shoestring budget, thereby limiting its effectiveness. Nor should this review divert any needed funding in other areas of the Department of Labour, if the Department of Labour is to meet those high standards as set out in the preamble to these budget estimates.

With the increased requirement of this department's resources due to the current abuses of labour legislation by employers and the incumbent increase in all other areas of this department's service, I appreciate the minister's efforts in the protection of the public purse. I have no difficulty with the estimates generally. However, certain aspects of these budget estimates require clarification. As a general



note to the budget estimates, I would ask the following questions. I note that votes 1 through 4 contain grants totalling \$41,505, which represents a 56.6 percent increase from the 1985-86 budget estimates. Could the minister identify the recipients of these grants and the amount each recipient has obtained? Further, could the minister identify the precise nature of these grants? Mr. Chairman, while these estimates identify only a small portion of the total estimates for the Department of Labour, the general public should be made aware of where this money is being spent.

Fixed assets have increased 37.5 percent. While I'm not asking the minister for detail on the purchase of pencils, I would like to ask the minister to outline the general nature of these acquisitions in the specific departments. In addition, I note that there are 14 full-time positions which appear to have been eliminated in the summary of manpower authorizations for the total department. But in perusing the individual votes 1 through 6, there appear to be 16 positions lost. Could the minister identify which of these numbers is correct?

Mr. Chairman, given the current instability of labour relations in the province of Alberta, can the minister assure all Albertans that these staff reductions will not adversely impair or restrict the effectiveness of this department in meeting those goals set out in the preamble to this estimate?

Due to the specific lack of information being presented in these budget estimates and the omission in the presentation of these estimates of many of the items to be considered, these budget estimates are difficult for anyone to address. We are being asked to approve the 1986-87 estimates. In those estimates are billions of dollars in expenditures, of which this department is not an insignificant portion. Mr. Chairman, these are public moneys contributed by Albertans who are still smarting from a 13 percent personal income tax hike implemented by this government. Albertans deserve to be better informed when it comes to spending their tax dollars, and this Assembly requires a better explanation of those expenditures if we are going to discharge our responsibilities to our constituents and to all Albertans.

As I said, these estimates require more detail, and this could be accomplished by amplifying details, notes, or explanatory materials accompanying each departmental summary. Any small business, association, or other organization when presented with a shoddy format for these expenditures would reject the very general and cursory overview provided by this government. Votes 2 through 6 contain no subprogram breakdown, no detail. This detail is essential to assist all members of this Assembly in understanding these estimates. In the presentation of future budgets I would certainly think this government could do a better job than they've been doing with the ones I and all of the other members of this Assembly were recently presented with.

In addressing vote 1, Mr. Chairman, I have a number of questions. Vote 1 covers departmental support services. Item 1.0.2 of this departmental support services budget reflects an increase of 4.7 percent in executive management salaries. It's interesting to note, when in the first quarter of 1986 the weighted average for annual percentage increases for settlements in the province ...

MR. DOWNEY: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. It appears the hon. member is reading his speech.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I appreciate that; however, I'm observing the Member for St. Albert very closely, and it appears to me he's using it as reference notes.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I like to read; it's very interesting. You write down more details when you do read and refer to something.

As I indicated earlier, in the first quarter of 1986 the weighted average percentage increase for settlements in Alberta was 2.6 percent, according to the Department of Labour. The question I would ask the minister is: why are executive managers of this department receiving nearly twice the pay increase of the average Albertan? Being mindful of the significant gross wage package difference between executive managers and this government's clerical staff, many of whom exist near or below the poverty line, this disparity is considerably unfair to those at the lower end of the totem pole. To put this in perspective, Mr. Chairman, I would draw your attention to the following example. Simply put, wage increases based on a 2.6 percent increase on \$15,000 dictate a \$390 increase, whereas a 4.7 percent increase on \$45,000 is \$2,115. This seeming inequity begs justification from the minister.

Reference 1.0.6, communications, indicates a significant reduction in the communications element of this budget, and although I'm in favour of cost-effective government, an explanation of this should be addressed. With the state of labour relations as they presently exist in Alberta, I would think that effective communications for this government should be a priority.

Vote 2 concerns itself with various aspects of employee relations, particularly in the area of employment standards, wages, subsidies, and employee benefits amounting to some \$4.6 million. Has the minister considered making cost-effective employment standards enforcement? I would suggest the hon. minister consider the recouping of costs of flagrant abuses of labour legislation and violations of that legislation from delinquent employers. Where employers' actions cause the department considerable expense in recovering wages wrongfully withheld from employees, those employers should be made to bear the cost of any investigations in those matters. Could the minister comment on the consideration I've put forth in my address to these budget estimates?

Albertans have an additional concern that employment standards are being abused by certain employers in the province of Alberta. Would the minister advise what portion of the \$3,749,241 referenced and contained in the element details is allocated by employment standards in the use of drafting overtime deferrals, banked hours schemes, and other ways which allow an employer to abuse the overtime provisions of and contained in the Employment Standards Act. Is the minister aware of these activities, and does his government condone them?

With respect to pension plans and the Pension Benefits Act, the minister mentioned that Bill 12 was a redraft of Bill 79, but in checking the Bills, I don't see a Bill 12 and I don't see any pension legislation suggesting changes forthcoming in the Assembly.

It's gratifying to see in the labour relations programs, details and summaries, as it applies to the Pension Benefits Act — I'll quote; in services provided by program it says: ... ensures employee pension plans are capable of meeting the promises therein, through proper funding and investment of the funds.

It's gratifying to see a statement like that, Mr. Chairman. I think it has been many, many years in coming in the province of Alberta, and certainly any review of pension legislation should receive the same priorities, as a full review of the labour legislation of the province of Alberta dictates.

All that remains now is for the minister to ensure fairness. I cannot stress that subject enough: that the minister proceed to that full public review of that pension legislation prior to any amendments being put forth in this Assembly. That review could take many formats. In reviewing some of the pension legislation, I know that when it initially came out in Bill 79, there were a number of problems. When it was revised to Bill 12 in the last session, that was certainly addressed in a lot better manner than what was dictated in Bill 79. I would specifically outline my concern as a member of this Assembly and being part and parcel of the construction industry and building trades that the minister concern himself with this new legislation as it applies to multi-employer pension plans. Employees' pensions must be protected. The repetition of what's happening at Gainers and the fiasco and the embarrassment to this province has to be addressed, and it can't be tolerated. Does the minister agree that full disclosure of all pension information should be mandatory? I repeat that. Does he agree with that statement?

Vote 3 concerns general safety with respect to the allocation of funds to the boilers branch, which consumes in excess of \$3.5 million of this vote. Is the minister aware of the capital works addition project for Syncrude Canada Ltd.? It's currently being undertaken in the Fort McMurray area. The Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act provides for the inspection of boilers, pressure vessels, and pressure piping systems for use in Alberta. Will the minister advise the members of this Assembly if the materials and pressure piping systems currently being fabricated by Hyundai pipe works in Korea for this Syncrude expansion project will be inspected, tested, and identified within the regulations, and if so will this inspection take place in Alberta or Korea?

Will the almost \$80,000 shown in reference item 3.0.2 of the element details as a budget increase be used to defray the cost of travel expenses for a boilers inspector to visit Korea, the United Kingdom, Ontario, or Quebec, because the additional locations are also sites of metal fabrication for that Syncrude project? The government has identified in their throne speech that the metal fabricating industry is a strong component within the province, but I would question the fabrication of piping systems outside the province of Alberta as being beneficial to our metal fabricators or strengthening this component of our manufacturing sector. The distinguished Member for Calgary North Hill introduced the motion urging this Assembly and this government to make every effort to buy Albertan, and I applaud his efforts, but what is reality in light of this example? Given Alberta's investment in the Syncrude project and the recent \$85 million incentive to Syncrude Canada, given the skill and expertise available in Alberta, how can this be justified? Will the minister assure the public that the pressure piping systems and materials being imported into Alberta from abroad will meet the strong safety standards demanded in Alberta legislation, and will they ensure public safety?

Vote 4, Mr. Chairman, covers the activities of the Labour Relations Board. It's seldom that I could stand here or in front of the Labour Relations Board and compliment them for anything or any of the awards and rulings that come from the board, but I recognize that they are somewhat handicapped by the legislation here in the province of Alberta, certainly as it applies to labour.

In reviewing these estimates, the board has lost the services of one full-time employee and has suffered a man-year reduction of two-and-a-half years. The employees of the Labour Relations Board are to be commended for the

service they provide, but is the minister aware of the backlog created by understaffing? Can the minister assure Albertans that when matters go before the board, they will be dealt with as expeditiously when his department is losing staff? Is the minister aware of the current delays in front of the Labour Relations Board? Cutting staff at the Labour Relations Board doesn't make for a more expedient and rapid resolution to the problems that board deals with. I'm certain the minister is aware of that too.

In vote 5, while recognizing the importance of the Human Rights Commission to all Albertans, I would ask the minister to clarify the 9.4 percent increase in salaries, wages, and employee benefits. I ask: has this 9.4 percent increase in salaries, wages, and employee benefits affected all of those employees equally, or has the lion's share only been allocated to management positions, as appears to be the case in other summaries presented in this budget estimate?

In addressing the budgetary estimates for vote 6, Mr. Chairman, I ask the minister to clarify or comment on the 40.1 percent increase amounting to some \$301,000 in reference item 6.0.6, recruitment/career advertising. How can this increase be justified when the majority of departments in each ministry have been subjected to a reduction in the number of full-time positions allocated to this department? Is this government simply running ads to fill the help wanted columns in the *Edmonton Journal*? Would the minister advise this Assembly which departments or ministries this recruitment is currently being carried on for, and further, is this recruitment for full-time or part-time positions or consultants?

In summary, Mr. Chairman, the estimates and all estimates for Alberta Labour have a mandate and responsibility eloquently quoted in many of the preambles to the budgets for this department, and these objectives are clearly stated. Everything looks just as cute as it could be, but what's the reality? I think the reality is that this government's record of ensuring the protection of rights of employees, public safety, human rights of individuals — it's plain for all to see that employees have no rights when it comes to the corporate sectors making profits. It's further demonstrated in the government's treatment of the majority of its employees, which has earned for it condemnation by the International Labour Organization in denying historic rights and freedoms.

The new minister, Mr. Chairman, has a formidable task ahead in ensuring that during his tenure these rights will indeed be protected. The task to repair the damage created by his predecessors in this department and to cure the neglect of historical hard-won rights and freedoms and to reintroduce trust between the parties to collective bargaining is certainly formidable. I'll congratulate him on his appointment as the Minister of Labour in the province of Alberta, and I wish him well in his endeavors in the restoration of fair and meaningful labour relations. I hope to applaud his initiatives when it comes to fair and meaningful labour relations in the province of Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, when I put my hand up to signify I wished to join in the review of the Minister of Labour's estimates, I was actually waving to the officials who are here in the members' gallery. I'm glad you saw me put my hand up because having listened for the last few minutes to the contributions of the Member for St. Albert, I'm very pleased to be able to, as one of the predecessors of my colleague, be in this position.

First, though, Mr. Chairman, I would like to note, as I've not been able to do so in the past when the members of the New Democratic Party chose never to ask any questions during estimates of the personnel administration department — for whatever reasons they chose to compliment the works of the public service commissioner, his executive assistant, the directors of the divisions of the personnel administration office, and indeed all of the staff of the personnel administration office who together with the Department of Labour staff now form the advisory to our colleague, the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Chairman, the record of this government and of these officials is very clear and is outstanding in Canada. If we think back to what transpired in British Columbia, with lost time, demonstrations, and virtual riots in the Legislature due to a government decision which may have been very appropriate by that government for its constituents and its situation with its union, if we think about Saskatchewan and the difficulties that occurred in that province in the public-sector area, or in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, or the maritimes, this province has gone through not only most difficult economic boom times but now a very difficult time for all Albertans in this recession, yet government employees have constantly been treated fairly, equitably, and with honour. At no time has this government failed to follow the agreement with its bargaining employees, and at no time have management or senior officials been treated unfairly. So I'm very pleased to be able to set that record clear, although I'm sure the minister will wish to make additional comments.

Mr. Chairman, given the very circumstances of the magnitude and complexity of government operations, the breadth, depth, length, and width of this province, throughout this province we have offices and officials and part-time, full-time, seasonal, and casual employees who do a tremendous job for Alberta. They have done a very fine job. I would like to compliment the personnel administration office, all departments, and other agencies, and throw a challenge to the Minister of Labour. This government has gone through a very effective downsizing of its public service, not with a callous hand but with very carefully planned, well-thought-out, and communicated decisions, a process that has seen the reduction of the size of the permanent work force by over 10 percent in three years. That process was done through redeployment, reallocation, retraining, and with amendments to the Act which were opposed by the New Democratic Party when they were presented in this House, amendments which provided the government with the opportunity to relocate and retrain employees who would otherwise not have been able to continue their employment. That was done by this government and the opposition of this party across in its 16 seats.

Mr. Chairman, I'd also like to suggest to the Minister of Labour that he continue an effort with the federal government and our sister provinces to endeavour to obtain more factual information from Stats Canada. Incidentally, their regional manager in Alberta apologized in one of the major news media published in Edmonton for the work they had done, which work has been referred to constantly by the leader of the Liberal Party — who is temporarily not in his seat tonight — who continually refers to the size of the public service as being one of the largest in Canada. I'm pleased to be able to stand up and say that those statistics have to be looked at very carefully. The minister may want to comment on the use of federal statistics which are based on a snapshot of all of Canada and not on

comparing — and I'll use this word — apples to apples. The statistics that are reported by Stats Canada are not based on numbers of employees but are based on payments to permanent, part-time, and seasonal public service officials. They show payments to board-governed institutions and to institutions such as foster homes and other third-party areas. Yet somehow the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, in his capacity as leader of the Liberal Party, adds up those numbers and comes to the conclusion that we have 60,000 public service employees, when the budget estimates clearly indicate the number of permanent employees, and it's about one-half of the number that we constantly hear about in the member's comments.

I'd like to comment, too, on the fairness remarks that have been made tonight, Mr. Chairman, and to note that the major daily in the city of Edmonton continues to pick up false and wrong information and comments on the fact that the public service of Alberta received a 2 percent adjustment last year. I have called the editor of that newspaper, and I have yet to see a correction. Perhaps the Minister of Labour, if he has the opportunity, could remind the Assembly of the awards that have been provided in either arbitration processes over the past number of years or through negotiations. Indeed in 1984-85 and 1985-86, the public service generally received zero percent in the first year when other private- and public-sector employees were receiving rollbacks. In the current year, which is just past, the government of Alberta employees received a 3 percent adjustment and not 2 percent as has been quoted in the major daily circulating in the city of Edmonton.

Mr. Chairman, I got to my feet on July 15 to point out a concern I had with respect to the Member for Edmonton Highlands and her comments, and I didn't have the *Hansard* in front me at the time. In bringing this to the attention of the Speaker, I commented on her use of the words "rigged" or "rigging." Indeed, what the Member for Edmonton Highlands said, as referred to in *Hansard* of July 15 was:

... Bill 44. This Bill, as members who were in the Assembly at the time may recall, was the most incredible rigging of the arbitration process that one could possibly imagine in all of Canada.

She went on to explain her position and did not impute any motive to any government member, but I'd like to note specifically what Bill 44 did. It brought a number of changes into the arbitration process so that arbitrators, who are appointed by the parties involved in a dispute, would consider certain factors — not ignore them or, if they consider them, not report on them, but they were required to consider certain factors. There were other factors they should consider. But in any event, whatever the final review of the arbitration process meant, the decision is binding on all parties: the government if the government is the employer, the employees, and the bargaining agent. To say that that process was a rigged affair is an opinion, and I challenge her opinion. But I find that that is not a rigged process. In fact, it provides all parties with the opportunity to present their cases. It gives the arbitration process a meaningful series of factors to review, and it provides a process which will resolve a dispute of that kind.

Mr. Chairman, I guess all employees of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, all employees of the government who are obliged by reason of their employment to be members of the AUPE, will be watching very carefully this judgment in Ontario and the appeal process which the affected bargaining agent there has launched. This process

involves an employee who was not by his choice a member of the union but who by reason of his employment and by reason of the Rand formula was required to pay his dues to the union. He successfully argued that his dues were being used without his approval for political purposes. Of course, we know which party those purposes would have been aimed at.

My constituents in Banff-Cochrane who are members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees by reason of their government employment have the same problem. They would like their union to offer them free choice. Haven't we in this House heard a lot of that? We've heard from the NDP about restrictions and rights. When is the New Democratic Party going to make a stand with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and say to the union executive, "Give the employees their free choice"? It would be very nice to hear that. I think the record should show that for all employees of the government 1 percent of their wages goes to the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, and not all of those dues are used for employee benefits.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude my remarks and share in one thing the Member for St. Albert said; that was to compliment the Minister of Labour and wish him well in his challenge. I agree with that.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

I would like to refer very briefly to the Gainers situation. The Member for St. Albert used the words "disgraceful" or "deplorable" or words to that effect. As a rural member, I am very saddened to see the New Democratic Party not doing whatever it can to assist the parties to resolve the problem in a reasonable atmosphere but simply adding to the problem. They are supporting the boycott which is being promoted by national unions in this province. Mr. Chairman, Gainers is a major meat processor in Alberta.

MR. STRONG: A point of order, Mr. Chairman. These allegations flowing from the other side of the House — I think certainly any member in this Assembly has a right to an opinion. The opinion that he is expressing that our New Democratic Official Opposition represents is not the correct one. Our party does not condone violence on the picket line or civil disobedience, but certainly we support freedom of speech, freedom to boycott, and all those other freedoms that are traditional to each and every one of us. So if he could restrict his remarks to the topic.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, if I might respond. I didn't say all of the things that the Member for St. Albert said I said. I simply said that the New Democratic Party is supporting a boycott. As a rural member, I would like to explain, Mr. Chairman. [interjections] I can conclude if you wish to comment on that point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MR. STEVENS: I'd like to comment this way as a rural member. I represent a number of cattle ranchers, cow-calf operators, feedlot operators, and backgrounders. Gainers is a major meat processor in Alberta. Last year Gainers sold 203 million pounds of product to our local, provincial, national, and international markets. Last year this company purchased \$107 million worth of hogs and \$98 million worth of cattle from home, from Alberta producers.

Now we have a sad situation in this province. We have national unions sending representatives to every meat store in our province of Alberta. They are pressuring management to boycott products. I find it offensive, and I share the view of people who find it offensive that national unions based in central Canada come into our province, pressure our stores, and drive our farmers into ruin. I find it shameful that this party is supporting that. Mr. Chairman, I will file this letter for the information of the Assembly, a letter that has been delivered to all producers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [applause]

MRS. HEWES: I thank you. Is that for me?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, you've never had so much applause?

MRS. HEWES: Oh, yes I have, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to comment briefly on four things tonight. My first comment is one that I made last night and that I will continue to make regarding the form of this budget and all other budgets. The paucity of information in this budget is appalling. I don't know how any elected representative can be expected to make decisions on this kind of material: four votes with no subprogram breakdowns, no precise objectives, no measurements, no targets. I find it very difficult to deal with a budget in this form and hope we'll see some changes, some reform in our budget process in the near future.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to express the view that has come to me over the last few years that the labour legislation in Alberta may have been adequate in former times but that is no longer the case. We live in a world that's changing very rapidly; it's no secret to any of us. We desperately need legislation that's relevant to today's conditions, to the changing industrial conditions and market demands that are worldwide. We need legislation that is crafted with an understanding of Alberta in the world, with rapid industrialization and competition in the middle powers and the Third World, and we need legislation that reflects the changing attitude about work, about conditions of the workplace, and about the mental and physical health of people in the workplace. We need legislation that reflects the economic conditions of today, the dramatic change in technology and the concurrent increase in training sophistication and mobility of the labour force.

Mr. Chairman, we've seen very different characteristics in gender and age and other characteristics of our labour force in recent years. Current events in Alberta unquestionably indicate the volatility of the situation and the need for contemporary thinking. I make a plea for legislation that's based on fairness to employer and employee alike, that ensures the integrity and protects the collective bargaining process that has served us well for many years.

Mr. Chairman, we've all had representation and discussions on Bill 110. It doesn't exist, but the reality of it haunts us still. In fact it was there, was read thrice, and was agreed to at one time. There is still a fear in our province that somehow it will be brought back, will be resuscitated. I say that it must be conclusively buried once and for all. It must stop being a constant source of irritation that benefits no one. It brings out the most aggressive and defensive behaviour imaginable. Regardless of the circumstances and the motivation for developing it in the first place, in my view it was a regressive move. I hope this

government would commit to a totally different route to reform than was attempted in the drafting of that Bill.

I submit that a task force should be struck to review the legislation in other parts of Canada and the world and in Alberta. It may be necessary to bring in personnel from elsewhere, Mr. Chairman, to provide a totally objective view and to meet with and hear from all interested publics in our province to bring forward recommendations for legislation as soon as possible. To maintain that fairness in varying economic circumstances, legislation should be crafted to protect all parties: business, labour, employers, employees, consumers, and community. As it exists, it appears to allow for manipulation by either party in collective bargaining, depending on the economic circumstances of the moment. Legislation should contain mechanisms that will act as incentives to all parties to negotiate in good faith and expeditiously. The task force should be so structured as to allow for interim reports which may lead to amendments. This would render the Act more contemporary while we await a more comprehensive overhaul.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to say a word about women. I'm pleased to hear the minister's comments and his suggestions here in the House tonight and to read the suggestions in the throne speech that this government is committed to changing the equity relationships for women in the province. I think we still have a very long way to go. We have a poor record in Alberta, not one I'm proud of, in equality of opportunity, equal pay for work of equal value, and the upward mobility of women in government, in business, and in industry. I want to see some action here to bring Alberta into real life in Canada. We don't have a good record, and I'm embarrassed by it.

I should tell you, Mr. Chairman, that last year I was privileged to attend a conference sponsored by the government of Saskatchewan for women in government in Saskatchewan. There were several hundred women and men there, and they brought in experts in psychology, motivation, and training from all over the United States and Canada. They had three or four days; it was well attended, highly thought of. I have never seen a group of women achieve more momentum and acceleration in their thinking and understanding of their own capacity to grow and develop and serve their government well. I think we should take a leaf from their book. I hope the minister will avail himself of the material from that conference. I understand it was intended that people from the Alberta secretariat be present, and I expect they have the information.

I also hope, Mr. Chairman, that it isn't long before we get a council of women in this province, not an advisory council but a separate council of women. I hope the Department of Labour will make use of their advice. I'm sure it will be forthcoming.

Just a final word, Mr. Chairman, about the Individual's Rights Protection Act. In my background I have spent many years in mental health matters. I've worked as a volunteer and professional for over 40 years now. I was 10, I guess, when I started. I've been very active in that field and associated with many programs and legislation to ensure that those who are in care and treatment, those who are in our communities and are still in need of care, and those who have recovered from mental illness have their rights protected. I would therefore ask the minister to report to us when he is prepared to introduce amendments to the IRPA to protect the persons I've mentioned and to bring the Act finally into proper conformity with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

MS LAING: Mr. Chairman, I would like to add to the concerns already raised about the sparseness of the information in the budget. As an executive director I used to prepare budgets, and I certainly had to give more information for a lot less money spent than is given here.

I would like to turn my attention to two areas in particular: staff reduction and privatization. The government, as the Member for Banff-Cochrane has noted, has been committed to reducing staff size in the public-service sector. Over the past three years over 1,600 full-time positions have been lost, and the service promises to continue at a reduction rate of 2 percent per year. We see reductions in all areas and all programs of support. Since the opening of this Legislative Assembly, we have seen some of the results of these reductions in the area of social services, where we see that caseloads are double what the guidelines suggest and that client violence has resulted from this kind of reduction. I have a great concern that these kinds of results will continue, and I would urge the minister to re-evaluate this position.

We also see that despite cuts in full-time positions, the government's manpower bill has risen over \$60 million. Some of this money is going to contractors and consultants. Unfortunately, some of it is going for workers supplied to the government by private agencies. Workers may take home \$8 an hour in their paycheques, but the employer, the person that is arranging for their employment, may in fact be receiving as much as that or more, and these employees are unprotected in terms of job security and do not have benefit packages. Although the government couches these moves in terms of words like "efficiency" and "flexibility," I wonder if indeed there is any demonstrated saving or better service.

In addition to this, we note that there are some guidelines in regard to reclassification and that people who should be reclassified continue to be paid at a lower rate which was consistent with less responsibility and less knowledge. I would quote from a 1985 memo from the ex-Treasurer Lou Hyndman to cabinet ministers preparing estimates. It was noted that

all such cost increases required to pay for reclassification, overtime, uprange hirings or merit awards must be absorbed within your manpower budget.

We see that there are disincentives to this kind of merit pay and this kind of recognition. Is it not reasonable then to conclude that the increases in the government's overall manpower budget are not going for reclassification or merit awards?

Another issue I would raise is that when funds from staff reductions are freed, the same memo also mentions that the Treasury should consider reallocating these funds to the private sector. As mentioned earlier, this leads the government to pay up to \$15 an hour for services that the worker is getting \$8 to fill at the present time and had previously been receiving \$11 an hour for. Does the minister not consider this very disruptive to morale and continuity of service in the public sector? I would ask that the minister investigate this matter to ensure that such practices do not result in job ghettoization. I would suggest that this happens to many women; that is, their jobs are moved into the private sector, and there is a great reduction in their salary and profit for the people arranging for their employment.

I would suggest that the government's relationship with its employees has not been as rosy as has been suggested by the members across. In 1983 the government forecasted a deficit of \$600 million and then enforced legislation that

required unions to consider the government's fiscal position when settling wage disputes. At the year's end the public service received no pay increase, and this government discovered it had a \$1.4 billion surplus. Thousands of governments in North America from the municipal to federal level would never be able to boast such a surplus. In light of this, I would say that the government's treatment of its employees can only be seen as shameful and would ask the minister what steps he will take to ensure that this does not happen again. The public service is indeed large. It is important to Alberta. We may in fact have more public servants per capita than any other province, but at the same time we have on a per capita rate more murders, suicides, and incidents of family violence than any other province in Canada. I would suggest that we need well-trained and well-paid staff that has certain continuity and security in their employment.

I would like to also address the personnel administration and congratulate them on spending so much on employee training and in assisting in the development of people in Alberta. However, I note that the fund will profit by \$8,500 next year; that is, it will take in \$8,500 more than it will spend. That will be added to a surplus of \$93,000 already held, to bring that surplus to over \$100,000 by year's end. I wonder why the government is making a profit from training their own staff and why the money is not being returned to general revenues.

One of the responsibilities in the area of research and planning is to review and analyze part-time employment and the impact of such employment on its workers and the impact of minimum wage legislation. It has been stated in this Assembly on several occasions that an increase in the minimum wage may result in an increase in the unemployment rate and all the woes that brings. Given that two-thirds of low income and minimum wage earners are women, is this government committed to sacrificing these women for the greater good of society? I have to then question: what is society if not a group of people living together? In this society 51 percent of them are women. So for whose good are these guidelines in place? In fact women, many of whom are single mothers, are being sacrificed. I would ask the minister if he is willing to re-evaluate his position and the government's position in relation to the minimum wage.

Thank you.

REV. ROBERTS: I would like to address a few comments on vote 5, which has to do with the administration of the Individual's Rights Protection Act under the Human Rights Commission. Although I hate to add my voice to the chorus of frustration and dissatisfaction of those of us who just can't seem to track what is being spent and how it's being spent, nonetheless with some questions, perhaps the minister can clarify how the commission is operated and what moneys are spent where?

In the whole area of the Human Rights Commission, I think perhaps the major point I'd like to make is that it seems to be taking an increasingly reactive role rather than what I thought it initially began as, a very proactive role in our society. Perhaps, though, this is the problem of coming from the ideology of the Progressive Conservative Party. I can never really tell the progressives from the conservatives or how some piece of legislation is progressive whereas others are very conservative. It's kind of like driving with a foot on the gas and the brake at the same time; it's just not good for the car. I'm wondering if the

people of Alberta, particularly through the Human Rights Commission, really know where this car is going.

Certainly the issues of human rights are crucial throughout the world in international arenas. In our own national government recently we have, through the good graces of those in our federal government, developed further human rights policies in terms of how our trade will go with nations that have increasingly obscene human rights violations. So too in our provincial government and our provincial life and even at the local level, human rights are issues of concern. I don't quite know how it got under the Department of Labour, but perhaps the rights of workers and the rights of all Albertans are those that are the ideals of this department.

In terms of where the moneys are being spent, I would like to know, with the subservice breakdown, if the minister has any idea of how much of the 5.9 percent increase is going for support staff and investigative research people and how much of it is going for what I think as well is a very necessary and important area of its mandate, that of public education and public relations. Certainly the work of the Ghitter commission — of course, we all remember Ron Ghitter, who does a wonderful job, a man of great integrity, intelligence, vision, and leadership. Ron Ghitter with his commission on tolerance and understanding brought issues of human rights to the fore of Alberta thinking, as well as the great scrutiny which racism in this province needs to be put under. I'm not even sure how the Ghitter commission was funded. I tried to find out. Some seem to think it was funded somewhat under the Human Rights Commission; others think it had separate funding.

My point is that commissions with such profile, such effectiveness, such teeth, and such competent people need to be more fully funded and need to have an increase in their funding throughout vote 5. I can't tell whether it is getting that kind of funding — not just such commissions but together with such public relations and public education materials, which would bring Albertans, many of whom don't think about human rights, to think more about it. Certainly Alberta is for all of us, although sometimes in this Assembly we get the impression that it's only for an elite few. Insofar as Alberta is for all of us, these are not just words to be mouthed but something that we need to work at in action. It's a program of policy that needs to be well financed with offices with good researchers and good personnel and, as I say, a strong proactive public relations and public education component.

There will no doubt be some confusion, as the minister has already said, in terms of what are rights, particularly with the increasing decisions of the supreme courts under the Charter, although it has also come to my attention that our own Human Rights Commission here in the province of Alberta is increasingly having its decisions in terms of what are violations under the Act overturned by courts in this province. So its own mandate, its own feeling of authority, its own ability to rule on certain questions is continually being undermined. I'd like to ask the minister if he's aware of this increasing trend and what he's going to do about it. Is he just going to disband the commission for having no teeth, or is he going to be able to give it some more teeth so that its decisions can stand up even in the courts of Alberta?

A further question we'd like to have answered in terms of the increasingly reactive role is why and how it has continued since 1980 that the ability of the commission to go after things and to initiate investigations has in fact been

taken away from the commission. It had that very important probing role, and now it seems to have, as I said, a reactive role of just hearing complaints. But there are many groups and individuals in this province who for fear of one sort or another are reticent to come to the commission because of receiving some kind of disciplinary action from their employers or other powers over them. If the commission had the mandate and the right, as it should have and does have in other provinces, to go after problem areas and to investigate human rights violations in those areas, then I think they would see a lot more than what comes to them over the phone from people who live in fear.

As well, on the commissioners themselves, I was pleased that the minister referred to them as not just coming from various minority groups around the province but as speaking on behalf of all Albertans. As I have met with many of them, I'm pleased that indeed they have not just been picked up from the Tory cocktail circuit but are compassionate and caring people who have a wide-ranging understanding of human rights and an Alberta for all of us. Nonetheless, as I said, they themselves are becoming increasingly undermined by the decisions that they have taken which have been undermined by the courts.

Similarly, I don't know why I have been labelled as being this radical person who wants to amend the Individual's Rights Protection Act by including sexual orientation and mental disability. My goodness, the commission itself made these recommendations a year or two ago. The former incumbent of Edmonton Centre supported these amendments and told the groups in my constituency that she would see them through. Somehow these amendments got lost in the shuffle of paper in cabinet. So it would seem to me that the commissioners themselves have wanted to include these amendments, as I said, to give the Act more teeth and be more embracive to protect all Albertans. But in fact many people in the Tory party itself, who, I might add, receive contributions from both gay people and people who are mentally disabled and who have such people running for them in public office, should take the lead in having them protected under the Individual's Rights Protection Act.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out further that homosexuality is not a criminal activity under the Criminal Code and hence should be protected no matter how people feel about that particular sexual orientation, but rather if it is protected under the Criminal Code then people who are then not criminals need also to be protected in their workplaces and in their residences by the Individual's Rights Protection Act of Alberta.

I might also add, as we compare the works of human rights commissions in other provinces, that other provinces do specifically allow their human rights commissions to investigate areas which have just not come to them. If they get a sense that there's some problem, they could go after it. We are prohibiting this in our statute in Alberta. Why is that happening? What are we afraid of? Perhaps we are afraid of including people who are mentally disabled because we see in ourselves, particularly those in the Progressive Conservative Party, that schizophrenia which cracks at the very heart of the personality, that, as I say, of being progressive and conservative at the same time. Trying to be proactive and reactive at the same time might lead to some mental disabilities. I think it would be of benefit for all Progressive Conservative members as well as for all members of our Legislative Assembly, particularly the Minister of Labour, who has jurisdiction of this area, to include these amendments I've suggested and therefore be proud of

this commission in the proactive way that it needs to be both funded and operated.

DR. REID: Before we continue, Mr. Chairman, I think I'd better give some answers to some of the items that have been raised so far. In reference to the Member for St. Albert and the specific questions he raised in relation to the dollars for the review of labour legislation, dollars are not included in the votes for that process. As said in my initial remarks, the exact process has not yet been determined. Of course, there were remarks made subsequently by the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar indicating how wide that process may be. No budget has yet been determined for that review, but I can assure the hon. member that it will be a full review and a proper one.

He questioned the increase in grants, which on a percentage basis may be quite large because this department does not make many grants. The increase is all related to a \$15,000 grant for research into fire safety in one- and two-family dwellings. That is of course related to the fact that most fire deaths and injuries in this province occur in single or two-family dwellings, and it's felt to be well worth the money that's going to be spent on that project.

Most of the increase in fixed assets is related to the purchase of another fire truck for the provincial Fire Training School at Vermilion. The current vehicles out there are all of an age such that they do not necessarily include modern fire fighting equipment and installations on them, and it was felt that it was better to have a modern piece of equipment in order to train people who may well be going back to fire departments in smaller centres that may have new equipment due to the grant and other financial programs offered by this government.

The item under 1.0.2, executive management, the 4.7 percent does not represent management and executive salaries. It's the increase in the total cost of that function and is not an allocation under wages and salaries.

The discussion that the hon. member got into on the role of the general safety services is an interesting one, especially when he got to the subject of the increase for the boiler inspection branch. The boiler inspection branch. Mr. Chairman, also inspects, under international and other agreements, manufactured and assembled pressure vessels built in the province of Alberta which are exported to many locations in the world, partly as the result of the previous minister responsible for international trade, who along with others went around the world selling Alberta's capabilities in this area. As we all know, there's been a very considerable increase during his term with that responsibility. That has resulted in pressure vessels built in Alberta being sent to many locations in the world, especially in relation to the energy industry.

The Member for Banff-Cochrane made considerable remarks about the public service of this province, remarks which I appreciated, and I'm sure the commissioners sitting in the gallery will hand them on to the employees of the provincial government. It was some seven years that the Member for Banff-Cochrane had the responsibility, and during that time he got to know the senior management and many of the employees of the province personally. I have not yet had the opportunity to do that, but I did make some remarks about the calibre of service that they render to Albertans.

He did specifically mention the subject of redeployment and downsizing the public service. As is well known, in this province we have attempted to reduce the public service.

as indeed the private sector have had to reduce employment in many instances. In fact, there must be few private-sector businesses that have not reduced employment during the last three or four years. I'm not going to get into the details of all the numbers and figures, but over the three fiscal years of '84-85, '85-86, and '86-87, the total number of positions abolished will be some 2,272, of whom only some 80 will be released without employment and with severance pay. The rest will have been redeployed within the provincial government or will have accepted early retirement or other means. That is in conjunction with the policy on the treatment of surplus employees, the main point of which is that wherever possible surplus employees will be redeployed in other areas of that organization. If necessary and if feasible, they are to be retrained. Normal attrition, which is retirements and resignations of course, are to be used to effect reductions; in other words, not replacing people who retire or resign. Regular permanent employees are to be given preference over casual and temporary employees. If it is not possible to transfer to another department, then and only then is severance to occur.

The Member for Edmonton Gold Bar had some useful suggestions. The format of the budget and the details of the elements: there are some additional details, of course, in the second book, and that applies to items such as votes 3 and 4 in particular, I think. I can confirm to the hon. member that it is certainly the attention of the government of this province and the Progressive Conservative Party to ensure that labour legislation is fair to everyone. That is the intent, it is the purpose, and indeed the review purpose will specifically address that in the process of reviewing the Labour Relations Act and other labour legislation in the future. In view of her comments about Bill 110, I think I should read into the record that, of course, that has not only not been proclaimed, it has been repealed.

As I said, I appreciate her comments on the review process. I can assure the hon. member and other members who have addressed that that we will be looking at many alternatives, and it will not be just a matter of addressing perceived problems with the current Labour Relations Act. We will indeed be looking at concepts from other jurisdictions to see if they can be amalgamated or incorporated into Alberta legislation to achieve a more stable and fair labour relations environment.

Both the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar and the Member for Edmonton Centre addressed the issue of the Individual's Rights Protection Act. It is difficult for a minister to address personal opinions, but I'm going to do that to some extent without making a commitment that there will be amendments to the Individual's Rights Protection Act during my term of office as minister.

The Individual's Rights Protection Act is really like other human rights legislation, to make sure that those people who have visible differences, which make them a minority — of course, we have added physical disability to the provisions during the time since it was first proclaimed. Visible differences, it is true, can result in discrimination, and there should be protection from it. When we get to the subject of mental handicaps and mental illness, some of them, of course, carry no visible indication of their existence; others certainly do. If it were possible to differentiate between the two, then it would be a much easier job to introduce legislation to include mental handicaps. It is my intention to have a look at it myself, because I have an interest in it from my previous career, but of course I will have to get the approval of the Legislature to do such a thing.

In relation to sexual orientation, that's another matter. I know of no sexual orientation or any other sexual preference that is visibly evident to the casual observer. If people wish to make a point of proclaiming their sexual orientation, be it heterosexual or homosexual, that is their business, but I have difficulty with the concept that a person who chooses to declare their sexual orientation should be protected by the Individual's Rights Protection Act from any results of that declaration. There is no way of knowing a homosexual from a heterosexual, male or female, that I know of medically.

The Member for Edmonton Avonmore spoke about staff reductions, and I've addressed that issue already I think. On the subject of privatization of government functions, surely there are two principles involved here. First of all, governments should not do what the private sector can do, unless one wants to live in a country where one believes that the government can do everything better than the private sector. I have not subscribed to that stand, and I don't think many members of this Legislature do. If so, there are countries they can move to rather than try to change this one. The other principle on the subject of privatization should be that where government functions are transferred to the private sector, as in motor vehicle licence issuing and many other functions where this has occurred, the private sector should be doing as effective a job as the government and preferably more economically. But it should not be a matter that it has to do it both more economically and more effectively. For the very fact that government functions can be transferred to the private sector for the same cost and the same effectiveness, I think it's a reasonable principle that those functions should go to the private sector rather than be retained as government functions. I think that's a given. The whole nature of Canada is that it's development by private individuals; government should not do what the private sector can do.

There is obviously some confusion to do with the revolving fund mentioned in vote 7 in that that fund is to enable the personnel administration office to deliver programs for training and development of employees. The department then charges the government agency or department that is receiving those services for its employees. If we can run at a small profit, maybe we are learning something from the private-sector function.

The Member for Edmonton Centre's remarks in relation to the Human Rights Commission: of course, all human rights commissions are subjected to compliments and abuse. There is no possibility of any human rights commission functioning in a matter that is absolutely acceptable to every member of society. We are talking about human emotions and reactions, and human rights commissions have a difficult job to try and make sure that every individual is treated with fairness, remembering that preferential treatment for a minority group may in actual fact be to the detriment of other members of society. The commissions have to walk that line at all times.

In my preliminary remarks I did mention the educational role of the Human Rights Commission and suggested that they should fulfill that role. Indeed, the members of the commission are well able to do it. I will, however, hand on to the chairman of the commission the encouragement of the Member for Edmonton Centre that there should be more concentration on that educational role.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I haven't had a chance to peruse the document file by my hon. colleague



from Banff-Cochrane. I'm just wondering: does the document contain information about how much fish from the Northwest Territories Gainers processed last year?

Mr. Chairman, the concern that I'd like to address briefly tonight has to do with the matter of fire safety standards, the role of the provincial Fire Commissioner, and what I understand has been the reduced role of local fire officials as a result of the passing of the Fire Prevention Act a couple of years ago.

It's nearly a year ago that a two-year-old toddler by the name of Anthony Pepper perished in a house fire in southeast Calgary. A \$20 smoke alarm might have saved his life, and if he hadn't lived in a firetrap, that might have saved his life too. I was personally asked last fall by friends of Anthony Pepper's family to look into this situation and see what could be done to prevent this tragedy from occurring again in another part of the city or the province.

City of Calgary officials explained to me that they can only go into a single-family home or a small residential building to do inspections of potential fire hazards if they are invited into that residence. This, I was told, represented a change from the situation as it existed prior to the passing of the Fire Prevention Act in 1984. As they explained it to me, apparently that Act took away the power fire officials had under municipal bylaw to inspect houses and small residential buildings and, if necessary, prosecute owners.

I would like to ask the minister if he is giving consideration to amendments to the Fire Prevention Act that would strengthen the power of local officials, local fire departments, and local fire fighters to investigate complaints that are made about potential fire hazards and to enter residential or commercial premises and order that work be undertaken to correct any deficiencies or hazards found in those buildings. I would ask him then if he could bring this Assembly up to date on any review that may be undertaken of the Act now or in the near future.

In 1984, Mr. Chairman, 52 people died in Alberta from fire incidents. Smoke detectors may have saved the lives of a number of them. In fact, of those 52 people who died in 1984, 39 were killed from inhalation of smoke and other fumes. Fire captains at scenes of many fires in this province have noted in their reports that had an alarm device been present, lives could have been saved in those instances. Equally, they have in many cases attended at a fire scene and been able to note that an alarm device also prevented the loss of life. As I understand Alberta law, only homes built after July 1977 are required to have alarms. I'm wondering what steps might be taken at this point to review that condition to make sure or to ask or insist that houses built prior to 1977 also have smoke detectors.

I'm also concerned about the issue of sprinklers in high-rise buildings. Not that sprinklers in and of themselves would save the buildings, but having them in a building in the case of a fire would give people a chance to get out. On March 7, 1986, here in the city of Edmonton 12 people were taken to hospital with smoke inhalation from a fire on the fourth floor of the 15-floor Solano House. Apparently sprinklers are an option outside of corridors. They're not required within the apartments themselves, and they're also apparently optional on higher floors. I understand the Alberta fire chiefs believe that sprinklers ought to be installed throughout high-rise residential buildings. They believe this ought to be a mandatory requirement. In order for it to be a mandatory requirement, Mr. Chairman, it would have to be incorporated into the provincial Building Code, and that in turn would then be incorporated into municipal documents.

Finally, I'd like to ask the minister to give us some indication of what changes, if any, he may be making to the Building Code in response to some of these incidents and in response to concerns that have been voiced publicly by fire officials in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions relevant to the estimates, and I'd like to make a few other observations.

Some of the concerns I have relevant to the estimates relate to the purchase of a number of fixed assets within the budget. Some of them seem extremely high. I'm wondering if these are just furniture, furnishings of some nature and, as I have done in other estimates, ask the purpose of the continuing purchase of assets of this nature. That being the case, replacing of furnishings and what have you, especially when I can hardly get anything in my constituency office, how can we justify this continual purchase? It is of some concern to me when we have budgetary limitations within other parts of the program.

The other one that comes to mind is the area of recruitment and career advertising under vote 6, an increase of 40.1 percent. Considering the attrition and downsizing that we're supposedly involved with, I'm wondering why we would be increasing our recruitment and advertising in the field of career opportunities when if we were to utilize our offices for postings or what have you we would probably find that in most cases we would receive suitable applicants from the areas of Alberta that have high unemployment rates, especially with a number of professional people who really do not have suitable work at the present time.

The minister answered a question from one of the hon. members from the opposite side with regard to the personnel administration office revolving fund, and I didn't get his complete answer. I'm wondering if these are departmental transfers that we're dealing with in the main. If that be the case, is the term profit or loss really misleading in that respect?

Mr. Chairman, in commenting on some of the areas of labour in this province, we have a commitment from a man who was elected leader of the provincial Conservative Party and who has become Premier of the province. Last October, during his leadership campaign, I personally had labour leaders in Calgary come with me and get that commitment from the Premier at that time. I just can't understand the continual charge by some members that there's nothing being done about this Labour Relations Act. Physically there may not be a lot being done; however, I know the minister is active in pursuing some change. There was certainly a committee set up by the previous minister to examine the Labour Relations Act. I am sure that with the involvement of labour, management, and government, this Act will be examined to ensure that it is fair.

What's fair? If we were to listen to the opposition, I would suggest that the labour Act would become unfair in another light. However, it is my view that because of the fair practices of the present government that has been addressing issues over a number of years, we will find that this will also be a fair review. It's not going to make everybody happy. Let's not kid ourselves. It doesn't matter what type of legislation is put into place; it's not going to make everybody happy. I don't assume for one minute that whatever Act is put together by the combined resources of all those people that will be participating in this review will make everybody happy. I'd be fooling myself and

anybody else if I thought for one minute it would, and I don't think anybody else does. The key words of course are: is it being fair?

It's interesting to note that there seems to be some discussion relevant to Gainers these days. Although I don't want to get into that overly, I think an article by Mr. Sykes in the *Calgary Sun* a couple of weeks ago was probably as accurate a report as I could possibly reflect on. I think he was so dead right that it's unbelievable.

It's interesting to note that the national union from Ontario is intimidating not only large business but also small business, single-man operations, with boycott letters and what have you. Yes, that's intimidating to a person out there struggling to make a living — and I mean just make a living — by working 10, 12, and 16 hours a day in his small business, yet he's going to be intimidated by a representative from a major union from Ontario that's probably making a lot more money than that poor little guy is on the corner of the street.

We talk about small business, Mr. Chairman. Most people in this House at one time or another in this last number of weeks have indicated how much they support the activity of small business. In many cases it sure looks like a double standard, or maybe some people don't understand what small business is, especially when some of these high-powered people start sending intimidating letters suggesting that they boycott somebody, suggesting that they don't utilize suppliers they've honoured and who have been looking after them for a number of years, and suggesting that we examine an increase in minimum wages.

Mr. Chairman, maybe a little lesson is needed here for some of the socialists in this place, because most of them don't understand business. They've never had to meet a payroll in their lives, and if they have, they've probably gone broke doing it because they didn't know how to deal with business. It's interesting that many small businesses hire young people as a first job or a part-time job. They hire people as a second job for income to assist their family. Change the legislation, increase the minimum wages to any great extent, and put all these small businesses or many of them out of business. I'll tell you, there'll be a lot of people over there really happy, and the poor owner that's out there working 16 hours a day will be asked to work 24 hours just to meet ends. I think the reality of the world must come home to roost on some people one of these days. They'd better understand the reality of the world out there.

Mr. Chairman, legislation that affects the realization of our economic times in competing in the world market is the key not only to small business and the demands placed on them but also to large business. Canada is a trading nation and Alberta in particular is a trading province. Unless we are able to compete in that world market, there won't be jobs for Albertans, and our socialist friends would probably be very excited about that considering their approach to many things is in many cases unreasonable.

It's interesting how we continually hear about Bill 110. It's also interesting that the only people who are talking about it are our socialist friends and some of the labour union people, keeping that fear in the minds of people that don't need to have that fear in them. The Act has been repealed. This government ...

MR. YOUNIE: Mr. Chairman, a point of privilege. Just a few moments ago it was imputed, and I think very falsely in terms of what I said to small businessmen in my riding,

that I would be happy to see small businessmen go out of business. I think that is a most unfair imputation on my motives and protest it heartily and would like to see it withdrawn. I work very closely with small businessmen in my riding and support them very strongly.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. I don't think the Member for Calgary McCall mentioned you by name or by riding.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, it should be noted that this side of the House continues to put behind us items such as Bill 110 and other items of that nature that are negative. We are continually looking forward to better legislation for the workplace and others, but the idea is that we're looking forward, not backward. That should be ensured by our friends on the opposite side. Possibly if they look forward a little positively, we might have a little less negativity out in the community.

It's interesting, Mr. Chairman, to note that in our legislation under our — excuse me; I just passed myself in another part of this legislation. I'll just reflect this off the top of my head. In most cases the legislation provides that for work of equal value people will get equal pay. That is already placed in our legislation. I think that when hon. members reflect one specific Act, they should look through the many Acts that relate to industrial behaviour, the Labour Relations Act and so on. I think you'll find that there are spaces provided in there relevant to the equal pay issue. I'm sure they'd like to see it in all the various Acts, but let's all do our homework properly.

It's interesting also to note when we talk about human rights and the Human Rights Commission ... I know people that are working with the Human Rights Commission and have been doing so for many years and doing an extremely honest, sincere job for the people of Alberta. It's very difficult to criticize people for making decisions based on what they feel evidence is. Yes, in our Acts there is the ability for these people to obtain information and get in and question people.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

It's also interesting to note that the police service in Calgary a few years ago, when I was a member of the Calgary Police Commission, instituted a policy of placing a race relations officer within the department to assist in race relations activities within the community. I was involved with the East Indian community many years ago in some of the difficulties they had with the community, the police, and others. Over the years, through the activity of the police service, the commission in Calgary, and also the Human Rights Commission, I think we've come a long way to assist human rights in this province. Let's not forget also that because one person has a right doesn't mean that that right should infringe on another person's rights. There's a very fine line, and I don't always know how to deal with it.

Mr. Chairman, the discussion regarding homosexuality and heterosexual circumstances certainly is one that comes up periodically unfortunately. I just can't understand why people who have a sexual preference can't keep it to themselves. Some do, and because it is kept to themselves, they are accepted very well in the mosaic of our community. It's interesting to note that others who do not wish to do that seem to want some special attention or consideration

by legislating something. I have some difficulty with creating special legislation for any specific group when if they were to fit into the mosaic of the community in a normal fashion, they wouldn't need that.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to close on another note here which another member brought up: fire prevention. If we look at the Act in totality we'll find that there are some investigative powers, that people can go have a look at people's homes and what have you. I also have a problem with that. It seems every time we turn around we want to give somebody some more power to walk into my home as a homeowner and give them the ability to force or demand entry to that home. I am appalled at anybody who wants to infringe on my quiet enjoyment of my property. It seems that we have double standards that created themselves that rear their ugly heads around here occasionally, as they did in city hall.

Mr. Chairman, it's also difficult sometimes — I know we have a very hardworking media, many who report objectively the activities of this House and other activities in the community. I have some difficulty many times when we try to fool the troops and continue to try to be an actor around here for much of the left-leaning media. It's interesting to try to get some objectivity in some of it, but we're fortunate in Alberta that most of our media does report objectively. It does get the ear of the community within reason. We won't name which ones of course. We'll let you use your imagination occasionally.

Mr. Chairman, I don't wish to comment on the Labour Relations Act at this time. I don't want to prejudice what a committee may decide, what changes, if any, are necessary. In general terms, much of the discussion that has taken place here this evening — if we do a lot of our homework and examine many of these various Acts that are in place at the present time, I think we will find that on the majority of the issues that are trying to be developed by some members, there is protection for our community, for our workers pretty well in place in the many areas of legislation that we have in place in this province.

I commend previous governments, the minister, and all those people who work diligently in the public service, continually getting cheap shots from the people they think they support occasionally. We're not going to give them cheap shots on this side; we're going to commend them for the activity and the hard work they place into the betterment of our community and our livelihood in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Chairman, I just want to participate for a short while in the debate tonight. Like the Member for Banff-Cochrane, I too have listened to my constituents, a good number of whom work at Gainers, and those members of my constituency want the laws changed. When I've walked the picket lines with my constituents, they've told me why it's necessary to have the laws changed. The reason is that when they're locked out, activity still goes on and profit is still allowed to be made.

The owner, who incidentally happens to be from Ontario at one point, doesn't ...

MR. STEVENS: I am too.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, aren't you fortunate; right up there with Peter. He doesn't want the laws changed, and my goodness, if he ever did, he probably wouldn't have

to petition the government. All he'd have to do is take them on a fishing trip. It's amazing the influence that might be there. Who was on the trip where the good folk just came back from Yellowknife? Some prominent movers and shakers in the government party. Eric Geddes, a prominent Tory fund raiser was out there casting flies and pulling out fish; nothing wrong with that. A certain Mazankowski was out there, not the Deputy Prime Minister but the Deputy Prime Minister's brother, but surely there's no influence there. Sandy Mactaggart: somebody else who went out there fishing with Pete. All the influence was there in that little planeload that came back, all this good collection of Tory folk. They wouldn't have to petition the government, the friends, the brothers, the relatives, the fund-raisers ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair is having some difficulty relating that to any of the six votes that are before the House. Would the Member for Edmonton Belmont address his comments more relative to the votes before him.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's fishing.

MR. SIGURDSON: I wish.

I'm talking about having to change the law. The minister said in his opening remarks that sometime this fall, after this session, the review would be going on. This promise was made in the Speech from the Throne, and I would just like to know specifically what month or what week that review will commence.

That, Mr. Chairman, concludes my remarks.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to add a few comments to the debate on the Department of Labour estimates this evening.

The first one is in looking at vote 1. One of the first items I always enjoy looking at in the various departments is to see what kind of an increase we're looking at in terms of the minister's salary and benefits. Of course, like all the other ministers, the Minister of Labour is planning to give himself a healthy increase of 5.6 percent. I don't begrudge the minister that if only the other people in this society could get similar kinds of increases. It especially offends people on this side when ministers have the gall to give themselves increases like that but haven't got the guts to give people minimum wage increases when they've been stuck for four lousy years.

Mr. Chairman, I guess what happens here is that we operate by the golden rule. You know, the rule that says, "Those who have the gold make the rules."

MR. STEVENS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The member has indicated that ministers do this or do that for themselves and not for others. The Legislative Assembly estimates now before the House, including this department's estimates, include sums of money based on the Legislative Assembly Act and the provisions of that Act. They are not there by reason of the choice of a minister or a group of ministers.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Chairman, they're specifically in vote 1.0.1, so I think they're totally germane to our discussion this evening, shameful as they are.

To move forward, in vote 4 we talk about labour relations, and I have to make a couple of points there. One is that we see no effort on the part of the government or the Minister of Labour to stop the trend toward the profitization

of government services. More and more government services are being turned over to the profit sector. What in fact is happening is that we're realizing little, if any, benefit in terms of the taxpayer, yet the wages paid to the people performing the services are cut substantially, their benefits, if any, are reduced, and they have no job security. In fact, I know a couple of people in my constituency who are being engaged by unscrupulous employers who have government contracts and are getting paid by the government but are not paying their employees properly and on time.

Moving on to another item under labour relations, there is the question of whether or not the kinds of resources the minister has proposed for our approval here in the Assembly are adequate to the task at hand. I would suggest that with the kind of labour relations the government has fostered in the last period of years, it is totally inadequate. For example, we have the most current dispute in the city, the Gainers dispute, and I have to wonder if we can have some confidence that the minister and the government really have the resolution of this dispute at heart. Previously we were discussing who supports the government — and we know that Gainers Inc. is a big supporter of the Conservative government — and whether or not the government really has at hand a serious intention to deal with the workers' legitimate requests for parity in the packing industry. I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the government has no intention whatsoever in this regard to make sure that the workers at Gainers Inc. and other workers in this province are treated with fairness and justice.

The last thing I want to say, Mr. Chairman, is in terms of vote 5 under the Individual's Rights Protection Act. I want to tell the current minister and this government that it saddens me that the first experience I had with the Human Rights Commission in this province was when I was a student applying for a job in this very building as a guide. I was told by the responsible person at that time that we didn't hire young men at that time for that role because the tourists like to see girls in short skirts. I complained to the Human Rights Commission about this sexist provision, and all the Human Rights Commission was able to do was to send me a letter or get the public relations people at the government here to send me a letter saying it's not the policy of the government to discriminate. In fact there was absolutely no action being taken. So I got my first taste, Mr. Chairman, of exactly the policy of this government, and that is that the Human Rights Commission is basically so that they can point to something to show they're doing action when in fact they're doing nothing.

Another thing I need to say about the Human Rights Commission, Mr. Chairman, is that there are a lot of young people in my constituency in Edmonton Mill Woods, a lot of young men in my constituency, and they are sick and tired of a government that is not going to enforce the provisions of its own Individual's Rights Protection Act, which clearly states that discrimination on the basis of sex and age is prohibited. Young drivers in our constituency and around this province are paying discriminatory high insurance rates and have been for some time. Mr. Chairman, it is beyond the understanding of the young people in my constituency why it is that the government has consistently made a special exemption for the insurance industry in this province to continue discriminating against young male drivers who have records that are as clean as anybody's. I think the only reason for that is that the insurance industry is a great supporter of this present government.

The next one I want to say, Mr. Chairman, is in terms of the Individual's Rights Protection Act: when are we

going to see some kind of provision where political affiliation is added as grounds to prohibit discrimination against? I know for a fact in the last number of campaigns that there are a number of people who would have liked to have participated but felt intimidated because they were made to feel that if they got involved in the campaign in other than the government party their jobs were at risk. I think that kind of intimidation and fear is shameful and ought to be addressed by the minister and by the government.

The last thing I want to say in terms of the Individual's Rights Protection Act, Mr. Chairman, is in terms of sexual orientation. We discussed this before, and I'd like to know why it is that the government here can not seem to bring itself to address this issue. It's the law in the province of Quebec, and that's one-third of the population of this country. It's about to become the law in Ontario and Manitoba, and I'd like to know what the problem is here. Are the laws that are invoked in the province of Alberta subject to approval by Jerry Falwell and company, or what's the delay here? Now let's show some leadership and get on with the task at hand. Let's show some leadership, and let's stop dragging our feet on these issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, in consideration of the estimates of the Department of Labour tonight, we've had numerous suggestions on legislation from the Official Opposition. I'd like to suggest that were we to take those, I think we would have a severe impact on our various industries in this province.

I'd like to use an example that is used by the opposition, and that is the province of Quebec. There seems to be some indication that their legislation should be the direction in which we're moving. It's very interesting to note that on July 4 this year, which was actually in the country south to us Independence Day — it was interesting that this report had some independent views. A report was brought out in Quebec that was part of the Legislative Assembly there. First of all, the consideration and the need for the report were based on the very real thought and concern that Quebec had to become more competitive, that their present antireplacement worker legislation rules and hiring practices had to be relaxed. Among the 93 recommendations, it was recommended that Quebec's tough, antireplacement worker measures be brought into line with rules of those in other provinces. This is the province that we are being recommended to be emulating, the province of Quebec. It was a Liberal member — the Liberals seem to have deserted us tonight.

MR. MITCHELL: No, they haven't.

MR. DAY: Excuse me. It was a Liberal member, and we give credit to him, who said that he would like to see the antireplacement worker legislation changed, more in line with — he recommended and used as examples Ontario and other provinces. Ontario law permits hiring outside workers at the time of a strike. This was the member from the Quebec Assembly recommending this change. They had discovered the hard way the effects of counterproductive legislation on the economy of a province.

Mr. Chairman, available data shows that Quebec's annual investment rate had dropped some 20 percent from 1976, and now today, in spite of massive government subsidy, their investment rate is some 20 percent below the national average. The major intent of those recommendations was not a diabolical conspiracy to subvert the labour movement;

it was to encourage the opening up of the private sector and therefore creation of jobs for some of the 650,000 unemployed in Quebec.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many?

MR. DAY: I appreciate that question: 650,000. I was prepared for it.

Mr. Chairman, we've got to get away from the mistrust and the paranoia that exists between management and labour. Industry has to be prepared and able to deal quickly with market changes. As an example, when cattle were more plentiful and government programs encouraged building, we saw new plants being built, lots of plants, lots of jobs. But after 1976, with a downturn in the industry, many plants closed simply because they couldn't compete at present costs. Burns closed down in Edmonton and Calgary, Canada Packers and Swift in Edmonton, Kerr closed in Calgary, Canada Packers closed their Lethbridge plant after buying it from Swift's, and Burns closed another one in Medicine Hat because of not being able to compete at those costs.

Not only the bigger but also the smaller independents suffer from counterproductive legislation. They're less able to shift their revenues and to adapt from one facet of industry to another. There is a need in this province to have labour/management co-operation to such a degree that we can shift rapidly back and forth depending on the constraints of the market at the time. We can't be burdened down with outdated, outmoded, cumbersome legislation that is counterproductive.

Alberta's hog plants are competing in a North American hog industry, where one U.S. plant alone kills 3 million hogs in a year. That's a third more than the entire production of Alberta in a year. We do operate in a province that has all the necessities for production. We have expertise. We have the technology. But we've got to avoid unrealistic legislation, and we've got to consider regional differences. We have to be able to sell our product out of province. We have to be able to ship our hog products some 2,000 miles to be able to access the megamarkets of Los Angeles. In comparison, Canada Packers in the east has only to ship some 300 miles to be able to tap into markets like Detroit and Buffalo. There are some differences there. They have to be considered on both sides if we're going to be competitive. Add to all this that Alberta plants have to compete head to head with U.S. plants that have lower labour costs. We've got to look at the situation. Even if an Alberta plant can survive at a 1 percent profit, which is questionable, there is no way they're going to be able to generate the revenue needed to maintain high-tech development, new plant design, or new product marketing or research.

Mr. Chairman, what I'm saying is that if these industries are going to survive in our province, we've got to be able to compete, we've got to be able to provide jobs, and we need greater co-operation between labour and management, not more confrontation and not legislation that brings confrontation to a head and puts the whole labour/management question out of balance.

I've been referring to and using examples coming from the meat packing industry, but these examples apply to all industries. We need to remember that the meat packing industry is Alberta's second most important after energy in terms of values of shipments. Alberta produces 44 percent of the nation's cattle and 12 percent of the nation's hogs. And when we hear recommendations to boycott that industry, I am amazed; I am shocked. We cannot risk legislation that is going to cause stagnation and noncompetitiveness.

We've got to remember that Alberta's chance for growth in this industry and in others simply won't happen in a static Canadian market alone; we've got to be successful in the U.S. west coast market, in Japan, in the Pacific Rim points of entry. We are living and moving into a new era, Mr. Chairman. We're moving into the 21st century. Things that worked in the 19th century are not going to work today. We've got to have an increased awareness and an appreciation on both sides, labour and management, that we need to see an increased commitment on the part of employers for the well-being of their employees. And we need to see increased commitment on the part of employees for the profit initiatives of their employers.

I believe we're living in a day in which we can take challenges and make opportunities out of them. I'm inviting labour and management in this province to begin to expand their thinking and to realize that we're living in an increasingly competitive world. We need to work together. Union leaders and management in Alberta have a unique opportunity to set a standard and an example for the rest of the country in terms of workplace unity and co-operation. We can't be spending valuable time and energy in endless disputes and clashes and dealing with outmoded and outdated legislation that only brings more confrontation and less competitiveness. I believe that we've got enough clear-thinking, well-intending people on both sides of this issue that if we have a commitment to see the industries move and grow into the 21st century, we can come up with ways and means of seeing our industry grow and develop and not stagnate. I believe that. The legislative proposals, though, that we hear from the opposition do not advance the type of thinking that I'm talking about. It only promotes the confrontational approach, which is of no help to Albertans at this point in time.

I commend the minister for his very levelheaded, calm, and collected approach to facing the dilemmas in this province, in industry and in labour, and I suggest we follow that example. Let's put aside the differences and the rhetoric and sit down to work out long-term plans for co-operation together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report and the request for leave to sit again, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the Assembly tomorrow will be in Committee of Supply and will deal with the estimates of the Department of Tourism. As to next week, I intend to forecast for the five days for the members tomorrow.

[At 10:35, on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10:00 a.m.]

