

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

Title: **Friday, August 29, 1986 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray. O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us. As members of this Legislative Assembly, we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country. Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 15****Employment Pension Plans Act**

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Employment Pension Plans Act.

Mr. Speaker, there are several principles in this Act which I would like to briefly review. Both full-time and part-time employees will be eligible if they have completed two years of employment, if there is a pension plan for their class of employment, and if they've met a minimum earnings test. There will be provision for vesting and locking in of pensions after five years of employment. Employees who terminate their plan will have to transfer the value to a locked-in, registered retirement savings plan, an annuity, or another pension plan and another employee if that plan allows for that. There are provisions for spousal pensions of at least 60 percent. The Bill requires employers to provide employees with full disclosure of information regarding their accrued benefits, and there are requirements for minimum contributions of 50 percent by the employer.

Mr. Speaker, the principles of this Bill have resulted from extensive consultations with all parties. There is a history of introductions of Bills previously, and I think that some of the contents will be of considerable significance to women.

[Leave granted; Bill 15 read a first time]

Bill 251**An Act to Amend****the Mortgage Brokers Regulation Act**

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill for first reading, being Bill 251, An Act to Amend the Mortgage Brokers Regulation Act.

This Bill will simply strike out that clause in section 2 of the Act which exempts members of the Law Society of Alberta from the Act's provisions.

[Leave granted; Bill 251 read a first time]

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table three annual reports: the report of Mount Royal College for '84-85, the report for Olds College for '84-85, and the report of the Banff Centre for Continuing Education for '84-85.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce two special guests in the public gallery today, Mrs. Dyann McLeod Burrows and her niece Sarah Burghardt. Mrs. McLeod Burrows is from Tacoma, Washington, and she's a sister-in-law of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I'm informed that she's also married to a right-wing Republican, Mr. Speaker. It only goes to show that every family has its black sheep; whether that's on the Norwood side or the Tacoma side, I can't tell. I would ask the members of the Assembly to please extend a warm welcome to these special guests and ask them to stand.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Seat Belt Legislation**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to my friend the Premier. It has to do with seat belts. As everyone suspected, Bill 211 was adjourned yesterday without a vote and dropped to the bottom of the Order Paper, despite the Premier's hints that he is considering a free vote on the issue. My question is: when is the Premier going to stop considering and make a decision instead and permit a free vote on this vital issue?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it was obvious yesterday that there were many members wishing to speak on the piece of legislation. As I recall, I think there were only six or seven out of 83 members who had a chance to even debate the issue. I think we should provide more opportunity, and when we are able to, then we should vote on it and have the House carry the day. That's democracy working, and that's the way it should be.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Premier's newfound fondness for democracy. But just to try to nail it down a little bit: is the Premier saying then that yesterday's hour-long debate was it? Are we going to have another debate in this session, and will the Premier — we can have it go all night if he wants — allow everybody to speak then and have a vote in this session? That's what the people of Alberta want to know.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the House decides how the session goes, and that's what I'm looking forward to.

MR. MARTIN: Well, we always like the Premier to look forward to things, Mr. Speaker.

Let me put simply this. We've heard a lot of talk about restraint and how we want to save the taxpayers' money, and it's clear from the studies that we would save money. My question is: by the government's not voting on this issue, is it government policy then that Albertans should be placed at a greater risk from accidents and should pay higher health care costs in Alberta than Canadians and all.

the rest of Canada except P.E.I. and that we're going to sit and wait for some mystical debate? Are we prepared now to deal with that, or are we going to pay higher premium costs as a result?

MR. GETTY: The answer is no and no, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's really not the answer that Albertans are looking for.

My question to this Premier very simply is: as the head of government, would the Premier screw up some political courage and deal with this issue once and for all in this Legislature and have a vote in this session? He can answer that question yes or no this time.

MR. GETTY: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I have answered the question. But it's the elected representatives and the people of Alberta who are responsible for the laws, not the media. Last time I looked, we were representing the people of Alberta, not jumping around as the NDP does when the media gets on some issue.

We know their position: state control of people's lives. All you have to do is look at the Order Paper. There are Bills that tell you what to wear, where to go, when you can work, and what you can sell. That is NDP state control. The people of Alberta reject it completely.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Would the Premier consider the issue is out there at this time? Would the Premier make a commitment to this Assembly that early in the spring session, before the heavy driving season starts next summer, the elected members of this Assembly be given the opportunity to debate the issue early and fully in the session and then a free vote be called in this Assembly?

MR. GETTY: I certainly will give consideration to that, Mr. Speaker. Members will have lots of opportunity to meet with their constituents. I would hope sometime in October, after the session closes, if it closes by then, we might all have an opportunity to be in our constituencies and talk to the people there and then represent them in the spring.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. To help him solve the anguish and the worry of waiting all winter to think about the decision next spring, would he consider adopting the motion as a government motion so it could be debated in this session and allow his members to talk as long as they want? We'll stay here as long as he's willing to stay.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there's no question that the House decides what it wants to do. Also, there are many, many issues, all of which must be treated in a balanced way in the House, and no one member can demand that his particular issue comes before all the others.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Premier is so helpless to deal with the issues and he can only deal with what he wants. Isn't that amusing?

MR. TAYLOR: He runs for cover every time it gets difficult.

MR. MARTIN: That's right.

Labour Legislation Review

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm in a good mood today because it's Labour Day, and I want to help out the Minister of Labour. I'm going to direct my question to him. I have — it's falling all over — some weekend reading for the minister. What there is here is specific studies of labour legislation, believe it or not: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, West Germany, Britain, the United States, and even Canada. Being in such a good mood, I'm trying to help the minister out.

Given that there is widespread public outrage over the minister's travel plans, will the minister now announce that his committee is staying in Canada and will not travel abroad? I would love — it's in the Legislature Library, and the minister can have these anytime.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, the Chair directs the material be removed from the Assembly at this moment. Order please. Perhaps I could invite about six pages to come and take the material. Thank you.

DR. REID: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I guess Speedy Reidy and the Jet-setters want to continue. Would he mind reading it?

Anyhow, we've never precisely nailed down what the government proposes to do about the numerous labour disputes which now drag on, I might say, due to the poor labour laws in this province. My question to the minister is: once and for all, is it the case that the Gainers, Zeidler, Lakeside, and Suncor disputes are just going to have to wait through the fall and winter for legislative reform, and can we expect no interim law change to help encourage settlements before next spring?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, there are provisions under the present labour statutes for perfectly adequate collective bargaining. If the parties to those disputes wish to and are sincere on both sides — and I would hope that they are — then there are provisions that are quite adequate for collective bargaining to continue and to reach a conclusion.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if the minister believes that, he's the last one in Alberta that believes that.

Simply, my question then, Mr. Speaker, is this: can the minister give the Assembly and the people of Alberta a solemn undertaking that all this jet-setting will amount to something? I'm asking specifically: will the minister guarantee there'll be draft legislation in the spring session, or is this just a trip for nothing?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the matter of absolute guarantee is a little difficult, but I don't know on how many occasions in and outside of this House I have indicated that the schedule is aimed at the introduction of necessary amendments or draft legislation in the spring sitting of 1987.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's a very interesting comment; there are no guarantees.

Mr. Speaker, my question then is to the minister. Being the helpful person that I am and given the minister's and the Premier's attitudes in this Assembly, if we're travelling around the world, why hasn't the government scheduled a trip to Poland so they can study their labour laws? It would be more relevant to this province.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition was genuine in his concern and his helpfulness, perhaps he would give more support to the process that has been initiated by this government with the intention of providing adequate laws for rank-and-file labour, for employees, employers, and the general public to make sure that the labour laws of this province are adequate, fair, and reasonable to all Albertans. If he was sincere in his helpfulness, perhaps he could take that up rather than criticize the genuine and sincere efforts of this government.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. This time, though, it's to the Minister of Tourism. Would he take a few moments and talk to the Minister of Labour in a Travel Alberta plan to point out to the Minister of Labour the many lovely spots where they can contemplate and reason in quiet solitude within this province, rather than travelling all around the globe?

MR. SPEAKER: *Beauchesne* clearly states the questions are not supposed to be facetious.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. It relates to the original question of the Leader of the Opposition, which had a point in it with which I completely agree. Can the minister assure this Assembly that prior to the trip being taken, the minister and all members of the committee will have a process in place by which thorough study will be made of those reports before the final decision is made with regard to travelling throughout the world? Can the minister commit that to this Legislature in a responsible way and, as well, report back to this Legislature that that has been done, and not report back in a facetious way that it hasn't been done?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I haven't gone over the considerable amount of documentation that the Leader of the Official Opposition brought in here this morning. What I can do is assure the hon. member that there has been a very considerable amount of documentation gone over by the department and myself and that the members of the committee are now studying quite a volume of paperwork. That's what they're doing between the meeting of last Tuesday and the meeting of next Wednesday. There will be much more for them to study before they go abroad.

Transfer Payments

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this question today is to the Treasurer. There have been recent reports of the federal deficit escalating beyond the federal government's original projections. This is a serious matter for the whole country, and certainly Albertans, like all Canadians, should be willing to bear their fair share of the burden of reducing the federal deficit. But we've already suffered significant cuts in federal transfers to the province for health and postsecondary education in the name of reducing this federal budget. Does the Treasurer have any assurances from his colleague Mr. Wilson that these important transfers will not be further reduced?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the agreement on established program financing has been an item under careful consideration for the past two years, as the federal government did two things: one, in a consultative way to express to the provinces the need to maintain the deficit, as the member

has expressed; secondly, to ensure that the agreement between the provinces and the federal government is one wherein provinces understood at least what the federal government had intended; and finally, of course, to bring legislation to Parliament to put in place the current established program financing.

Over that period, Mr. Speaker, the province of Alberta has taken a lead position in objecting to the kinds of cutbacks which were anticipated by the federal government. Although we were not successful in ensuring that there were not reductions at least in the projected established program financing, we obviously were able to express on behalf of many provinces, including our own, the impact that the established program financing reduction would have on the current programs in this province and in other provinces; not so much Alberta but in other provinces in particular.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, as I've said in the House before, the federal government's intention is to reduce the rate of expansion of established program financing, and that impact on the province of Alberta is, as the member noted, some \$500 million over a five-year program. The current impact of approximately \$29 million is reflected in this fiscal plan. And finally, as we have said before, because this province tends to set its own expenditure programs based on what it considers to be the priorities of this government with respect to hospitals and Advanced Education in particular, we have done that independent of the flow of funds to us, and we continue to maintain the highest level of assistance to hospitals, universities, and colleges independent of the transfers from the federal government.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I shudder to think of the length of the answer if his throat hadn't been sore. Maybe I'll give him a rest and ask the Premier this next question.

Will the Premier seek an assurance from his friend Mr. Mulroney that since the Prime Minister regularly contradicts his Finance minister on issues related to reducing the federal deficit, he will get a commitment from the Prime Minister that there'll be no further cuts?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, it's not our habit to answer secondhand reports raised by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. He doesn't know what they said, actually; he's going by newspaper reports. I thought our Provincial Treasurer answered his question perfectly well.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker. I guess we both communicate with the Prime Minister at about the same level.

Would the Premier then seek assurance that any reductions of other federal programs that benefit the provinces do not exceed cuts to other federal programs like External Affairs or Defence?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I've said before in the House, the federal government has the responsibility to handle their own budget. They have imposed, over the years of Liberal governments in this country, a tremendous deficit of borrowing that sits on the head of every Canadian. It's been the result of a Liberal/NDP coalition in the House of Commons. They loaded up this nation with debt; now we're trying to work our way out of it. Albertans recognize that this debt is a major problem for the people of Alberta and of Canada, and Albertans are prepared to assist as Canadians in trying to work that debt down.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. I think he must have been asleep last night. Five and a half billion dollars of borrowing pales to insignificance what the federal ...

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the question, not debate.

MR. TAYLOR: Can the Premier give the people of Alberta a guarantee that during a period when federal fiscal resources will be further restrained. Alberta will be an important part of the consultative process — not let's just lie down there and take it — and will receive its fair share of federal assistance, two things the Premier was not able to do when it came to the oil industry?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think the Alberta government is able to obtain the assistance that it requires, and the people of Alberta, as I said earlier, being good Canadians, have always felt that this tremendous debt imposed on their heads by the Liberal government is something they are going to have to all pull together to try and reduce. We're prepared to be part of that national effort.

MR. R. SPEAKER: To the Premier, Mr. Speaker. This relates to the 1970 program of the Official Opposition called "On to Ottawa." At that time the hon. Premier was a leader in terms of that program. Would the Premier be prepared to revive that "On to Ottawa" program and in his representations under that program assure not only Albertans but Canadians that there will not be an introduction of new taxation of some form from the federal government?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously members of the House of Commons are elected by their constituents, and their constituents will ask them to do certain things. In terms of new taxation, the hon. Provincial Treasurer has outlined a series of consultations that have gone on and will go on in the future.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Treasurer. Considering that the federal government when it calls Parliament will give detailed reasons why its deficit has gone up and some of these facts will be that we are going to lose some \$530 million by 1991 in transfer payments, will this Treasurer take a leaf from the pages of Mr. Wilson's procedures and tell this Assembly why we need \$5.5 billion in borrowing power?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member has confused the issues as he does day after day, time after time. There's no question that this government has traditionally led Canada in terms of fiscal reporting, in terms of providing information, in terms of opportunities for discussion and debate on all relevant matters affecting the financial position of this province. We will continue to do it.

Other provinces look to Alberta as a lesson, as an example, as a model, and I think it would be gratuitous for me to suggest to Mr. Wilson how he would conduct his affairs. I can only indicate to you that you had ample opportunity on a variety of occasions to debate the fiscal plan; I have not seen any reasonable alternatives or anything creative. It's a fired old government after one term ... [interjections] It's a tired old opposition after one term of office. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair reminds hon. members that they're cutting into their own time of question period and therefore should not be dismayed if not all members make it into question period. The Chair recognizes the designated hitter for the Representative Party in the Member for Clover Bar.

Wood Preservative Plant

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it must be the start of a long weekend.

My question is to the Minister of the Environment. On Monday I asked if an application had been received by the county of Strathcona or the Department of the Environment, and the county of Strathcona had received an application from Bradbury industries. Is the Minister of the Environment in a position to indicate if there's been any change in the status of the application; in other words, has the Department of the Environment received the application from Bradbury industries for the erection of the new plant in the county of Strathcona?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Late yesterday afternoon applications were received from Bradbury Industrial Group Inc. for approvals under the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts to construct a chlorophenol plant in the Scotford heavy industrial area of the county of Strathcona.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister made any decisions, in light of the rumoured fact that this application was going to be coming, to have an environmental impact study or an assessment done on the effect on the surrounding area of this proposed plant?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, early this morning I reviewed the applications that were submitted by Bradbury Industrial Group and have directed that a letter will be written and forwarded to Bradbury Industrial Group Inc., calling for an environmental impact assessment of the type listed in the guidelines printed in the fall of 1985, the type called Selected Topic.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister. What opportunity will the people in the Scotford/Fort Saskatchewan area have to have public input to the proposed plant?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, once again, the document that reviews environmental impact assessments in the province of Alberta clearly indicates what would be required. There are a number of steps. Perhaps just briefly I could highlight a couple of them in direct response. First of all, the proponent in this case is "expected to maintain direct contact with [all] the appropriate agencies during the preparation of the report." They will have to provide for public involvement in the exchange of information, will have to have an assessment of the significance of this proposal "to the community and evaluate alternatives." They have to "determine the public acceptability of their projects before presenting their reports [back] to government," and they will be required to publish a notice where copies of the EIA will be available, and also to have public meetings, hearings, and the like.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, has the minister established any deadlines as to when all the procedures that are to be followed must be followed and when they must be completed?

MR. KOWALSKI: That would be entirely up to Bradbury Industrial Group Inc. I'm not anxious to approve any licences until I first of all have been satisfied with the correctness of the application, until I'm satisfied that the local municipality has had an opportunity for a full hearing and a full briefing on this matter, and until I'm satisfied that the people concerned and affected have had a full opportunity to provide their input, to ask questions, and to hear debates with respect to the merits of this particular application. So in terms of the guidelines, there is no rushing of anything. If it takes six months, so be it; if it takes six years, so be it.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, on the same line, but it's to the minister of economic development. Is it part of the policy of economic development in this province, in order to fully utilize the hazardous waste plant, that the minister is trying to attract this type of hazardous waste manufacturing to the province?

MR. SHABEN: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YOUNIE: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Environment. When I met with Mr. Hean last night, he indicated that he has heard of other industries planning to move to Alberta because of the Swan Hills waste disposal plant. Has the minister been made aware of any of these?

MR. KOWALSKI: I've not had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to be wined and dined by Mr. Hean or Bradbury Industrial Group Inc., so I can't really respond to the question.

Calgary Stampeders

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I trust that you'll resist the temptation to rule that my question today is hypothetical. My question, sir, is to the Deputy Premier. In view of the anticipated victory by the resurgent Calgary Stampeders next Monday, could the Deputy Premier advise the Assembly as to the economic implications of the government's previous loan guarantees in light of the Stampeders' remarkable turnaround on both the balance sheet and the football field?

MR. RUSSELL: Seriously, Mr. Speaker, that is a very happy situation coming at a good time in the life of the community of Calgary, a nice kind of community effort success story that we like to hear about. It is correct that when the community-owned team was in danger of failing last year, the government — on the initiative of our Premier, who has some interest in the game — stepped in with a loan guarantee of \$1 million. Combined with that and the efforts of the team and their directors and the community of Calgary, it has been a real turnaround. I'm sure everybody is pleased with that success story coming at this time. There is one more step to follow in the plan of action which may not particularly please the Premier: Monday the Eskimos are going to be annihilated.

MR. SPEAKER: A reasoned supplementary.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, in response to your request for a reasoned supplementary, in view of the Premier's occupational background and his position as the leader of the government of all of Alberta, could the Premier indicate his policy position today as to the outcome of Monday's game in Calgary?

MR. SPEAKER: With all due respect to former quarterbacks of the Eskimos, the Chair recognizes the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche followed by the Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. GETTY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Points of order will be recognized at the end of question period.

Radar Detectors

MR. PIQUETTE: This is not a football story.

To the minister of transportation. Mr. Speaker, today we'll be debating Bill 17, legalizing the use of radar detectors in Alberta. On July 28 in this Assembly the minister admitted that radar detectors have been rendered obsolete by new technology like radar guns.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the question is clearly out of order: anticipation of today's Order Paper.

MR. MARTIN: No. Wait until the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair awaits the question and may well respond again.

MR. PIQUETTE: Okay. Is the government's policy of permitting these detectors not simply going to encourage rip-off of consumers who are unaware of the detectors' uselessness?

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, hon. member: clearly anticipatory with respect to today's debate.

AN HON. MEMBER: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order at the end of question period. I'm sorry.

Tolerance and Understanding

MR. CHUMIR: My question is to the hon. Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker. Recent events relating to the Aryan Nations raise again the Ghitter committee recommendation that the government immediately implement specific programs in all our schools to enhance tolerance and understanding, including specific establishment of an intercultural education development fund. The new health unit is piecemeal, optional, and only in junior high schools. What we need is a compulsory program at younger, more impressionable ages. Can the minister tell the House, nearly two years after the Ghitter recommendations, whether it is or is not government policy to have each student receive a well-thought-out program of education on this important matter?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is clearly the intention of this government to address and continue to address the issue of tolerance and understanding within our school system. However, I do believe it's important to note that in my view and in the view of this government it is not only the school system which breeds tolerance and understanding in its young Albertans. In fact, I believe there's a major responsibility on the part of the community and on the part of the family to ensure, as all members

have unanimously agreed in this Assembly, stamping out any kind of discrimination or intolerance wherever any of us should find it.

I can say, however, with respect to the recommendations of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, that we have made a major effort in our province to effect a lot of those recommendations already. That has taken place. We have done a major audit by a professional group of educators of our school curriculum materials, including resource materials, to stamp out any suggestion of intolerance in our materials. That has been done and will continue to be done, even for existing materials and new materials that are coming into the school curriculum.

As well, we have acted on many of the recommendations of the report of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, and for those that we have not yet acted upon, we are continuing to work with many of the professional groups and stakeholder groups in this province with respect to education for ongoing mechanisms to implement those recommendations.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, because of the hon. member's and the Liberal Party's position that there be no public support for private schools in this province, I think it's important to note that the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding gave a very clear recommendation in their report for the continued public support of private school education in this province.

MR. CHUMIR: We seem to have had another tour around the world, but the question related to the specific recommendation of the Ghitter committee that there be immediate programs on intercultural education. Why has there been so little progress on this matter, other than perhaps a lack of concern on the issue on the part of the government?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I take issue with that statement, Mr. Speaker. I think it has been very clear that we have in fact acted on many of these excellent recommendations. As I have said, not all have gone in place; however, there is an ongoing discussion. As well, as I have said in this Assembly, I will be bringing forth a new School Act, hopefully in the spring of 1987, when hopefully a comprehensive statement on the final recommendation of this province with respect to those important recommendations can be made.

MR. CHUMIR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, on a matter which doesn't relate to School Act amendments. Can the minister tell us whether there is, in fact, at this time in the Department of Education a group actually working on a comprehensive program of this nature, as recommended by the Ghitter committee, for all of our schools?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, there are many exercises going on in my department, and one of them certainly is with respect to tolerance and understanding and the professional committee which has been established to review those materials. As I've said before, I believe it's incumbent upon all of us to continue in our diligence to fight intolerance in our system. My department is working very hard to come forth with very clear recommendations as part of the School Act. I disagree with the hon. member that this is not an integral part of that exercise.

MR. SPEAKER: A final supplementary, Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier on this issue. Can the Premier, who sets the tone of leadership in this province, give the House a commitment that the government will ensure that a program of tolerance and understanding becomes a part of every child's education in Alberta without further delay?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe the hon. member followed through with that supplementary, having just been given such an excellent answer by the Minister of Education, who covered all of those matters in great detail and very, very well.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. What avenues is she opening up to parents and members of the community if in fact they discover that intolerance and misunderstanding are being taught in the classroom?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I believe that is the intent of a unanimous resolution that was before this Assembly a week ago today. It clearly stated that wherever any member is witness to or has information about something which breeds intolerance in their view, we are all to work on it. I think all parents, students, and teachers in province — all of us are responsible. If the hon. member has information in that regard, I hope she would draw it to my attention if it affects the school system.

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Education. Is it not true, Madam Minister, that there are many programs already in existence on this very topic? I'm thinking of the society for the elimination of stereotyping.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important point and one that was a part of my earlier answer. But let me make it clear that in the new secondary curriculum which will be coming into the school systems starting this fall and moving in a way that can be easily through the system, certainly tolerance and understanding is a very major focus. I do believe and always will believe that discussion amongst a peer group of the issues involved in tolerance and understanding will always be the best teacher for that student.

Herbicide Applications in Forests

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of the Environment is on the topic of the application of chemical herbicides in the forest areas of Alberta. Have any permits been issued this year for the application of these herbicides?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I approved two applications submitted on behalf of the Canadian Forestry Service and the Alberta Forest Service for an application in the Grovedale area.

DR. ELLIOTT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the application taken place, or when will it take place?

MR. KOWALSKI: The application took place yesterday, Mr. Speaker. It was concluded by approximately 1:15 in the afternoon on some 62 acres of land.

DR. ELLIOTT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Was the public advised with respect to this application and the nature of that program?

MR. KOWALSKI: Public information meetings were held in the northern part of the province earlier in the year, Mr. Speaker. Individuals were given an opportunity to meet, to discuss, and to hear more about what was being applied, where, when, and how. There were no major concerns after the explanations were given.

Essentially, the chemical that was used is something called Pronone, which is a granular material, not a liquid. It was applied by helicopter in good environmental conditions. There was no drift outside the target area beyond 15 or 16 feet. The project was supervised by Alberta Environment staff, officials from the Canadian Forestry Service and the Alberta Forest Service, and the whole project was videotaped.

DR. ELLIOTT: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are there other applications or projects of this type planned for the Grande Prairie forest area?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of requests on my desk for research projects associated with the usage of certain chemicals that would be applied manually, not aurally. I think I have 11 on my desk that I will be reviewing later today, and in terms of the review, at this moment there is nothing that would suggest I wouldn't approve them.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Environment. Given the danger of some of these chemicals, could the minister not put in a two-stage process? It's one thing to approve the early stage, but then there should be a warning broadcast and posted just prior to the actual application process. Is the minister looking at that system?

MR. KOWALSKI: Earlier this year contacts were made with all of the individuals in the other 11 areas that are being looked at, advising people that applications had come forward by the Canadian Forestry Service and Alberta Forest Service. I might add, in terms of the application that was approved for the aerial spraying in the Grovedale area, assistance would also be coming from the World Wildlife Fund through the Wildlife Toxicology Fund. I think the process that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon asked for has already been in place.

MR. YOUNIE: Mr. Speaker, for either the Minister of the Environment or the minister of forestry. Will this research project with chemicals be matched by a research project in manual nonchemical methods of controlling brush? Is there such research going on now, and will the results be compared to see if we can be as successful here as they have been in B.C.?

MR. KOWALSKI: The purposes of the two research projects that were approved last Friday and concluded yesterday included disc plowing and manual hand clearing. In terms of the two in the Grovedale area, some 62 or 63 acres were sprayed by helicopter. That also includes some, I guess — I've got the information here in hectares, and I'm trying to translate it into English. That also includes approximately 30 acres of land that would be disc plowed and manual hand clearing. All of the applications that I will be looking at today deal with manual application.

The purpose of the research projects is to take a look at it from three or four different perspectives. We have aerial application; that's one perspective. Aerial application

can go by way of either helicopter or fixed-wing airplane. In this case it was helicopter. It can go with disc plowing, manual hand clearing, or mechanical clearing. There are actually four, five if you interpret the two aerial ones.

Mental Health Act

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I would ask the minister if the government is going to be introducing amendments to the Mental Health Act or a new Mental Health Act during this legislative session.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we've been working — my predecessor was as well — on the development of a new Mental Health Act, not amendments to the existing one, which it would be our intention to introduce into the session and then have some considerable time for public debate on it before it would be finally passed. I have other responsibilities that have prevented me from progressing as well as I thought I might in that regard. Whether or not it's introduced in this session depends entirely upon how long the session lasts.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Speech from the Throne clearly indicated that proposals with respect to mental health would be introduced this session. Has that particular commitment made in the Speech from the Throne been altered, or is it simply that the government is unable to make up its mind what to do with the new Mental Health Act?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the legislative session will not end when this particular sitting adjourns, as I understand it. The commitment was made with a view that it might be either during the spring or summer session or during the fall session.

It should be observed as well that in my view it's important to bring forward a new Mental Health Act that's well thought out. There are a good number of areas in the field of mental health that in my view have a greater priority than bringing in a new Act. The moves that we've made with respect to approval for a very significant project at Ponoka and other matters of that nature I thought were more pressing in terms of time than trying to make sure we had a new Act introduced at the present time.

It will come in due course. I'm hopeful that it will be during the current session of the Legislature, at least in the fall session.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, the Drewry task force report was tabled in December 1983, so his recommendations have been under review for nearly three years. My question to the minister: is it true that we will in fact get a new Mental Health Act, or is it just another delay that's going to carry this process into 1988?

MR. M. MOORE: The task force report the hon. member is referring to dealt at great length with a number of issues relating to mental health, most of which did not require the implementation of a new Mental Health Act. It would be interesting if the member could advise of one single thing that this government is not able to do with respect to mental health because we do not have a new Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we conclude this series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?

Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The present Mental Health Act does not reflect the provisions of the Charter of Rights. There are outstanding concerns on the certification of patients, consent for treatment, due process, and the confidentiality of records. How long is the government prepared to let these matters remain outstanding? Indefinitely?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, many of the matters that the hon. member has raised can be dealt with without the introduction of a new Act. The question of confidentiality of patient records and the access by patients to their records is one of the items that I've having some considerable difficulty with in terms of trying to frame sections in a new Act that would be appropriate. We have the challenge to meet what we believe to be the terms of the federal legislation; at the same time we have the challenge to ensure that the rights of patients and the rights of their relatives and friends are protected. It's a complicated and tough problem in that single area.

We're working on those things, but it's not our desire to simply bring a new Act in without some pretty specific direction from the government in those important areas.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister, welcoming his answers that other things are going to be put in place. Can we now expect that the strong recommendations for an advocacy program in the Drewry report will take place immediately, will not wait, and that amendments can be made to the IRPA and need not wait for the Mental Health Act?

MR. M. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker, we can't expect that.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. A point of order, hon. Premier?

Calgary Stampeders (continued)

MR. GETTY: I've been thinking about that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Deputy Premier having raised the fact of the annihilation of the Edmonton Eskimos by the Calgary Stampeders, I only want to advise the House that I'm reconsidering the position of Deputy Premier.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the Committee of Supply come to order, please.

1986-87 Capital Fund Estimates

Hospitals and Medical Care

1 — Construction of Hospitals and Nursing Homes

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to this vote?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make some very brief comments which we didn't have time to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Excuse me, hon. member. Could we have the indulgence of the Assembly in this committee.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a couple of very brief comments which there wasn't time to make on Wednesday afternoon. The first thing that I'd like to say just in a general way is to echo some of the sentiments made earlier by the Member for Lethbridge West. I might hesitate a bit to commend those comments, because it might lead to the demise of those particular suggestions.

The notion that this Assembly deal with a capital budget review separate from the general operating spending within each department I think is a good idea. I'm certainly not keen about leaving a pay-as-you-go approach to budgeting, which has been the practice over many years in this government. When each department comes forward and brings a separate capital fund as well as it's general operating expenditures to this Assembly, it can then give us an idea of how that different spending is taking place and separates it into two very important categories. Whether that capital spending in each department would be funded by this Capital Fund or by the General Revenue Fund, that doesn't have to be determined as a general policy. However, I think the notion of separating the capital budget review from the operating budget review is an important one.

Mr. Chairman, I do want to refer very briefly — I appreciate that the minister of hospitals indicated on August 27 that they're considering the submission from the Calgary General hospital in terms of the role statement that was provided and the financial request undergirding that particular role statement. In question period some time ago the minister indicated that a decision was likely, he hoped, before the end of August. I would ask the minister if the department has been able to meet with that hospital in order to reach some understanding about the role statement for that particular institution, as I think that if there is that kind of agreement early on in the process, then from that agreement would come the suitable financial arrangements in order to realize that role statement.

I appreciate that he referred to it in his comments last Wednesday; however, I would like it if he would be so good as to pursue that a bit further in terms of whether that decision is imminent or whether it's something that will have to wait for many months and, secondly, whether there is any kind of commonality between his department and the General hospital as to the role statement for the future of that particular institution.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, I too just have a few comments left over from the other day. I also wonder if the minister could particularly respond to my earlier question

about this fund and the way it's set up now and the way it's proceeding. Is it going to deal with the problems the Auditor General has identified in terms of the lapsing or the problem of hospitals under construction, that their capital at the end of the year — the funding lapses, and there are problems in terms of how it goes over to the next fiscal year?

While we're on that, is the minister able to help both in terms of the planning of hospitals and for us in the Assembly to look at what an overall strategy is for the next two, three, four, or five years in terms of the direction of what hospitals are going to be developed, how they're going to be developed, and to what extent, so that it's not just a year-by-year allocation? I know you've mentioned the feasibility studies and the other studies the hospitals go into and that it is a long process, but if the funding is just one year at a time, we need a more effective strategy over a longer term and the lapsing perhaps is a problem that has to do with that.

Then to ask the minister just for clarification of some comments. I see that we have votes in here for the continuation and completion of the southeast hospital in Edmonton and the northeast hospital in Calgary. I take those to be the Mill Woods and the Peter Lougheed. Could the minister clarify his remarks in Public Accounts in terms of his now seeing in some sense that these are — I believe he said "no longer necessary," that they're not needed. I'm sure the minister didn't mean that and that there is some other way in which he was trying to infer some concern. If we are going to be voting today on over \$80 million going to the completion of these hospitals and all the shake-ups they have caused at hospitals like the General and Holy Cross, would he clarify what he meant by — I thought I heard him say that these two new hospitals are not needed, that at least he sees now that they're not.

As well, in terms of the redevelopment plans for the Royal Alex, in the response to the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar that the \$1 million is being set aside for the study, for the planning, is there also the commitment from the minister and the department, as I'm sure is on record from campaign promises to the Royal Alex, that, yes, the redevelopment will be going ahead and the \$70 million will be coming along? Is it still in a study phase? Can it still be turned down? Or is the minister giving his commitment, as has been on the record, that the Royal Alex will be able to proceed with its redevelopment?

The minister again spoke about looking at the Ontario situation where I thought he said "moratorium," but I think the exact quote is that they have just stopped building, period, across the province and we need to be looking at that. Is the minister serious about those comments? If so, how far will this stopping of building go? Is this the last year we're going to have to vote on capital projects for hospitals, or is this going to be one or two years down the line? How does that kind of economic cap and freeze deal with the political promises and the political aspect of what hospital building and construction has meant in the province? Is the minister really willing to grapple and deal with the political commitments and see the economic constraints and have a moratorium? Can we have some clarification on his thoughts in that regard to do with capital spending?

I suppose the answer in terms of the Glenrose, which I forgot to bring up earlier under vote 1.5.2, must be that the construction on some of their redevelopment is coming to a close. As we have had representation this week from

the Alberta Hospital Association on the need for advocacy around rehabilitative medicine and I've heard via the grapevine that there are indeed some problems at the Glenrose in terms of its administration and some of the things going on, is the minister still demonstrating some growing commitment to rehabilitative medicine and the work of the Glenrose and other work like it throughout the province?

Another concern, and again I'm sure the minister didn't quite mean it the way I heard it. He said that the new Alberta children's hospital needs to be under one roof and one facility, and I certainly agree with him on that. But is he saying at the same time that this will necessitate a new freestanding ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hate to interrupt the hon. member. Will members please not walk between the Chair and the member speaking.

REV. ROBERTS: In terms of the Northern Alberta Children's hospital, within months the site will be chosen. I am wondering if on that site we will find a new freestanding hospital. I thought it was to be 150 or so beds, but if it's 200 or 250, does that mean it'll be a whole new building, which might well cost over \$100 million or \$120 million? How would that affect the minister's thoughts about a moratorium, or can it be under one roof, one facility, in an already existing building such as the children's pavilion or on an existing site such as the Royal Alex? Or is this going to be a new building somewhere else at a much, much greater cost?

Just to keep it on the record, the minister commented earlier about the need for supporting the private nursing home operators, particularly in their capital operations. Here we see that \$364,000 is going to district nursing homes; I guess that doesn't mean private nursing homes. But where is the minister at in terms of using public capital dollars, which we now need to go out to borrow across the country? How much of that and the work of raising that for the province of Alberta is going to private nursing home operators? My goodness, if they're going to be in the private business of running nursing homes and making profit, it seems to me that they should be able to provide their own capital. Is any of this capital money being earmarked for private and how much? Certainly groups like Extendicare and others in the United States concern me in terms of the way they can both raise capital themselves and make a handsome profit on their equity.

These are some of the final concerns I have, Mr. Chairman: the long-term planning and overcoming some of the lapsing problems; the minister's clarifications of what he means by the Mill Woods and the Lougheed not being necessary; the commitment to the Royal Alex; if there's to be a freeze or moratorium, how far it will extend; and what's with rehabilitative medicine and pediatric care in Alberta as a whole?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of comments to make to the minister, in no great detail. One is maybe a little more explanation from him on the estimates on hospitals under 40 beds in the northwest, northeast, central, and southern regions. There is an expenditure there of about \$20.4 million. My travels around the province seem to tell me that it's rather questionable whether the small, dozen-bed hospitals are very efficient. Quite often there is no medical aid close by. Secondly, in order to try to keep the hospital looking occupied and people busy, there are often

chronic care people occupying the beds rather than really hospital care people. I wonder if he has looked at whether or not it is necessary to go ahead with the capital construction — I don't even know if one of these might be in my constituency — and if we are, whether there shouldn't be a broader base than just hospitals, whether it shouldn't be moved in with something like a combination first aid clinic tied to a certain amount of chronic care.

Maybe what we should be doing, instead of \$20 million in this year alone, is putting more money into air ambulance or helicopter ambulance, something that moves them into a better equipped hospital very quickly: from a first aid centre to a well-equipped hospital rather than putting something out that is really neither fish nor fowl nor a hospital with the proper facilities. I suspect we could work out a much better system and that a lot of these were edifices more or less for the MLA to prove that he indeed wasn't way back on the back benches, that he was able to do something for his constituency, and he could point to the 12-bed hospital that he got up there on the hill.

The second area is chronic care and nursing homes. I'd like to ask the minister whether he's thought of an ombudsman that would have the particular duties of dealing with those in nursing homes and under chronic care. Now I know there are a lot of complaints no matter where you are whenever you have a group of people under one roof, whether it's in a bunkhouse, a labour camp, a chronic care area, or a nursing home. Nevertheless, I think those complaints are very real in the minds of the residents there and quite often the parents of the residents. There is rather a frustration that exists. I've had my parent in a nursing home, and because of the fact maybe I'm recognized when I come in. The list of complaints is long. I think a lot of it, the ombudsman type of work, might almost be therapeutic.

I'm not trying to say that Alberta nursing homes are run and supervised so well by your department that there's never a complaint. Nevertheless, the fact is they should have somebody they can go and talk to and someone that they feel has their interests at heart. It's amazing how many senior citizens in these homes have nobody close by. They don't have a parent or a close relative that comes in and fights their case in case they are feeling a bit discriminated against or they have a legitimate beef I think an ombudsman type of person whose sole task was to deal with the occupants of nursing homes and chronic care people would have some value, and I'd like to hear the minister's answer on that.

Lastly, I find as I go around the province that you get certain dichotomies between home care, which the government is rightfully putting a lot of emphasis on today. Home care is a buzzword. Now, Everybody is for it, but you have home care, nursing homes, chronic care, and hospital care. Now when it comes to finding what the charge is on the purse of the individual or the family that's concerned, bearing in mind that home care ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair is having some difficulty. The Chair would hope members would read page 1, which is a preface to this vote. This is capital funds; it's not the operating. That was dealt with in the minister's estimates.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm going to try to tie ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Would the hon. members take a moment to read the purpose of the vote that's before this committee.

MR. TAYLOR: I'll try to tie it back — I don't know. Maybe I should start with the conclusion first and work backward to keep from being ruled out of order. What I'm getting at is that with home care now arriving on the scene — and of course there is a question because the health districts and the MDs do not have the money to fully fund this — there are charges being made along the road in chronic care or nursing homes or home care. I'd like to see the minister get together with the minister of community health and possibly Social Services to see that the charge to the family is equal no matter which one of these services is being taken. What we're getting now is a push to use chronic care in hospitals because it's free, and yet it's very expensive to the province. We could cut a great deal of our construction costs here and in other areas if indeed people found they could stay under home care without any more money out of pocket. Right now there's a built-in bias to try to put senior citizens and others into the highest cost care because, amazingly enough, it costs the citizen less ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair would feel more comfortable if the hon. member would insert the word "construction" periodically in his comments. In that way we can somehow relate to the vote.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm getting near the end here, Mr. Chairman, but it is nice to know that you're on your toes.

Construction costs now are highest for the highest type of care, which is obvious. Nobody is going to expect you to build them cheaper, but what I'm getting at is that you're possibly building for a clientele that would not need to be as big if you equalized the amount of compensation or the charges made to the clients all the way down the line. In other words, it should be no more expensive to the family for home care than for hospital care. Certainly if you did that, it would cut our construction costs rather amazingly and, at the same time, possibly render better service.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary Mountain View asked a question with respect to the Calgary General. Just to briefly review, my understanding is that the government said to the board of the Calgary General hospital that we would expect to be able to approve at some point a rebuilding/upgrading program that would cost no more than \$100 million. The Calgary General then came back and said, "We believe it requires more funding than that, something in the order of \$140 million." Department staff are working with the Calgary General hospital to determine why they have a higher figure and what it involves. It is true that I said to the hon. member that I hoped to have some resolution to that by the end of August. I've not yet received advice from my department as to whether they've concluded their discussions. In fact, I will make a commitment to the hon. member that within the next two weeks and before the session closes I will at least be able to respond in some way as to where we're at. We haven't reached a conclusion, at least as to what stage we're at.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Centre asked eight questions, and with the exception of one all of them have been dealt with at length in this House by me, either in my estimates of the operating side of the department or in question period or in Public Accounts on Wednesday. But I will briefly review them again so the hon. member will have it on the record again.

First of all, I dealt with the so-called funding lapse both in Public Accounts and here on Wednesday afternoon. Perhaps I should start over and explain again how we finance hospitals. We have a capital projects manual that begins with the planning and carries right through to construction. This, in part, will answer his question about long-term planning too. The time frame there runs anywhere from a minimum of about three years for a straightforward nursing home or prototypical hospital where the plans are on the shelf to as long as seven, eight, or nine years for something as complicated as, say, the redevelopment of the mental hospital in Ponoka. We project the cost for each year of those projects when we approve them. Things change from time to time in terms of the building progress or the nature of the kind of work that needs to be done, so every year we update that and put into the budget the amount we feel is required. If more is required during the year because construction is going fast, we pass special warrants to get more money. If less is required, the funding lapses, but there is no case that I'm aware of in the last five years where hospital construction has proceeded either faster or slower because of the funding requirements. If the funds are required, we provide them. I explained that last Wednesday, and it's no different today than it was then. Two days don't make a great deal of difference in how we plan.

With respect to the Royal Alex hospital, the same situation that exists with respect to the Calgary General exists there. My predecessor said that for \$47 million, I believe, an adequate upgrading program could be done at the Royal Alex. The Royal Alex came back and said, "No, we think it's going to cost more to fund the upgrading of the entire hospital, some 12 program areas." The hon. Premier visited the hospital during April and made a commitment that we would review the hospital's view of what needed to be upgraded and what the costs were. Once we had completed that review, we would then make a decision. No decision has been made to spend any money at either the Calgary General or the Royal Alex. At the present time we're still in the planning stages. Again, we hope the review of the Royal Alex will be completed shortly, and we'll have an opportunity then to decide what is going to occur.

I talked in Public Accounts the other day about the concern I have with respect to rising hospital costs. They've been going up at the rate of about 15 percent a year for the last five years. Each time we build a new institution we add new operating costs unless we close an old one or something of that nature, and that doesn't very often happen. The Mill Woods and Peter Lougheed hospitals were both approved to proceed with construction on the basis of certain changes taking place at the Edmonton General and the Holy Cross in Calgary. As a result of community concerns expressed in both cities, a number of active treatment beds remain at the Edmonton General, and the Calgary situation is no different, with the Calgary Holy Cross still a major active treatment hospital. What I said in Public Accounts was that given those facts and the downturn in the economy of western Canada and this province and the projected population growth that exists today, we could presently get by without either one of the two hospitals which are under construction in terms of the total hospital beds in the province and in the two cities. I also went on to say that they are needed to serve the communities they were intended to serve; there are no facilities there. There's no question that they will both be completed. But I made an observation about the difficulty that we as legislators and as a government will have in paying for the operating costs of those facilities and a lot of others.

I also said it may be that we will have to stop hospital building. We could in fact quit approving new projects in 1987. When I say stop building, that means quit approving new projects. That doesn't mean we'll stop building the Northern Alberta Children's Hospital, which has already been committed; that will continue. But it may be that we'll have to stop making approvals for new hospital construction. Frankly, Mr. Chairman, we could do that in this province and five years from now still have a far superior hospital system than any other province in the country. I don't find anything unusual about a statement that we may not approve any more new hospitals for planning and construction over the course of the next while. I have said to my colleagues in the Legislature that they should not expect to have new hospitals approved in their constituencies under the current economic circumstances.

Let's then refer very specifically to the Northern Alberta Children's Hospital. I don't know, but I've always expected that it would be a new freestanding building. The board of the hospital has told me that they believe it is logical to consider that building as being one located adjacent to a major hospital to take advantage of equipment and other operating cost savings that might result from working in co-operation with another hospital like the University of Alberta or the Royal Alex. The hospital will be located in Edmonton city. That's the commitment that has been made by the Premier. It will be up to the board to make recommendations to our government as to exactly where, and I hope that will be done within about the next six months, according to the board's timetable.

The other matter the hon. member raised was with respect to Glenrose. I met just last week with the board chairman and the executive director of the Glenrose hospital. The building, the redevelopment project there, is going ahead very well and there is no change in its status. Whatever the hon. member heard from his grapevine, there obviously were some vines missing, because I have heard that everything is going along quite well there, and they're into phase 2 of that redevelopment project.

Finally, the question of the funding of private nursing homes. I have said earlier in the Legislature that for a number of years we have had in this province what I believe could be considered as a somewhat unfair situation where we funded 100 percent of the capital cost of district nursing homes. We paid almost the same per diem allowance to operate them; there's about \$2 a day difference. We funded no capital costs for private-sector nursing homes and very little for the voluntary sector, the religious organizations, and so on. I think it would serve us well to give some encouragement to private-sector nursing home operators and the voluntary ones, to provide some part of their capital. The reason that needs to be done is of course that private-sector nursing homes simply cannot bring their homes up to standard and attract new patients unless there's some redevelopment. We have to either decide that we're not going to have private-sector nursing homes or provide some assistance to them with respect to upgrading and building in the capital costs. That would still be cheaper than paying 100 percent of the cost of the board-operated homes.

I could then move to the comments made by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. He spoke about the home care program in the latter part of his remarks and how that might affect the cost of nursing home and auxiliary hospitals. I have said in the Legislature a number of times that I think we're only on the edge of the breakthrough, if you like, in thinking in terms of the care of elderly citizens in

our province. Over the years ahead I think you're going to see much less institutionalization and much more use of home care, day hospitals, outpatient facilities, and that sort of thing. That is very much in the forefront of our thinking when it comes to approving any capital projects like nursing homes or auxiliary hospitals. We want to be absolutely certain that we're not building something that in fact will not be required as we move toward more sophisticated means of taking care of the health of our elderly citizens. I think the traditional concept that they should simply be sent off to the nursing home until they die is very rapidly moving away from the thinking in this province and across the country, and I hope it does.

The other thing the hon. member talked about was an advocate, an ombudsman, for patients in nursing homes. I think we have that kind of thing with respect to the committee chaired by the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff which reviews nursing homes and hospitals and looks at the quality of care that goes on there. We also have it with respect to every nursing home or auxiliary hospital resident who is able to write or contact his or her MLA, and lots of them do. We have it with respect to people who write to my office, and lots of them do. Finally, and probably most importantly, are the elected or appointed boards that run almost every one of those homes, and their responsibility as well is to be advocates for their patients.

I'll conclude my remarks, Mr. Chairman, by just making a brief comment with respect to the hon. leader of the Liberal Party questioning the development of hospitals under 40 beds in rural Alberta. Just to name a few, what we're looking at in this budget at the present time is the construction of an ambulatory care centre in La Crete. We're looking at the replacement of the Leduc General hospital. We're looking at some additions and renovations to the Slave Lake General hospital. We're looking at auxiliary beds at the Valleyview General hospital. We're looking at a small prototypical unit at Wabasca-Desmarais, north of Slave Lake. We're looking at a replacement facility in Tofield, one in Daysland, and one in the community of Coaldale.

My concluding comments about the matter being continually raised with respect to the building of hospitals in rural Alberta are no different than they were to the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark on Wednesday morning in Public Accounts, and that is simply this: the Liberal-held view that rural Alberta should not have hospitals and should die or be sent by ambulance to Edmonton or Calgary is rubbish now and always will be.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, could we then pursue a bit more with the minister his thoughts about not approving new proposals for new capital expenditures in years to come. I'm glad for the clarification that it's on new proposals and will not affect anything that's been approved or is on line now. But is he just thinking about these things, or does he have a serious time line in mind as to when he will put a freeze or stop on accepting any new proposals for any new construction or building in hospitals? Will that, if and when it comes, also include the redevelopment of existing hospitals, many of which might need some capital dollars to help in their redevelopment, the older ones in particular? Or will they too, because of economic constraints, just have to get by through difficult times?

Thirdly, will that announcement, if and when it comes, include the building of new auxiliary care beds? It seems to me that we still need to separate them out and have a commitment over time to building them as they're needed

in conjunction with other ways of dealing with long-term care for the elderly. But certainly we can't go on building auxiliary care beds forever as well. Will a moratorium or freeze on new proposals include auxiliary-care beds or not?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I have nothing further that I can add with respect to my concern about the additional operating costs attached to the development of new hospitals over the course of the next several years. I don't have any secret plan in mind, and the hon. member will simply have to await whatever decisions the government makes with regard to new construction.

I went through this earlier in this House on two occasions, but I will do it again for the hon. member's benefit. Until a tender is called and awarded, one can never be sure that anything is going to be built, because the process goes like this. A project request is submitted by a hospital board. After some consideration of that project request, a letter of understanding is issued if it's approved. The letter of understanding says, "We understand you're requesting funds to do a certain project, and you are now able to proceed to develop a master plan." That is the stage that both the Calgary General and the Royal Alex are in. Once that occurs, it may be that after the development of the master plan the government will say, "I'm sorry, but what you propose is too large and beyond any scope that we can handle, so the project cannot proceed." But if the master plan is approved, then the hospital's planning committee will develop what we call project parameters, and they are submitted to the department. They're more detailed parameters with respect to the number of beds and so on that might be developed. The project parameters then are approved or not approved. If they're not approved, then they have to go back to the drawing board and start over, or maybe the project is suspended entirely.

Finally, the project scope definition is considered. Again, it's submitted to the department and either approved or not approved. Then we get into the final design, and that report is presented to the department and either approved or not approved. Finally — the hon. member is shaking his head because he doesn't believe all of this occurs. The facts of the matter are that at any one of those stages a project can be cancelled or not proceeded with. We finally award a contract once a design is all complete. Once we award a contract and construction starts, I have never known of any project that was not finally completed, except to say this: oftentimes space is shelled in, so to speak, and not utilized. It may well be that a hospital with 100 beds could be built. There are lots of them around the province now that are built to accommodate the expansion in population over the next 10 or 15 years. The space is shelled in, but it is not furnished and not utilized. If in years to come we're able to finish it, put beds in it, and start utilizing it, that's again an opportunity we have to save substantial costs when you consider the operating costs of each bed.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to clear up one point. I know it is very difficult to pry a new idea in between the ears of the minister of hospitals, but his statement that the Liberal Party believes in sending the people to Calgary and Edmonton to die can't go unchallenged. What we're after is the equality of care in a construction project, and his budget, his backup, and his whole speech and everything has clearly indicated to the people of Alberta that he is not as interested in giving equal care to rural residents and large city residents as in building edifices for himself and friends out in rural areas.

What we're trying to get across is the point that first aid and proper helicopter and ambulance service would bring them in to — as everyone knows, the high cost of medicine today and the high amount of technical equipment can only be supplied in the larger cities. That equality should be given to the rural resident rather than putting the rural resident in some fine thing that has his plaque or the plaque of some predecessor of his in the corner saying that it was built for the wonderful people of Valleyview or wherever it was. Rural people want real care, and they don't mind taking a half-hour or three-quarters of an hour ride in a helicopter to where the expensive equipment is. To say that they're being transported in to die is totally irresponsible. He doesn't know what he's talking about, and what he's trying to do is defend an antiquated system of building edifices of aluminum and glass out in the rural areas as a form of patronage rather than real care for the rural residents.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to enter into that fray. I'd like to go back to my own debate, getting things going.

Now the minister — we must not be communicating, because I fully understand the procedures, the plans, the master plan, the statement of understanding, and how the department must through all the steps that are necessary when there's huge capital construction. I'm asking if the minister is now saying that there's a new world in Alberta, because it seems to me that in the past there have been raised hopes and expectations that if a community, if a board get together and put this together, more often than not — in fact, most of the time — their plans will be accepted. You know, it's open hunting on hospitals; we've got all this money.

Some of the things the Liberal leader is saying might, I think, enter into it. But there is a very different world in Alberta today, and perhaps we or the minister should be saying more clearly that we're not raising hopes and expectations. If there's going to be a moratorium, none of this process should be going on. I think it's perhaps misleading to people to say, "Okay, you can make these plans and think that you're going to get funding at the end," when in fact we should be saying to them, "Listen, we're in a downturn; there's economic constraints of both capital and operating, and you really should not even begin to make these plans for the next five or 10 years." If that is the new world the minister is suggesting, I think it's one that is laudable and that we need to debate. That's what I'm asking for in terms of whether it is a different world that the minister is outlining here in terms of the expectations around new hospital construction, not to mention the debates here.

MR. STEVENS: To the minister. Mr. Chairman, some years ago when the hospital plans for this province were unveiled, one of the most far-reaching and excellent programs in Canada, I recall being in the Legislature when the then Member for Edmonton Norwood and now opposition leader stated his party's position and publicly opposed construction of hospitals such as — and he named the hospital in Banff I've never let my constituents forget that; they will always remember that. Now I've heard the leader of the Liberal Party this morning stressing that we don't need rural hospitals. [interjections] That's exactly what the member said, and I'll read the Blues on Tuesday when I return from my constituency and make sure that those are carefully considered.

I represent a rural area in which there are some 2 million to 4 million visitors a year driving across the Trans-Canada Highway or on Via Rail, when it runs, and there are two hospitals. One has just been completed. It is one of the first prototypical hospitals that the minister's predecessor helped establish as a policy in this province: to build prototypical hospitals, hospitals that could be established in communities of all kinds of sizes and needs.

That hospital has been one of the major employment generators for the community of Canmore. It is not fully open, and that's sad, because the population of Canmore and the pressures for growth have changed from when the hospital plan was prepared. But it's there and it's doing a fine service to the community of Canmore and to the tragic problems of highway accidents, climbing accidents, and the other serious problems that occur in a tourism area. This hospital is serving the community well. It is well serviced by specialists and general practitioners, and many Albertans, Canadians, and United States visitors are very fortunate that that hospital is right there providing a service. The hospital's wing for extended care is fully occupied. I visited those patients, and they are very pleased that they don't have to travel to Calgary for specialists' services. It's right there in the community it serves.

Today there is a hospital in Banff that has just had its steel framing. The Member for Edmonton Norwood at that time and now the Leader of the Opposition said, "We don't need a hospital in Banff; there's a hospital in Banff today." Yes, there is a hospital in Banff. It's overcrowded, it's on the wrong side of the Bow River, and it can't take helicopter arrivals. A helicopter today has to land with injured and trauma victims on the national parks headquarters site, and the patients are then brought across a trafficked road on a gurney. Now we have a new hospital under construction, and that hospital has been a special design; it's not a prototypical hospital.

There in Banff, where the average daily population can be 30,000 people, we have a new hospital under construction to replace one that has served all of Alberta very well for numbers of years. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to stand in my place and say, on behalf of the people of Banff-Cochrane and perhaps on behalf of other colleagues from rural Alberta who would like to enter in this debate, that we're very pleased to have hospitals in rural Alberta, and we'll continue to see hospitals and services provided to the citizens of Alberta wherever they live.

Agreed to:

1.1 - Minor Construction	\$19,260,000
12 — Major Medical Referral and Research Centres	\$6,015,000
13 — Major Urban Medical and Referral Centres	\$103,805,000
14 - Other Referral Centres	\$38,557,000
15 — Specialized Active Care	\$11,977,000
1.6 — Community-based Hospital Facilities (Over 40 Beds)	\$64,799,000
1.7 — Community-based Hospital Facilities (40 Beds and Under)	\$20,429,000
18 - Long-term Chronic Care	\$15,922,000
19 — Supervised Personal Care	\$364,000
Total Vote 1 — Construction of	

Hospitals and Nursing Homes \$281,128,000

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that we have

the views of the hon. leader of the Liberal Party on the record at least twice about rural Alberta.

I move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee of Supply rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration a certain resolution and reports as follows.

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, a sum from the Alberta Capital Fund not exceeding the following for the department and purpose indicated:

Hospitals and Medical Care: \$281,128,000 for construction of hospitals and nursing homes.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair corrects itself: having heard the report, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 1 Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, 1986

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 1, the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, 1986.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members will recall first that when there was the commitment to the Western Accord carried out into an agreement for the removal of regulations in the pricing of oil and gas in Canada, particularly in Alberta, there was a further agreement that before deregulating gas, there would be a one-year period in which this decontrol would be phased in. Our legislation did not have the specific capacity to allow that phasing in; nevertheless, we did proceed through a series of regulations that allowed us to do it. This Bill covers the period and the regulations that we have used for the period November 1, 1985, to November 1, 1986. In other words, it is a Bill which is necessary to provide the legislative framework for what is going on right now in the matter of going through a phasing out of control of natural gas pricing. Whether or not we proceed with natural gas decontrol does not impact upon this Bill.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I agree that the Bill does cover that period from November 1, 1985, to November 1, 1986, but it also carries with it conditions for the future

sale of gas produced here in the province of Alberta. This Bill, as I understand it, allows the government to retain the status quo if it so wishes with respect to the sale of Alberta gas while at the same time empowering the government, through the Lieutenant Governor, to make new regulations with respect to gas pricing. So there's a bit of a contradiction there in the sense that we need to introduce an inordinate number of regulations, it seems to me, to bring about deregulation. But I'll move on from that point for the moment.

With respect to retaining the ability to maintain the status quo, our party is in agreement with that. We have expressed on many occasions our concern with the deregulation of the gas industry scheduled for November 1, '86, and have called for at least a one-year moratorium. As I read that Bill, it would still be possible within the amended Act to have such a moratorium. But with respect to empowering the Lieutenant Governor, which is really the cabinet, to make regulations, our first concern is that these powers will be removed from the Legislature itself, that no further debate on issues like this would occur, and that instead you would have the cabinet in effect making decisions, which again takes further power away from the people of the province.

It seems to me that the Bill, if passed, would also incorporate a number of regulations which have already been adopted by the cabinet, namely 384-85, regulation 105-86, and regulation 174-86. I might note again in passing that here we're introducing a number of regulations to bring about deregulation. Further to that, the Bill seems to us to be an essential aspect of the whole concept of deregulation, so we oppose it on the following terms.

First of all, we think it will hurt small companies the most. They cannot afford to get into a full price war and underbid larger companies, so we wonder how many companies will go under as a result of this Bill. It seems to be anyone's guess at the moment.

Alberta and other signatories, being the producing provinces, are the only ones that seem to be making concessions. The consuming provinces will get cheaper gas, so as a result we'll get lower provincial gas royalty revenues, which ultimately will lead to decreased reserves and the collapse of the small independent gas-producing sector in the economy.

Thirdly, governments in the consuming provinces have not fulfilled the spirit of deregulation. We've talked about that before. Two have imposed taxes that will reduce the revenues to producers under netback pricing arrangements.

Fourthly, the pipeline and distributing monopsony means that one major part of the spirit of the agreement, which essentially is open access of transport between sellers and buyers, simply will not occur. As an example, TransCanada PipeLines under deregulation will remain both a buyer and a seller, and as such it has no real incentive to fight for the best possible price for producers. It can offer cheap prices to Ontario because it makes its money when the pipeline is running full. It doesn't face the risk that producers do. Though Bill 23 says that resellers must have producer support for their resale prices, this is really only a paper requirement. Once the bidding gets hot, prices fall, producers won't be in any position to hold out for more money and are going to approve virtually any deal that a middleman offers them.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, we find it interesting that the government amended clause (o) in the Bill in such a way that it can return to the old regime. It signals to us

that even the government is beginning to question the wisdom of proceeding with deregulation. I think the Premier alluded to that in his opening remarks. We would encourage the government to continue to exercise caution with respect to deregulation. Basically, we oppose this Bill because if enacted it would, first of all, hurt small producers the most, reduce provincial revenues, and push prices down to where the rate of return would not be sufficient to develop new reserves.

In conclusion, therefore, this Bill must be defeated or at least withdrawn until such time as the maximum consequences of deregulation can be investigated, studied, and reported.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the broad, general principles of the Bill are one of the most difficult things to speak on because I think a great deal of the problem is that the government has us in a corner whereby we have to be working on this type of solution to the problem. I think it is good to go back. I will say this without equivocation or fear of too much contradiction. As people become more and more enlightened in the oil and gas industry and markets, the energy accord has to be one of the most horrible agreements any government was ever sucked into down the road.

I know the Premier likes to hark back to the NEP, but when he talks he forgets that the increased activity after the energy accord was signed was nothing more than a frenzied activity for the companies to try to take advantage of the national energy policy before it was cancelled. As soon as the national energy policy had run out, our drilling and everything went to nil. We signed the energy accord. It went from made-in-Canada pricing, Mr. Speaker, just at the very moment when the world market was collapsing. If you will go back to read my speeches and even news releases of April '85, I said that within a year this government would regret the day they moved to a free market.

As one that's been in the oil and gas industry all my life, and my father and uncles before that — anyone that has been around it knows that the oil and gas market is controlled by a cartel out of the Middle East. Whether that cartel is controlled by the Arabs themselves as it is today or whether that cartel as it was back in the '20s and '40s was controlled by the major companies or whether it was controlled before the 1920s by the Dutch and British governments and their corporate creations to take advantage of things, nevertheless the fact is that the cartel has always existed. Whoever had control of it might have changed. Yet we, sort of like country boys at the circus 50 years ago, wandered in and got taken into this idea of an energy accord, mainly a deal put together by the consumers of central Canada, to try to get our prices down.

Anyone only remotely associated with agriculture would know that when you reach a surplus position, you have two resources at your command, whether you want to keep the price of wheat up, the price of eggs up, or a proper return for agriculture. One is to cut down on your production, prorate your production to where the market is, or secondly, go into some sort of storage facility, keeping the product off the market to be sold later. At least in agriculture you're talking about a perishable commodity; here you're talking about an unperishable commodity. The government did not have the wisdom to decide that they could hold that off the market to try to keep the prices up or to try to keep a decent market for our oil and gas. Instead, they threw away our whole opportunity for some type of decent return

and, by trying to pile more and more oil and gas on top of more and more oil and gas, drove the price down even further.

Even the government of Mexico at the time — you can go back to your readings of 1985 — refused to sell cheap natural gas to the U.S. They refuse to this day to sell it. They know natural gas will be worth a lot of money down the road, and they have refused to build a pipeline into the U.S. to receive prices for natural gas, to date at least, of less than \$4 U.S. an mcf, whereas we're still dumping at \$1.50. Mexico has much more surplus gas reserve than we do, yet we choose to take our children's and grandchildren's heritage and keep dumping it onto the market with some hope that somehow or another we're making some money. It's a lot like the fellow who plays the stockmarket, buying high and selling low and hoping to make money on the volume.

The type of logic this government used in signing the energy accord and then still pressing through with releasing whatever control we have with natural gas pricing boggles the imagination. When you have a product that is in surplus supply ... Surely the only time the Premier even starts to talk sense on oil and gas is when he gets angry enough to start threatening to cut off peoples' supplies. A crack of light appears through his thinking, that possibly by cutting down and rationing the market, he could hold the prices up. But the other area is that even if we didn't hold on to natural gas pricing, we shot ourselves in our other foot. It wasn't bad enough to open up the pipelines and say: "Come on; take it. If we can't get enough for our gas, we'll sell you some more. We'll keep dropping the price."

The price has dropped since the energy accord was signed from \$4 to distress prices in the U.S. today of \$1.25 to \$1.50. In other words, we are receiving roughly 30 percent, in many cases, of what we were receiving when the energy accord was signed and selling a measly 20 to 25 percent more. That is certainly going in a greatly reversed direction. We shot ourselves in the other foot when it came to oil pricing. Natural gas is affected by oil pricing because fuel oil is made out of oil and fuel oil competes with natural gas as an end product down east. When we freed oil, we did the same thing. We put the pressure on natural gas to go down, because in effect we are selling oil to the east to make cheaper prices, to make cheap fuel oil to turn around and cut off our own gas markets. That had to be one of the most mind-boggling exercises I've seen any group go to, whether government or corporation: sell a product with the left hand that's undercutting a product you're trying to sell with the right hand.

What I'd like to talk about, Mr. Speaker, and where I'd like to see some light of wisdom penetrate the dark recesses of the Energy department and the Premier's financial advisers, is to once more think of prorating the market to the supply, something that farmers learned in the 1920s and '30s. Farmers fought from the turn of the century into the late '30s for marketing boards, for control to keep their surpluses in line so their prices weren't driven down out of sight. Yet we have an opportunity to do that in oil and gas, and we've turned it down at every opportunity. A prorationing system would hold our gas back for a while. If this government is so committed to the free market that they must sell and sell fast anything that isn't nailed down, at least possibly keep the government share of the royalty in reserve in some way, shape, or form, either by leaving it in the ground or recompressing it back into the ground so it can be sold down the road when the price has established itself.

Mr. Speaker, the next item I'd like to touch on is the question of selling the asset. As the minister for Forest Lawn — pardon the Freudian slip. As the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn pointed out, this gives carte blanche to the government to continue to change things on the question of gas pricing and marketing without coming back to the Legislature. I'd like to emphasize a point here that the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn has already touched on. This is a little different — not a little different; I might say that it's a lot different — from the usual permission that the government does. Without an adequate or large enough opposition to bring them into line, this government has gotten into a rather high-handed way over the last number of years of spending warrants and approving budgets. Until I was elected, I never thought you approved budgets after the money was spent, but it seems to be the only type of budget that I look at nowadays.

The fact of the matter in this case is that it's a little different from changing a budget. When you change something about selling natural gas, you're selling an asset just as surely as you're selling your land or selling this Legislature Building. Natural gas is a diminishing asset, as the former Premier was fond of pointing out time and time again. The sale of it should not be considered income; it should be considered the liquidation of an asset. Before nearly any corporation or government will change the liquidating of an asset, they will go back to the people involved, the shareholders. In making regulations for corporations, even the most retrograde government around the world will not allow the management of the corporation to liquidate an asset without going back to the shareholders. I submit that this is being entirely missed here. The gentleman from Forest Lawn is right on when he says that we have to come back to the Legislature before we do anything on our gas and oil pricing, because we're liquidating an asset, we're not just handling ordinary income.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I rise as well to oppose this legislation. The reason is a very general one on which I have spoken a number of times. Basically, the legislation represents another chip in the disastrous process of deregulating our natural gas industry. It of course implements the provisions of the Western Accord, which have been such a cause of difficulty for the oil and gas industry in this country to date. The Western Accord was entered into in March 1985. Since that time, and certainly unprovided for in that agreement, conditions for the natural gas and oil industry have changed dramatically. Unfortunately, the policies of the provincial and federal governments have not changed, as they should have, commensurate with those changes in economic circumstances. When we should be having a realistic assessment of the problems that are faced, we find too much ideology.

Another reason the Western Accord provisions of deregulation should not be proceeded with and are a problem is that several of the conditions in the Western Accord have not been satisfied. One of these conditions is that there be some satisfactory arrangement with respect to the question of maintaining surpluses of gas for future Canadian needs, which of course restricts the ultimate right of export to the United States. This in fact does not reflect deregulation at all. It is a regulatory matter which operates to the ultimate disadvantage of the natural gas industry. That problem still remains, and it must be resolved before decontrol takes place.

There is an additional restriction on decontrol which prevails at the present time; that is, the rules relating to

the price at which natural gas can be sold into the United States and the requirement that it not be sold at less than border prices in adjacent Canadian markets. Both of these requirements with respect to pricing restrictions and maintaining a surplus for future Canadian needs are in fact quite reasonable and may be justified, but they can't be justified as part of a deregulated process. If there's going to be deregulation in terms of the sales of gas when we have a surplus, as at present, we must have deregulation on the other end; otherwise, there is an imbalance to the distinct disadvantage of the oil and gas industry. The mandate of this government, of course, is to look after the oil and gas industry of this province and provincial revenues, and it should not be agreeing to an arrangement which is a substantial imbalance.

Almost all segments of the oil and gas industry are unanimous that deregulation should not take place on November 1 and that it should either be delayed for one year or postponed in total. It is perhaps one of the only things the oil and gas industry is almost united on, and they reflected these sentiments very clearly at a meeting in Calgary earlier this week. Of course, the primary rationale was a very realistic one, that the industry cannot withstand the further financial hemorrhage that will take place on November 1 if natural gas prices take the significant drop which is anticipated at that particular point in time. As we look at the situation, we find in fact that at this particular point in time there is not one good reason to deregulate natural gas prices on November 1 and there are many, many good reasons to postpone deregulation. As a result, I submit that our legislation should clearly reflect the reality of this scenario and should not reflect an intent to deregulate in total, as does this particular legislation.

For terms of clarity, I would acknowledge that not all segments of the natural gas industry are facing the same situation. There is a portion of the natural gas industry in which sales are made to industrial markets which have to compete with cheaper fuel oil, and in order to maintain those markets, some form of price flexibility is required. On the other hand, when you're dealing with the commercial and residential markets in the heartland of eastern Canada, that market competes with electricity. The present price structure can definitely be maintained very easily and still beat the pants off electricity. We should start being hard-nosed businessmen and not unrealistic philosophers in terms of pushing for a free market and recognize that distinction.

I also have concerns, as expressed earlier by the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn and the hon. leader of the Liberal Party, that this legislation as originally constructed and as continued at this point in time vests far too much authority in the government to make important decisions affecting the natural gas industry in this province by means of regulation. This is totally unacceptable. It is a reflection of the general tendency and attitude of the government to govern by regulation, and it is compounded by the fact that not only have pricing provisions with respect to natural gas during the period since the Western Accord was entered into been governed by regulation, but the reality is that those regulations were unlawful. There has been no legal authority for that. There is provision in this Bill for legitimizing that Act, and that Act must of course be legitimized. But it does not obviate the very unsatisfactory nature of the manner in which the government has managed this particular issue of natural gas pricing and particularly points out the void in the government's commitment to the democratic process in not having had a session of this Legislature for such a long period during the past year and a half.

I stand opposed to this legislation, which does not reflect the needs of this province at this point in time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a couple of brief comments in terms of Bill 1, Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act. I think it is appropriate at this stage of review by the Assembly when we deal with the principle of a Bill to ask what the objectives of a particular piece of legislation might be. As I've been listening to the debate over the last many weeks, I've been wondering what the stated objectives of an energy policy ought to be for this province. In looking at this Bill from that perspective, I thought what I would try to do is enumerate a few of what I see as key issues or key objectives that any energy policy for this province ought to achieve.

In no particular order, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that one thing we as legislators ought to achieve is to maximize the return to the public for the development of public resources. That has to be a key objective. Secondly, it would seem to me particularly important that we maintain in this province a healthy Alberta industry and a healthy Canadian-owned industry as well. Thirdly, we ought to be managing energy resources with a view to being good stewards for future generations, which is another way of saying that it ought to be a primary objective to have security of long-term energy supply for the people of this province and the people of this country. These aren't necessarily the only objectives that ought to be or could be enumerated, but certainly they would have to be the key elements of any energy policy for this province.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at this legislation and listening to the debate that has occurred over the last several weeks, I have been trying to understand what the government's objectives are in terms of energy policy. Quite frankly, I've not been able to ascertain that it goes any further than simply a commitment to deregulation. I've not seen any other objectives enumerated, only that the government is saying that deregulation is the way we ought to go. In essence, what I understand that to be saying is that we need or we ought, from their point of view, to turn all energy policy over to the hands of private interests, regardless of what effect turning those important decisions over to that group might have on the resources of this province or on the long-term impact to the industry as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I think the effect of deregulation is becoming more and more obvious to more and more people in this province and perhaps also to members of this government. One is that consuming provinces are going to get cheaper gas. As a result, Alberta will get lower provincial gas royalty revenues, decreased reserves, and the possible collapse of the small independent sector — diametrically opposed, it seems to me, to what ought to be the key objectives of any energy policy. I'm at least pleased to see that there may be some recognition by the government that that is going to be the effect and movement to perhaps pause, hold back, and restrain themselves from this drive to deregulation by November 1. Now that they're beginning to understand some of our concerns, I say that's good. That's a step in the right direction.

This Bill contains the option to retain the status quo. To the extent that it does that, I agree with it. As our hon. colleague for Calgary Forest Lawn has indicated, our party has called for a one-year moratorium to ensure that if any steps are taken in this direction, they're clearly thought out and they maximize or achieve the key objectives

which I earlier referred to in terms of energy policy. The means employed to achieve or retain the option of the status quo indicate to me that this government is choosing to do that through regulations rather than through legislation; that is, that the decision-making to retain the status quo will rest exclusively with cabinet and not in legislation.

So the effect of this amendment, the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, will end up putting more power, more authority, and more decision-making into the hands of cabinet. We will end up in essence, Mr. Speaker, with a highly regrettable trend which I see emerging through much of the legislation being brought to this House in the last several weeks; that is, that cabinet and order in council will be much more greatly relied upon by this government to achieve its objectives than to do it through full debate and the passing of legislation in this particular Assembly. It's a highly regrettable trend. I don't like it, and I think it's one which needs to be opposed.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to add some comments to those of my colleagues on this side of the House. Before I do that, I might also wonder why we have not heard a more vigorous defence of this Bill if it's such a good one and somebody on the other side standing up and explaining why we need it at this time. Perhaps it's because it's indefensible.

The first point I want to make — I won't belabour it because my colleague in front of me just did a pretty good job on it — is that it does give more power to the cabinet. When is deregulation not deregulation? I mean, it's up to the cabinet whether they want to do it or not. It seems to me that is an important enough decision that it probably should be made in this House rather than by cabinet.

If you argue in favour of deregulation, it would seem that you don't want to have a lot of regulations. Yet what this government does in Bill after Bill is ask us to give the cabinet more blank cheques to do more regulating in secret. It isn't that we don't get regulations in this province; we just get them done in secret by cabinet. Then they argue, of course, that they're not regulating things, that they like the free market. Deregulation at this time is wrong. You can argue the principles; you can get into the ideological arguments if you like. But the effect of it at this time seems to me rather ridiculous. A few years back when the prices of oil and gas were going up, the argument for deregulation by the Alberta government made some sense.

Now, when prices are going down and are very, very low, there are some very obvious consequences of this that are absolutely disastrous, as the request last night for a \$5.5 billion deficit would indicate. One of the effects means that the producing provinces are the only ones making concessions in the energy accord and the deregulation process, that the consuming provinces are getting cheaper gas and oil as a result, and we get lower prices for our gas royalties. We've taken a bigger reduction than anybody else. We're getting decreased reserves because we're selling more of it faster and cheaper, and we'll see the collapse of our small independent petroleum sector. On top of that we have no guarantee that the consuming provinces will honour the spirit of the agreement and are going ahead and imposing taxes, cutting down on the producers netbacks. So, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the wrong time to go ahead with this measure. I know the cabinet is retaining the right to delay the November 1 deadline, but the direction is still set, and this Bill authorizes that direction.

If we look back a little bit, we in this province had to accept a lower than world price for our gas and oil. It was forced upon us. We didn't agree to it and didn't like the idea. We've got to be kidding if we think that by having got rid of that ceiling price — because the prices are now so low that to talk about a ceiling price is nonsense — when the same thing happens again later or when this thing turns around, if it ever does, and the prices start going up, we won't get another one imposed on us. The fact of the matter is that the political clout in Canada is in the east and with the consuming provinces, and for us to push for deregulation and say that we will accept this total wipeout of our small indigenous oil and gas industry because we believe in deregulation come hell or high water doesn't make any sense.

When the price turns around and goes back up, as it will do later most likely — certainly if you kill enough of the marginal industries, the frontier industries, the more expensive industries around the world, and the Alberta industry, eventually OPEC will be able to get hold of the cartel by short supplying the oil of the world and drive those prices up high again, which of course is where they're heading in five years' time if they can do it. So to argue that we will be allowed to have those high prices when and if they come back again and therefore we'd better accept this low price now seems to me rather foolish.

If you want to stick to the ideological argument and say that we're for deregulation come hell or high water, okay. But even the Premier suggested that there had to be a limit somewhere along the line. I guess it's time that he decided where that limit is. He said that there is a price below which it does not make sense to sell our resources, that we deserve a fair return for our resources. I agree with him on that, and it's time we started thinking about where that price is. When you're arguing the ideological debate about whether to regulate or not, it seems to me that at some point you have to become practical, too, and say, "What is the effect?" The effect to this point is rather disastrous.

Specifically in terms of the gas industry — I've been talking partly about oil, although you can't really separate the two entirely — many Canadian oil companies had long-term contracts with American oil companies before the deregulation process set in. This government did not go to bat for those companies to be able to retain those contracts. It was decided by the Americans that they would allow their companies to break those contracts as they saw fit or willy-nilly as the Americans started to deregulate and they started to develop a gas bubble. The Alberta government said, "I guess that's okay." So they hastened the particular mess we are in. The desire of Alberta companies to lower their prices to get into the market in fact helped them by putting pressure on Ottawa to lower those prices and to deregulate the price of natural gas, so now we have arrived at the point where we have or will soon have a deregulated natural gas industry. As long as the American bubble exists, we have to sell low to get into that market, so we are selling off a lot of our natural gas and will do over the next few years very cheap and very fast. I'm concerned what that will do for the long-term supply.

There were, I believe, some provisions. For a number of years supply had to be proven and shown to exist in Canada before we could export to the States. I think it was something like 25-years' supply. Maybe we don't want to return to those exact kinds of regulations, but it seems to me it had at least some sense of responsibility to the future

rather than just selling our gas cheap now and maybe later getting hooked into, for instance, the rather wild project of bringing natural gas from Prudhoe Bay at a higher price. The cost of the project has killed that particular idea, but we did do a lot of the prebuild and sold a lot of our natural gas fast and cheap. We may regret that in the long run.

It seems to me that it doesn't make much sense to allow ourselves to be caught in the boom/bust of the world oil and gas industry. So we sell some of it to the States on this side and buy some from abroad on the east side of Canada; nonetheless, if we had a stable and fairly long-range planning policy, Canada has nearly enough enough gas and oil to be pretty well self-sufficient, and that seems to me a worthwhile aim. It would guarantee a stable, reasonable price and supply of gas across this country for consumers, and it could also provide a long-term secure industry in this province that would assure us a place of reasonable prosperity. It would certainly do us a lot better than what has happened over the last 15 years in the gas and oil industry.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time we built a compromise into the particular problems we have right now. The Premier has said, and I mentioned it before, that there was a price below which it did not make sense to sell. I think we should be looking, in terms of gas and oil both, at a price somewhere between the totally unregulated price that we will get or are getting and the price that was needed to maintain the industry at the luxurious level it was doing some time back, five years ago. Maybe some price in between would force the companies to cut some of the fat, do some trimming, and streamline their industry a little bit but at the same time at least maintain their existence for those companies that do that, because we are going to see a lot of our small companies disappear altogether in the gas and oil industry if we don't do something on that nature.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, in closing debate I would just comment that there certainly has been a surplus of natural gas in this province, and we didn't help it today with comments from the other side. I just heard a bunch of natural gas created across there. I don't know whether it's the kind we can sell or not. I'm sure it's not the kind they can sell.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sour gas.

MR. GETTY: There was one thread of sense in there that I certainly agree with; that is the comment about the need for regulations or having everything in legislation. That's something that has been argued ever since I was here in 1967. The argument has always been made. It's a balance; you can't get everything into legislation. Our legislation would be so ponderous that it would make it even more baffling for the citizens of this province than it sometimes is now. But you have to have regulations; it's a fact to life. We will argue about when it's too much or when it's too little.

To come to the points made with regard to this Bill, there was hardly a comment made about what the Bill is intended to do. The Bill is for the period of phasing in toward decontrol. Even if we accept the position taken by

the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn that you would want to extend this period another year, you need this Bill. He's arguing for and against. All it indicates to me is how little they understand the energy industry. I must admit that he has spent some time working on it. I certainly listen to him because I gather he is the critic in that regard. But if you ever wanted to convince me that they don't understand it, get the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View and the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway up to completely confirm that they don't understand the energy industry. They've just done it. That's just natural gas, I guess.

Mr. Speaker, every now and then I think I have hope for the members of the Liberal Party in the energy field because I know the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has spent a lot of time in that area. But today I find that hope disappearing again. The one breath of fresh air after the national energy program, which they supported in a coalition with the NDP and devastated this province with, was the Western Accord to wipe it out. The Member for Calgary Buffalo really gets me. He says: "Why do you keep talking about it? Why don't you forget the national energy program?" Sure, if I were him I'd want everyone to forget it too. He says, "We don't understand why you keep talking about it." We'll keep talking about it. If he wants to forget it, let him forget it, but the people of Alberta won't forget it. They won't forget the coalition between these two parties that brought it in and devastated this province and now, of all things, start to say that they're on the side of the energy industry. Now they are helping the energy industry. What a joke. They aren't caring about the energy industry; they don't understand it.

The one thing they want is regulation; that's for sure. They don't understand the energy industry; they don't understand risk and reward. They don't understand risk-takers. As a matter of fact, risk-takers make them all nervous. They don't understand them at all. What they think, Mr. Speaker, is that the best way is to try and have government control; give everybody some rate of return. One member said something about: "Let's cut them down from their luxurious life, but let's just keep them alive. Somewhere in the middle we'll have all this government control, and we'll judge whether he's just alive. If he's making too much, we'll take some away." What nonsense! I've never in my life heard ... [interjections]

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and I have both been in the energy industry. For most of the time we've been in that industry it has been deregulated. Industry wants to be deregulated. There are always problems now and then when you're moving from deregulation to regulation or from regulation out. Sure there are problems, because you get a whole group of managers who've grown up under a kind of regulation. But then you move away from it and you have to go through an adjustment period. There's always pain when you switch like that, but it's necessary to go through it.

Small companies never had a chance to sell gas. Who were they going to sell their gas to? Before deregulation came in, one company, TransCanada PipeLines; that was all. With deregulation a small company can now go anywhere and make a deal. That's the small company's desire. That's what they want. They didn't want to sell just to TransCanada PipeLines. What kind of nonsense was that, that they don't want deregulation? Certainly they want deregulation. Naturally they also want more stable energy prices. Sure they do; we all do. But to talk about deregulation hurting small companies is nonsense. They need to be able to compete.

There is an argument that perhaps there should be another year of adjustment. We've said several times in the House that we're considering that. But, Mr. Speaker, any small company that has reserves wants to be able to be free to sell them to any market they can find. One of the things that held back small companies is that they were developing gas reserves and they couldn't sell them because under regulation they could only sell to TransCanada PipeLines. They had no other alternatives, so they said: "That was already taken over by Shell Oil or Petro-Canada or somebody else. We want to be free to go and find markets." That is what deregulation is all about. That's what small companies need. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. members. Under Standing Order 12(4)(b), the only occasion to interrupt a member when speaking is to raise a point of order. I would remind hon. members, because it's happening with four or five individuals, and the Chair has been listening to it for about five minutes, that this is debate; it is not dialogue.

MR. TAYLOR: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Not to argue with it, but there's a difference between interrupting a speaker and constructive heckling.

MR. SPEAKER: Nice try, but inadmissible.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I sat very quietly and listened to them talk. I never tried to interrupt them — a great temptation at times. Now I understand their unease, because they've realized how off-base they were and they can't stand to hear the facts. It always seems they just can't sit there and listen.

I hear this talk that we've got a surplus and that that's bad. Somehow that hurts. Again, what nonsense. Surplus is what we need in order to sell to these markets. The most important thing is that our industry drills and discovers new reserves. That's the lifeblood of companies, to establish a surplus so they can sell that surplus to other markets. If we only have enough for Alberta's needs now and 25 years in the future, everything would be shut-in except those few wells that provide for Alberta's needs now. You have to have surplus. Don't argue that surplus is wrong; you know better than that.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation provides for a period of decontrol, of phasing in, and it's essential to the industry. It's helping them right now. This legislation needs to be passed. If there's any reason to take another year with decontrol, we would need this legislation anyway — another reason it needs to be passed.

Let me conclude by saying, Mr. Speaker: let's be clear when we're talking about who's trying to help the energy industry. The one thing we all know is that these two parties devastated it in the not-too-distant past. They don't understand the energy industry. They can't stand to have it deregulated because they don't understand the whole theory of risk and reward. Let's be clear. The NDP stands for state control. They want to control profits. They want to control initiative. They don't like individual initiative; that doesn't fit. It's totally against state control. It's individuals furthering their own good. That's what Alberta is all about.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question in my mind that we have on the opposite side a different philosophy from ours. Theirs is to control people's lives; ours is to allow individuals the initiative and framework to build their own lives without the government being in there trying to run their businesses

and control everything they do. This province was built by individual initiative. You could not have had Alberta following their theories. There is no way that the NDP theories or the left-leaning Liberal theories could have had any part in the building of this province. We wouldn't even have it. It was done on individual initiative. They were no part of Alberta's past, and they will be no part of Alberta's future.

MR. TAYLOR: A point of information, Mr. Speaker. I want to tell the Premier that the Liberals started this province; for the first 22 years the government was a Liberal government. He doesn't know his history. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: I think both sides of the House could come to order.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud has moved second reading of Bill 1, the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, 1986.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a second time]

Bill 17

Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1986

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 17, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1986.

The amendment Act contains a series of 12 amendments that relate to a new section which covers the definition of an emergency vehicle, and this is one that was discussed at some length with the Alberta Fire Fighters Association and other associations and has been included in this particular amendment.

Section 8(e) of the Act introduces the new eight-light system for school buses, which is one that has been discussed for some time and is a proven additional safety feature for school buses in the province of Alberta. It adds another dimension by way of amber lights flashing to warn motorists that the school bus is about to stop and then the red light would flash and the buses or the vehicles that are approaching or attempting to pass school buses would have to stop.

Section 17.1, another new section, is the capacity of the minister to designate vehicles or classes of vehicles as emergency response units.

Section 16(1). This amendment broadens the authority of chief constables, municipal commissioners or municipal managers to engage persons including commissioners. That really broadens the ability to use other than commissioners of Corps of Commissionaires because they haven't been able to provide enough people to handle those particular issues.

Section 29(2) is amended to accommodate the new three-red-light taillight that is now on all the 1986 models of cars and, in essence, under the law would appear to be illegal unless we change this particular section.

Section 59 removes duplication. It's covered in that new definition of emergency vehicles.

Section 61 is a repeal providing the individual with the choice of using a radar detector or not using one, of purchasing one or not purchasing one, and will provide us with the opportunity to be consistent with our neighbours, the provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan and the state of Montana.

Section 66(5) is for clarification. It has been requested by the industry and will increase the safety of flagmen. This relates primarily to the use of over-dimensional loads

and the capacity for flagmen to assist in moving them around what I'll call tight spots on the highways.

Section 68 clarifies the rules of the road that the operators of emergency vehicles may contravene and includes the order of precedent, Mr. Speaker, plus making it clear that operators cannot be negligent in exercising that authority.

Section 70(1) is a repeal. It repeals what is presently in the Act as 100 kilometres per hour daytime and 80 kilometres at night to 100 kilometres per hour day and night, which is consistent with what we're already doing.

Section 103 clarifies what action drivers should take when an emergency vehicle is requiring the right of way.

Section 105 is clarification and adds amber lights to the stopping system of school buses and also provides municipalities with populations of 10,000 or more the right to pass a bylaw prohibiting the use of alternating flashing lights where speed limits are presently 50 kilometres or less. Again, that was requested by the municipalities we've had some discussions with.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question.

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against Bill 17. Not in its entirety — I have no difficulty with most of the other sections. I think there would be no problem with a lot of the other sections of the Bill which the minister just enumerated, except for section 61 being repealed by this new Bill.

This amendment to the highway Act is frivolous and lacks any sense of urgency. Legalizing radar detectors, especially when the Minister of Transportation indicated on July 28 that they have been rendered obsolete by new radar gun technology ... This message has not been put out to the public yet, so I'm afraid this Bill will actually induce a lot of people to get out — and they are already doing so — to establishments or firms selling the devices, believing that by buying this device they will be able to escape radar traps and do excessive speeds on our Alberta highways because of that device in their possession.

I checked a few of these establishments in the last few weeks. Sales pitches by salesmen are telling the consumers that they can detect radar traps well in advance using the devices. These devices range from a price of \$149 to \$600 or \$700 for some of the more sophisticated ones. In other words, what they're saying to the consumers is that they can travel at excessive speed without fear of being caught because their detectors will allow them to slow down in advance of radar traps.

I spoke to some of the police officers who are running the radar traps and radar guns, and they basically confirm what the minister has indicated to me. The use of the radar gun basically voids the effectiveness of 99 percent of any devices sold in Alberta at the present time. But they're finding now as they are stopping speeders on Alberta highways that more and more of them have these devices. A lot of them are purchasing them in anticipation that the laws will be changed shortly by the introduction of Bill 17. What I'm saying is that by legalizing radar detectors this Bill will only encourage more speeding on Alberta highways. It will also create consumer rip-off because there is a lack of information about what the minister said on July 28.

Will the minister or the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, if they are going to be serious about introducing this frivolous change to the Act, warn the public about the false advertising claims of firms selling detectors that are obsolete with the new radar guns the police force

is presently buying to make sure it's possible? The Edmonton police force said that the only place where it might be effective at the present time is in the city. But they are quickly changing these traps to the radar gun so that by the time they anticipate the radar, they're caught anyway, so it doesn't really help any member of the speeding public.

Some members of the police force that I've talked to have indicated to me that most people are unaware of the uselessness of these devices. Many consumers, of course, are simply throwing out \$200 to \$600 without that knowledge. When I was in a particular store last weekend, I saw three customers buying them in a matter of about 15 minutes. When I asked them on their way out of the store, they basically confirmed this assumption. They said it was because they were becoming legalized and they were on the verge of losing their licences. That was one of the things all three of them said. They were all up to around 12 to 13 demerit points, and with one more speeding ticket they would lose their driver's licence. That seems to be the incentive for why they're buying these detectors. They indicated that by having a radar detector, they would avoid radar traps and hopefully avoid having to lose their driver's licences.

So what I'm saying to the minister right now is that I really don't understand the reason for the introduction of this amendment to the Bill. In the situations where other provinces and other states have introduced them, at least the consumers in those jurisdictions, when they did purchase these radar detectors, had some safety or at least some usefulness for these machines. Why do we introduce them now without making the public aware that these machines are no longer useful? Are we just doing this to basically have a few firms make a lot of money off the backs of the uninformed public? It seems to me that's the only purpose of this Bill. I would urge the minister to reconsider this amendment. The minister surely knows that drivers buying these devices are buying them because they want to avoid being caught while speeding. There's no other reason they would buy them.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. The second stage of the Bill is with the Bill in principle and the total Bill. For seven minutes the Assembly has been listening to this one particular area with respect to this particular Bill. The member has even made reference to an amendment, and there is no amendment before the House. Would the member please conclude remarks with respect to the total Bill and the principle thereof.

MR. PIQUETTE: Okay. I did indicate at the beginning that the other sections of the Bill as proposed are acceptable to this side of the House, but the repealing of section 61 from this Bill is the one we feel has to be addressed by the Official Opposition.

In concluding, I urge the minister to drop the section repealing section 61. I think we don't need this section at all. In the next few months as the public become more aware of the whole obsolescence of buying a radar detector, this whole issue would die away anyway. I think it's a very frivolous thing to do in this Bill, because I feel that the consumer is going to be really ripped off in the end and it's not encouraging the proper respect for the speed limits on Alberta highways. One of the things we should be addressing is making sure we have respect for the law in Alberta. This basically contradicts the whole purpose of the Highway Traffic Act, which is to make sure that Alberta highways are safe by having proper sirens, proper signals,

et cetera. Now we have a section of a Bill which does not address that concern.

I move that we adjourn for the day.

MR. SPEAKER: I have a motion to adjourn the debate. Those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on second reading of Bill 17, I'm a little unsure of what's to happen here. I think the principle of this Bill is to introduce some amendments that try and eliminate some redundancies in existing legislation and to generally make our highways safer overall. Yet included in the Bill is a section, which we can examine in greater detail at the committee stage certainly, which seems to fly in the face of the overall intent of this Bill, which is to improve the level of safety and standards in the province of Alberta.

I'm referring also to the proposed legalization of radar detectors. Mr. Speaker, to make legal devices of this sort, which do nothing other than encourage people to violate the laws of this province, laws which the Attorney General and Solicitor General are forced to uphold, is something that is beyond me. I think it requires some further explanation on the part of the hon. Minister of Transportation of just why he wants this to be included. [The Sergeant-at-Arms rose]

Am I under arrest or something?

AN HON. MEMBER: Unsheath your sword.

MR. FOX: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps it might be wise to adjourn the debate.

MR. FOX: I move that we adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Vegreville, those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the next sitting day will be Wednesday, September 3, as we enter the fall sitting, and Government Bills and Orders for second reading will be the order of the day on that occasion. I move that the Assembly stand adjourned until 2:30 on Wednesday next.

MR. SPEAKER: The next comment by the Chair is somewhat irregular. However, I believe that on behalf of all members we would like to say good-bye to two of the pages, Lisa Hauk and Terri Mann, as this is their last day. [applause]

Having heard the motion by the Deputy Government House Leader that the Assembly stand adjourned until

Wednesday, September 3, at 2:30 p.m., does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? The motion is carried.

[At 12:58 p.m., the House adjourned to Wednesday, September 3, at 2:30 p.m.]