

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Tuesday, April 28, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/04/28

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**PRAYERS**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks for the bounty of our province: our land, our resources, and our people.

We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

**head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling today the annual report for '85-86 of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, as it was known at the time.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table an announcement this morning on behalf of the M.L.A. for Sherwood Park, the Minister of Agriculture, and myself with respect to health concerns in Strathcona county.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the following reports: the Public Service Management Pension Board, the Public Service Pension Board, the Special Forces Pension Board, the Local Authorities Pension Board, the Universities Academic Pension Board, and the annual statement of the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to introduce through you to the members of this Assembly, 22 students from grade 10 in the Sturgeon composite high school. The Sturgeon River valley has some of the best and most expensive farmland in Alberta. I'd ask the students to rise along with their teachers, Mr. Pilger and Mr. Mitchell, and get the traditional welcome of the Legislature.

DR. CASSIN: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to introduce to you and through you, a fine group of 88 students from the F.E. Osborne junior high school in Calgary North West -- Varsity Acres, to be more specific -- with five teachers: Mrs. Jones, Mr. Hanson, Mr. Leong, Mr. Sumner, and Mr. Heerema. I'd like you to give them the traditional applause.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to the Assembly members of local 55 of the Alberta Union of Public Employees from the Foothills hospital in Calgary, who are up in Edmonton for the 75th annual AFL convention. I'd like to introduce Mr. Tom Minhinnett, the former chairman; Bryan

Baxter, the new trades chairman; Bert Arnold, secretary; Ruth MacLennan, housekeeping; Everett Visser; Greg Stech; and Dave McLean. Would they please stand.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, on behalf of my colleague the Member for Stony Plain, who is absent on other government business today, 26 students from the Stony Plain elementary school. I understand these are exceptional students from a very fine constituency in Alberta. They're here along with their teachers, Mr. Eric Cameron and Mrs. Debra Butler, and parents Mrs. Lutz and Mrs. Turner. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

**head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Private Line Telephone Service**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, et cetera, et cetera. It's approximately one year ago that the Premier announced a \$496 million commitment to provide every rural Albertan with private line telephone service within five years. The Premier guaranteed that this program would be implemented, and he talked about 340 construction jobs and 200 permanent operating jobs in rural Alberta. My question: will the minister advise as to the status of this commitment one year into the program?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The program for 1986-87 was carried out on schedule as far as the provisioning of new lines was concerned. Orders have been placed for, I believe, all of the switches which are required for exchanges, to modernize the exchanges, and the actual turning up of some of the systems awaits approval of the Public Utilities Board. The application has been before the Public Utilities Board for several months.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question. Mr. Speaker, A very interesting answer, I would suggest to the minister it isn't on schedule, because Alberta Government Telephones has recently reduced spending on the rural individual line service, the ILS program. My question to this minister is simply: why is the government weaseling on the implementation of this program in view of that commitment one year ago?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to challenge the hon. member, but it is a fact that last year's program was carried out as scheduled. This year's program is reduced from the original intended amount. The program is a five-year program, and the intent is to see that it is accomplished.

MR. MARTIN: So, Mr. Speaker, the minister is admitting, then, that it has been reduced. Will the minister confirm that cutbacks in funding for the individual line service program have resulted in cancellation of remote digital switches scheduled for the Clairmont, Silver Valley, and Woking areas in the Dunvegan riding, cancellation of switches scheduled for installation in Hobbema in the Ponoka-Rimbey riding, cancellation of switches scheduled for Evansburg in the Whitecourt riding, and cancellation of five additional exchanges?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I will not confirm that. In fact, I will simply reaffirm what is my information, and that is that upwards of \$90 million worth of new switches, which I believe to be the amount required, were ordered from Northern Telecom and from Microtel several months ago.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question, then, Mr. Speaker. I'll have to help the minister out with his department. I'd like to file three copies of an internal memo in AGT, and one of the things they state in there is that the cuts to private line conversion should not be made public because a study is under way regarding "the ramifications of this reduced budget." My question: is the minister not aware of these cutbacks, and if he is not aware, will he find out and report back to this Assembly? I'd like to file these three copies, if I may.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the government commitment which I have just reiterated, I'm aware of the orders that were placed, and I'm also aware of the reduced amount of spending from that which was anticipated for this current year. That's a far different situation, Mr. Speaker, than saying that the program will not be accomplished within its time frame.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, who is turning out to be quite a wit. It's not hard to be on schedule when you do nothing. Could the minister confirm that those lucky few that are going to take part in the Premier's program of a private telephone line, those lucky few that sneak through the incompetence of his department, will be asked to pay \$400 each for this gift from the Premier?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, if I had as many opportunities to accomplish something as the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has had to arrive in this Assembly, I'm sure we would have had the program accomplished long ago.

MR. TAYLOR: Convoluted.

MR. YOUNG: It may be convoluted, hon. member, but you had many opportunities before arriving here.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question about the portion that would be required of individual telephone subscribers, that was a part of the public announcement made last April. That's not news; that's been a part of the program. That is the subscriber's contribution, and that's always been known to be over and above the approximately \$400 million of the general cost of the program, of which general revenues are contributing over 50 percent.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

#### **Zeidler Forest Industries Ltd. Labour Dispute**

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct the second question to the Premier. I believe it was on April 8 that the Premier announced that he had ordered the Minister of Labour to contact Zeidler forest products to determine whether that company is prepared to negotiate a settlement in the over-a-year-old labour dispute. Will the Premier advise whether he's heard back from the Labour minister, and if so, will he advise if this initiative was successful?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that wasn't my direction to the Minister of Labour. As a matter of fact, on the occasion when I dealt with this matter, I had met with the Zeidler union and with Mr. Munro from British Columbia to determine what their position was with regards to the outstanding strike. Having had a meeting with them, I felt it was then appropriate that the government would meet with the management group, just to determine their position and see if there was any middle ground. If there isn't middle ground, then obviously some disputes never are settled. On some occasions, as a third person talking to two protagonists, you can determine that there is middle ground and help them towards that middle ground.

Frankly, I wasn't that encouraged in talking to the union group, and the Minister of Labour was then asked to meet just to see if there was any middle ground he could determine with the Zeidler group. He has been working on that meeting. Since the last time I was talking to him, the House broke for the Easter break. He was working on the meeting, and I'm not sure if he's had it since then -- probably not -- but he may wish to add to this reply.

MR. MARTIN: Well, supplementary question. I'll come back to the Minister of Labour. The Premier seems to indicate that he does not regard this dispute as serious enough to warrant his own personal involvement. My question is simply: why is the Premier not prepared personally to involve himself as he did in the higher profile Gainers strike? Is it because \$15,000 came from Zeidler during the election?

MR. GETTY: I guess, Mr. Speaker, you get to understand where those comments come from, and therefore you treat them with the disdain that they actually deserve.

Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, I did meet with the union. I felt that meeting showed me, as I just told the House, that there seemed to be very little middle ground. It's probably why this strike has gone on for so long. Not every strike is solvable, I guess. That's certainly been true in the past, and it may well be true in this case. Nevertheless, we are trying. It may be that the Minister of Labour will want to help the Leader of the Opposition in terms of when his meeting may go on or what the current plans are.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I think I should clarify. Mr. Campbell of Zeidler has been out of the province. I've indicated to him indirectly, through his secretary, that as soon as he returns to the province, it's my intention to meet with him, and that I regard the meeting as essential and as a matter of some urgency.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As I pointed out, this dispute has been going on for over a year. I say to the Premier: will the Premier now, even at this late date, be personally prepared to intervene on both sides and try to bring this dispute to some sort of resolution?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I've already said, I have become involved in order to see if there is any middle ground. There is no value in trying to get involved in something when it doesn't appear that there is any way to pull it together. I've offered; I've met with the union. Our Minister of Labour will be meeting with Zeidler, as he just described, and then reporting back to me. If it appears that I can do anything possible to help solve this dispute, I will try. There's no question that it appears they are far apart and that there has been some remarkably poor lead-

ership given to this union from their leaders.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's just typical. It's always one side's fault, not the government's friends, who gave \$15,000. It's nothing to do with scab labour. That's not the problem.

My question is to the Minister of Labour. One of the reasons for this dispute has to do with use of replacement workers. When are we going to hear and have brought to the Legislature the much-talked-about labour laws, and are we going to deal with replacement workers? If we did, that dispute would be over.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, without getting into debate on a Bill which is not yet in front of the Legislature, I would indicate that the sole reason may not be that attributed by the hon. leader. The situation is that this is a dispute now one year old, a total of about 90-odd employees originally. Some of them have returned to work in the plant, some of them have found work elsewhere, and some have been dismissed during the strike by the employer, a matter that has been to the Labour Relations Board. All of the normal processes are occurring under the current statutes of the province. The leader will have to wait until I present the Bill in the Assembly for the proposed changes, and he will have ample opportunity then to debate those changes.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, Could the minister or the Premier -- to either one who can answer, Mr. Speaker -- tell us whether or not in talking to management you have suggested that they will be expected to rehire or retain all the workers that are now out on strike, that they cannot get away with going on indefinitely, because they will have to rehire their original employees?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is raising something that was raised in this House in relation to previous disputes in other industries. The current situation is that an employee remains an employee during a strike or lockout. The Labour Legislation Review Committee suggested that be clarified because there are apparently some misunderstandings and misconceptions, both on the part of unions and on the part of management. But the current legislation is pretty clear on that matter.

I should point out that the involvement of the department has been considerable over the past year, both in mediation involvement by the deputy minister with both parties and, of course, the disputes inquiry board. Those matters are all now history. None of them were successful, and as the Premier has indicated, both parties are still far apart, and it would appear that they are going to continue that way. Governments cannot settle matters of contract between two parties where the two parties are unable to reach agreement. That is not a government capability nor a government responsibility.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon asked me if I might comment on the views with regard to that matter. As he will recall, in the Gainers dispute that matter was certainly one which we stressed as a government belief. The legislation did provide that members of the union who were on strike would be rehired when that strike was settled. And I might say, Mr. Speaker, we were certainly able to help in that regard, where there was middle ground. The government's efforts did a lot more to solving that strike than running around on a picket line, as the Leader of the Opposition did, causing trouble.

### Constitutional Talks

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I can't blame the Premier for rattling the cage now and again. If I may address this question to the Premier, yesterday the Premier made a number of interesting comments on the Constitution in the upcoming talks. We learned first that he feels the Edmonton declaration to be dead and buried, since aboriginal rights were discussed in March ahead of Quebec; second, that he is willing to entertain a reduction of some provincial powers to achieve Senate reform; and thirdly, we learned by his brief, one-word answers in the House yesterday that he's reluctant to put his thoughts on these important issues on record. Is it the Premier's position that the Edmonton declaration is dead as a result of the federal action of holding a conference on aboriginal constitutional matters in March?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, not that it is dead, but that it should be pointed out that when other members who availed themselves of agreeing to the Edmonton declaration wanted to deal with something other than the Quebec matter in the Constitution, they felt that they were not restrained by the Edmonton declaration. Also, the federal government obviously felt the same way. It's my belief that since August there have been a lot of things happen and that we would be well as a nation to deal very seriously with the Quebec issue but also other matters that are so important to strengthening this nation.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier was aware that the aboriginal conference was constitutionally required; there was no way around that. But he mentioned there somewhere . . . Could he care to be specific and name what first ministers are in agreement with him that the Edmonton declaration is dead or at least is not to be followed, and therefore they're free to discuss other constitutional matters?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, then with respect to the Premier's comments on his willingness to entertain a reduction. Let's go on to that. You've commented that you were willing to entertain a reduction of some provincial powers to get Senate reform. Which provincial powers will you be willing to consider?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that matter was actually raised by the Hon. Joe Clark in a speech in Camrose, that he thought this was an issue that Alberta should be worried about in the event that we wanted to get Senate reform. It is not something that we're worried about. As a matter of fact, we believe that with Senate reform we will have a redistribution of the powers of Parliament. However, my comment was: if there were some Premiers who worried that by having a strong Senate representing the regions of this nation -- some Premiers worried that somehow they might lose their stature or their control in some way in representing regions -- that was not something that worried me. But in terms of the distribution of powers it's clear from the report this House endorsed that that matter would not be necessary at all, that provinces lose powers but rather that you redistribute the powers within the Parliament.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, last supplemental to the Premier, While it's commendable to push for Senate reform -- and we're all behind you in that regard. If now you feel that the Edmonton

declaration did not bind you and the Premier hopes to enlarge the agenda to include Senate reform as well as Quebec, would he consider enlarging the agenda to also cover areas such as the fisheries and property rights in order to make your negotiating room a little better than it would have been otherwise?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, those matters were raised by other first ministers, and it would be up to them if they wish to raise them. For my part, for this government's part, we intend to push a reform of the Senate, specifically the Triple E option, at every opportunity we get.

### **Senate Reform**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my questions are also to the Premier and with regards to Senate reform, and more specifically, the Triple E Senate. Could the Premier indicate at this time whether that item is formally on the agenda for the upcoming meeting of April 30?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm just trying to recall if there is an actual, formal agenda here, because this is really an informal meeting of first ministers on the Quebec issue. I do not believe that there is an agenda yet that I have seen come in my correspondence. Nevertheless, we will be reviewing the whole matter again this afternoon. But it is clear from my discussions with the chairman that I will be raising the matter of the Triple E Senate at the meeting.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the Premier. The Premier has recently had conversations with the other Premiers of Canada. Could the Premier indicate whether there was support for more formal conversation with regards to Senate reform, specifically the Triple E Senate, at your April 30 meeting?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I always believe, when talking with other first ministers, that it's just as a matter of courtesy that they represent their governments and that they should express the views of themselves or their governments and not have them expressed by me.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. As an option, rather than formal discussion of Senate reform at this meeting, would the Premier consider the option of making a request for a sequence of meetings following this one that would be specifically directed towards discussions on Senate reform, rather than trying to do it all on the April 30 meeting, but on a planned sequence of events that may culminate in two years of discussions to finalize this matter in a more formal way?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the thought behind that suggestion. It is an option that some people have been discussing and putting forward. The trouble with it is whether it's just an agreement to talk, then whether you get enough goodwill behind that agreement to talk that it will lead to any meaningful reforms, and that's the judgment that would be necessary in any discussion of that option. I would hope that perhaps we could get something in a more concrete nature. You never know, of course, with these matters; maybe there are second and third steps. Because we're talking about a serious reform of something that currently seriously flaws the Canadian system of Parliament. So while that option has been raised by some, it does-

n't appear to me at this stage to be one that is a satisfactory option at this time.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. In terms of the April 30 meeting and any informal agreements that may be arrived at, would it be the intention of the Premier to bring any agreement -- or intended position of the government of Alberta -- back to this Legislature and that position being presented through the Legislature by resolution for formal discussion?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's my belief -- and I'm pretty sure, but I'll check it further -- that we would have to bring any amendment -- and it would be my desire to in any event -- to the Canadian Constitution for debate in this Legislature.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, since the Premier is going to an historic First Ministers' Conference on the Constitution in two days, on Thursday, and since he does not know whether there is an agenda or what might be on that agenda if there is one, could he please give us some idea of how well his Triple E Senate negotiating strategy has been prepared in anticipation of this meeting two days from today?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I expressed to the hon. member, this is another informal meeting of first ministers. It happens to be dealing with an issue of Quebec and the Constitution, in which we are asking that it be broadened so that we can discuss Senate reform. I have found at these informal meetings that agendas are not nearly as important as the goodwill and the intentions of the participants. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, my discussions with other Premiers and the Prime Minister lead me to believe that we will discuss the Quebec proposals and that there will be opportunity as well to discuss Senate reform. And as I said earlier, other Premiers may wish to raise such matters as fisheries and property rights.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary Fish Creek, followed by Vegreville.

### **Legal Profession**

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question and supplementaries today will be to the Attorney General. I wonder if the Attorney General could comment to the House on the status of the progress of the review by his departmental officials of Victims of Law Dilemma representations to the effect that the Attorney General and the Law Society have not adequately dealt with their concerns and their financial losses associated with inappropriate or even illegal use of client trust funds by some Alberta lawyers.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Law Society of Alberta is, of course, a body corporate which is comprised under legislation of this Assembly and is a self-governing profession. It's my understanding that the people involved in defalcations which have taken place relative to relationships with lawyers in other capacities than in the direct legal capacity have not been satisfactorily resolved to some people in the province, but that really is a matter which must be left to the Law Society of Alberta to deal with those issues. The Attorney General's department, of course, has taken action relative to charges where appropriate, and of course, convictions have resulted. Unfortunately, that does not result in restitution for the victims of those criminal

offences. I regret that very much, but that is a fact of law. But I do not consider it my prerogative really to advise the Law Society as to who they should meet with or what action they should undertake relative to dealing with these people who have complaints against their profession.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that under the relevant statutes the Attorney General's scope is perhaps somewhat limited, but given the public perception that the Law Society is not sufficiently open or that it is not adequately policing itself, would not the Attorney General agree there could be some merit in the Law Society meeting with Victims of Law Dilemma and conveying, at least on this member's behalf, that suggestion?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, once again this is getting into an area where I don't want it to be made to appear that as Attorney General I am forcing upon a freestanding profession my views, but I do think it important to note that in recent years the legislation has been amended to provide for public representation on the benchers of the Law Society, that in recent years as well the Law Society has undertaken more activities to inform the public of the role that they play in terms of dealing with the public and individual members of the Law Society. I think some progress has been made, but, of course, as citizens of Alberta I would always urge upon a self-governing profession that they take great care in communicating with the public and individuals who've dealt with any of their individual members to be free and open in their communication. And I hope that the Law Society will undertake that, but I cannot order that to take place.

MR. PAYNE: If I may be permitted a final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'm encouraged by and agree with the Attorney General's comment that "some progress has been made." I would agree that that's a very wholesome and healthy trend, and could I ask if the Attorney General would be prepared in the future to continue to take advantage of whatever opportunities present themselves to ensure that that trend continues in Alberta?

MR. HORSMAN: I have, Mr. Speaker, in the last year or less than a year that I've been Attorney General, had occasion to meet with the benchers of the Law Society. That is a practice carried out by my predecessors, and I will continue to do that and to bring to the Law Society the concerns that have been expressed to me by members of the Assembly or members of the public who have been in touch with my office either by letter or by telephone. That I have undertaken to do and will continue to do.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Attorney General consider an amendment to the Legal Profession Act that would enlarge the number of lay benchers and ensure at the same time that they are broadly representative of society?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, that of course is a matter that has been under consideration, generally speaking, relative to the whole question of professions and occupations. And the experiments which have been introduced by way of legislative changes, including that to the Legal Profession Act, have been very useful. I will take the hon. member's supplementary question as a representation which I will discuss with the benchers at

the next meeting I hold with them.

There is merit in terms of increasing the number of lay representatives and, of course, to make sure that they're represented, and I think that would be wise to keep into consideration both in terms of the membership by way of sex, the representation by way of other occupations, and regional representation, which I think would also be significant in terms of providing a broadly based public participation in the profession.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I raised in the House recently a motion to set up a major public review of the legal system, and I wonder whether the Attorney General would advise the House as to his position of setting in motion such a review, including the need for changes in the Legal Profession Act to address concerns arising out of the Petrasuk case and other similar matters?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have not had the opportunity yet of reading the debate that took place on that particular motion. I'm aware, of course, that it was and still remains on the Order Paper and that it might in fact come forward again for further debate. If it does, I will certainly have read the previous debate and perhaps be in a position to be in attendance for any further debate on that particular motion. But I appreciate the representation that has been made by the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville, followed by the Member for Calgary Buffalo.

### **Agricultural Assistance**

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mondays, of late, have come to be very sad days indeed for Alberta grain producers: last Monday with the announcement of the 20 percent decline in the initial prices paid to farmers and then yesterday with the announcement of the end to an 18-month moratorium on Farm Credit Corporation foreclosure actions.

Recognizing that Alberta has the highest percentage of FCC loans in arrears in Canada, some 21 percent, and recognizing that a number of our producers in Alberta are facing foreclosure actions through the provincial lending agency, the ADC, did the Minister of Agriculture consult with his federal counterpart on this action and make him aware of the additional hardship this places on our rural communities?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we have had contact with officials within the Farm Credit Corporation within the province of Alberta, and they have led me to believe that when the moratorium was first placed, there was a possibility of some 100 foreclosures that could take place within the province of Alberta. During the period of the moratorium I understand that some 50 have been resolved; there are still 50 outstanding. But they've also left me with the assurance that the last thing they would wish to do is to foreclose on the farming population, and they're going to do everything within their power to make sure that those farmers that are facing financial difficulties -- they're going to go that extra step to make sure that they do maintain their present farms.

MR. FOX: Wishing and hoping is the kind of conservative eco-

conomic strategy that got so many producers into trouble. Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the minister refused the suggestion made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the provincial government make additional commitments of aid to our grain producers in light of the reduction in initial prices and refused to reconsider the elimination of the 23-cent-a-gallon increase in farm fuel to farmers. In light of yesterday's announcement, the lifting of the moratorium on FCC foreclosures, will the minister reconsider those suggestions?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as is traditional, the hon. member is mistaken. It's not the economic policies of this government that have caused the difficulties that our farmers are facing. It's the economic policies of the former federal Liberal/NDP coalition that caused interest rates to exceed 20 percent. And because of those exorbitant interest rates the farming population . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the minister would like to sit down until there is a chance for the rest of us to hear what's going on.  
Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious again, by their laughter today, the seriousness with which they take this difficult situation the agricultural sector is facing, and I find it despicable that they can laugh in the face of the difficulties that the agricultural sector is facing. I'm more than happy to outline again, as I did yesterday, the specific responses that we have outlined, the forthcoming support that we have given to the agricultural sector and are going to continue to give. Unlike the other parties we take this seriously, and we're going to do our level best to support the agricultural sector during this difficult period of time.

MR. FOX: This minister and this government ought to spend a little less time looking in the mirror and feeling good about the past and more time looking out the window and feeling concerned about the future.

Last November. Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister refused the suggestion of my colleague from Athabasca-Lac La Biche to implement a temporary moratorium on ADC foreclosures, at least until the report on the review of the role and mandate of that corporation was complete. We're waiting; we're waiting; we're waiting. Will the minister . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Vegreville, the Chair is also waiting. This is supplementary question time; you're now into the third sentence on this supplementary. Could we have the question, please.

MR. FOX: Will the minister, for the farmers of Alberta, commit himself to a date as to when that report will be tabled in the Legislature?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I would only ask one thing, recognizing that the word courtesy is beyond the realm of understanding of the New Democratic Party: that they not judge us by their own very low standards when they do put these questions. Because it is obvious by the way that they do put them that they are judging us by their own gutter-wallowing, and we're quite frankly not about to get down to that low level.

But we're more than happy. Mr. Speaker, to give the commitment that once we have the report in our hands, we're more

than happy to make it available to all interested members. We don't dictate; the hon. member might like to dictate to various agricultural groups. We don't dictate. We asked them to do a job. Once that job is completed, I'm sure they will share with us the report.

MR. FOX: I can hardly speak after that scathing attack. Mr. Minister.

Considering the 600 quarters that the ADC now holds and the some 300-plus quarters the FCC will have in their possession and the fact that it will be difficult to sell, will the minister give the farmers of Alberta and the rural communities which they support his firm assurance that this land will not be sold to any other than bona fide farmers of the province of Alberta?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we're going to do our level best, as I have indicated on a consistent basis and as this government has indicated on a consistent basis, to support our agricultural sector. I must say that I've always found -- and I recognize the hon. member doesn't wish to look to history at all to see how we can improve the future -- it so worth while to look at history so we can forecast and do a better job when we do look to the window of tomorrow. One only has to look at our past actions, and I'm more than happy to go through them. When drought affected this province, this government was very forthcoming in their support. Whenever a disaster or a catastrophe has ever affected the agricultural sector, we've always been forthcoming. If the hon. member would be willing to check the record, he would find that we've just indicated to him something that is very factual, and we're going to continue with that strong and legitimate support for the agricultural sector.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Stettler, followed by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. DOWNEY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker. A supplemental question to the minister. I wonder if the minister could outline for us some of the negative effects that the farm credit moratorium has had and the fact that moratoriums could very well create two classes of farmers.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, that is part of the dilemma that we are facing, because we recognize that in the event that a moratorium is placed, the credit needs of those farmers could be drastically affected, to the extent that the traditional lending institutions might withdraw their financing to the farming population. I'm sure that even the opposition members would agree that there isn't a consensus amongst the rural population as to whether we should place a moratorium or not. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to make sure that the credit needs of both our institutions and the financial institutions are as responsive as possible to the financial needs of agriculture, and we're going to continue to do that.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I know that while the minister philosophizes with his back bench, there's a number of farmers being flushed down the drain. I wish he'd wake up on that, and he could stop it.

Could the minister tell the House, Mr. Speaker, what discussions he's had with the federal Minister of Agriculture about what the FCC will be doing with the 232 square kilometres they've already foreclosed on? To the uninitiated that's 57,329 acres, or to the Premier, that's 573 golf courses. What is the

federal government going to do with that acreage?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to make inquiries for the hon. member with our federal counterparts. As he is aware, and I've pointed out on a number of occasions, we're in a provincial Chamber here and not a federal Chamber. I don't know what they're going to do, but if the hon. member wishes me to make representations for him, I'm happy to. But it's noteworthy to come back to what I indicated earlier. It's because of that gentleman's party that interest rates escalated beyond 20 percent. What has happened is that because of that not only the agricultural sector but the business sector is still hurting from the disastrous economic policies of the combined parties of the New Democrats and Liberals.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. My concern is certainly the farmers that are going to be affected, but the timing of this announcement is very critical at this time in that the farmer should be in the field, but he can't go in the field if he's in a foreclosure procedure, which will occur with some 50 to 60 farmers under the present process. Could the minister indicate from his discussions with federal officials or the federal minister what type of commitment will be made to allowing those farmers to proceed with cultivation and care of the land while foreclosure procedures or other discussions are occurring with those farmers in very difficult situations?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I can only underscore what I indicated earlier. In our communication with the Farm Credit Corporation, they've left us with the assurance that they are going to do everything within their power to enable the farming population to continue. Again, I can only stress that it's of no advantage to them to foreclose, and they've indicated that to us in a very forceful way. They want to do everything, and they're going to take that extra step to help the farming population, to allow them to continue with their farming operations.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary Buffalo and, if there is time, Calgary Forest Lawn.

#### **User Fees In the Public School System**

MR. CHUMIR: Okay. Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Education. User fees and other charges in schools are becoming an increasingly common feature in many systems across the province, particularly in the Calgary public school system. These fees threaten the principle of equal access to an education, particularly for children of lower income families. I was wondering whether the minister would advise as to what the government's policy is with respect to the charging of such fees by individual school boards.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the government's policy is clearly outlined in statute, and that is that no school board may charge what is a tuition fee but certainly may levy a fee for non-instructional items for the users within the system.

MR. CHUMIR: What is the minister's position with respect to the Calgary school board's proposal to charge a fee of \$250 per annum for busing and transportation for 2,000 bilingual students in the city of Calgary, which threatens equal access for lower income students? If the minister is not aware, perhaps could we have an undertaking to review that?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that there is no school board in this province of which I am aware that doesn't have a provision within their student fee policy to recognize the inability of some students to pay a fee. I would be pleased to look at the specific issue raised by the hon. member. If it is a matter of creating a tuition fee as opposed to a fee for noninstructional purposes. I would be prepared to review it.

MR. CHUMIR: The Calgary board has also implemented a \$25 per student resource fee for all junior high schools, which fee is presently structured to become part of the school budget. What is the minister's position with respect to this form of school financing, which will likely leave schools in lower socioeconomic areas with lower budgets than in higher areas as a result of an inability to collect the same percentage of fees? And if the minister is unaware, would she undertake to review that matter as well?

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Oral Question Period has expired. Do we have the unanimous consent to continue and complete this set of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?  
Hon. Minister of Education.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the questioner continues to ask the government's position. I've outlined that position clearly as it is stated within legislation in the School Act. With respect to a user fee being imposed, I think it's interesting to note that there is a constant bringing up within this Legislature of an apparent or at least a measured inability of locally elected school trustees to make decisions within their own jurisdiction. I will certainly review whatever the hon. member wants me to review with respect to the Calgary school board, but I would underline that the Calgary school board -- and the people of Calgary elect a school board to share a partnership role with this province in delivering a system of education. They are facing a difficult economic fiscal period, as we all are. They are attempting to meet the requirements of their own students and maintain the quality of education, and I applaud them for their efforts.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you. Will the minister undertake to this House to ensure that this form of fee, whether it goes beyond tuition fees or not beyond tuition fees, is not affecting and eroding the concept of equal access to our public schools and turning these public schools into quasi private schools where wealthier students have greater access than do the children of lower income families?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker. I will review if there is a move from a fee for noninstructional items to become a tuition fee, but I do not accept the allegation which the member is making that there are differences between those who can pay and those who cannot. As I have clearly indicated, there is not one school board in this province of which I am aware that doesn't have some ability to allow for the student who is unable to pay a fee for noninstructional items.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Some school boards have documents that require parents to sign a promise that they

will pay for books before books will be given to the children. Can the minister assure this Assembly that no children are denied access to books and materials if parents cannot and will not sign this document?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, many school boards in this province assess fees for the use of textbooks. It is alternate to the requiring of parents to purchase those textbooks outright. In fact, it is a saving mechanism for parents, and given that the province's provincial subsidy on textbooks remains the same this year over last, I will certainly look into the matter if the hon. member wishes to raise a specific with me. But certainly our support for textbooks and for subsidies for textbooks means that students have access to those textbooks at a far lesser amount than they would have to pay if they had to purchase them.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional supplementaries? The time for question period has expired.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek the unanimous consent of the Assembly to move the following motion under Standing Order 40. We have given you the notice ahead of time. The motion is that

the Legislative Assembly supports an amendment to the Constitution which would ensure that there are a series of meetings of first ministers to deal with reform of the Senate.

It is further resolved that the Legislative Assembly urges that Alberta's Premier discuss Senate reform with other first ministers and that he immediately seek a constitutional amendment which would conclude Senate reform negotiation within two years.

MR. SPEAKER: Notice was given primarily to the House leaders of the political parties. The Chair will have the motion distributed to the House and recognize that the member speak to the urgency aspect under Standing Order 40.

MR. TAYLOR: Given, Mr. Speaker, that the first ministers' meeting on the Constitution is later this week and the Premier will likely not be in the House again prior to that conference, it is important that we consider this motion today. Not only is the issue of Senate reform vital and urgent, as noted by the Premier himself recently at his party's policy conference, but it is important that we provide him with the ammunition in the form of the backing of the entire Legislature so that he can go down to Ottawa with that clearly on the record.

It is important that we take the bull by the horns, if you'll pardon the expression, and urge the Premier to seek a constitutional amendment which would put into place a process for Senate reform negotiations similar to that put in place in the Constitution in 1983 with respect to aboriginal rights.

This is clearly an urgent matter. Mr. Speaker. The Premier and his party agreed that this was an urgent matter earlier in April, and if they now deny this motion, I would question their commitment to Senate reform.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, on March 10 of this year . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, the Chair has difficulty recognizing the minister at this stage. The waiver of notice, Standing Order 40, by the interpretation of the Chair only allows speaking to the urgency issue as being a matter for the member proposing to try to make the case there, and then the Chair must immediately ask whether unanimous consent is given to the House or not.

All those in favour of giving unanimous consent for this issue to be discussed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: It fails.

Orders of the Day has been called. Member for Edmonton Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to bring forward Motion 241 for debate at this time. If may speak to that particular request, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that today is the date that labour and the federal government have designated as Injured Workers' Day and that our *Standing Orders* are silent on the urgency of motions that are already on the Order Paper, thus my request for unanimous consent on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: A request has been made for an unusual procedure, for the House to bring forward a motion for discussion which is already on the Order Paper. With respect, while *Standing Orders* of this House are silent on the matter, as pointed out quite correctly by the Member for Edmonton Belmont, in actual fact within the tradition of parliamentary process, unanimous consent could be given by the House to vary its own procedures. Therefore, this is a request for unanimous consent. Those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion fails.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that the questions and motions for returns on the Order Paper stand.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair apologizes to the House for a variance in procedure whereby we proceeded to the Member for Edmonton Belmont's concern before we dealt with the matters of questions and returns. Nevertheless, the procedure and decision stand.

### head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

210. Moved by Dr. West:

Be it resolved that the government of Alberta consider estab-



lishing a new mandate for Alberta senior citizens' lodges to provide nursing care where required, under the direction of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, in order that these facilities be better utilized.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the House. I have been waiting some three weeks to bring this motion forward, and I thank them for their consideration a few moments ago so that the motion can come forth in order.

Mr. Speaker, there are ever-growing problems developing in Alberta in relation to our senior care program surrounding the lodges.

I will preface my remarks by saying that these problems are greater in rural Alberta, especially in some of the areas where free-standing lodges have been built in locations with no other level of health care facilities. In my constituency there are ever-glaring examples of all the inequities of this system that prompted me to enter Motion 210.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

May I take the time now to congratulate those that worked on the report of the Health Facilities Review Committee, the discussion paper on senior citizens' lodges, of 1985 that addresses these concerns head-on. At the same time, let me say that if reports and recommendations are not clearly and specifically acted on at once, then much is lost in the transition of time. Let us say that Motion 210 is intended to nudge along and speed up a direction well discussed already.

The mandate given to lodges by the legislation through The Homes for the Aged Act of 1959 was outlined in the foundation charter, stating this:

that the purpose of lodges was to provide low rental accommodation for elderly persons who are not suffering from any chronic disease or disability that incapacitates them to the extent of required specialized care. The property of the foundation shall be used only to provide such accommodations and recreational facilities, and other services necessary or desirable for the physical and mental well-being of elderly persons.

In reality, that mandate was to provide a dormitory with room and board for healthy, mobile seniors who come and go into society without dependence on anyone and yet no hassle for the upkeep of self-contained units or their own house. Under that mandate many of the early lodges were built with small rooms, little more than cubbyholes, with large spaces for common areas with recreational facilities. Although thought a positive direction at that time, it turns out that many of those with their small rooms and large, spacious recreation areas are out of vogue in light of today's longevity of our seniors.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, let us look at the ever-changing reality of our statistics. There are 194,000 seniors now with life expectancies of 80-plus for females and 72-plus for males. By the year 2006 there will be in excess of 300,000 seniors with life expectancies for females of 85-plus and males of 75 to 78. There are many of the seniors in our lodges that have no intention today of being as mobile as their counterparts of ages 65 to 70 years back in 1959 when the mandate was founded.

There are 7,500 lodge beds with a 13 to 15 percent vacancy in this province, or roughly 1,000 beds empty in the wintertime, and in the summertime we can see as high as 1,200 of them open. The question of why or what is wrong always is asked. There are many reasons that when coupled together may give

you that answer. Firstly, the life expectancies and health issues that go with those expectancies make the practicability of the 1959 mandate redundant. Many seniors are reluctant to stay in those lodges today with their age and with some of their problems without added care.

Secondly, home care with such programs as Meals on Wheels, et cetera, maintains individuals in self-contained units, apartments, manors, or their own homes much longer. The third reason we're redressing the emptiness of these beds: it therefore goes without saying that if you have home care, then the next assessment is likely bypassing the lodges and tiers them into nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals, or even active treatment beds. The fourth reason could be related to the physical facilities, the dormitory style that has an environment that is very tough on seniors who are 85 to 90 years old and wish to stay in their rooms more than oft to entertain family and friends rather than the open hassle and loss of privacy of the large common areas. As well, many of these seniors have more personal belongings that they wish to keep in their rooms, and some of the older lodges cannot accommodate that at all. The newer lodge designs are addressing this factor a bit now and are extremely beautiful in relationship to the physical facility, albeit a little sterile, as stated by many elderly seniors.

So what do we see now in many of the lodges that I said exist in rural Alberta? We see empty beds. Yes, up to 50 percent in quite a few of the ones that I've seen, but coupled with that we also see many individuals the average age of 80 to 85, and in some lodges I've even seen average ages of 88, believe it or not. These seniors need varying degrees of help with medication, diets, bathing, dressing changes, Aids to Daily Living, recreational aids, and help with such basic needs as even putting on some of their clothes. They are quite able to live independently in the lodge, but some of them have eyesight problems, memory problems, and some problems with mobility. Many, many of them years ago would have been in nursing homes or auxiliary care beds instead of the lodge. They stay because they can either not find beds available in nursing homes or auxiliaries close to them and close to where their loved ones live, or perhaps they are waiting for Motion 210 to get them nursing care right where they are and still keep a degree of that home environment, that independence, instead of having to be institutionalized for the next few years of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to look at perhaps a directional scenario that might exist. A new mandate would take lodges -- some lodges, not all -- to become the first tier in a multi-level health care system including lodges, nursing homes, auxiliary care, and eventually to active treatment. The lodges requiring this type of direction now could implement personnel such as registered nurses or registered nursing attendants into the staff. Matrons hired in the future, so that there's no threat to matrons at the present time, could be considered to be registered nurses. In doing this we would take a great deal of pressure off nursing homes that have people who shouldn't be in such high-cost beds, and at the same time the auxiliary and acute care bed problems in certain rural areas would be allowed to rationalize in order that individuals are not occupying health care beds in the wrong category at too high a cost.

And I'm going to emphasize at this point, as I discuss this and debate it, Mr. Speaker, that I am not emphasizing or bringing forth that we convert lodges to nursing homes, that we take them out of the category they're in. They will still be funded as a lodge, with only the direction of that new added personnel, under Hospitals and Medical Care. I emphasize that, and I will

at the end again so that those departments that fear we're just going to convert these to nursing homes will be alleviated in their fears.

Let's put this in terms of dollars versus the utilization of the beds to the taxpayers of Alberta. A lodge pencils out at a cost to the government, to the taxpayer, of \$6.11 a day. A nursing home bed costs us \$40 to \$45 per day. An auxiliary bed costs the taxpayers between \$100 and \$115 a day. An acute care bed is a whopping \$392 per day. These are averages.

In many areas of rural Alberta we have a lack of auxiliary and nursing home beds, but we do have throughout the province a thousand lodge beds sitting empty. At the same time, there are a great number of auxiliary patients in active treatment beds at \$392 a day, and we have nursing home patients in auxiliary beds at a \$100 a day cost to the government. Allowing nursing care in lodges would lighten up the load on the other part of the health care system, especially in rural Alberta, and many nursing home beds could be properly used, as well as permitting availability for auxiliary patients to come back to nursing home beds when required. The costs would rationalize, and even with the added cost of nursing care in lodges it would not be as high as in nursing homes, especially as this tier system would use a degree of home care already available to lodges. No more lodge beds would be built outside of the multilevel health care concept in the future.

Many auxiliary beds are needed in rural communities as well as some direct nursing home beds, and as the system progressed, these needs could be addressed. For an example, just on an off-side, the cost to build a nursing home bed is roughly \$65,000 to \$75,000. An auxiliary bed is a whopping \$100,000, and in some areas higher; that's to build one bed. I saw a 25-bed hospital progress report assessment, and it was \$2.5 million, right on the nose, to build 25 beds. So if you look at those dollars and, even at a conservative estimate, that 500 of those 1,000 beds empty out there could be used, it is a lot of money that could be better saved and used not only to renovate the existing lodges but also to build much-needed auxiliary beds in many areas, as stated.

When I referred a little earlier to the building of lodges in the future only in a multilevel care system, I look at Airdrie, at the Bethany centre, and note that they have built not only some nursing but some independent lodge beds around a clinic facility, a multilevel-type facility, at a \$34,000 average, compared to those beds I said, at \$65,000 to \$75,000 through the departments.

Lodges working under a multi-tier system under the new direction of nursing care from the Hospitals and Medical Care department could address another inequity within the lodges as they sit in our health care system, namely this: Mr. Speaker, there are a tremendous number of boards that are creating a great deal of overlap out there. Home care, under its board, now operates within the lodge system and provides daily visits where necessary to change dressings, give insulin, take blood pressures, check on medication, baths, et cetera. Believe it or not, a recent report said that home care is addressing 65 percent of their time to giving baths in lodges, while the people working at the lodge are doing the medication and assisting with that themselves already. But these home care people cannot provide 24-hour supervision, and many times they're not even asked to give assessment on an ongoing basis that may be achieved through long-term care committees of groups within a tier system.

Could we not envisage home care, lodges, nursing homes, and auxiliary hospitals under the same department's direction, under one individual committee assessing and delivering our

senior care programs? "Why," you would say, "put it under one or two departments rather than the three or four we have now?" Well, due to the fact that any time you have more than one department that you have to change back and forth for communications, you get increased bureaucracy, inconsistencies, lack of communication, and plain mistakes. At the present time, in some areas there are four boards trying to get it all together: home care, lodges, auxiliary and nursing homes, and hospitals.

Another area is that the nursing homes, auxiliary, and hospitals are grouped together, cutting down one department. However, if you could get reduction of these boards by even one in some areas, you would be doing something. The number one advantage would be to prevent empire building and alleviate the need to have all beds full 100 percent of the time to meet your budgets. Such concerns that we have with day care or respite care could be better addressed under this system, as the boards would not be so concerned with 100 percent occupancy for budget requirements.

Mr. Speaker, so often in lodges the board and matrons have a priority to keep the beds as full as possible, which is related directly to funding. Oftimes they have no health care background and struggle with making decisions economically, therefore taking nursing home and auxiliary patients, knowing full well the inequities of that mandate we discussed earlier. Helping these boards with transition to nursing care and lodges would address their problems in this area. With amalgamation you would also address another area, in having a long-term assessment committee.

I am happy to see what is going on in the way of a two-year pilot project in southern Alberta. Through the co-operation and involvement of local boards, the interdepartmental committee on long-term care is testing a model for co-ordinated assessment and placement services for long-term care. The two pilot areas are the Foothills Health Unit in Calgary, the area covered by the Calgary Auxiliary hospital and nursing home district No. 7, now called Carewest. The period of testing is two years, 1986 to 1988. A single point of entry, one point of contact within the area for long-term care services, is the objective. It is felt that this greater co-ordination will reduce confusion for older people and their families and eliminate duplication that now exists and ensure that all options have been explored in providing older people with appropriate help.

Mr. Speaker, I can see a future where this would even help in such areas as my constituency with our lodges. These committees would also alleviate the problem with empire building and prevent the improper capital building of lodge beds when in actual fact it was auxiliary beds that were needed in certain areas. We have seen in the past where blatantly, without communication, lodge beds were built right in strong view that the hospital and nursing home areas and that sort of thing needed auxiliary beds, but the money was put into lodge beds and just stayed empty. It was an unbelievable empire-type situation. Improved communications between all departments would have prevented some of the building of some of these lodges and added beds and cut down the poor utilization, just as I'd stated.

With lodges under a new mandate with nursing care, we would have better co-ordination of the services without the competition that is being seen at the present time. We could address such things as dietitians, laundry service duplications, physiotherapists, recreational directors, and so forth. With the multilevel tier system suggested, under one or two boards and under one department's direction, we would see better utilization of our dollars and a commonsense approach to multilevel

care of our seniors, including those in lodges at the present time that are falling through the cracks.

Mr. Speaker, having said that part of the debate, the consensus at the present time would probably say that certain lodge foundations can go ahead and utilize nursing care -- I've heard this stated -- if they so wish. And I think if you ask any department involved here, that with the previous discussions and review panels' reports, they would say, "Certainly, this is a positive direction." The foundations find a solution; unfortunately, some of the boards out there and lodges at the present time can not get there from here. They would like to do some renovations and to perhaps implement nursing care but are having trouble in two or three areas. One is that some of the lodges are very old, built under a concept with narrow hallways, small rooms, perhaps improper bathing equipment and aids to daily living. They would be willing to do renovations and changes within their lodges but run up against departments who say that they must address the 1985 nursing home standards and codes in capital construction. The costs are alarming, and the funds are not available for this type of conversion. They don't want to be nursing homes; they just want to do some moderate renovations but look for funding in that direction.

Many of the boards feel that if they were allowed to implement minor changes without having to address the absolute of the codes, they could function very well. After all, lodges are not nursing homes and could be addressed under the same premise as one's private home, that it is adequate for people who should be in nursing homes but under home care are able to stay in their own homes. Therefore, we don't request that a private home meet the standards of nursing home construction, and I don't see why lodges have to either, under the same concept.

Secondly, many of the lodge boards are left high and dry in relationship to hiring nursing care people, registered nurses, or registered nursing attendants, and are not getting any clear-cut direction either through funding or their level of responsibility for taking such a direction. We would certainly like to see more flexibility, Mr. Speaker, and clear-cut directions given to those lodges that are in trouble today.

Going back to the point about funding. We certainly see areas where it would almost be cheaper to bulldoze down existing lodges than to do the renovations under the codes the way they are today. There certainly must be a compromise on this position. Mr. Speaker, I guess two words are "flexibility" and "common sense." This is what a lot of people running some of our systems such as the lodges are looking for today. I have enjoyed very much doing the research and looking into the senior health care system. I can see that there is progress being made by the government and individual departments, and I congratulate each and every one of them for working on those projects.

In closing I would like to say that all departments and all Albertans involved in working on these various boards and committees do so without confrontation. There's a great deal of paranoia out there in every department and every board that this sort of progress or any insinuation that we do what I just said in Motion 210 is going to hurt them in some way or affect their empires or affect their department. There is really no need for any one area to feel intimidated by change that is considered positive and worth while. With the ever-increasing gray zone that is coming by the year 2000, those individuals already working within this system in various departments would certainly be utilized in a rationalized system that addresses the needs of today versus 1959. They don't have to fear that they'll be closed

down. There'll be openings for them within the system, and they don't have to put up those walls to protect themselves against the change.

I must emphasize that by no way does Motion 210, again, insinuate that we have to convert lodges to nursing homes and therefore change the cost and designation of the physical plant from Municipal Affairs and housing. The occupant would still pay the lodge level of dollars, and the physical lodge would alter its mandate only to allow nursing care, directed for some of the cost sharing and supervision from the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

Home care would actually be freed up. If you're looking at rationalizing dollars, home care would actually be freed up to cover a broader area where it was meant to be -- out in the public domain -- and would address future needs at lesser costs that would occur at greater institutionalization of our seniors. So home care would have more availabilities, service areas outside of the single dwellings -- manors, et cetera -- to go to the homes. I mean that they would have a greater access outside of the lodges that would free up those nurses to go to the individual homes, and therefore the dollars that we're pumping into home care at our time would go further. Our existing lodges in rural Alberta would definitely be better utilized and would be a benefit to all under this system.

To all other hon. members, Mr. Speaker, who have brought up and discussed various aspects of senior care in this House recently, I congratulate you and encourage you to continue a positive attitude towards solutions such as discussed in Motion 210 today. And I sincerely ask that you consider passing this motion today.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, It is certainly a privilege to rise and speak to the motion made by my colleague for Vermilion-Viking. Motion 210. My colleague did a very thorough job in addressing the issues of lodges and emphasizing the problems and the new mandate that this law should take. As a past member of the Health Facilities Review Committee I've had the opportunity to travel throughout the province and visit many of the lodges. During these visits I became very aware of the various inequities within the lodges that my colleague just mentioned. Some of the rural areas have lodges with long waiting lists, and others are half full with no waiting lists, as my colleague mentioned.

My curiosity and interest in this area led me to expand my visits as an MLA throughout Calgary and the rural area surrounding Calgary. It was very interesting to listen to all the municipality board members and their views on their own lodges. Each has its own uniqueness and idiosyncrasies. Some are adjacent to self-contained units, some are free standing, and some are near active treatment hospitals. I spent many hours talking to staff, residents, and visitors in these lodges, and even managed a meal or two, which I didn't really need. Each lodge had a special sense of pride, and they all had one thing in common: their client -- the senior citizen. Many of the seniors have been in the lodges since they opened. Many seniors, and perhaps 10 percent of the residents in the lodges, have been assessed for nursing homes.

The foundation made up of local participating municipalities is responsible for the operation and financing and any operating deficits for lodges within its jurisdiction. These lodges today, 20 years later, have not changed this mandate. They provide room and board, laundry service, and light housekeeping to the seniors. All have a central dining room and central lounge, with

some recreational areas. Most of these lodges are around 45 to 65 beds.

There are 6,767 lodge beds in Alberta, and the average cost per day is \$19.81. The average deficit is \$6.11 per day. Since 1970 the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation has invested over \$150 million in lodges. The average vacancy rate is 11.9 to 14 percent in rural areas and roughly 8 percent in Calgary and Edmonton. The time has come where the mandate for these lodges must be examined. Most recently the Health Facilities Review Committee recommended changes in the lodges and their mandate, and the most significant change would be to provide a form of nursing care, as my colleague already mentioned.

It appears that the average age of a citizen in the lodge is 88 years. Residents require supervision and assistance with their medication. They require routine blood pressure checks, nutrition and hygiene advice, and just general assistance, general evaluation of their specific needs. It has been stated by the Health Facilities Review Committee that the current home care program provides excellent care and services to the lodges. However, it is not an ongoing service. The time that the nurses spend in these lodges could be spent in the outlying areas, specifically in the rural areas.

It appeared from my observation as well that there is a definite need for some full-time nursing care; however, only light care, as has already been mentioned -- an RNA, perhaps, supervising medication, nutrition, and hygiene. A program activities person, already available in some lodges, has proven to be very successful. Lodges that provide ongoing activities do appear to be the popular lodges.

This certainly would not take away from the mandate of nursing homes. Nursing home residents are already now requiring heavier care, and long waiting lists are occurring there. The lodges appear to require additional medical service. The ones that need additional medical services have no nursing home in the area, and each area would probably have to be evaluated on its needs.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

Day programs and respite care could also be an avenue lodges could conceivably adopt. The housing planning secretariat, in conjunction with Alberta Mortgage and Housing and the Senior Citizens' Homes Association, is conducting a thorough review of lodge program policy. The review will focus on a number of major programs and policy issues facing the lodges. A shift in the role of lodges could have considerable impact on other institutions, shelter, and home delivery services.

Long-term care services are a part of one system because they serve one client, and that is the senior. There is a need for co-ordination in long-term care planning, and the lodges are part of this system. In the past lodges and nursing homes were planned, approved, and built independently of any formal inter-departmental consultation. With the number of senior people expected to increase, especially now, at a time of restraint in provincial spending, it is necessary to ensure effective use of our current and future resources. The goal is to provide services that ensure equity and balance in a fee structure. It is my belief that the new long-term care committee that I chair will streamline this process. The committee should address the needs of the seniors in the community and keep up with the demands and, more important, address the overlap within the departmental policies, as my colleague has already mentioned.

I'm looking forward to this motion being passed, thus giving direction to the committee to improve the quality of living for our seniors in lodges. I commend my colleague for this motion and support it wholeheartedly.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Bow Valley.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I would like to make a few comments on Motion 210: having nursing care in our senior citizens' lodges. I'd like to congratulate the Member for Vermilion-Viking for again bringing this to our attention. It has been discussed in this House before, but with our always changing scene for senior citizens, we certainly have to keep on top of this type of a program.

First I would like to bring to your attention a bit of history that I've experienced as it relates to lodges. Mr. Speaker, I was a member of the Newell Foundation board from 1966 to 1979. I was the chairman from 1970 to 1979. To start with, there was a 50-bed lodge in Brooks, called Newbrook Lodge, which was built in 1962. In 1966 there was an occupancy rate of about 35 residents in the summertime and about 45 to 48 people in the winter. This shows a bit of the mobility of the people that were using the lodge at that time. Some folks moved into the lodge in the winter and then moved back home in the summer. Some of them actually went back home and farmed over the summer and spent their winters in the lodge.

Within a few years the lodge was filled to capacity, and there was a waiting list of about 15 people requesting a bed in the lodge. At that point we applied and were granted a 10-bed addition to the lodge, which was filled right away. We then, after having taken a proper survey, applied and were granted a 44-bed lodge in Bassano. The same year the Newell Foundation board, in conjunction with the Royal Canadian Legion, asked for some self-contained units in Brooks. The self-contained units were such popular accommodation for senior citizens that there was a continual request for additions. There are now 110 self-contained units in Brooks, eight in Bassano, as well as units in a number of other surrounding villages and towns.

The 44-bed lodge in Bassano was built in 1976 and has never been filled to more than half its occupancy. The self-contained units were so popular that it also reduced the demand in the Brooks lodge to about 60 percent occupancy. The age of the residents in the lodge has now risen dramatically, so that now the population of the lodges are people who no longer want to or are able to look after their daily needs. We have matrons handing out pills and medication to residents in the lodges who can no longer be depended on to take their medication on their own. Some forget to take their medication; others forget that they have taken it and take it over again. It has to be kept in the security of the matron. We do get home care, and they come in semiweekly to bathe people who are no longer able to look after their own bathing needs, and any other services offered under the home care program are offered in the lodge.

Particularly, home care is useful where there are diabetics that are taking insulin. The home care nurse can fill several needles, seal them, and leave them with the matron, who then hands them out on schedule to be administered by the persons themselves in the lodge, or else the matron has to administer the insulin herself. The matrons are concerned about the legality of this. Are they taking a position of a nurse, and are they qualified to do that? Both the lodge in Brooks and the one Bassano

are in very close proximity to the hospital.

Now here's where we run into jurisdictional problems. Lodges are under the jurisdiction of Alberta Housing, hospitals are under the jurisdiction of Hospitals and Medical Care, health units are under community health, home care is under Family and Community Support Services, and these people have the most flexibility. However, in the case of the Brooks lodge in particular, all those services are less than a block away. It would seem to me a small hardship for any one of these services -- namely the hospital, health unit, or home care program -- to supply a nurse for whatever time each day it would take to administer medication and check those patients who have identified a need. We had some problems originally in getting the matrons of the lodges to accept home care; there was a jurisdictional problem there. Those problems seem to be in the past, however, and now home care is readily accepted in the lodges.

In Bassano, as I have said, the 44-bed lodge has never had more than 50 percent occupancy. Bassano hospital was in very serious need of some extended care beds for the last several years. Last summer, in conjunction with the Bassano hospital board and with some discussion with the Newell Foundation board we attempted to take one wing of the lodge in Bassano and make it into extended care beds. It was an ideal situation because the lodge itself is built in four wings with 11 beds in each wing. It would have been relatively simple to close off one wing and make it into an extended care accommodation. However, we ran into some problems. The lodge is under the jurisdiction of Alberta Home Mortgage, and the nursing care wing would be under the jurisdiction of Hospitals and Medical Care. Both have a different set of building standards, staffing standards, and administration standards. This made it look like an impossible situation. Arrangements now are under way to solve the extended care beds in Bassano hospital, so we are no longer looking at that. There are now two patients from Bassano in the Brooks nursing home who are quite mobile and only need medication or therapy daily. If there was nursing care in Bassano lodge, these people could stay in the lodge with only the minimum need of a nurse to look after them.

There are two financial aspects to be looked at also. One is that if these people are in the lodge, it would be less expensive accommodation in the nursing home and could probably free up a bed in the nursing home for someone who is in an active-care bed that could be in the nursing home. This again would be saving some money. The other aspect is that our lodges are now running at 50 percent occupancy but have to be staffed as if they were operating at full occupancy. The income from the occupancy that could probably be increased by having a nurse at the lodge, at whatever portion of the day necessary, would probably allow the occupancy rate to rise, and that of course would pay for the nurse being in the lodge.

Mr. Speaker, we're in a different area now than we were in 1962 or 1977, and we should be able to move according to the times. I recommend that we support and pass this resolution.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very pleased to see this resolution and hear the hon. member's comments about it. I think he has quite accurately described a situation that is a very familiar one to me, and one on which I've spoken in this House on a number of occasions. I see many of his comments and suggestions here as being compatible and complementary

with some of the ideas that I have put forward as well.

Mr. Speaker, most of us are very familiar with the seniors' lodges that have been developed through the province that allow seniors affordable housing with some other supports, giving an opportunity for semi-independent living. Lodges also ensure a buddy system, and that becomes increasingly important with the aging process. I wish we could get more of them operational through seniors' organizations, which have been quite effective in many municipalities in the province to check on people every day. But lodges automatically offer the buddy system, and they provide other very essential activities -- opportunities for socializing, for recreation -- to destroy or to at least alleviate the fear and anxiety that many seniors suffer as their health may not seem what it should be and their energy deteriorates. And they certainly go a long way to alleviating loneliness. The lodges I've been familiar with have been excellent institutions for the most part, providing special events usually well-related to the community in which they exist, with matrons that are experienced and thoughtful people, warm people, who care very deeply about their residents.

I've been associated in a number of instances, Mr. Speaker, with assisting lodges to get better transportation services through public transit relocation of bus stops and so on. It seems a very simple requirement to most of us, but to a senior who has to walk a block in inclement weather it may preclude all of their social contacts and contacts with family, opportunities for community involvement, and opportunities for involvement with their church.

No question, Mr. Speaker, that we have to think about their need for health care as well in lodges, I'm talking not just about illness care; I'm talking about health care, the need for proper nutrition and exercise that should be available in all of these kinds of institutions for seniors at different levels of their requirements.

Mr. Speaker, I think as well that what the hon. member is suggesting is a methodology by which residents in lodges could access minimal treatment, medication, and referral to other sources as necessary, foot care and other types of minimal treatment that would reassure them. I'm aware through a number of family contacts with several private organizations that offer seniors accommodation where nursing services are in fact available. Nursing aides or assistants provide care for a fee as a rule: medications to the forgetful, assistance with bathing, with dressing and making sure their teeth and hair are done, things that to us seem everyday but which are very important in their self-esteem. These private seniors' residences appear to have bridged the gap in quite a positive way and are able to accommodate seniors with minimum health problems or handicaps that wouldn't likely be able to stay in a lodge under present circumstances. Now, I recognize that the private accommodation is only available to those who can afford it, and I see this motion as being an effort to level that disparity and make this type of service available to those whose financial circumstances may not be quite as healthy.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope too, if this review does occur, that in fact other uses for lodges would be considered at the same time. I've long been a proponent of adult day care, and I recognize that there are seniors' lodges that have excellent facilities at their disposal that could possibly, with minimum changes, accommodate day care in their neighbourhood, in their town or city or in the quadrant of the city. [some applause] I'm glad to see there's support for that notion. I think it's one that is overdue in our considerations.

Also, the same line of thinking is the relationship to day hospitals. This is not a new type of program for the handicapped and those needing treatment in our communities. Unfortunately, we have not been able to move as swiftly in this province into the provision of day hospitals as some of us would have liked to see, but it seems to me at the same time this is being considered we might just give some extra consideration to where that component fits into the whole system. As has already been mentioned, respite services could also be incorporated into this kind of change in our lodge mandate. There's no question that lodges are not fully utilized, particularly in rural Alberta, and that there are grave inequities from lodge to lodge in the age and the comfort level that the lodge is able to afford.

I would like to ask, however, of the hon. member, Mr. Speaker -- I wasn't sure if it was his intent that there should also be consideration given to removing the jurisdiction from the foundations of the operation of the lodges, and perhaps he will comment on that if he makes any closing remarks. I didn't read it that way, but just for our clarification, I'd like to know precisely what the intent is. I was relieved to hear his remarks about boards and departments and the lack of communication that result in costs and the difficulties encountered by applicants. It's reassuring to hear the member seek a more rational system and a sensible approach to building regulations and renovations. But perhaps he would just comment on whether that in his mind would necessitate a change in the total mandate as to under what jurisdiction lodges will continue to be operated.

The member has stressed, and I agree, that we're not talking about hospitals here; we're not talking about nursing homes. Care must be exercised not to turn our lodges into this type of institution but to keep our minds on protecting the independent living accommodation, hopefully extended by the provision of a preventive health service, first of all, to allow seniors the safety of advice and minimum treatment and, where possible, procedures that could be done safely within the lodge without the inconvenience, the hardship, the trauma of hospitalization unless it's absolutely necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest, too, that this type of move, positive as it seems to be, needs to be negotiated with municipalities, with the foundations, and with the residents in lodges to determine whether or not this is the type of activity and change they would like to see. I think we've got to be careful to bring in all of the actors when we're contemplating a change of this kind.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken at length on a number of occasions about my perception of the need for integrated health care for seniors and disabled -- the one-stop intake type of service -- and I see what's being proposed here as one more piece in the spectrum of services to the elderly of our province. We certainly must stay in the forefront, be as innovative as we possibly can. I would hope that it does meet approval.

In reviewing the motion as put forward, I had some concerns that it was going to be lodged in hospitals and health care as opposed to community health, and I'm not sure I understand the rationale for that. Perhaps the hon. member would speak at further length about why he has . . . I do understand that he wants to see fewer gaps between departments and that that would be a move in the right direction, but I'm not certain why he chose hospitals and health care as opposed to community health, and perhaps he could speak to that. I would of course like to see several of our departments that deal with the same constituency amalgamated and blended into one.

But I do hope it meets the approval of the House, because I

see it as a provocative step, a step that will move towards comprehensive options and single-entry intake in placement and will provide a better and more comprehensive service to seniors, and I will support it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to add my voice to those commending the member for bringing forward this motion and the intent behind it being very honourable, but such an intent and such an area of serious concern as our care for our elderly is one that I think needs a bit more critical thought than has been given so far. And I would like to add a few more critical reflections upon the motion and its intention.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

For one, it seems that the member himself is admitting that the recommendation was made a couple of years ago and very little has been acted upon it. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but it seems to me that if it is of such value and such importance, despite this revolt on the back bench it should be on the front benches; it should be something that is government policy already, being implemented long before this, and so in that sense is far overdue. If the member wants to in fact carry up on a number of recommendations that have been made which have great merit, he might also look at the recommendation the Health Facilities Review Committee has made that is of great merit. He should look also at some of the recommendations the Hyde report made, one of which is that the Health Facilities Review Committee should be scrapped altogether. I don't know if members have missed recommendation 23 that in fact states that at present the Health Facilities Review Committee is way overburdened and should not have a government M.L.A. on it or chairing it. I don't know if the Member for Cypress-Redcliff is aware of this, or the minister to whom the committee reports, but it seems to me that a lot of recommendations have been made which could vastly improve our care for our elderly which, as I say, Mr. Speaker, is of such great concern to us. There continues to be this slowness, this idleness, this very dinosaurian approach to improvements in the system that this government has.

Nonetheless, in terms of lodges, Mr. Speaker, again it seems everyone is talking about the fact that we have this system and we have a number of lodges around the province which are so underutilized. Well, who planned them in the first place? Who planned the hospitals and the nursing homes, the auxiliary care hospitals and the lodges? And with what foresight did they plan these? How is it that we now sit in 1987 and have various numbers of government departments doing all this great work with all this great money and so poor in co-ordination? So now we have a number of acute care hospitals that are underutilized in rural Alberta and we have a number of lodges that are underutilized and have high vacancy rates.

Mr. Speaker, again I think it points to the mismanagement of the whole health care system of the government of the last 14 to 16 years that we have come to such a date as today and find ourselves in such a quandary. Now again, I commend the member for bringing this forward, and others have spoken to it to say we need to help to improve this system. And looking at the lodges is one that needs some instant improvement, as it's going to de-

velop a continuum of care rather than the haphazard development which has been the hallmark of our care for health and for our elderly. There has been a preference for institutionalizing too much anyway. We know that seniors in our province are the most institutionalized of any in the civilized world. There is a preference for the acute; we tend to want to spend a lot of money and a lot of time and energy in debate around fancy hospitals and high-tech treatment. But this, as the member said, very low cost, very affordable, very cost-efficient housing has been neglected to our peril.

So the alternatives that have been outlined in the Health Facilities Review Committee's recommendations of a couple of years ago are ways to help to look at this vacancy problem, and again I think they're commendable. We need to look at better respite care. Day care has been mentioned, and even some shared home accommodation. So when we look at the alternative in the motion of increasing the nursing component — indeed, I might even question some of the medical components of care — it is an important consideration and is long overdue. The quality of care that it will provide is, I think, unquestionable. Moreover, I think it would help to enable seniors to stay in their locales with their families and friends in the neighbourhood instead of being shifted off for the nursing care that's available in auxiliary or acute care hospitals. So it has many advantages.

I'm wondering, though, whether the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care or the Minister of Community and Occupational Health — whoever — or other cynics might complain, "Well no, there's just going to be another add-on; this is just going to cost the system more money" and, "You know, we have to balance the budget, we have to reduce health care costs, and this is just going to be another add-on like I've heard home care is just another add-on. It's going to cost us money; we're not going to save on the institutional side. It's going to increase utilization. You know, you give them more nurses and they're going to find out more things that are wrong with them. They're going to refer them to more doctors, and the doctors are just going to generate more of the turnstile medicine that we have." That in fact, instead of providing nursing care as is appropriate, it could well be argued that it's just going to generate an expansion of the costly health services that we have too much of already. So many say, including the minister, that we have to cut back at every turn.

Well, I feel with the member and others who have spoken that in fact this kind of measurement looked at more critically has some very cost-effective and quality-of-care measures to it and needs to be pursued with vigour. Administratively, of course, it is a mine field. As members have cited already, you consider three, four, or five different boards all in the same town, all having competing interests in developing their own little empires. How you're ever going to get them to work together and co-ordinate in terms of delivery of service and co-ordination of care and reduce the level of bureaucracy that's there when they've been set up and mandated, I don't know. It just seems to be something that we might have some vision of goodwill around. It needs a lot more pushing than has gone on heretofore.

Then we get into the whole level of nursing care. I don't know about hon. members, but I tell you that there is no easy definition or generic quantity of what it is when you talk about nursing care or providing nursing services. You might go down to the AARN convention at the end of this week and see the variety and diversity of nurses and nursing care, nursing back-

grounds and nursing orientations. There are nurses that have a certain background in institutional settings. Are those the kind of nurses we want in the lodge setting? Those who are going to know what it is to preserve institutional life? Or do we want nurses that are going to have a bias toward home care, nurses that have been trained in the community, that know the community resources, that might in fact enable someone to bring in other resources they hadn't thought of before to the lodge and help them manage their care in a more preventive fashion?

Are these nurses going to be specialized, as the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar has said, in terms of diet and nutrition, or are they going to be nurses that have specialized in medication and drugs — we see how overdrugged and overmedicated our elderly often are — or are they going to be nurses that have some experience and expertise in rehabilitation? Are they going to be RNs? The member said it would be nice to have an RN. Or is he really saying they are going to be RNAs? Or are there going to be nursing assistants with not a lot of background or formal training at all? What about the Victorian Order of Nurses? What's the role for them? Are they going to be able to have some sense in this new piece of the pie?

We talked about the single-entry model, but I still would like to talk about the discharge model. It looks as though this system is looking at admitting people to a lower level of care in reducing them down from acute care to auxiliary nursing, and nursing home back down into lodges. That's laudable, but who is going to make those assessments and diagnoses? Who's going to say from someone in a nursing home, "No, we're not going to compete with you, but we do think you could probably be well managed in a lodge"? So we tell the nursing home operators and people that no, we're going to discharge them and move them down a level, because there's now nursing care available in the lodge. Who's going to make those kinds of diagnoses and assessments and manage the reduction in terms of their placement? Is there going to be this bias toward home care and toward lower levels of care among the nurses we're talking about?

So this sense of one department or one bureaucracy which is going to develop, direct, and deliver the services, to have that sense of vision, which many of us have spoken of, that is one that needs to work together toward a more holistic or more co-ordinated continuum of care — if the member is really serious about not creating confrontation in the system, it's one that I submit is going to have to be done with consultation with those in the system.

Now, I didn't hear him refer that he had the support of home care nurses in this or that he had the support of the AARN or any other group of nurses he had talked to. It seemed to me that if we're going to avoid confrontation, we're going to avoid just dropping it on top of them and saying, "By the way, we've developed this new system in the Legislature, and this is the way you're going to have to deliver nursing care." Or is it one that's come from the grass roots, that has been discussed with all the various sides of the nursing profession and those who deliver nursing services, as well as those at the board and administrative levels, as well as those in government, and have it work its way up through the system so they have some sense of ownership and involvement in the progress of the new direction?

I would submit that if it's just going to be something we've developed here and imposed on them, then that's when the confrontation is going to occur. In fact, I'd submit that in terms of the way Hospitals and Medical Care has generally been administered in this province, people do feel a sense that it's been imposed, that decisions are made far away from their real life ex-

periences in the hospital or in their health care settings.

I had some points about doctors and the medical component. You know, we talk about nursing care that's available. What about specialized geriatric care? Geriatric care whether it's of a nursing quality or medical quality is at a premium. As hon. members have said, prevention is the key, but how many doctors, how many nurses can go into a lodge and help improve the health status of those in the lodges anyway, so that they could prevent or detect early some problems and avoid further institutionalization, avoid further medical problems? It's nice again to talk about the fact that we want to implement this, but you know, all you good Conservatives know the laws of supply and demand. The demand might be here, but where is the supply? Do we really have the supply of good geriatric nursing, good geriatric doctors who can help improve the system as it's so needed?

As I say, Mr. Speaker, I certainly am with the members in terms of the direction of this motion and the recommendation of the Health Facilities Review Committee as it's been laid out in its three recommendations. I think that with enough vision and with enough political will this can come to pass and should come to pass yesterday. But it seems to me that if we are going to continue as this government wants to — it seems to want to continue only in terms of balancing the health care budget or getting the votes of prospective voters and not primarily to look at the quality of care and continuum of care that's needed for all Albertans, particularly elderly Albertans — then this motion may well fall flat in the political will of the day and in the political reality of the next few years; that is, until a new government is formed in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Red Deer South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise at this time to speak in support of Motion 210. I always welcome the opportunity of being able to address in this Assembly the needs and concerns of senior citizens. I want to thank and to compliment the Member for Vermilion-Viking for bringing forward the motion and sharing with us some very real and legitimate concerns facing senior citizens today. The Member for Vermilion-Viking and all the speakers' comments on this motion today indicate that they obviously share the compassion and sensitivity for seniors that this government has demonstrated over the years.

Mr. Speaker, almost 13 years ago now I was first appointed to the board of directors of the then Twilight Lodge Foundation. The Twilight Lodge Foundation or the Twilight Lodge was a senior citizens' complex and was one of the earlier lodges built by this province and administered by the municipality. As I say, I had the pleasure of being appointed to the board approximately 13 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, my first walk through that lodge was a most humbling experience for me. It revealed a facility that I could take no pride in. To be very blunt. In fact, I was shocked by what I witnessed that day. It was a typical institution of the times: cold linoleum floors, barren walls; they were that anemic green colour halfway up, and they were topped off with that nice pale yellow. They were crowded facilities. There were up to three and four men or women to a room. There were common washrooms and showers just down the halls — no privacy, but just a short walk down the hall. There were cold, callous, institutionalized regulations: "No, you can't have a teakettle in

your room; we couldn't allow that. No, you can't have a toaster in your room; it might be dangerous. We couldn't allow that." Senseless regulations, Mr. Speaker. Imagine what this did for the morale of the seniors that were living there.

Prior to moving into the lodges, these seniors often had to sell or auction off all of their belongings. A lifetime worth of collections, wedding presents 50, 60, and 70 years old, personal furnishings filled with years of memories. "No, you can't bring your own bed into the facility. No, you can't bring that special chair with you. No, you can't even rearrange the furnishings that are there": a cold, callous, calculated institution was what welcomed seniors at that time, Mr. Speaker. But interestingly enough seniors of that day didn't protest. They didn't run to government demanding more. They did what they always do. They took it all in stride and made the best of it. They made the best of it, and couldn't we learn from that attitude today, especially my generation, the "me" generation, the takers? Too quickly we turn to government for everything. Wouldn't it be wonderful if only we could learn to make the best of what we have and do a little more for ourselves? We can learn a lot from our seniors today if only we would learn to listen and to pay attention to the very good and sound advice they so willingly give and share. I know I have sure appreciated the help and assistance and advice extended to me over the years by seniors in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that we have come a long way in this province since my first walk through that institution. We now have senior citizens' lodges. Through the leadership of this government, through the efforts of local municipalities, and through the efforts of many caring Albertans we now have lodges that we can be proud of. I personally, as a director, witnessed the total renovation of the lodge I referred to earlier. It now has private rooms with private baths, current colour schemes, fireplace, games rooms, crafts rooms, workshops, and we put some compassion and some humaneness into the regulations. The adjustment from a home full of memories to a small room in a lodge is traumatic enough without excluding provisions for some personal effects. We now have those provisions. We now have provisions for personal furnishings in the room, and yes, they can even make that cup of tea before they go to bed, Mr. Speaker, in their own room.

I witnessed not only the refurbishing of that particular lodge, but I also had the privilege of sitting on a building committee for the Pines senior citizens' lodge in the constituency of Red Deer North. I also witnessed the construction of some of the finest self-contained units anywhere, through the efforts of the Red Deer Kiwanis Club with the co-operation of Alberta Housing and this government: Albertans helping Albertans; Albertans helping themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we have progressed a long way, but there is more to be done in this ever-changing situation. And the situation is changing, and we need to be aware of that. We need to plan for it. We need to have policies that allow for change and include the flexibility to provide not only for today's situation but for the drastic changes into the '90s and beyond. Demographics make it very clear that we need to be looking ahead. The number of Canadians 65 and over is multiplying twice as fast as the general population. Statistics Canada reports that between 1981 and 2031, it will increase from 2.3 million to 6 million people, or from 10 percent of the total population to 21 percent: alarming statistics. We need to be aware of them, and we need to be planning for them. We need to be proactive today and not reactive tomorrow.



Mr. Speaker, I have stated in this Assembly on prior occasions that the best place for senior citizens is in their home. We are too quick to institutionalize senior citizens, and we need to challenge that. Seniors belong, if at all humanly possible, in their own homes, and anything that we as a government can do to facilitate or accommodate that should be our utmost, should be our foremost, and should be our number one priority with senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the 1984 annual report of the provincial senior citizens advisory committee states what I feel should be a guiding principle in developing policy for seniors, and I quote:

The majority of seniors want to be as independent as possible, while also having the security of knowing that help is available as needed. Of these two, independence is especially important to a senior.

In that light, Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my predecessors in this Legislature for the insight they had in establishing the co-ordinated home care program in 1978, a program established to provide Albertans, primarily seniors but all Albertans, with health and support services in their own dwelling. Our government's commitment and support for this program has increased 12 times from \$2.5 million in the original 1978-79 mandate to \$29.9 million in our 1986-87 budget. I think it's appropriate, and I want to compliment the Minister of Community and Occupational Health for his continued commitment to this very important program. I recognize that not all seniors can remain in their own home, but again I want to emphasize that there are both humanitarian and economic reasons for making every effort in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, I've commented on the progress we have made as a government in support of our seniors, and I've touched upon this government's commitment to the well-being of senior citizens. This government can be proud of its track record, and I sincerely believe we take a backseat to no province in Canada as it relates to services for seniors. But there is more to be done. Motion 210 urges the government to consider changing the mandate of Alberta senior citizens' lodges to provide nursing care to residents in need of that additional assistance. Mr. Speaker, this would be a very positive step. Many lodge residents have no choice but to move to a nursing home setting when all they really need is assistance, just a little more assistance with such things as bathing or taking medication. I know that lodge staff in many parts of this province do assist their residents with these needs, and in doing so, they are working above and beyond the call of duty. But more importantly they are putting themselves in a vulnerable position in terms of liability. I don't think it's fair for us to call upon them to be put in that position. Revising the mandate of Alberta senior citizens' lodges would acknowledge the need to provide nursing services for some residents and, by putting it above board, would ensure that those residents get those services without risk to the lodge staff.

As the Member for Vermilion-Viking and other members have suggested today, one way to accomplish this would be to expand the mandate of our lodge program. Now, I know that an expansion to the lodge mandate would cost money, and we are in a tight fiscal situation today, but as the Member for Vermilion-Viking has already pointed out, it might be a lot more cost-effective to go this way than to continue admitting people into higher forms of care than they require.

Cost aside, Mr. Speaker, this gives me a chance to talk about one of my pet projects. I think that in the long term we should be putting more effort into the co-ordination and establishment

of multilevel facilities. My Motion 214 last year addressed this matter, so I won't go into it in depth at this time, other than to say that it makes absolute sense to develop senior citizens' facilities on a co-ordinated and an integrated basis so that we can meet the needs of all our seniors in one central location. A multilevel care facility would provide self-contained units, lodging facilities, nursing home and auxiliary care in one central site and in a cohesive fashion. The merits and advantages of multilevel facilities are immeasurable in both humanitarian and economic terms. In a certain sense, that is what Motion 210 is getting at. It's saying: let's look at the mandate of the lodge program to see if we can't keep some residents in lodges with their friends and with their spouses rather than having to move them to a nursing home or an auxiliary hospital.

Mr. Speaker, another thing I want to comment on -- and I was pleased to see the Member for Vermilion-Viking touched on it as did the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar -- is the concept of a single point of entry. The single point of entry system, as I understand it, is an integrated assessment procedure for care services where one assessment is undertaken to determine whether a client requires services from a community-based home care program or requires placement in a senior citizens' lodge or a nursing home or an auxiliary hospital. Many, many individuals do not know where to begin in searching for suitable placement for themselves or for loved ones. They just don't know where to turn to. A single point of entry system would go a long way toward ensuring that seniors receive the care they need and in the most appropriate setting. The person doing the assessment might decide that a lodge would be a suitable placement if certain additional services could be made available as suggested in Motion 210.

Mr. Speaker, governments can only do so much, and I think there also has to be a change in public attitude. I feel that change has already begun, but there are a lot of stereotypes out there working against seniors. For instance, many people believe that most seniors are sick and in nursing homes. The fact is that in Canada only 6 percent are. Many people believe that old people are feeble-minded. Yet recent U.S. and British studies show that the opposite is true. Verbal comprehension, numerical skills, and inductive reasoning often improve with age. Many believe that physical decline is an inevitable part of old age. The fact is that although muscular strength diminishes with age, most people can continue doing what they have always done into late old age.

In doing some of my research, Mr. Speaker, I was particularly struck by the comments of Pat Murphy, a 72-year-old retired newspaperman, and again I quote:

There seems to be a general feeling abroad that after you reach the age of retirement, you go into a state of mental retardation, that you suddenly become interested in silly singsongs but not in Bach, Chopin or Haydn. If you're stupid at 70, you were probably stupid at 30. The old population is the same as the young population, and the sooner people realize it the better.

Still, Mr. Speaker, many seniors do have special needs, and after contributing to society for so long, they deserve to have them met. Discussions such as this one today encourage the exchange of ideas and policy options, and I once again compliment the member for bringing it forward. I look forward to the continued discussions on this motion, and I would hope that my colleagues in this House will support it if we have the opportunity of voting on it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker. I wish to speak briefly to this motion today. I want to commend the Member for Vermilion-Viking for bringing this very important matter before the Assembly. It's certainly timely in terms of some of the discussion which is taking place in my constituency today. We have a situation there in the town of Pincher Creek where we do not have a nursing home, and the Crest View Lodge, which is the senior citizens' lodge there, currently is full, with 48 occupants, which is different from the situation which other members have described in terms of underutilization of senior citizens' lodges. In terms of the 48 residents of that lodge, 19 of them could benefit from a higher level of care than they are now receiving, which would mean having nursing home care within that senior citizens' lodge.

There recently was a public forum in Pincher Creek to discuss services for senior citizens, including nursing home and extended care facilities. There is an extended care facility attached to the Pincher Creek hospital which has 20 beds there and which is currently full. We see that the extended care is being backed up into the active-treatment hospital system there. I've invited the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care to visit the community to discuss the needs there, and he's assured me that he will be visiting there in the very near future. The lodge board there has under consideration a policy discussion which is very similar to that which has been initiated by the Member for Vermilion-Viking, in that they are considering the options in terms of providing some level of nursing home care to those residents in the lodge to meet this need in the community.

I should also comment on a situation which was in the Crowsnest pass community in my riding. Back in 1973 we opened there a combined senior citizen/nursing home facility, which was a pilot project for the province. There were at that time 30 nursing home beds and 36 senior citizen beds. So there has been some experience in the riding with regard to providing two levels of services within a single facility. This facility was also attached to the local hospital. There were some difficulties in terms of how you provide those services, and if this motion is passed, perhaps consideration to the experience there might be given in terms of a committee or the department looking into this situation.

I'd like to conclude by commending the member for bringing this motion forward and would urge all hon. members to support it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Highwood.

MR. ALGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to state that I'm happy to address this motion today both because of my involvement with seniors' issues through acting as chairman of the Provincial Senior Citizens' Advisory Council and as the member of the Legislature managing the Senior Citizens Secretariat and because it is possible for me to say with some pride that the Alberta government has shown long-standing support and understanding of the needs of seniors in this province.

Over 10 years ago this government resolved to pay special attention to the senior population in Alberta. At that time the 1975 Speech from the Throne announced some of the very important programs for seniors that have continued to the present day. There is a wide-ranging number of programs and resources available to senior citizens, and as is the crux of the matter today, their aim is to promote the ability of seniors to live as independently as possible while still receiving the support

needed to allow them to do so, an aim to which I am strongly and personally committed.

I would also like to state, Mr. Speaker, that I am pleased with the general intent of the motion before the House today and that I commend the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking for bringing such an important issue to the attention of the House. The proposed motion states that its intention is to provide lodges with proper nursing care where required so that these facilities can be put to better use. That makes a lot of sense. I am aware that there is some problem with the present way of managing senior citizens' lodges. There are some vacancies in senior citizens' lodges today, and many have expressed the desire to see that these vacancies are filled with those seniors who might require more care than can be provided under the present lodge system.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I too would like to see our senior citizens' lodges working to their best ability and fullest capacity. Senior citizens' lodges are too great a boon to the seniors in this province not to be doing so. If one considers, Mr. Speaker, that senior citizens' lodges allow people to live independently in homes rather than in apartments, while at the same time allowing them to receive help with such things as bathing, laundry, meals, and whatever, it is not hard to see why senior citizens' lodges are so strongly supported. But it is hard to see why there should be any vacancies at all. I've always had trouble with that, given the wide number of benefits afforded by senior citizens' lodges.

Part of the reason for these vacancies, however, is that the lodges at present do not always provide enough services for all seniors to be able to live in them. Providing nursing care in seniors' lodges is the approach to solving this problem that this motion takes. By extending the kinds of care available in senior citizens' lodges, a wider range of people with greater and lesser capabilities might be able to take advantage of living in the lodge. Nevertheless, what I would suggest is that this extended care be along the lines of increased home care aid rather than nursing care under the direction of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care.

There are several reasons why I feel this way. One is that often the kind of help that would be most needed is the kind that could be provided by home care workers -- or homemakers, if you like. Increased personal care such as helping with the making of meals does not have to be given by medical professionals and would be more than sufficient in the majority of cases. Administering medication and other such specialized activities could be handled just as easily through having medical professionals schedule regular visits to the lodge.

Another reason I believe instituting nursing care under the direction of hospitals and medicare is not necessarily the route to take is that by putting extended care in the hands of medical professionals, the government would actually be significantly increasing its expenditures in the realm of senior citizens' lodges. Now, if that had to be the case in order to meet the needs of our seniors, I would say fine. If, however, it would mean hiring medical professionals to do work that could just as easily be handled by home care workers, then it cannot be justified -- and especially now when our efforts must continue to be focused on finding ways to reduce spending. As well, because the lodge program in Alberta is currently under review by the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Alberta Senior Citizens' Homes Association, I would think it slightly premature for us to set the Alberta senior citizens' lodge pro-

gram onto a new course before receiving the results of their research.

All the same. I would like to stress, as I did in my opening remarks, that I highly commend the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking for bringing this matter to our attention today. It is true that the Alberta senior citizens' lodge program is in need of some improvement in order for it to be able to work to its best efficiency and capacity. Improving and extending the kinds of care available should most definitely be looked at. Those I've noted. I believe that extending home care programs just might prove more than sufficient in this regard.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, might I just add that I believe this motion gives all of us here in this House an excellent chance to consider a program that is worthy of much praise. The Alberta senior citizens' lodge program is a worthy institution that should most definitely command a lion's share of our efforts and commitments.

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Mr. Highwood.

MR. STEWART: In rising to speak to this motion, Mr. Speaker, I want to join with other members in first congratulating the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking, recognizing his sensitivity to those issues that affect our senior members of our community as well as his foresight in recognizing the longer term implications of those issues.

I also think it is one of those happy occasions in the Assembly when all members appear to be focusing on a common objective; that is, in this case, providing for our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there are some very appropriate points that have been raised, very valuable points in the debate to this point, and I certainly endorse much of what has been said -- in fact, I would say all of what has been said. I believe it's appropriate for this motion to be brought forward at this particular session. Firstly, because it directs our attention to the importance of the seniors within our community and also it requires us as individuals to examine our own attitudes and priorities. Secondly, it directs us to consider these matters with a long-term outlook. And thirdly, I think it contemplates a concept of multilevel care in our facilities, which is a rather new concept but certainly a logical direction for us to be following.

As to the importance of our seniors, our attitudes will in the final analysis determine how we as legislators and as members of the community will determine the direction of provisions for care for our seniors. If we regard our policy and programs as strictly a recognition or a reward to our seniors for their past contributions, then it seems to me that the results of that type of attitude will indeed direct us in certain ways and means of dealing with our elderly which is based primarily on a motivation that providing for them will in turn make us feel better. If on the other hand our attitude is such that we regard our seniors as an integral part of our community and recognize the contribution they have made and recognize that their own desires and hopes and dreams are to remain as vital and contributing members of our community, to retain their independence, their sense of self-worth and their dignity and their capability of remaining at least in a lower level of care, then we will have accomplished a great deal. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the latter attitude now prevails in our society and now and in the future will form the foundation for our policies and programs for our seniors.

Earlier I suggested that this motion was appropriate as it directs our attention to longer term planning. It is critical to estab-

lish long-range objectives in directions and channel all of our human and financial resources accordingly. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make two or three general observations which I believe are critical to the assessment of the motion. Firstly, I believe it is critical that we recognize and accept the concept, as I mentioned, of multilevel care facilities. I was pleased that the hon. Member for Red Deer South raised that motion and that a debate took place in this Assembly on that very point. Of course, providing for a nursing care component within our seniors' lodges is an example of that particular concept of multilevel care. Secondly, it's also important that our consideration is based on certain commonly accepted facts and statistics. Longer term planning requires a very clear identification of the realistic forecasts and trends in respect to the demographics that relate to our seniors.

With respect to multilevel care facilities, the 1982 report of the Nursing Home Review Panel defined it as follows:

one which combines in the same or continuous sites, under one management, programs drawn from at least two of the following three categories: long-term patient care, housing for senior citizens (and other dependent populations), and care and support services to persons living in the community.

In other words, the concept of multilevel care includes two or more levels of care in auxiliary hospitals, nursing homes, lodges, self-contained units, as well as home care services.

The concept of multilevel continuing care facilities was a recommendation made in the report that I mentioned, and its rationale was briefly summarized by five objectives that were set out in the report. I would suggest that these five objectives are an integral part of this particular motion today: firstly, the economies of scale, both capital and operating, in basic and specialized services; secondly, provision for a continuum of care, thereby reducing relocation; thirdly, a provision of a continuum of care, thereby allowing adjustment of service levels to meet temporary changes in needs; fourthly, allowing married couples to stay together; and fifthly, providing flexibility of design to allow for long-term changes in the facilities' role.

I don't believe these objectives require debate; they are all worthy goals for our care and residential accommodation for our seniors and I'm sure are accepted by all members. The ability to achieve these objectives through proper planning and development of continuing care facilities -- which includes the two or more levels of care that are suggested by this motion -- is what it's all about. The facts and statistics relating to our demographics concerning our seniors -- usage, et cetera -- are not important themselves but rather in the trends that they indicate. Any consideration of future planning and development of our care facilities along the line suggested must recognize those trends and take them into account.

It seems to me that the trends I mentioned are interesting and certainly are instructive, and they include the following: firstly, the increase in the proportionate number of seniors as a ratio to our total population in Alberta, basically through the increase in life expectancy; secondly, the increase in what is known as the old age dependency ratio, which is the ratio of our seniors to the number of persons in the work force. Undoubtedly earlier retirements are affecting that particular ratio. Third, there is an increase in the average age of seniors, which means that there are more of our seniors in the 75-plus years and indeed 85-plus years category.

Fourthly, there is a general improvement in the income level of our seniors as pension and other retirement plans come into

effect, for the benefit of the most recent retirees. Fifth, there is still a greater percentage of seniors in the smaller urban and rural nonfarm areas as opposed to the two major urban centres in Alberta, although I believe that ratio is decreasing. Sixthly, the majority of our seniors still own and occupy their own homes, approximately 66 percent. There is no doubt that the number of government programs is assisting seniors to maintain their independence in their own homes.

Seventh, nearly two-thirds of the Alberta seniors are currently living in a family situation, about 23 percent are living alone, and around 13 percent are currently living in some form of collective dwelling, whether it be a lodge, nursing home, or auxiliary hospital. The trends show that the proportion of those living alone, especially older women, is increasing. And eighth, the current health status appears to indicate that while the majority of older persons in Alberta are able to care for themselves, approximately 15 to 20 percent of the older population may be in need of help on a continuing or intermittent basis due to disabling conditions.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this motion recognizes the importance of constant monitoring of those trends as an essential element of planning for future care facilities, to emphasize the possibility of more care occurring in the home and the possibility of quality care being provided at a reduced level of facility.

Mr. Speaker, another trend that is important and is relevant to the issue is the fact that senior citizens' lodges have been experiencing in recent years vacancy rates and at the same time there being a tremendous demand for nursing home accommodation. In other words, the existence of subsidized, self-contained apartments plus other programs aimed at helping seniors remain in their own homes as long as possible has in fact reduced the demand for lodge accommodation. The seniors are not giving up on their independent living until medical problems force them to do so.

Another important trend in fact is that these seniors that do reside in lodges, the average age is on the increase and the percentage of such residents requiring some regular medical care, as envisaged by this motion, is also increasing. These statistics and trends merely bear out the fact that multicare facilities are appropriate for the future care of our seniors.

This motion in my judgment is a positive move in that direction, Mr. Speaker, and I applaud the mover and all members who have spoken in support of the motion.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Associate Minister of Agriculture.

MRS. CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure for me to participate in this motion today because I've long had an interest in senior citizens' lodge programs and the many benefits they provide in rural Alberta. I introduced a motion on senior citizens' lodges myself in 1985, Motion 205. So I really commend the Member for Vermilion-Viking for bringing this recommendation forward, and I certainly support it.

I'd like to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, how very important it is to have these lodges scattered throughout the province in the smaller centres. It makes it possible for senior citizens to remain an integral part of the family, and it allows the family to maintain the contact which is so very, very important to senior citizens. This contact is often lost when the elderly person is removed to a larger, more remote facility or centre. Continued family support, community support is as important to the mental

health and welfare of the senior citizen in many cases as the lodging and the food and other care that's provided.

Mr. Speaker, I might note that when the senior citizens' lodge program was established, I believe in 1958, the guidelines and philosophies were much different, and those guidelines and philosophies have not kept pace with the changing needs of the residents. I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, that when the original lodges were established the average age of the senior citizens in those lodges was around 64, and I believe that a lot of seniors were in the lodges at age 58. In 1974, 3 percent of the senior citizens in lodges were under the age of 65. 25 percent were between the ages of 65 and 74. 57 percent were 75 to 80, and 15 percent were over the age of 85. In 1978 another survey was done, and 2.5 percent were under 65, 18 percent were in the 65 to 74 age bracket, 48 percent were 75 to 84, and 32 percent were now over the age of 85. In that four-year period residents over 85 had jumped from 15 percent, and the total number of residents over 75 had moved from 72 percent to 80 percent. I know I went into a senior citizens' lodge in my constituency recently and there was only one person in that senior citizens' lodge who was under 75 years of age.

So certainly with the changes that we see in the senior citizen population in this province, we have to be prepared to make changes in the senior citizens' lodge program which will ensure that they do benefit those people who are residents.

In an article in the *Reader's Digest* that I picked up in 1985, it says:

Thanks to better health care, people are living longer. Already there are 950,000 aged over 75, and by the end of the century the number is expected to reach 1.5 million

people in Canada over the age of 75.

Some of the things that we might want to consider are the home care programs: make them available to the senior citizens' lodges. If senior citizens need a home care worker to bathe and change sheets and generally tend to the residents, maybe we should look at that, rather than sending them to a nursing home. It's not always in the best interests of the senior citizen, the family, or the taxpayer to move a senior citizen from a lodge situation to a nursing home situation.

Medication. I know that some senior citizens' lodge boards will not even allow the staff to remind residents to take their pills. So if they become forgetful -- and certainly at my age, Mr. Speaker, I would hate to rely in all cases on my memory for certain things. So I recognize that there may be a problem, and it doesn't seem to me to pose a major problem for the staff of a lodge to remind a senior citizen. We have in effect bubble packs and special programs where a druggist can set up the medication for the senior citizen so it's readily and easily available to the senior citizen and to the staff to remind them to take the pills, if that's what they need.

The one other aspect that I want to address as a major concern of mine is the atmosphere of the lodge. I believe the senior citizens' lodge is a home. It's very, very important that we consider it a home and that the staff and directors of the senior citizens' lodge ensure that the lodge is not just a facility but is really and truly a home for the senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, I certainly endorse the motion put forward by the member today, and I hope that members will support it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. Paul. No? A call for the question. [The House recessed at 5:21 p.m.]

[Motion carried]

