

The following electronic version is for informational purposes only.  
The printed version remains the official version.

---

**Official Report of**  
**DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**(Hansard)**

---

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 1975

Afternoon Sitting

[ [Page 2825](#) ]

**CONTENTS**

Liquor Control and Licensing Act (Bill 99). Hon. Mr. Macdonald.

Introduction and first reading — [2825](#)

Liquor Distribution Act (Bill 93). Hon. Mr. Macdonald.

Introduction and first reading — [2825](#)

Hospital Insurance Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 98). Hon. Mr. Cocke.

Introduction and first reading — [2825](#)

Oral Questions

Coal mine at Elkford. Mr. Bennett — [2825](#)

Casa Loma project. Mr. D.A. Anderson — [2825](#)

Provincial position on Senate marijuana hearings. Mr. Wallace — [2826](#)

Princess Marguerite accommodation. Mr. Smith — [2826](#)

Private affiliations of ICBC's Mr. Scrivener. Hon. Mr. Strachan answers — [2826](#)

Disclosure documents of defeated candidates. Mrs. Jordan — [2827](#)

Meeting with oil and gas company. Mr. McGeer — [2827](#)

Hotel tenant eviction. Mr. Gibson — [2827](#)

Increased costs for holly shipping. Mr. Curtis — [2828](#)

Senior Citizens Home Repair Assistance Act (Bill 42). Second reading.

Mrs. Jordan — [2829](#)

Mr. Speaker rules out of order — [2830](#)

Public Bodies Information Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 44). Second reading.

Mr. McClelland — [2830](#)

Pacific North Coast Native cooperative Loan Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 19).

Committee report and third reading — [2833](#)

Legal Professions Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 76). Committee stage.

On section 9.

Mr. Gibson — [2833](#)

Hon. Mr. Macdonald — [2833](#)

Report stage — [2833](#)

Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 29). Committee stage.

On section 5.

Hon. Mr. Barrett — [2834](#)

Report and third reading — 2834

Insurance Corporation of British Columbia Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 68).

Report stage — [2834](#)

Automobile Insurance Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 69). Committee stage.

Amendment to section 3. Hon. Mr. Strachan — [2834](#)

On section 3 as amended. Mr. Schroeder — [2834](#)

On section 8. Mr. Schroeder — [2835](#)

On section 9. Mr. Gibson — [2835](#)

On section 10. Mr. Wallace — [2836](#)

On section 11. Mr. Schroeder — [2837](#)

Report stage — [2837](#)

Personal Information Reporting Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 79).

Committee, report and third reading — [2837](#)

Trade Practices Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 88). Committee stage.

Amendment to section 2. Hon. Ms. Young — [2837](#)

Amendment to section 3. Hon. Ms. Young — [2837](#)

Report stage — [2838](#)

Hospital Amendment Act, 1975 (Bill 91). Committee stage.

On section 3. Mr. Wallace — [2838](#)

On section 8. Mr. Wallace — [2839](#)

On section 12. Mr. Chabot — [2839](#)

Report and third reading — [2841](#)

Committee of Supply: Department of Health estimates.

On vote 89. Mr. Phillips — [2841](#)

On vote 90. Mr. McClelland — [2844](#)

On vote 92. Mr. Fraser — [2845](#)

Department of Economic Development estimates.

On vote 34. Mr. Chabot — [2851](#)

Department of Labour estimates.

On vote 120. Mr. L.A. Williams — [2857](#)

---

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 1975

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers.

**MR. G.S. WALLACE (Oak Bay):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to welcome a good friend of mine seated in the Members' gallery, the former mayor of Duncan, Mr. Jim Quaife.

**MR. W.R. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to welcome Suzanne and Len Van Egmond from Sechelt. Mrs. Van Egmond is the new president of the Social Credit constituency of Mackenzie. I would like the House to give them a particularly warm welcome.

**HON. W.S. KING (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to welcome today visitors

from Revelstoke, Mr. and Mrs. Wes Ennis and Mr. Ennis' sister and brother-in-law, whose names I unfortunately forgot. They're from Burnaby and I would like to welcome them anyway.

**MR. C.S. GABELMANN (North Vancouver–Seymour):** Mr. Speaker, in the gallery this afternoon are a group of trade unionists from Vancouver, members of the graphic arts union. I would like the House to make them welcome.

**HON. D. BARRETT (Premier):** Although I have had no notice of it, it appears that there are a group of students from Coquitlam School District 43 in the gallery today.

### **Introduction of bills.**

## LIQUOR CONTROL AND LICENSING ACT

Hon. Mr. Macdonald presents a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Liquor Control and Licensing Act.

Bill 99 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

## LIQUOR DISTRIBUTION ACT

Hon. Mr. Macdonald presents a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Liquor Distribution Act.

Bill 93 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

## HOSPITAL INSURANCE

Hon. Mr. Cocke presents a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Hospital Insurance Amendment Act, 1975.

Bill 98 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

### **Oral questions.**

## COAL MINE AT ELKFORD

**MR. BENNETT:** To the Minister of Mines: with respect to a public meeting held at Fernie in which a representative of a German development consortium outlined its plans to spend \$200 million to develop an open pit and underground coal mine at Elkford, has the provincial government or the Minister's department been part of any discussion with this consortium?

**HON. L.T. NIMSICK (Minister of Mines and Petroleum Resources):** Yes.

**MR. BENNETT:** Supplemental to the Minister. Has there been any indication of what route would be taken to ship the coal to tidewater, in view of the statements made at the meeting that the majority of coal would go to European steel mills?

**HON. MR. NIMSICK:** No.

## CASA LOMA PROJECT

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON (Victoria):** I'd just like to congratulate the Minister of Mines for giving a classic example of how questions should be answered in this House. (Laughter.)

Could I ask the Minister of Housing whether any more funds have been advanced to the principals of Casa Loma Ltd., in addition to the original payment of \$565,000?

**HON. L. NICOLSON (Minister of Housing):** I'll take that as notice.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Could I ask the Minister, as he has taken that one on notice, whether he will also consider the question of the government's position in the Casa Loma matter in view of the lawsuit launched by a prominent bank and Casa Loma Ltd.? Is the Minister aware that, according to the contract, all work is required to have been completed by Saturday, May 31, 1975?

[ [Page 2826](#) ]

**HON. MR. NICOLSON:** I am aware that there is a prerogative which can be exercised by government. If we were not satisfied at that time, we could exercise rights. But nothing says that we have to.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Could I ask the Minister, if he is aware of this, if he intends to waive that Saturday May 31, 1975, date and allow work to continue after that?

**HON. MR. NICOLSON:** Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of waiving. We haven't at this time decided to exercise it.

## PROVINCIAL POSITION ON SENATE MARIJUANA HEARINGS

**MR. WALLACE:** Mr. Speaker, to the Attorney-General with regard to the hearings that have been held by the Senate committee regarding the legislation pertaining to marijuana: has the provincial government any intention of taking part in the hearings and a brief on this subject to the Senate committee?

**HON. A.B. MACDONALD (Attorney-General):** The provincial government did not intervene or present a brief.

**MR. WALLACE:** A supplementary. Is it the government's intention in the near future to present any position regarding the proposal to move marijuana offences from the Narcotic Control Act to the Food and Drug Act and, in general, to reduce penalties for marijuana offences, including automatic pardon for first offenders convicted of possession? Does the government have any position, and if it has any position — and I hope it has some position on this very important issue — does it intend to communicate that policy to federal authorities for their information prior to the amending of the federal legislation?

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** This is a matter of federal law.

**MR. WALLACE:** Oh, come on, Alex, don't dodge the issue.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** The matter now having been raised — we know it has been raised — we will take under consideration whether or not it is something on which it's appropriate for us to intervene. It is not something that has come up at a dominion-provincial conference between, say, the Minister of Justice and the A-Gs of the provinces. That matter has not been on the agenda. There have been Senate committee hearings, and the matter will be debated in Parliament. But we'll consider whether or not we should take a position.

**MR. WALLACE:** Well, can I take it from that, Mr. Speaker, that the Attorney-General is suggesting that the chief law enforcement officer in this province doesn't have some responsibility to communicate and discuss at the federal level issues of this importance to the whole society? Are you suggesting that? Could I ask that question, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. I think it is a bit argumentative and it's certainly beyond the jurisdiction of this Legislature to deal with that question.

## PRINCESS MARGUERITE ACCOMMODATION

**MR. D.E. SMITH (North Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, did Commodore Gorst — I mean the Member for Esquimalt — consult with you or seek your advice, considering the fact that we have Bill 90 on the order paper, intituled Free Public Toilets Act, before he circulated to the Members of the Legislative Assembly a memorandum dated May 29, indicating that staterooms will be available, if booked, to all MLAs on the inaugural run of the Princess Marguerite at a cost of \$8 with settee and basin, or for \$10 with settee, toilet and basin? (Laughter.) Is it the policy of the government to charge people \$2 before they even know if they may require the facilities?

**HON. D.G. COCKE (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, the rate was reduced by virtue of the fact that while in Canada the utilization of these facilities is free, as soon as you get across the 49th parallel.... (Laughter.)

Interjections.

**MR. SMITH:** Mr. Speaker, on a supplemental, then, I presume that the facilities will be available free on just the junkets around Victoria Harbour.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** They are presently free on the B.C. ferries, yes.

## PRIVATE AFFILIATIONS OF ICBC's MR. SCRIVENER

**HON. R.M. STRACHAN (Minister of Transport and Communications) :** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Member for Langley (Mr. McClelland) asked me a question about the affiliations of a Mr. Scrivener with certain companies elsewhere in Canada. I am informed that the list he referred to was compiled for the Insurance Corp. of British Columbia by the

[ [Page 2827](#) ]

Canadian independent adjusters conference around December, 1973, before Autoplan began operation.

Mr. Scrivener did not join ICBC until July 1, 1974. Immediately before that time, he had begun selling his interests in D.A. Scrivener Ltd., the parent company he owned in Regina, and also the associated companies, Scrivener, Countryman and Westman Ltd. In Calgary and Saskatoon.

The Regina firm's sale to a new company was completed by him before he arrived to take his post with the Insurance Corp. of British Columbia. Negotiations on the Calgary and Saskatoon partnership interests took longer, but they were completed within six months of his arrival in Vancouver with Mr. Countryman buying out Mr. Scrivener's shares. From that time, he has had no interest in any of those companies.

Mr. Scrivener's name also appeared, and may still appear, in the name of a fourth claims adjusting company operating in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, under the title of Scrivener, Countryman Ltd., but Scrivener himself never had, nor has now, any ownership in that firm. But at one time he had allowed his name to be used for a fee in the title of that particular company. So Mr. Scrivener has not any interest of any kind in any of those companies. That is the information I have.

## DISCLOSURE DOCUMENTS OF DEFEATED CANDIDATES

**MRS. P.J. JORDAN (North Okanagan):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Hon. Attorney-General. I am sure that he will recall the Public Officials and Employees Disclosure Act and the debate surrounding that Act when the Minister introduced it to the House, and the concern that was expressed by the opposition for people who ran for public office, disclosed before the election, were defeated and then asked to have their disclosure papers returned.

Could the Minister advise the House if there is anything in the Act at this time which would prohibit a body such as a school board or a municipal council from returning personal disclosures upon request when the candidate was defeated?

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** I do believe that public documents that were available to the public should be destroyed.

**MRS. JORDAN:** A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is aware that there are a number of cases around the province now and there are a number of requests from defeated candidates, including a Mr. Gordon P. Johnson of Vernon, who offered his services in a by-election for the school board of School District 22 in May, was defeated....

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is the Hon. Member asking a question.

**MRS. JORDAN:** I am asking the Minister if he will.... Excuse me, just wait until I get to my point. In this case, this gentleman has requested that his documents be returned to him. It has been denied. Upon appealing to the Attorney-General, he made clear that there was not provision at this time for the return, but it did not say that it inhibited the return. In light of the confusion over this, and an appeal of a public-spirited citizen, a publicly responsible citizen who offered his name in a by-election, would the Attorney-General entertain an amendment to this Act in this session to allow those to withdraw their documents?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. That would be out of order. The matter is out of order. The Hon. First Member for Vancouver–Point Grey, and patriotism is not needed.

## MEETING WITH OIL AND GAS COMPANY

**MR. P.L. McGEER (Vancouver–Point Grey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question for the Attorney-General and/or the Minister of Mines and Petroleum Resources with respect to the mysterious jet-setters who came in from Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas Co. referred to by the First Member for Victoria (Mr. Morrison) yesterday. At the meetings with these officials, were agreements entered into that would help to bring about normal drilling programmes in British Columbia next winter?

**HON. MR. NIMSICK:** No. (Laughter.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Hon. Member for North Vancouver–Capilano.

**MR. McGEER:** A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Hon. Member behind you would ask a supplementary, if permitted.

**MR. McGEER:** Does that mean that there will not be normal drilling programmes in northern British Columbia next winter?

**HON. MR. NIMSICK:** No! (Laughter.)

## HOTEL TENANT EVICTION

**MR. G.F. GIBSON (North Vancouver–Capilano):** A question to the Attorney-General, Mr. Speaker. Last

night there was shown on television some

[ [Page 2828](#) ]

footage of a fracas that ensued when a B.C. television crew was filming a room of a tenant in a Vancouver hotel who was not under the protection of the rentalsman. That was the subject of the story. There is some concern, as a result of the publicity that ensued, that this particular tenant may be evicted because of that. I would ask the Attorney-General if his department can take steps to prevent that or at least maintain a watching brief on that incident.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** The question of whether or not somebody who's a lodger in a hotel is a tenant or a licensee is a very difficult one. It may be that this particular person you refer to has tenancy rights or it may be that he is simply a licensee.

I would be very glad to refer this matter and to keep a watching brief. I don't think anybody should lose their home, even though it's a rented room, as a result of a fracas in front of television cameras.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Supplementary on the same. In view of the fact that the rentalsman's legal advisers have now informed him and he, in turn, has informed the Attorney-General that virtually no protection exists for the residents of skid road hotels due to the fact the Landlord and Tenant Act does not apply, could I ask the Attorney-General whether some interim steps are going to be taken to protect these people who at the present time are subjected to eviction as well as very severe rent increases, as landlords anticipate legislation to bring them under the Landlord and Tenant Act shortly in the future? I'd like to know whether there's any interim measure to protect these people at the present time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think it's a matter of a legal question that can only be answered in the statutes as they exist.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** The legal question is settled. They have no protection.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** No, not necessarily.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** But what I would like to know is whether the Attorney-General has any advice to give, any public information to give, so that unscrupulous landlords will not take advantage of this interim period to either evict or raise rents to exorbitant levels.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** It's a matter with which I am very much concerned. We try to keep up to date with it. Some of them may be covered by the Act, but the majority of people lodging in hotels are not covered by the Act. Whether or not the Act should be amended to expand it into that field, with the support of the Liberal Party of British Columbia, in terms of rent control and protection for these people is a matter of government policy.

Will you support the whole thing if we do that?

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** I will be happy to reply to the Attorney-General.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Can I not answer the question? Well, I will answer it privately later on.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Only where it relates to your own jurisdiction.

#### INCREASED COSTS FOR HOLLY SHIPPING

**MR. H.A. CURTIS (Saanich and the Islands):** To the Minister of Agriculture. Has the Minister received any complaints or requests from holly growers on Vancouver Island to approach his federal counterpart or any other federal agency regarding significant increases in the cost of shipping English holly off Vancouver Island — an

important industry, as the Minister knows?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Vancouver Island holly.

**HON. D.D. STUPICH (Minister of Agriculture):** The Ministry hasn't received any in over a year.

**MR. CURTIS:** I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan) was making so much noise I didn't hear the answer.

This matter has been raised very recently. The increases have taken effect again in the last few months.

**HON. MR. STUPICH:** The question was whether or not I had received any representations. I have not.

### **Presenting reports.**

Hon. Mr. Hall files the sixth report of the Royal Commission on Family and Children's Law.

Hon. Mr. Stupich files the 69th annual report of the Department of Agriculture for the year ending December 31, 1974, and the first annual report for the Provincial Land Commission for the year ending March 31, 1975.

### **Orders of the day.**

**HON. E.E. DAILLY (Minister of Education):** Mr. Speaker, public bills in the hands of private Members. Adjourned debate on second reading of Bill 12. I

[ [Page 2829](#) ]

don't know if the Hon. Member is here.

Looking through the adjourned debates on second reading, the Members listed in order here are not in the House. I wonder if we could have permission to move to second reading of public bills in the hands of private Members.

Leave granted.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Then we would move to second reading of Bill 42.

## SENIOR CITIZENS HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE ACT

**MRS. P.J. JORDAN (North Okanagan):** The purpose of this Act is in recognition of a very serious problem that senior citizens in British Columbia face today, that of the high cost of maintaining a home in light of the rising cost of living in terms of heating, lighting and taxes, from which there has been minimum relief from this government.

In any repair or maintenance done to a home by senior citizens, if it has to be done from outside, they face extremely high costs for the labour as well as high costs for the equipment needed. Such things as drainage pipes, shingles and repair of stairs are prohibitive to those who must live on a fixed income.

In companion with the practical problems faced by the senior citizen today is our philosophy, the Social Credit Party philosophy, that we should do everything as a society to create a climate in which senior citizens can remain in their own homes until such time as they choose to move. We do not agree, and we will strongly oppose, the concept that senior citizens should live in community housing, with relatives or in nursing homes for financial reasons. We feel that it's the responsibility of society to see that that type of unacceptable situation to the individual is not imposed upon them by the actions of society. This bill would be in keeping with our philosophy. If adopted by



this government that claims to be so concerned with the problems of the small people or the little people, it would show their good faith and be a very practical way of showing their concern for the senior citizens of our province.

There are many senior citizens, both those who are young senior citizens and those who get older, who want to live in their own homes above all else. Many physicians will tell you — I am sure the Hon. Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) will reinforce this statement — that older people sometimes suffer shocks which result in mental and physical deterioration if they are removed from familiar surroundings. This often happens if it's done voluntarily and it certainly is a very common reaction when the move is forced upon the individual. We don't feel that should happen.

The Minister of Finance knows and many Members of this Legislature know of case after case in British Columbia today where senior citizens, because of the high cost of land, because of the high cost of taxes which this government is doing nothing to alleviate in terms of a problem, because of school taxes — a commitment by this government to remove them has not been kept — because of the high cost of heating and power, because of the high cost of materials and because of the high cost of assistance, are being forced by the movements of society today out of their home. If the government would establish this grant system, it would be one small way, along with many other ways that we have previously suggested, that the government could meet a commitment to the senior citizens of this province and could show good faith that they, along with the Social Credit Party, believe that senior citizens should have the right to stay in their own home as long as they so desire.

There is another factor in terms of those who might have just enough money to get by but who may suffer from physical disabilities such as arthritis, blindness — general infirmities of old age — who have to have extra help in their home. This is an added cost which along with the upkeep of their homes makes it very difficult for them.

The most serious danger of all, if senior citizens stay in their homes without needing those repairs that any home requires, is that it can lead to personal injury. If stairs deteriorate and rot, and senior citizens fall down them because they can't afford to have them repaired, this often spells the beginning of the end. They break a leg or a hip; they don't heal; they become discouraged, and frequently death results not specifically from the injury but from the problems of the injury.

Wiring in a home, if it's not kept up to date, can cause serious personal injury to senior citizens. It can to anyone but more so to these people. Heaven help us that in British Columbia, in this wealthy, wealthy province, we should have senior citizens today living under leaky roofs. Mr. Speaker, there are senior citizens in this province today living in their own homes with leaky roofs because they can't afford to have them repaired.

I am sure we can all recall many other specific circumstances where senior citizens are suffering inconvenience, personal danger and possibly severe emotional trauma because of problems they are encountering in maintaining their own homes, I would urge, through you, Mr. Speaker, that the government accept this principle and accept this bill and offer a system of cash grants to senior citizens who have owned their homes for one year, if you wish, in order that they may use that money to maintain their homes in a state of proper repair, to protect their health, to protect them from injury and,

[ [Page 2830](#) ]

most of all, to protect them emotionally so that they do have the same choice that other younger people want to have — that is, the right to remain in their homes.

I'm looking at the Minister of Finance. Would he indicate a willingness to accept this principle?

Interjection.

**MRS. JORDAN:** I beg your pardon?

Interjection.

**MRS. JORDAN:** Well, the Minister of Finance says the bill is out of order. You know, Mr. Minister, I must say that your response to the plight of these senior citizens in British Columbia makes Snoopy look like a greyhound.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**MRS. JORDAN:** Stop hanging your hat on technicalities and accept the principle.

**MR. D. BARRETT (Premier):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to rule on the bill in terms of an impost of the Crown.

**MRS. JORDAN:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you wouldn't want to take directions from the Premier. The Premier doesn't have to accept the bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order!

**MRS. JORDAN:** The Minister of Finance can accept the principle.

[Mr. Speaker rises.]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please! Would the Hon. Member be seated, please?

I think it's quite inappropriate, when any Member stands on a point of order and makes a point of order, for another to suggest that because the Speaker pays attention to the point of order he's taking directions from any Member of the House. My directions come from the rules, and the rules very clearly are there to deal with points of order. Any Member in this House is entitled to raise a point of order on the rules.

I think the Hon. Member knows that this particular bill requires a grant to be made, as one of the primary sections of the bill. The Hon. Member has been in the House long enough, further, to know that such a bill would require the message and the sanction of the Lieutenant-Governor in order to be passed by this House or to proceed in this House.

Consequently, under our standing order 67 and also because of the constitution of this province, which incorporates the British North America Act as well, no bill or statute or measure shall be passed by the House without first having the assent of the Lieutenant-Governor by message to this House.

So under standing order 67 I have no recourse but to rule it out of order when a point of order is raised in the House.

[Mr. Speaker resumes his seat.]

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Second reading of Bill 44, Mr. Speaker.

## PUBLIC BODIES INFORMATION AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

**MR. R.H. McCLELLAND (Langley):** Mr. Speaker, on each day that passes and this government seems to want to get involved in more and more outside activities which are outside the sphere of what we have come to accept as normal government procedure, this bill becomes more important. The bill asks that many of the corporations and commissions and societies and agencies and branches and associations which have been formed under the direct auspices of the government come under the purview of the Public Bodies Financial Information Act.

There's not much doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that no other jurisdiction in Canada has ever been asked to pass so much legislation that in effect could leave the public open to having its pockets picked on behalf of government agencies — programmes that provide practically no checks or balances at all to these governmental

agency spending programmes, programmes, Mr. Speaker, that open the wallets of the taxpayer and, what perhaps is more important, take the responsibilities of scrutinizing the expenditure of public funds away from the elected legislators.

We saw what happened here earlier this year as there was an attempt to make it impossible for the opposition to scrutinize expenditures of the Ministers. Yet here we have all of these public bodies not really open to scrutiny by the elected representatives. Instead, the total spending authority has been placed either in the hands of the bodies themselves, in many instances, or the cabinet or even, in too many instances, an individual Minister. We feel that neither the government nor these agencies can be trusted with the kind of spending powers they're taking upon themselves. We also feel that the taxpayers of this province need to be protected from abuses of this kind of power.

Mr. Speaker, the government seems, in setting up many of these Crown corporations and other bodies, to be almost obsessed with allowing them to have, and allowing the cabinet to have, open-ended

[ [Page 2831](#) ]

financial powers. It is creating and has created an unbelievable list of public bodies, commissions and Acts of legislation, all of which seem to have the tendency to throw the concept of fiscal integrity right out the window. I don't know whether I could name them all, but our bill has been revised this year and we now go from A to Z, Mr. Speaker.

Even in some of the bills which would seem to be rather innocent in the beginning — the Medical Services Act, for instance.... You wouldn't think there'd be any opportunity for that Act to open up the vault doors and allow unlimited and abandoned spending. Yet we find that the provision has been made in this Act for any number of programmes, schemes, dreams with no accountability whatsoever to the Legislature.

If I could just refer to one section in that bill, Mr. Speaker, it says "...to provide financial or other assistance to any person establishing or administering a programme referred to in clause (a)." Now here's a section in a bill which is an open invitation, Mr. Speaker, to develop what could be a provincial LIP programme in all of the worst aspects of those kinds of programmes where we see various groups of people, or individuals or agencies, providing publicly funded services for which there is either no proven need or, in many instances, for which a programme is already being provided. And that is only one bill out of so many.

Most important, again there is no accountability in these provisions. A kind of sweeping financial discretion is evident again in the Farm Assurance Income Act, in which we should demand, again, that there be accountability of the money being spent through the provisions of that Act. The Agricultural Credit Act — again the government has the power to set up various forms of boards and agencies. They haven't done it yet, but certainly the power is in that Act, Mr. Speaker.

The same thing for the Land Commission Act. The insurance corporation — we've certainly seen a lot of examples of what kind of open-ended spending is going on in that corporation, with \$34 million in losses in its second year of operation. Controlled costs, you know.

The Department of Housing Act — the same kind of thing. The Department of Transport and Communications Act, under which I am sure, once it gets operative, we can expect a whole new ball game in the proliferation of bureaucracy.

The Energy Act, the development corporation, the takeover Act of Ocean Falls and Can-Cel, the Alcohol and Drug Commission Act, the British Columbia Cellulose Co. Act, the Petroleum Corp. Act — the Medical Centre I've mentioned — the Department of Mines and Petroleum Resources Act....

Besides those direct Acts of government, we also have the various companies which are now under the jurisdiction and umbrella of this government, like Plateau Mills, Vancouver Island Coach lines Co. Ltd., Pacific Poultry, South Peace Hydro Products, Woodbridge Development Corp., Kootenay Forest Products, "Pinko" Poultry — there could have been more but we ran out of letters in the alphabet, so we stopped at that.

But the point is that the people of British Columbia certainly have the right to demand that they have full accountability. The only place we could see that that full accountability could come is under the jurisdiction of the Public Bodies Financial Information Act which not only demands that these corporations and companies provide us with an annual statement, but also show exactly what expenses are being incurred by the company, who is getting the money, who is getting paid, who the employees are and what their salaries are. Those are things that the people of British Columbia have a right to demand, particularly with the proliferation of the kind of activity this government is getting itself involved in.

We have never in the history of this province seen such an incredible growth rate of government agencies, paid for from public funds, taxpayers' money, but not subject to the same kind of scrutiny that the people of this province should expect and demand.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of full accountability — and I know that the government will want to let the sun shine in, as they have indicated on so many other occasions — that I have presented this bill which is an Act to Amend the Public Bodies Information Act. I have no doubt that the government will, in the interests of fair play and honesty, show no hesitation in accepting its principle and adopting this bill.

**MR. G.S. WALLACE (Oak Bay):** Don't hold your breath.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** I would like to move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to ask a question of the Hon. Member for Langley, dealing with his bill. The wording is a bit uncertain when you read the words "formed under the authority of the...." Then it cites certain Acts — Farm Income Insurance Act, Medical Services Act, Agricultural Credit Act. But if you read further down, you get into some difficulty in understanding. It says: "...formed under the authority of the South Peace Hydro Products, formed under the authority of the Pacific Poultry, formed under the authority of the Kootenay Forest Products, and formed under the authority of the Panco Poultry," well, of course that doesn't read properly, does it? Would the Hon. Member like the

[ [Page 2832](#) ]

matter deferred until he could, perhaps, amend those sections?

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Well, I'd be happy to submit amendments, Mr. Speaker. It may be just a little difficult to read.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is not that. It's not only difficult to read, it would be out of order if it isn't comprehensible.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Oh, well, it's certainly comprehensible. "The Plateau Mills Co. Ltd." — what's wrong with that? I can understand it; I'm sure the people of British Columbia could understand it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is not a question of that.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** I think that's the important thing, Mr. Speaker. But yes, I would be happy to defer because if that's the only grounds....

**MR. SPEAKER:** No, there are other grounds. May I go on to the second....

**MR. McCLELLAND:** If you rule my bill out of order I think I have achieved some kind of record, and I would be glad to defer it....

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I go onto the second point? The second point I am trying to consider is: the Crown itself cannot have any burden or duty imposed on it by a private Member without authority from the Crown itself. That's one point.

The second thing is: an agency of the Crown, such as a Crown corporation or company that is owned by the Crown, similarly, cannot have a duty imposed on it, any more than can the Crown, according to our authorities here. So you get into this difficulty — are these all Crown agencies or corporations?

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Sure.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You are saying "sure." They are? I'm asking for the information from you.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** I thought I made it very clear that the agencies to which I refer, and the commissions and boards, are directly under the umbrella of the provincial government in one way or another.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to consider this. I would ask that any decision on this matter be deferred until I have had a chance to look at it more fully, because there are decisions of this House that would rule them out of order where.... Would the Hon. Member adjourn the debate on this, please?

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Yes. Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that the debate on this bill be adjourned until the next sitting of the House after today.

Motion approved.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that we proceed to committee on public bills and orders.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think the rule here is that on private Members' day, when you go into public bills and orders, you go through the list of public bills in the hands of private Members. I have several authorities that indicate that that is the rule unless there is some supervening priority precedence matter. The only precedence matter that we have would be estimates. So the question is whether the House wishes to proceed further on public bills in the hands of private Members or go on to public bills in the hands of government Members.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Question on the motion. I made a motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Shall leave be granted that we proceed to public bills in the hands of the government?

**MR. WALLACE:** It's already been denied.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You denied it? Okay, I just wanted to know. So we will have to continue with....

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** You cannot have a division on that motion?

**MR. SPEAKER:** No, it's a matter of leave. It's private Members' day.

Interjection.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, I asked for leave and it was denied.

Interjections.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I understood that there was some arrangement made, and I would like to know whether the agreement is being honoured or not.

**MR. WALLACE:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can clarify the situation. I, for one, have not been consulted about any arrangement with the Whips, and I was the person who said no when leave was asked to proceed further. But if I am the only one in the House opposed to the idea, I

would like to withdraw my opposition and grant leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Member.

Committee on Bill 19, Mr. Speaker. Then we will go on down the list.

### PACIFIC NORTH COAST NATIVE CO-OPERATIVE LOAN AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

The House in committee on Bill 19; Mr. Liden in the chair.

Sections 1 to 2A approved.

Title approved.

**HON. N. LEVI (Minister of Human Resources):** Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 19, Pacific North Coast Native Co-operative Loan Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete without amendment, read a third time and passed.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Mr. Speaker, I said that we would go in order but, as a couple of the Ministers had to slip out, I would like to move to Bill 76 until they return.

### LEGAL PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

The House in committee on Bill 76; Mr. Liden in the chair.

Sections 1 to 8 inclusive approved.

On section 9.

**MR. G.F. GIBSON (North Vancouver–Capilano):** I would just like to ask the Attorney-General why section 40 is being repealed.

Interjections.

**HON. A.B. MACDONALD (Attorney-General):** Do you want to come back to that section?

**MR. GIBSON:** Fine.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Do you have a point of order, Hon. Member for North Okanagan?

**MRS. JORDAN:** In regard to the section that the Hon. Member for North Vancouver–Capilano mentioned, I would suggest with all due respect to the Chair that this is a matter that the Attorney-General is prepared to answer. If he needs further information, we should recess the House until such time as he is prepared....

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** I think the Member agreed to get his answer later.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** It isn't that.

**MRS. JORDAN:** It's a matter of the House's business, not a Member's business.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** I think he agreed to get his answer later.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** Mr. Chairman, I'd be glad if the committee agrees to go back to section 9 to answer the question. This is to do with articulated clerks. In earlier sections of the Act, there is a change in name, and their duties are spelled out elsewhere in the Act and their obligations and so forth. The section just drops because it's no longer useful.

Sections 9 to 17 inclusive approved.

Title approved.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 76, Legal Professions Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete without amendment to be considered at the next sitting of the House after today.

**HON. MRS. DAILY:** Committee on Bill 29, Mr. Speaker.

## CORPORATION CAPITAL TAX AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

*(continued)*

The House in committee on Bill 29; Mr. Liden in the chair.

On section 5.

[ [Page 2834](#) ]

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Yesterday I was asked two questions related to this section. I'd like to inform the Member (Mr. Gibson) who asked me that additional revenues for the year 1975-76 will be \$1,500,000, the small businesses will save between \$750,000 to \$1 million, and the amendment eliminates 10,000 small businesses from paying taxes under this bill.

**MRS. JORDAN:** Why did you put those 10,000 businesses in a tax position in the first place?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** No comment.

Section 5 approved.

Title approved.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 29, Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete without amendment, read a third time and passed.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Mr. Speaker, committee on Bill 68.

### INSURANCE CORPORATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

The House in committee on Bill 68; Mr. Liden in the chair.

Section 1 and 2 approved.

Title approved.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 68, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete without amendment to be considered at the next sitting of the House after today.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Committee on Bill 69, Mr. Speaker.

### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

The House in committee on Bill 69; Mr. Liden in the chair.

Section 1 and 2 approved.

On section 3.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I move the amendment standing in my name on page 20 of orders of the day, amending section 3 of this bill.

Amendment approved.

On section 3 as amended.

**MR. H.W. SCHROEDER (Chilliwack):** On section 3 as amended, with the figures still remaining at \$250, is there anything in the amended section that will make it very clear that the amount of dollars to be recovered will be those dollars over \$250 without respect to the amount of damage done to the automobile? Let me explain what the question is. For instance, the practice in the past has been that if damage to an automobile — hit-and-run or parking lot damage — was over the limit, and the limit was \$200 before, then the corporation paid the entire amount. However, if the damage happened to be \$195, then the owner paid the entire amount. What is the plan going to be now under section 3 as amended?

[Mr. G.H. Anderson in the chair.]



**HON. R.M. STRACHAN (Minister of Transport and Communications):** First of all, the amendment was designed to make it very clear that the deductible did not apply to physical damage to the individual. There was a difference of opinion among lawyers, and one of them thought it might have applied to physical damage to the individual. The amendment is simply to make it clear that any limitation only applied to damage to the vehicle.

Section 3 as amended makes it very clear that the corporation will accept responsibility for the damage above the deductible, whatever the deductible happens to be. This is a vast improvement over the situation where there was a hit-and-run driver. Previously, there was absolutely no compensation if the hit-and-run driver had never been identified. It's a vast improvement, and this is simply clarifying it and rationalizing it and bringing it into a reasonable procedure.

[ [Page 2835](#) ]

Section 3 as amended approved.

Sections 4 to 7 inclusive approved.

On section 8.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** This is a question of the registration of the vehicle. Are we to understand after this amendment that the registration is going to be clearly separated from the issuance of licence? Up until now, the registration was a form which was carried usually in the motor vehicle, which was the paper licence. It was the form which represented not only the fact that the automobile was registered in some owner's name but it was in essence the indication of a licence to operate, in addition to the plates or the decal.

Is it clearly understood in the statutes now that this registration referred to in this section is not a licence to operate but is simply some list on some registry known otherwise than the registration before? Is it spelled out clearly? If not, then the concept first espoused by this Minister that said under this insurance plan that if there was no licence there would be no insurance, and if there was no insurance there would be no licence.... We need to be very, very sure that this registration does not refer to that licence.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** The registration is a certificate of proof of ownership of that vehicle. The licence plate and the decal and so on are proof that that car is entitled to be on the road. And that is the difference between the registration and the other factor. This allows us to maintain the registration and the other factor. This allows us to maintain the registration and the record of who owns that vehicle. Whether or not it should be on the road is entirely different legislation.

That is all this does. I can assure you that there is this separation.

Section 8 approved.

On section 9.

**MR. GIBSON:** Mr. Chairman, I want to express some concern about section 9, particularly part (b) of section 9. The purpose of this provision, I imagine, is to provide for payments in cases where equity demands such payments and where the regulations or rules of the corporation wouldn't otherwise make it possible. I imagine that is the intent. But the effect of the words also would allow the corporation to make payments in a way which could not be justified in cases where the corporation really might just be getting into a boondoggle and making considerable overpayments for one reason or another, I am not speculating that the present management of the corporation would do this or anything like it.

What I am suggesting is that there should be a check on this section by providing that any payments made under the authority of this section should be published in the *B.C. Gazette*. An amendment I would like to move would be adding to the end of subsection (b) the words "...and publishing notice of any action taken under this authority in the *B.C. Gazette*." Before moving that amendment, Mr. Chairman, I might say that I have some doubts

as to whether it is in order unless it is accepted by the Crown. To that end, I sent notice of this to the Minister two or three days ago, and he may perhaps have some view on that.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** The Member did send me a copy of this proposed amendment. I got to it this morning. I have asked for comment on it. I am not prepared to accept it at this time, but certainly I will consider its implications for future action. I am reluctant to accept an amendment without having fully checked it out. I have been through that once already and discovered it opened doors we hadn't realized it would open. On that basis, while rejecting the amendment, I can certainly assure the Member I will take a good look at it.

I have already indicated publicly many times that the reason for this section is to avoid the sort of situation that happened three years ago when the present Premier was ordered out of the House because of the iron-clad terms of a contract that did not allow an insurance company to follow through on natural justice. That was why, when we wrote the legislation, I insisted there be the right in there. Let me assure you it comes to the board of directors. It is not just an automatic thing; it comes to the board of directors and we stand behind any decision we make.

I will certainly examine your amendment. Although I don't accept it at this time, it doesn't mean I am turning it down.

**MR. WALLACE:** You're becoming very conservative, Bob.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I'm learning.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** In response to what the Hon. Minister said, will the Hon. Member withdraw the amendment?

**MR. GIBSON:** I will indeed. I appreciate what the Minister said and the consideration he has given this. I just ask him if he could clarify what he means by some future action. What kind of time frame does he have in mind?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** The next time there are a

[ [Page 2836](#) ]

series of housekeeping amendments coming up, I will certainly have a look at that one before that time.

Section 9 approved.

On section 10.

**MR. WALLACE:** Mr. Chairman, section 10 refers to an addition to section 46A and it deals with the corporation's capacity to write special policies, as it were, where the regulations don't seem to cover the policy applied for. In this addition for that kind of service, I would like information as well as to comment. The section reads: "...the corporation may prescribe the commissions to be paid to its agents as remuneration for their services to the corporation respecting insurance transactions conducted under this section."

First of all, I gather that section 46A provides for a rather unique kind of policy or a policy which differs in specific details from the general applications for the various classes of vehicles. Otherwise, why have this section in here in the first place? If that is the case, I would like to know how much might be involved by the agent in dealing with such a policy, drawing up a policy or amending it or whatever is involved. That would be my question.

My comment would be that this seems to give the arbitrary power to the corporation to tell the agent what he will get paid. For a government that believes in collective bargaining and the fact that there are two sides to every argument, I read into this amendment that the corporation shall tell the agent what he shall get for this service he renders in the drawing up of this particular type of policy.

I know the Minister has commented earlier on, and I think in second reading the Minister commented that of course it would be done after discussion with the agents. If past record is anything to go by, I am not so sure that the

agents would feel very happy with that kind of arrangement whereby they sit down and discuss it with the Minister and then the Minister tells them what their commission will be.

I would wonder if the Minister could answer these two points: how complicated might the service be, and to what degree is the agent going to have elbow room to really negotiate what the commission is worth?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** The Member made some general comments about relationships with the agents. He may not have been in the House the other day when I spoke on Bill 68 and read from the speech given by Mr. Hamilton, the president of the agents' association, at the meeting on May 5. If he was not in the House when I read that, then I suggest he check Hansard of two or three days ago, when they outlined their attitude towards ICBC and what has happened.

There were and have been discussions between the agents and the corporation. We have an individual contract with each agent. Despite that contract, we have on three or four different occasions, after discussion, even added and increased the amount of money that was being paid to the agents for different kinds of work. Every company has the right to determine what salaries and/or commission it will pay its agents. It is naturally and can be subject to negotiation.

The explanatory notes that I asked for, and which are indicated briefly here: "...that the need for this flexibility in the handling of the multi-faceted aspects of commercial and industrial automobile insurance lines indicates the desirability of having this flexibility."

Some of the vehicles are very, very expensive vehicles, and there is the examination of them. Some of them are fairly straightforward, even though they are very expensive. Yet there is such a variety of vehicles it is almost impossible to classify every single instance. So this is to give the flexibility to make a fair commission without, at the same time, forcing the corporation to pay what would be, in essence, an exorbitant amount of money for the time taken to do a particular job because of the value of the vehicle, an extremely high value in some of these vehicles. It's a two-way thing.

**MR. WALLACE:** Could I just ask the Minister if in preparing this amendment he discussed the matter with the agents? Are the agents or the representatives happy with the wording of this amendment? Putting it another way, has he had any complaints as to the amount of discretion to the corporation, which this amendment appears to allow, in the setting of the commission?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I have had no complaints from the agents about the vehicles that are referred to.

**MR. WALLACE:** No, not the vehicles.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Nor on the commission paid on the vehicles referred to.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Perhaps this entire section would be more acceptable to the agents if, rather than the word "prescribed" the word "negotiate" were there. It would not only leave the door open to negotiation, but it would also present a far more flexible attitude on the part of the corporation — "negotiate" the commissions to be paid. Not only would it give it a better face as of right now, but it would not have to be changed, then, a little later on if and when agents happen to be certified as a bargaining unit, and an amendment would have to

[ [Page 2837](#) ]

come in at the time.

Would the Minister consider an amendment that would use the word "negotiate" rather than "prescribe"?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** If the agents ever get themselves into that position, then there are a whole variety of things that would have to be changed. If that situation comes about, then I'll look at your suggestion. A whole variety of situations would have to change before the agents could be in that position.

Section 10 approved.

On section 11.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Could the Minister tell us whether or not any payments payable under the Traffic Victims Indemnity Fund and the responsibility assumed by the corporation has been made? Have any of these payments been made to date?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Yes, quite a number have been paid. Some of them are in the process of being certified and checked out in accordance with the responsibility which I voluntarily accepted by introducing the legislation I did last fall. I think about one-third of the claims have been paid and the others are on the way. That's the information I had about a month ago.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Could we have the date of the first payment?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I would have to check that out, but I'll get it for you.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** You don't have it right there?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** No, I haven't.

Section 11 approved.

Sections 12 and 13 approved.

Title approved.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report the bill complete with amendment.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 69, Automobile Insurance Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete with amendments to be considered at the next sitting of the House after today.

**HON. D.G. COCKE (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, committee on Bill 79, please.

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION REPORTING AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

The House in committee on Bill 79; Mr. G.H. Anderson in the chair.

Sections 1 to 7 inclusive approved.

Title approved.

**HON. P.F. YOUNG (Minister of Consumer Services):** Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 79, Personal Information Reporting Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete without amendment, read

a third time and passed.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Committee on Bill 88, Mr. Speaker.

## TRADE PRACTICES AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

The House-in Committee on Bill 88; Mr. G.H. Anderson in the chair.

Section 1 approved.

On section 2.

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** Mr. Chairman, I move the amendment standing under my name on the order paper.  
(See appendix.)

Amendment approved.

Section 2 as amended approved.

On section 3.

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** Mr. Chairman, I move the amendment standing under my name on the order paper.  
(See appendix.)

Amendment approved.

Section 3 as amended approved.

[ [Page 2838](#) ]

Sections 4 to 15 inclusive approved.

Title approved.

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise and report the bill complete with amendments.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 88, Trade Practices Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete with amendments to be considered at the next sitting of the House after today.

**MRS. JORDAN:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I realize that it's unusual, but I was out of the House doing a radio interview just outside in the corridor when Bill 79 was called. The Hon. House Leader is aware that I have amendments on the order paper. It has been a little difficult this afternoon because the House Leader, with the consent of the House, has been jumping around in calling the bills owing to certain Ministers being out of the House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are you referring to a bill that's been already passed?

**MRS. JORDAN:** Yes, Bill 79, and I wonder if the Minister ....

**MR. SPEAKER:** I don't think it would be regular once it has been proclaimed by the Speaker as having been passed as an Act. I don't think we can then march backwards. It would be different if an order could be discharged, but we have gone past that stage to the point that it is an Act of the Legislature at this moment.

**MRS. JORDAN:** I appreciate your ruling and I accept it. But I must express disappointment that the House Leader would move in this direction when, with the consent of the House, we have been allowing her to call bills out of order owing to Ministers being out of the House at various times. I had no idea she was calling it at that moment. I was only out about three minutes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is regrettable, but nothing can be done about it.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** That's what I say. I have no objections, but if it can't be done according to the rules of the House, I guess we can't. But I have no objection if there were a way to have it done.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I am afraid it can't, because it is not the same as asking leave of the House to discharge an order. It's gone beyond that. We have actually proclaimed it as having been enacted, and all it requires now is the consent of the Lieutenant-Governor.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Committee on Bill 91.

## HOSPITAL AMENDMENT ACT, 1975

The House in committee on Bill 91; Mr. G.H. Anderson in the chair.

Sections 1 and 2 approved.

On section 3.

**MR. WALLACE:** Just a brief comment. I think this is a good attempt in this section to define personal care. One of the problems we are getting into more and more is the multiplicity of terms that are being used to describe levels of care. Since it is extremely important that we get the idea across to the community, and certainly to everybody involved in the health field, that there are indeed levels of care which require greater or lesser degrees of skilled professional involvement, the sooner we do that the better.

The Minister is preoccupied at the moment. I just wanted to ask him a question regarding the new definition in section 3. It's very obvious — or at least I think it's obvious — if you read it word for word that there is a great effort there to exclude any suggestion of medical or nursing care in the terms "non-professional care and supervision" and "a planned programme of social and recreational activities." I just wanted to be clear in my own mind that in this definition the Minister is making it very clear that we are referring to people who in no way, shape or form require nursing or physician care regardless of where it's provided. I'm trying to clarify what you mean by "personal care," especially when we have already discussed a big segment of intermediate care of which this really is a part. I wonder if the Minister could either confirm or correct me in my understanding that this definition is specifically put in here in these words so as to relate it to a person who requires neither nursing nor physician care.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, as you know, some time ago we delineated the levels of care. What we wanted to do was make sure that there is no misunderstanding. The Member for Oak Bay has it quite right; the personal-care level does not require any form of medical or nursing care on an ongoing basis. Mr. Member, you're a doctor. But aside from that, it's to make sure that they are sorted out.

[ [Page 2839](#) ]

The next level of care up is intermediate care. That's an additional level of chronic care that we have discussed many times in this House. Then, of course, comes extended care, rehabilitation, acute care and so on. So just to make sure that there is no misunderstanding, I think it was time that it was in the Act and properly designated.

Section 3 approved.

Sections 4 to 7 inclusive approved.

On section 8.

**MR. WALLACE:** Just a brief comment. I can see the purpose in this. The section says that an apparently dead person shall not be removed from a licensed hospital until a medical practitioner has certified that the person is actually dead. I just would like to make the passing comment that while I see the obvious wisdom in this, I hope the legislation is not interpreted by some hospitals that the apparently dead person shall be examined forthwith by the physician to certify that the person is dead. I've certainly been phoned in the middle hours of the night by private hospitals where the deceased person was known to be on the verge of eternity and they wanted me to go and certify at 3:30 in the morning that the patient finally expired.

I think that while it certainly doesn't imply in this section that it should be forthwith, I wonder if the Minister would consider whether some instructions to hospitals or regulations or otherwise could just clarify the point that it doesn't necessarily mean that a medical practitioner the very next minute, regardless of whether it's day or night, should immediately abandon what he is doing to go and clarify that the apparently dead person is really dead.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, the reason I introduced this particular section was that it was brought to our attention that a deceased body was turned over to an undertaker prior to a certification of death by a medical practitioner. As far as I'm concerned, that's not good enough. I'm not suggesting what time the doctor should be called or who should call him or whatever, but that person should not be removed and turned over to an undertaker until such time as there is that kind of proper declaration. So it's now in the Act and that's it.

We can work towards seeing to it that sense, not nonsense, is done around it. But we have to have this section in the Act for that purpose.

**MR. WALLACE:** Yes, I couldn't agree more. I just wanted to make the point that the principle the Minister is espousing is sound; I am sure all the medical profession would say that. But I hope the Minister in his capacity, not necessarily by amendment or even by regulation, could perhaps circulate to the hospitals that this is not intended to be some authority to hospitals in a pre-emptory way to demand that a physician immediately go and certify that some.... It might be necessary to go immediately, but in some cases, particularly with the chronic hospitals, it is not necessary. Physicians have enough demands on their time and interruptions of their sleep that it seems to me unreasonable that that interpretation might be placed on the amendment by the hospitals.

Section 8 approved.

Sections 9 to 11 inclusive approved.

On section 12.

**MR. J.R. CHABOT (Columbia River):** Section 12 appears to me, from my cursory examination, to substantially strengthen the position of the public administrator in the management of a hospital that encounters, or runs into certain difficulties. I'm wondering if the necessity of changing section 44 of the former Act to suggest "notwithstanding the Societies Act, and the Companies Act or any other Act," is caused by the difficulties that has been experienced by the hospital board in the community of Fernie.

I notice this morning, when reading the latest orders-in-council, that there has been a re-appointment of the public administrator, Mr. Howard, to administer the affairs of the Fernie Memorial Hospital Society. His appointment has been ongoing for some considerable period of time, and I'm wondering what really is causing the difficulty in that community.

I have been approached by members of the board of that hospital, as well as the chairman, who have recounted to me very strange activities taking place in the hospital, which I am not about to relate at length at this time. It's my understanding from meeting with these people, and from their background, that the people who resigned from the hospital board were very concerned, community-oriented people.

[Mr. Dent in the chair.]

In fact, the chairman was decorated by the Governor-General of this country with the Order of Canada for his activity in community affairs over the years. This honour was bestowed upon him for his great contribution, and now he finds himself in a conflict situation where he's been forced to resign as chairman of the hospital board in Fernie. He didn't do this lightly; it wasn't done lightly. It was a conflict

[ [Page 2840](#) ]

between the administrator and the board, and four or five of the hospital members have resigned over this problem. We notice now that the problem is ongoing. There have been notices placed in the newspapers in the community of Fernie by a nominating committee and Mr. Howard, the public administrator of the hospital. In fact, a recent letter has been sent to the Minister regarding the powers of the public administrator in that community, which should be read into the record. It was dated May 12, in Fernie. It says:

"To the Hon. Minister of Health:

"Please find enclosed notices from the *Free Press*, May 7 edition. As you must be well aware, there has been much controversy with regard to the Fernie Memorial Hospital. We, the hospital society members, are now faced with a new and interesting situation: a nominating committee. We are asked to offer names to a group of people whose function, it seems, is to sort the wheat from the chaff and present only those names they deem suitable. By whom are these people who may stand for election judged? Where did this nominating committee come from? There's no indication in the ad, which I have before me, of who this nominating committee is.

"The issue of the resigned members was cut-and-dried out of Victoria before they were done the courtesy of an interview. Is this the last step to the final coat of whitewash? I personally resent the patronizing and arrogant attitude this government has adopted. If this is indeed not the case, kindly correct my impression.

"Yours truly, Mrs. Tremmie Yourchek."

Now Mrs. Yourchek was a former member of the hospital board in the community of Fernie. The government representative, as well, has resigned from the board.

This is all that the former members have been asking for: they've been asking that the Minister concern himself with the problems surrounding the hospital that are being experienced in that community. They've asked for a public inquiry, and that public inquiry has not been forthcoming. That's all they ask. They want their names cleared — people who've made a great contribution to the community of Fernie and other communities before. I think the Minister, if he has any reports on his investigation of the problems surrounding the administration of that hospital, has a responsibility to these people who have offered their services over the years on that hospital society, and to give them the benefit of the findings of any public inquiry that might have taken place.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, I have to say that I'm nothing less than shocked at that kind of speech. I would suggest, in the first place.... Let's just take the first premise.

**MR. CHABOT:** Stay with the facts as I told them to you.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Let's take the first premise that the Member for Columbia River came up with. He said, for instance, that the new subsection is tougher. Let me tell you about the new subsection. You know what it says? It says that the public administrator may be given complete control over a hospital society. The old subsection said it was mandatory. What we're trying to do is make the kinds of transition situations available.

**MR. CHABOT:** Notwithstanding the Societies Act and the Companies Act.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** What are we doing now, Mr. Chairman, in Fernie? A hospital board quit. A hospital board resigned. Fortunately, we had this section in the Act, which needed some improvement in wording. If the Member was here yesterday, it was fully discussed. But we've improved the wording and provided a transition from the administrator back to the society.



The Member said: "Who is this sinister nominating committee?"

**MR. CHABOT:** I used the word "sinister"?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Yes. Well — "Who is this nominating committee?" I'll try to use your kind of expression. The local hospital society in Fernie elect a nominating committee who in their own town nominate members for the board.

We hope that they can get back. We haven't manpower enough to be running hospitals around this province in BCHIS. Mr. Howard is needed elsewhere. But, Mr. Chairman, when a hospital board resigns, when they're having personality problems and other problems, then it's necessary that someone run that hospital. It's been run by Mr. Howard for the last few months. Now we have passed an order-in-council making a transition back to the hospital board, once it's elected. Pure and simple.

**MR. CHABOT:** Mr. Chairman, just a few words regarding the Minister's statement. This nominating committee — and I'm not going to use the word "sinister"; that's not my type of language. I don't use those kind of inflammatory statements. But certainly I put some emphasis on this nominating committee.

Why is it necessary to have a nominating committee to personally select those people they feel — "desirable", might it be? — to be members of the

[ [Page 2841](#) ]

hospital board, to stand for the hospital board? Why can't there be elections held by the members in good standing of that hospital society, as is done everywhere else in the province? That's the way they're done.

One other question which I put to the Minister and which he hasn't responded to was the fact that the former members of the hospital board of that community, including your nominee and political sympathizer, had resigned in disgust. Now what's taken place in that hospital? Certainly there is justification for some kind of an inquiry. Why can't there be a public inquiry relating to the problems being experienced in that community surrounding that hospital?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Well, Mr. Chairman, that knowledgeable Member for Columbia River says that nominating committees are unique or rare. I have yet to encounter a hospital in this province whose society does not have a nominating committee. Now if you've got one in Golden or Invermere, that's rare; not this particular method.

Interjection.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** All right. Then in that case, why are you speaking so frivolously? Because it does not occur that way.

**MR. CHABOT:** Oh, come on.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** It occurs that hospital societies have nominating committees who go out and find out from among their members who is willing to stand. A rather usual procedure. So that's taken care of.

As far as the hospital was concerned, we sent our administrator, one of our first-rate administrators from BCHIS. He informed us there was no need for an inquiry. The major problem in that hospital was a personality problem. Therefore it would iron itself out as people got to know the facts better. Now, I don't understand that there is any problem with respect to patient care. As Minister of Health that's my job: to see to it that patients get the best of care that the system can provide. My understanding is, from an old-time member of the B.C. hospital insurance group, that that hospital is providing good patient care.

It's up to the society to put themselves together in such a way that they can come back and run that hospital in the way it should be run — not with spite but with proper dedication to the delivery of health care.

**MR. CHABOT:** One further question, Mr. Chairman. The Minister said he's received a report from the public administrator that recommends no public inquiry. On the basis of that report, is the Minister going to deny the request of the former members of the hospital board from having this inquiry which they have been requesting for some considerable period of time?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Yes.

Section 12 approved.

Title approved.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Bill 91, Hospital Amendment Act, 1975, reported complete without amendment, read a third time and passed.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** I ask leave of the House to permit debate in Committee of Supply for this afternoon's sitting.

Leave granted.

The House in Committee of Supply; Mr. Dent in the chair.

## ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*(continued)*

On vote 89: community services, \$4,375,734.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** I recognize the Hon. Member for South Peace River. Are you just sorting your mail or are you going to speak?

**MR. D.M. PHILLIPS (South Peace River):** No, I am trying to find some notes that I had here. Things move rather swiftly in the House for a change. I certainly don't want to change that, Mr. Chairman, but I just want to ask the Minister of Health a couple of questions.

He informed me this morning, if I heard him correctly — I am sure I did but I would like the Minister to inform me if I didn't hear him correctly — that there is no problem with funds for mental health care. The problem was to get personnel. I'll just sit down and let the Minister inform me if I am right.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, I understand all the positions in the unit are filled, The funding

[ [Page 2842](#) ]

that you find there is just for that number of people. In the past, there has been a problem with respect to manpower, and that's it. That funding that you see is just for that number of people.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister informed me the budget was cut down from \$137,142, which was to include payments for existing staff and an increase in staff of one clinical psychologist with a PhD, two psychiatric social workers and four psychiatric nurses. The budget was cut down from \$137,142 to \$72,896. I ask the Minister why the budget was cut down. There again, I believe I heard the Minister say correctly that the budget was cut down because personnel were not available to fill these positions.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** In general, yes.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Is that the case? Why did you cut the budget down?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, obviously you have picked up a budget request from a particular area. That is the budget at this point. You say it is cut down. That is not to say that we haven't flexibility within this vote to increase it. But I am not going to debate here a policy that is going on between the mental health branch and one of its community health centres.

I say that, generally speaking, in the northern areas, there has been a difficulty in acquiring manpower. I suggested this morning that the likelihood is that it was recognized that staff wouldn't be available in any event to match the requests from that particular community mental health centre. But then I went on to say that we are looking at ways of dealing with the north through using various alternatives. I just didn't want to suggest what those were at the present time because, after all, I don't want any of the alternatives to disappear from under my feet.

But, in any event, that is the number of staff who are last year's complement with the increases in salary.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Maybe I can help the Minister because Dr. DeWitt, the psychiatrist in the area, has made contacts. I have the names of two persons who have their PhDs in clinical psychology who are willing to work in this area. This is why I am so concerned about this. The situation is critical in that area, very critical. I have correspondence here on the recent death of a woman with four children strictly because she didn't have sufficient health. It was a suicide. These situations are cropping up.

All I am saying to the Minister is, if it is a case of money, that is one thing. But here are two people, one from Richmond and the other from Kodiak, Alaska, both of whom have their PhDs in clinical psychology. They are available and they will go to that area to work.

I would be quite happy to supply this information to the Minister if he will give me his assurance that he will take a look at this budget, because the situation is really critical up there.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, I certainly would give that kind of commitment, and I would have given that commitment had the Member approached me personally in my office or in the hall at some time or another on this question.

It is very difficult for me to stand here in this House.... As you know, we have well over 5,000 people in the mental health service. It's very difficult just to be able to pull out of a hat numbers for specific areas. I haven't even heard, nor has my senior Deputy, of this particular situation and that availability of staff. So I would be only too happy to discuss it with you.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I appreciate this. I did bring it up once before under your salary vote, and you said it was a situation.... This information...well, I won't say it just arrived, but it did get misplaced on my desk. I'll certainly supply you with the information, and I appreciate you making that commitment — I don't want to be critical. As I say, I am concerned about what's happening there. All I want to do is see that the situation is alleviated. I'm not, by any stretch of the imagination, Mr. Minister, trying to make political hay out of this very, very critical situation. I will certainly provide you with the information. I appreciate your frank comments.

**MR. CHABOT:** Just one brief question on a matter I raised before with the Minister regarding the mental health services being provided to the community of Revelstoke and the community of Golden.

Now it was my understanding from correspondence from the administrator of the Queen Victoria Hospital in the community of Revelstoke that there had been severe restrictions, that no longer were the mental health workers travelling into that community to provide the services. Whether this was a misunderstanding I don't know, but it was his understanding that it was because of budgetary restrictions, that it no longer was possible to provide this service.

Just a few moments ago the Minister suggested that there were ample dollars to provide services; it was just a

matter of being able to engage professional personnel. The Minister did, after some considerable time, reply to the administrator of the hospital suggesting that the Vernon Mental Health Centre

[ [Page 2843](#) ]

would reinstate the services to the community of Revelstoke, and that they would travel again.

I'm wondering if the cause of the cutback of those services to the community of Revelstoke and Golden was really budgetary problems in the department, because the Minister has given us a clear indication that there are no budgetary problems in the field of mental health.

**MR. WALLACE:** Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, I did raise the same kind of problem in the Skeena riding, specifically in the City of Kitimat. I wonder if the Minister could tell us whether advertisements are appearing in the journals of an increased complement in terms of psychiatric social workers or psychiatrists or that kind of personnel, because I think the opposition Members are still not certain as to whether there is a complement agreed to as to the kind of skilled personnel required but unavailable, and that simply because you may need five personnel and you can only get three, you set the budget for three. That makes a lot of sense, but we are concerned over here that something is being done in a positive way to get the personnel that are required. I wonder to what degree the Minister or the department concerned has advertised and failed to find the personnel.

The people up there in Skeena are like the people, I guess, in Peace River. They are very anxious to know if it is money or lack of personnel. If the personnel can be found, will the Minister provide the salaries?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, naturally there is a last-dollar syndrome in everything we do, and certainly this is a very important area. But let me tell you about some of the advertising that's gone on over the years. There's been a great deal for the type of people you described.

Now I remember the last time I was in the Peace River, up in that country represented by the Hon. Member (Mr. Phillips) that spoke just before the Member for Columbia River (Mr. Chabot). At the time I went up there they were anxious and very angry that there had been advertising in some publications for mental health personnel, but not for their area. So I came wildly back to the capital city of B.C. and asked some of my chaps: "How come that happened?" They said: "Well, we gave up because we keep advertising for them and we are just not getting them." That's probably a value judgment, may the quality be good, bad or indifferent. That's for you to judge.

But the fact of the matter is that they were at that time having real difficulty in securing staff to go to that particular area. That is why it surprised me when I heard this other information.

Revelstoke? Mr. Chairman, we are looking at that whole question. We did ask that the service be restored to the area — that is, the team service that had gone back to the Vernon area — but now we are looking at the whole question from the hospital base. The Minister of Labour (Hon. Mr. King) has leaned on me a good deal and so has the Member for Shuswap (Mr. Lewis) about this whole question.

Interjections.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** We are responding to that request positively, I hope.

**MR. CHABOT:** Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to see the Minister of Labour interject to make sure that he got a little bit of credit for what has not taken place in the Revelstoke area, as well as helping out my little friend from Shuswap.

I have again recently received communication from the community of Revelstoke regarding the spotty and sketchy type of service that has been given to that community. I'm not going to read the letter, but there is concern. The nub of the letter is that they're hoping that it will be possible for the Minister, under the provisions of this vote, to establish a unit within the community of Revelstoke to service the surrounding area without having to go all the way to Vernon. You can imagine how someone from Golden can ever get to Vernon in the winter months — going

through the Rogers Pass, and the hazards of driving that road — Vernon is about 165 or 170 miles away. So people who need care when these services are cut back and they have to drive to Vernon, certainly aren't going to drive that distance in the winter months.

What I want to know, really, is if the Minister is giving consideration to the establishment of a unit in the community of Revelstoke to service the area south of Revelstoke, immediately west to take in the community of Salmon Arm and immediately east to take in the community of Golden. Is that being considered? I think it's a logical solution to the problem that that particular area of the province is facing.

**MR. A.V. FRASER (Cariboo):** The Minister of Labour should be making that speech. What's the matter with you?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Labour has made that speech, and much better speeches.

Presently we are looking at the whole question of the travelling group. We are not second-guessing. What we are looking at are the requests that have come in from the area — the hospital base request and also the request to beef up the travelling group.

You talk about the Rogers Pass. A person has to come across the Rogers Pass to go from Golden to

[ [Page 2844](#) ]

Revelstoke — that same kind of hazardous drive. Mainly what we're dealing with here are mental health teams that go out into those communities, not patients coming in to see them.

**MR. CHABOT:** I agree. If they go from Vernon to Golden, they're not likely to go — it's too far in the winter months.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Right. But in any event, ultimately our objective, of course, is to have community mental health programmes in all good-sized communities and in all districts where we can have a good central core and move people around those districts.

Vote 89 approved.

On vote 90: in-patient care, \$41,585,681.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a brief comment and ask a question of the Minister to do with the concerns expressed in the annual report of the branch. It was most adequately pointed out that there is a staff shortage at Riverview Hospital. Some time ago there were comments by the British Columbia Medical Association that the dispute, between the government and the salaried physicians may have been at least a partial cause of the shortage at Riverview, and the reason why the government wasn't able to attract psychiatrists to come to work at Riverview. Since the Minister has indicated that there will be a settlement in the next day or two, or in a matter of days, at least, does he expect that that settlement might, in fact, relieve the situation at Riverview? Are there any other contingency plans to alleviate that shortage which was detailed in the annual report?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, there have traditionally been staff shortages at Riverview. It's far, far more attractive for a lot of doctors and other health workers to work in the community than to work in a large institution.

Just let me say that historically the patient population in Riverview has gone down from 2,260 or thereabouts, almost 2,300, to 1,600 in the last three years. At the same time while we've gone down in patient population from 2,300 to 1,600, our staff complement has gone up from 1,800 to 2,200. So, really, the complement of staff as to the staff-patient ratio has improved vastly. I just hope, however, that we can continue with the community mental health services and get the bulk of the people back where they belong in their own communities being served by the

community support service.

**MR. WALLACE:** Mr. Chairman, the whole concept of mental health care and de-emphasizing treatment within an institution is very sound — we would certainly support the Minister's efforts in that direction.

However, I wonder if the Minister couldn't give us some more specific detail as to expediting the process. Since all patients will not be able to leave Riverview, could we not have some assurance that some of the very unsatisfactory circumstances, to say the least, should be upgraded?

I gather that even the Premier is well aware of the problem. He suggested during his trip in Japan, perhaps in an off-the-cuff moment — which he might now regret, I don't know — to one of the television cameramen or interviewers travelling with him that if he really wanted to investigate social need, he should go to Riverview. I guess the interviewer has done just that. I missed the programme, but I understand it is being shown again tonight at 7:30. I am just giving the programme a little plug for those who are interested. I would like to see it.

I took the trouble to go through Riverview myself earlier on this year with every cooperation from the Minister's department — I want to make that plain; there was no suggestion at all that I shouldn't go.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** And so did the television.

**MR. WALLACE:** And so did the television people. So I am not trying to make political points.

As the Minister said, there is a last dollar somewhere. But, Mr. Chairman, the large wards at Riverview are such that if you don't have a mental problem when you get into them, you certainly would have one before very long. It makes some of the barracks rooms in World War I look like the Hilton Hotel. The beds are just really camp beds and they are very close together. The only personal kind of effects the patient seems to have is a tall, narrow...I suppose it is a wardrobe. The room is bare and austere. I know they don't spend all their hours in that particular room.

But seriously, Mr. Chairman, and without trying to make a great big deal out of it, I just say that while it is very productive and positive to get people out of these big institutions and treat them in the community — I completely agree with that — some unfortunate souls are going to stay in Riverview or some other kind of institution, unfortunately. To put them in that kind of place at night to sleep really is anti-therapeutic. Any good you might be doing during the day, if I were a patient in there, would sadly be undermined and neutralized in having to be accommodated in these large, barn-like wards with such spare fittings and furniture and so on.

Within these kinds of general limitations, I wonder whether the Minister has any plan to even subdivide some of these big rooms, make them a little more

[ [Page 2845](#) ]

homelike or improve the furnishings or put in better beds. When you compare these beds, for example, to the super-duper beds in the Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, it is like comparing, I don't know, a three-wheeler bike to a Cadillac, that sort of idea. Again, I am not saying we shouldn't have these top-quality beds in the acute-care hospitals, but I am saying there is such a vast difference between the situation in some of these large wards in Riverview compared to what we are providing for people in other hospitals.

I am just making the point that I know the money is not endless, but there is a certain amount of money, and there are some terrible gaps and inequities, depending upon what your level of illness is and where you are being looked after. I just wonder if we couldn't shift the money around and perhaps be less generous in some areas in order that we can make life a little more reasonable and comfortable and with a little hope for the patients in Riverview.

The last question I would really ask is: what is the ultimate goal of the Minister in his planning for the ultimate fate of Riverview? Is it intended to keep reducing the population as much as practical and reasonable, but acknowledging that there are a certain number of patients who require care in an institution and probably always

will? Or does he have plans for an alternative, more modern and more therapeutic atmosphere which, as I say, could be done, I think, either through smaller units in the same setting or at least one smaller unit? Or, in fact, are we going to renovate or modify Riverview as it now exists?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** One of the problems we have with the whole Riverview situation is that that place was built to last. It is so very difficult to renovate.

**MR. WALLACE:** It would make a good museum.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Yes, it would probably make a number of museums, it is so big and there are so many buildings out there. We are not trying to hide anything, Mr. Member. I acknowledge the fact that it is a crummy place in many areas. The TV asked if they could go in, and we said yes. As a matter of fact, we gave them a sort of carte blanche. For 11 months they were making that "Hourglass" programme, and at no time did we put any restrictions on them. They went into every little nook and corner. I was a little bit hurt, in a way, that there was nothing positive said, but that is fair enough. That is news, and so what? It was open to you; it is open to any person who has a vital interest in that particular area.

We made a decision. We know that some areas have to be upgraded. We want to build smaller units that have more of the home-like kind of atmosphere you are describing. But people in that setting have to be viewed in the future as people in either extended care, intermediate care or the level of care you think of when you think in terms of a person who is physically disabled. So, really, that has to be part of our planning process.

The first objective we have is to get them out of there if at all possible, and into their own communities. That's why you'll find that I am delighted with the cooperation we have had from general hospitals. They are building psychiatric wards now, and that will be for shorter-term situations.

One of our problems was that in the old days we sent people to Riverview never to be seen again, and they suffered from institutional neurosis. That has to be the wrong approach. You have to keep them at home if at all possible. So, Mr. Chairman, we have all of these priorities, putting them together and trying to phase down. At the same time we have members of our staff right now going through Riverview to find out what areas can be upgraded and made into the kind of units you are describing. Hopefully, we can get on with that job as quickly as possible.

Vote 90 approved.

Vote 91: salary contingencies, \$13,485,188 — approved.

On vote 92: hospital insurance service, \$464,163,192.

**MR. FRASER:** I have two or three short questions. First, I would like to ask the Minister what the average daily rate is that is being paid hospitals, starting on April 1, 1975. I don't know whether you have an average, but give the high and the low. I would like to hear what that is.

The other thing I missed this morning on public health, and I have two short questions for the Minister. What is the problem with doctors in the public health, why can't we get doctors? The Cariboo has been without one for a year. I understand one is....

**HON. MR. COCKE:** That's not in this vote.

**MR. FRASER:** I know that. But, I say, I wasn't here; I missed this morning.

There is also Tatla Lake which is in public health, too, but I don't think the nurse has been replaced there as yet.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** I wonder if the Member would accept an off-the-cuff average per diem. I believe that we can say it's well over \$100. I think we can say it's around \$100. Some hospitals are higher, the tertiary kind of facilities, and some are lower. But let's say \$100 a day is what we are paying now, and it is reflected in that little

teenie \$464 million vote.

[ [Page 2846](#) ]

To answer your questions about doctors in public health, I believe that will be sorted out shortly. There has been, as you know, a little bit of a tie-up in that area. The health unit in Tatla Lake — I believe we have a position there, we are just trying to fill it.

**MR. FRASER:** The nurse stationed at Tatla Lake — there hasn't been one there for a year.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Yes, I know that. There was a little trouble with Dr. Vandermann and the previous public health nurse. There is the possibility that there might be trouble with the next one. Normally, when you think in terms of the public health nurse you think in terms of the nurse who is the extended-role type of nurse who does a good deal of primary care. Dr. Vandermann has a feeling that a nurse should not do that kind of thing, and this has been the problem, I guess. There is an establishment for a nurse there, Mr. Member, and we can certainly deal with it. I imagine that they are trying to fill that position.

**MR. WALLACE:** Once again I feel that we can't pass a vote of \$464 million without at least a few comments and some questions because hospital care or institutional care has just become fantastically expensive. In terms of salary settlements, it looks as though we have nowhere to go but up. As the Minister just mentioned a moment ago in answering a question, the average daily cost of care in an acute hospital is somewhere around \$100.

In that respect in particular, I know its tedious and repetitious to say so, but we are terribly wasteful in our use of acute-care beds. To give the House and the committee a simple example, in the two large general hospitals in Victoria, where the cost is \$100 a day, there are always 30 or 40 patients who shouldn't be there at all because they should be in some other facility.

I have a clipping here which just headlines it in even in that very acute-care mental hospital, the Eric Martin Institute in Victoria. The headline says: "One-Third of EMI Patients Don't Need Acute Care." The administrator is reported as saying that one-third of the 100 beds for adult patients at the Eric Martin Institute are occupied by people who don't need acute psychiatric care, but have nowhere else to go.

We have, as I say, 60 or 70 beds in Victoria every day occupied by patients who are only there because they have nowhere else to go. As I have said many times in the House before, this is nothing new, the situation being demonstrated as it is. The federal task force some seven or eight years ago pointed out that the trend in hospital planning to build more and more acute-care beds was a very ill-considered plan when there was no planning, or little or no planning for all these different levels of care.

I know the Minister has acknowledged this and he has mentioned it in today's debate. But I wonder whether the Minister feels that he is being successful in getting the message through to where it belongs; and the message belongs at the regional hospital board level in the different regions in this province.

I don't think we can stand here in this House, for example, and criticize the government for not providing the dollars. There may be a day when we will come to the government from the capital region and ask for X dollars and not get them. I don't know. That hasn't happened yet. In fact, the tragedy is in the capital region that there has been about \$20-odd million sitting around for two or three or four years that the voters in this community passed and voted and supported by a very clear majority to provide facilities.

Interjection.

**MR. WALLACE:** As the Minister interjects, at the rate of inflation I don't know what \$20 million is worth since it was approved three years ago. I suppose it is worth \$12 or \$13 million now.

I would just like to ask that question. Does the Minister feel that the message regarding levels of care.... If you build acute beds, you will certainly fill them up. There is never any problem putting patients in acute beds; you



can do that just as easy as wink. But if we are going to be spending \$100 per day, plus the capital costs and the salaries that are involved in acute-care hospitals, then it is time we woke up to the tremendous need for alternative levels of care.

In other words, the key is to give the appropriate kind of care and facility for the appropriate need of the patient. Because you are a patient with a certain need, that certainly doesn't mean you should be in an acute-care hospital. Unfortunately, that's the image that has persisted until recent years, not only in British Columbia but in Canada.

While I am not the least bit happy with the federal government and some of its rigid attitudes to cost-sharing, I think I can give one credit to the federal government of several years ago. It became aware of this abuse of acute-care beds before anybody else did. At that point I think it over-reacted, or, at least in the course of succeeding years, it is now so nervous about cost-sharing that it seems to be holding back in areas where it wouldn't be at all unreasonable to come up with a few federal dollars. But anyway, that's really another issue.

I have to again say that the biggest gap is the gap, between the acute-care hospital and the extended-care hospital. I'm glad that in that other bill we were able to get it clearly established that the segment of intermediate care starts above the personal-care level where the person only needs help in the place they are living, without medical or

[ [Page 2847](#) ]

nursing care.

My first question would be: are we getting through to the regions? Is the planning looking at the different levels and not just zeroing in on one or other kind of facility to the neglect of the others? The whole thing has to be integrated to make any medical sense, let alone dollar sense.

The second question would be that in the Minister's efforts to date to fill some of the gap between acute care and extended care, what is the government's policy regarding the \$10-a-day charge which has been levied in the Penticton and Tillicum Lodge in Victoria? I think there are four altogether.

Interjection.

**MR. WALLACE:** Yes, it's \$10 in Penticton. I just visited the Penticton place the other day and visited with some of the people there. They are very happy. It is a beautiful place, just an excellent place. Oh, sorry, I'm mixing up Penticton with Kamloops. It was Kamloops.

Interjection.

**MR. WALLACE:** I'm sorry; I'm getting mixed up. It was the Kamloops one I was in most recently, and they told me they were paying \$10 a day.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** The Ponderosa?

**MR. WALLACE:** The Ponderosa; that's right. I've been in the Penticton one as well, but I can't specifically recall what they are paying there.

Anyway, is there some uniform policy that the Minister is developing regarding charges paid by the patients? In other words, if it is going to be \$10 at the personal-care level and you go up a little bit to intermediate care — some kind of nursing or medical care in small or greater amounts — what policy is being developed to try and get some equity and relationship between the amount the patient pays in relation to the amount of assistance they're receiving.

We touched on this earlier today, and I would like the Minister, if he would, also to comment on what is happening to the person on social assistance in an extended-care hospital. I know that the Minister of Human Resources (Hon. Mr. Levi) had earlier mentioned that those patients receiving Mincome no longer receive the full

Mincome. They don't receive Mincome minus \$30, and I don't know that either of the Ministers has explained to us exactly what the formula is.

If Mincome patients are paying a certain amount for their board and lodgings in an extended-care hospital, and the government's paying the rest.... The Minister's nodding, but I'm not at all clear on this. The reason I think it's important is that the government seems to be very uncertain in its own moves in regard to the charging of the patient for these various levels of care. We've got \$1 a day in the acute care. We've got, as I understand it, \$1 a day in extended care, but for Mincome patients there's been some modification.

Now we have \$10 a day for the personal care. We have a \$5 charge for ambulance service. We've got ones and tens and fives and it looks like some kind of crap game when you look at the whole spectrum. Yet some people are being helped very appreciably in meeting the cost of their care and others are really not getting any kind of deal at all.

I know that the Minister, for example, had considered the \$5.50 a day for the extended-care hospitals some time ago, and I think he, personally, still believes that that would not be unreasonable. I assume that the collective decision of the government was not to proceed in that direction, and I would like some statement of policy. Where are we headed in face of these tremendously substantial rising costs? For example, under this vote salaries are almost doubled. This, of course, isn't the only cause of vote 92 being so greatly increased. But we've got here salaries from \$2.2 million to \$3.9 million. Mind you, that's within the staff of the department. That is the department, I realize, but even that....

Interjection.

**MR. WALLACE:** Well, there's a 6 per cent increase in staff, but I've figured out a 77 per cent increase in salary, That, again, is probably related to.... Does that include contingencies?

Interjection.

**MR. WALLACE:** At any rate, under the payments to hospitals, which are projected to go up to \$446 million, if you look at the way in which that's accumulated, about 80 per cent of that sum is salaries to hospital employees. If you look at the average.... In fact, maybe the Minister could tell us what the approximate average figure was that the hospital employees negotiated the last time they reached a settlement. I'm not sure when renegotiations start. Of that \$446 million we're spending on hospitals, 80 per cent of that relates to salaries and fringe benefits.

So if that doesn't get the message through that we should be treating as few people as possible in hospital institutions and that they should be treated only at the appropriate level of care with no frills.... The thought of some day requiring an intermediate level of care in an acute-care hospital is expense of a kind that I just don't think we should approve. On the other hand, the fact that a patient in an acute-care hospital is paying \$1 a day, and if they

[ [Page 2848](#) ]

go outside or go to a nursing home they're going to pay \$600 a month...what would you do? You'd try and stay in the acute hospital just as long as you could. There's no incentive for you to get a little better.

Of course, at the other end of the scale, in the extended-care hospital, you've no incentive to improve either because if you get a little better you get heaved out of the extended-care hospital and back into the nursing home at \$600 a month. This economic injustice defeats me. I don't know why, in light of the government's general thrust in many other areas to help the underdog and pay for people who are disadvantaged in various ways.... They've certainly got a group of people requiring a certain level of hospital care who are very sadly disadvantaged in the financing arrangements of this government.

I notice that the Minister of Mines and Petroleum Resources (Hon. Mr. Nimsick) is paying very careful attention. I can remember him on this side of the House repeatedly making the speech that I'm now making. I suppose it's the old drip, drip, drip on the stone, Mr. Minister of Mines. If we just keep squeaking that wheel enough,

we might get some grease.

Seriously, it's not a matter to joke about. It's very sad and serious, because we have a substantial number of people requiring and receiving hospital care, and it's costing them sometimes every penny they have; or finally they have to go on social assistance. I don't think that's a very fair way and, certainly, if we can do as much as we're doing in Medicare and at extended- and acute-care hospitals, I think we should be able to do a little better than we're doing. The Minister has said many times that the plan is in the works, and that they're studying the situation. Can he give us two things, any kind of likely date that this might be started, even in part, and, secondly, does he have any specific measures in mind to rearrange some of these inequitable financial arrangements at the present time?

This morning he said that in relation to medicare premiums it just meant that the government was paying a larger share of the total costs than they did in 1965. The same argument, obviously, applies to acute-care hospitals and extended-care hospitals at the moment. As the costs go up, the patient still pays \$1 per day, so the government is paying a larger and larger fraction of the total costs. All I am asking is: do you have a date, or do you have any specific plans to try and have the patient keep up with the cost of inflation by paying the same percentage fraction of the cost in the hope that more money will be available to plug the gaps that now exist?

In this vote there are one or two other smaller points I wondered about. I notice travelling expenses are going up from \$140,000 to \$200,000. I wonder if this is simply due to the rising costs of travel, or is there a greater policy to get the staff of BCHIS out into other areas. For which particular purpose is it — inspection or helping regional boards?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Consulting, in most cases.

**MR. WALLACE:** The last point I want to ask is: can the Minister report, as of this moment, on the progress on the peninsula hospital in the capital region? The Minister knows how frustrating it has been to get some of the decisions made in that direction.

Earlier on in this session the Minister offered the hospital every help with functional planning of the proposed 75-bed wing. It would just be such an asset to the people on the peninsula and a little bit of a release of pressure on the city hospital beds and so on. The sooner we get these 75 beds completed, the better. I wonder if the Minister can report just what his knowledge is of progress on the peninsula hospital.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, let me go back to the beginning. The Member asked: are the regions getting involved, are they cooperating in planning and production of alternatives to the acute-care situation?

Most of the regions are becoming very much aware of that. Of course, one of the problems with our system is that the capital funds for hospitals are provided on a share basis — 60 per cent provincial, 40 per cent regional. On the other hand, however, the province picks up the total cost of hospital insurance, so, really, the motivation isn't there so much for the region to produce alternatives. In other words, what difference does it make to the region whether there...I mean, sure it does morally or ethically, but what difference does it make whether a patient is in a \$100-a-day bed or a \$12-a-day bed. It is a little bit of a problem there with motivation.

The regions are becoming concerned. Particularly I have noticed the Vancouver regional district recently. They used to be very much opposed to getting into that area. They are now moving very much ahead. I think we are building 1,100 beds in Vancouver for extended-care alone. They are also thinking in terms of getting together with us on the whole question of intermediate care. So, yes, the regions really are beginning to work in this area.

The policy regarding equity. I think one of your last questions was around that question as well. I think I dealt with it earlier in the session. That was that I didn't want to change a thing until after our negotiations in September. We are negotiating the whole new sharing situation. Hopefully, we are going to get a lot closer to it this time. The preliminary talks have looked good, so I suggest that maybe we

are much more optimistic than we have been heretofore. This is sharing lower levels of care than acute care.

**MR. WALLACE:** If they don't, will we go it alone?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** If they don't, we have to go it alone; there is no question about that. One way or the other, we have to go.

You asked what is happening about the Mincome patient in an extended-care facility. The Minister of Human Resources (Hon. Mr. Levi) has seen to it that they don't get their Mincome aspect. They still get their old age pension and any other pension. The Mincome is withheld because, after all, it is only costing them \$1 a day for room and board. I agree with you; it is totally inequitable. Again, that gets back to the policy with respect to equity. I think it should be all established at one time.

What was the income increase in the hospitals? It was roughly 10.5 per cent plus a COLA clause which I think amounts to roughly 8 percent, so it was about 18.5 per cent in retrospect. We didn't know what it was going to be in prospect. But anyway, that is what it has been. Yes, it was a pretty heavy increase, but in many of the areas there was a real need for parity, payment for services rendered and so on. In any event, I think that answers your question.

The peninsula hospital, as I announced a long time ago, will cooperate. As quickly as the plans are made available they will be approved as quickly as we can. We want to get that thing off the ground and running.

Where are we now? Are we on functional programme? I presume we're on functional programme; I think the functional programme will probably be ready by June.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Mr. Chairman, I was pleased to hear the Minister say we would go it by ourselves if we don't get cost-sharing for the alternative levels of care in the province. Nevertheless, we do seem rather slow in getting anywhere. I know that the Minister's arguments are that we are moving rapidly with more money into the home-care programme and that part of the money has been transferred to Human Resources. But still he talks about the Greater Vancouver Regional District. The regional district has said that they need 3,500 intermediate-care beds now. That's the need, and it isn't some time in the future. It also emphasizes in that report that 4,000 beds will be needed by 1981. Those beds should be made available and covered by the same co-insurance scheme which is presently covering extended-care and acute-care beds.

I differ with the route that the Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) seems to want to take and perhaps the route the government wants to take concerning the charges being made for the alternative levels of care. In this province over the past several years we have taken the view that various forms of health-care delivery should be supported in terms of.... We talked about this briefly earlier today. It should be thought of as a social dividend which is paid for by a strong and growing economy. Unlike many other jurisdictions, we didn't have a mishmash of different levels of premiums, bureaucracies, co-insurance and deterrent fees and all of those kind of things. We simply took the view — I think we should still take the view — that progressive stages involved with the health-care delivery system as it applied to the hospital world would move us in stages to dollar-a-day coverage for all levels of health care through acute care, extended care, intermediate care and, hopefully someday, with federal government approval, even home care.

We did have extended care and acute care provided at \$1 a day. There was a problem with the development of the facilities, a problem which is ongoing as yet and which is gradually catching up. In terms of the intermediate care and home-nursing care, there was some relief under the Canada Assistance Act between the province and the federal government. But we seem now to be facing a breakdown in this programme for the future. It bothers me, and I would like to make just a couple of observations about it, Mr. Chairman.

The history of premium plans, wherever they have been done, and deterrent plans, wherever they have been done, has been that they get amended upwards or downwards or sideways or some other way. But most often the amendments come to serve a political purpose at election time rather than to serve any purpose of the patient in need of care.

The premium system and those deterrent systems also create massive amounts of red tape, Mr. Chairman, and more patient participation than is necessary if we accept, first of all, the premise that the health-care delivery system should be supported by the economy.

Interjection.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** No, you can't penalize people for being sick; that's what I believe we're talking about. If we're talking about \$5-a-day contributions for extended care under the present.... I would say that a rough estimate, under the present number of people taking advantage of our extended-care facilities, would be maybe \$4.5 million. That's peanuts; it's no percentage of the surplus funds available for health-care delivery service. If we're talking about intermediate care, we'd be probably talking about a \$1 recovery at \$5 a day of far less than \$4 million. Again, Mr. Chairman, that's just peanuts.

[ [Page 2850](#) ]

If we ask the patients who are going to be involved in that intermediate-care system to provide us with \$5.50 a day, it not only breaks down the programme that we had hoped would be developing in British Columbia but it makes no allowance for the fact that extended care, intermediate care and home care are practical and useful ways.... Once again, we had this demonstrated very clearly to us when we travelled a couple of years ago with the committee around the province. There are useful ways of reducing the very costly delivery system now which is connected with the provision of acute care and the subsequent hope in the future of reduction in the escalation of those costs. We're all looking in the long run to stop the escalation and put a halt to that escalation of costs which has been so rapidly rising year by year. Extended care, intermediate care and home care have always been considered a cheaper way of bringing down the utilization of expensive acute-care beds. I think the proof is now there that these programmes can bring down the cost of health care to some degree.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** They don't bring it down at all.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** So if this argument is sound, and I think it is perhaps the Minister would disagree with me then to require a \$7 million participation by the patient isn't realistic in terms of either the economy of this province and its ability under at least the previous economic system to progressively move through the stages based on the ability of the economy to provide the dollars necessary.

It also goes perhaps unrecognized, Mr. Chairman, that if we demand that additional patient participation in the system, then we automatically make our Mincome programme conditional. We are either moving towards some kind of a guaranteed Mincome programme or we aren't. We can't have it both ways. If we go under the \$5.50 deal that's been mentioned on a number of occasions, then we are playing games with our senior citizens. We are giving them money with one hand and saying: "This is your money and you are entitled to it; it is your guarantee by this province that you will have an income that you can live on." On the one hand we are doing that and on the other hand we are taking it away from them for a vital social service — namely, health care — if we go to this higher payment for one level of alternative health care. It would be just as logical if we buy that to go to a series of charges for TB clinics or VD clinics or any kind of preventive health measures. Mr. Chairman, I simply can't buy that whole idea.

I think that to assign a large portion of Mincome payment to a social service, in this case health care, is really a mockery of the idea of placing discretionary spending power in the hands of those people covered by Mincome, whether they be handicapped persons or senior citizens or who they are. If we do go to that kind of penalization of elderly sick people, it makes a mockery, too, of the description of the Act as a guaranteed minimum income, because with just a stroke of the Minister's pen we can effect this change, or we can do it by order-in-council. It doesn't require a bill of the Legislature. We could reduce the discretionary spending of elderly persons by \$165 a month, and I don't think that's fair.

I believe that we should really back away from the concept of different charges for different levels of care. If you're sick, you're sick. If you are in need of health care, then you need that health care. It should be on a fair and equal basis, as I said this afternoon, between every level of care. We need to be going towards that system suggested

by the federal government in its task force report of progressive patient care which follows the patient right from the day his illness is determined right through to the end, whether that be home care, intermediate care, extended care of whatever it happens to be. Mr. Chairman, to do anything else is a slap in the face to the needs of the people of this province and particularly to the needs of those elderly people on Mincome assistance.

I have a couple of other matters. One has to do with the Cumberland hospital.

Interjection.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** No, it's not an acute-care hospital. The acute-care hospital is under destruction, not construction. It's in the Member for Comox's (Ms. Sanford's) riding.

There would seem to be, and I don't really want to suggest this, some political considerations regarding the acceptance of proposals for the construction management of this Cumberland project which is underway. A.D. Storrie Construction Ltd. asked to bid on this construction project, a construction management project, and they were told that they wouldn't even be considered because of their lack of hospital construction experience.

Similarly, another company, C&E Construction Ltd., were advised at the same time in the same way that they would not be considered either. The criteria apparently were that the two firms involved had no recent hospital construction experience. A.D. Storrie Construction Ltd., because they didn't want to take this decision lying down, were called to Victoria on February 25, and they were advised then that their proposal would be considered. Therefore they sort of backed off at that time. But since that time both of these companies have been cut off from this project. I would like to ask the Minister why.

[ [Page 2851](#) ]

In the case of C&E Construction, the principal of that company is Earl Evans. He has had 15 years experience as general superintendent. His partner is Craig Fleming and he has been in civil engineering for 30 years. They were involved in the building of the Hamilton General hospital, a project worth \$17 million, the Oshawa General hospital, a project worth \$18 million, and the P.E.I. Fathers of Confederation Building, worth \$2.5 million.

A.D. Storrie Construction Ltd., Mr. Chairman, the other company in which it was said they had no hospital building experience, has had experience in building 924 beds in hospitals: Altman Nursing Home in Toronto, 100 beds; Parkside Nursing Home in Regina, 140 beds; Chinook Nursing Home in Calgary, 100 beds; Brentwood Nursing Home in Calgary, 69 beds. It goes on and on. The point is that these people have had a lot of experience in the field of hospital construction. I wonder whether there were other reasons for their not being considered whatsoever in the bids for construction management of the Cumberland Hospital.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Mr. Chairman, this matter was brought to my attention briefly and long after the fact, as these kind of things do. I understand that there was one company — I can't remember two. It was felt by some of the officials, who were doing this work in BCHIS, that their lack of experience in building hospitals was one that should be looked at. But apparently they came down, had a discussion and it was felt by the officials, again without my knowledge, that maybe they shouldn't give that kind of a suggestion, and so they changed their minds. But they didn't get the contract, as you say.

We don't issue contracts like that. They're tendered, they're bid on and that's it.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Yes, but they weren't allowed to even bid on the thing.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** I understood they were allowed to bid on it. I can't give you.... I'd have to look into the facts of the case.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Well, will you get the information?

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Sure. To even intimate that the people who have worked for Hospital Insurance for all

these years successfully.... They've never been criticized by the former opposition critic, I'll tell you, with any kind of an implication like that. And to have that occur now to the same people is strange, to say the least.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, it's not good enough that the

Minister gets all flabbergasted and red in the face because someone brings up a serious question about a serious problem. You admitted yourself that there's a problem here.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** No problem.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** What do you mean no problem? You said you don't even know the details.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Why should I?

**MR. McCLELLAND:** You said you'd look into it.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** It would be more of a problem, Mr. Member, if I did know the details.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Oh, Mr. Chairman! The architect, in this instance, refused to even accept the consideration of these companies. They didn't get the opportunity to bid, as I understand it, and according to the letter I have from the company. That's the problem. If they had the opportunity to bid in an open tender situation, I wouldn't even be raising this situation. But as it turns out, the people themselves are concerned about the political ramifications. Not me! They suggested it and I'm bringing it to you because one of them is a prominent member in a party with which I'm quite closely connected, and the other one is the husband of the woman in the Cumberland area who has been the moving force behind the Concerned Citizens of Cumberland Committee which has been trying to keep the acute-care hospital in that area.

Now that's not my fault, but it's a legitimate question, I think, and one that should be asked. There seems, Mr. Chairman, to be some deviation from normal policy here. I think it's only fair that the Minister look into it and let us know whether there has been a deviation of normal policy, and if so, why. That's not an unreasonable request.

Vote 92 approved.

## ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*(continued)*

On vote 34: Minister's office, \$85,129 — continued.

**MR. CHABOT:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister's office has a very substantial increase over the previous year. I was wondering if the Minister would tell me why it's been necessary to increase his travelling expenses from \$7,000 to \$8,000. That's \$1,000 more just for travelling.

[ [Page 2852](#) ]

**HON. E. HALL (Provincial Secretary):** It's the price of gasoline.

**MR. CHABOT:** An additional \$1,000. With the kind of salary that Minister has, that should be adequate without expecting the taxpayers of this province.....

**HON. MR. HALL:** Mr. Chairman, I'll wait for 20 minutes while the Member's notes come in — if he is waiting for them.

Interjections.

**MR. CHABOT:** I think that \$7,000 is adequate for the Minister's travels. Are you planning any particular trips this year? Are you going to Japan to examine their aquaculture which with great fanfare you went to see last year when you were going to establish a great industry in the Province of British Columbia?

I'm wondering whether the Minister will tell me what the results of his great deliberations in the country of Japan were, regarding aquaculture as an industry on the horizon in British Columbia, due to the great efforts and the great discussions that took place in Japan just last year.

The Minister went there. He went there for other things I know, but he had to have some justification to go to Japan. The justification he held out to the people of this province was that there was a pressing need for the establishment of an aquaculture industry in this province.

Where is this industry going to be established, and when? Could the Minister answer those two short, brief, precise and to-the-point questions?

Interjections.

**HON. G.V. LAUK (Minister of Economic Development):** The travel budget, I believe, is the same as last year's, isn't it? I see, it's an increase of \$1,000. I am tentatively planning some trips, and announcements will be made well ahead of time about itineraries.

Interjection.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** I was thinking we might have to go to Golden. I've heard a lot of things that are depressing people up there, mainly the MLA (Mr. Chabot). He doesn't seem to be able to communicate in this House the needs of the people of Golden in his constituency about economic development. I guess we'll have to go up there and do it for him.

**MR. CHABOT:** I thank very much the Minister for all the information he gave me regarding the usage of taxpayers' money for a joy trip to Japan, but he never answered me as to what was happening with the industry that he's going to attract to this province.

Now, talking about Golden, we have a community there that in the forest industry, under normal conditions, employs approximately 850 people. At this time, there's about 450 employed. Almost 50 per cent of the labour force is unemployed. The Minister, just a few days ago — in fact, maybe yesterday....

Interjection.

**MR. CHABOT:** Now the Minister has suggested that the government or the people of this province have invested \$100,000 in the Trigull and that the government is ready and willing to advance an additional \$500,000 for the manufacture of the Trigull in this province.

My question is this. I think the Minister, who is in charge of the administration of economic development and the welfare and economy of this province, should take into consideration that when he places tax dollars into a particular industry, he should have the right to direct that industry to depressed areas of the province. Parts of the province are locked into a single industry, such as the forest industry in Golden. I'm wondering if the Minister would be prepared to say to Trident: "Golden would be a logical place to go, because we believe in diversification of industry. In view of the fact that my government or the taxpayers of this province are investing \$600,000 in your operation, we would like you to assist us as well. Assist us by diversifying industries to communities that are hard-pressed, that need new jobs, that need secondary industry."

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Now he's talking. Now he's telling us about something he knows something about, his riding, instead of the broad economic questions that he's not too familiar with.

Interjections.



**HON. MR. LAUK:** Just because the development corporation loans money to private corporations in this province, we can't take the heavy hand of the state and dictate economic and location decisions to the boards of these various private corporations. That's the heavy hand of the state. We don't believe in that kind of activity.

However, I would like to sit down privately with the Hon. Member, because we are a government for all of this province, and discuss the economic problems of some areas of his riding and see if something can't be done. Even with the limited resources of this little government, there may be something we can do to overcome the current downward trends in some areas of your riding.

[ [Page 2853](#) ]

**MR. CHABOT:** Short question. I was wondering if the Minister took my advice yesterday. Has he resigned from the BCR, as he should?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** No, I have not resigned, and no, I have not taken his advice seriously.

**MR. GIBSON:** I have a short question for the Minister, which I asked the other day. I am sure, through inadvertence, he didn't answer.

The public is spending millions and millions on the Dease Lake extension of the BCR. Could the Minister tell me what freight will be carried on that line?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** I do think that a complete and thorough debate with respect to the northern lines of the railway should take place during a statute which is on the order paper.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It's out of order.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Not at all.

**MR. GIBSON:** Well, would the Minister perhaps indicate, as a preliminary round to the main event, whether he does not agree that the mineral policies of his government have caused the non-development of the Stikine River property and the Liard River property, together accounting for some 80,000 to 100,000 tons per day of mineral throughput and together accounting for something like a million tons of freight per year on that Dease Lake route — indeed, the most probable freight to be carried on that line? Wouldn't he agree, that those mines aren't going ahead? He would agree with that — those mines aren't going ahead.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Mr. Chairman, in all of the material and literature and the reports that we have had to date on the Stikine and other areas that would relate to traffic on the Dease Lake extension, there was no definitive plan. There were not even any preliminary proposals for the development of those areas. They are still, even with the extension in there, a long time off from development. I don't think that can be blamed on any current activity in the world market even. But you must look at the world market; you must look at the tremendous cost of developing those wilderness areas of copper deposits. There are other copper deposits in the province that could be on stream long before Stikine. Now certainly the extension should encourage or speed up the development of those areas. We hope to see that.

The current assessment of the railway's activities shows no substantial change in mineral traffic.

**MR. GIBSON:** Just a follow-up question, Mr. Chairman. Could I understand better that last sentence: "The current assessment of the railway's prospects shows no substantial change in mineral traffic"? Is that what the Minister said?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** That's right. Nothing has changed recently in terms of the traffic on the railroad with respect to mineral hauls.

**MR. GIBSON:** Does that mean that you weren't banking on any mineral traffic before, because certainly you can't bank on any now? So that means you didn't figure there was going to be any before. So that means you have

been pouring money into this railroad extension, thinking there is going to be no mineral traffic. Is that what the Minister is saying?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Don't you fence with me, young man!

**MR. GIBSON:** I'm not fencing with you, young Minister. I'm trying to find out what you are saying. If that is right, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister is telling us that there was no mineral traffic projected on that line, then he's been pouring money into it since, and that's a disgrace. I wanted to clarify that.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Before we embark on a full debate on this matter, I would note Bill 27 on the order paper, which I think would provide opportunity for full debate on this issue.

**MR. GIBSON:** This is just a preliminary round, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Now he has nothing to say. When you said "young Minister" you should have said "young, inexperienced Minister."

I'd like to ask the Minister just a couple of quick....

**HON. MR. LAUK:** I never personally attacked you. I don't know why you would attack me.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I'm attacking your policies. You personally I am not attacking. I wouldn't attack you personally, Mr. Minister. I wouldn't think of it. But I sure would attack your policies and the policies of your government. Because I am saying you are inexperienced....

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Well, stick with something you know nothing about.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Would the Hon. Members address the Chair, please?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I know, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister is just trying to get me angry. I'm not going

[ [Page 2854](#) ]

to get angry with the Minister, although he makes me angry.

Interjections.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** No, I won't allow, Mr. Chairman, myself to be carried away. But I just want to ask the Minister a couple of quick, short questions.

No. 1: would you tell me the status of the subsidiary DREE (Department of Regional Economic Expansion) agreements for the northwestern part of the province and the northeastern part of the province? Where are they at? What status?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Which ones?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Any of them. All of them. Mr. Chairman, the Minister did come up north and outlined months ago.... Shortly after taking office he came into my area and said: "We are on the verge of signing these agreements." That was over 18 months ago. To date we haven't seen any action. He and his other cabinet colleagues, namely the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources (Hon. R.A. Williams), went into the northwestern portion of the province, and promised great development, grandiose plans. The Premier went up there and had a meeting. Oh, yes, I've outlined them in the House. I'm not going to take the time of the House to do it this afternoon, but there were large developments in the lumber industry, large power developments, large copper developments, large mineral developments.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Subsidiary agreements?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** The subsidiary agreements, yes.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Mr. Chairman, there is one initial subsidiary agreement that has been in Ottawa a week for signatures.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Which one?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** I'd prefer not to name it. I will name it soon if Ottawa doesn't act. I will name it within the next several days.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** What area?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** That concerns the northeast. Three are in negotiation. We are negotiating one....

**MR. PHILLIPS:** What area?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Well, one is general in the north, and another is specifically northeast. That's the one on coal that you and I talked about privately before. But that's in negotiation and there is a lot of material that still must be settled.

A third one that I would prefer not to discuss at this time is in negotiation as well. We hope to have two if not three of them completed and ready for signature in early summer.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Just one short, little sentence, Mr. Chairman. So one agreement affecting the northeastern portion of the province is in Ottawa now. You say that if you don't have the thing through within a week that you are going to make it public. That's concerning the northeastern part of the province?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** This concerning an area of the northeast. It's a preliminary subsidiary.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** And it doesn't have to do with highways. Does it have to do with highways?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** No.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** It has nothing to do with highways, all right. It has to do with economic development.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Yes, sir.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** The Minister said: "Yes, sir." I am saying that because I don't think *Hansard* picked it up. All right, thank you, we have that in the record. I appreciate your frank statement.

One other point. We have been doing an economic survey of the northeastern portion of the province. We have had one or two surveys and they didn't satisfy the Minister. I would like to know about the survey that is close to completion or is completed. What is the status of it? When are we going to have something definite?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Originally, when I discussed with the city fathers in Dawson Creek the possibility of tabling the survey material.... (Laughter.)

I keep on hearing a voice in the back there that sounded familiar from the old days — coming from up here. It throws me off.

There are about four or five volumes of material. We are condensing it. It will be about three weeks, and we will table a survey. The other specific material will be available on request, if you like. I suppose we could dig it up.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Yes, I find it a little difficult to hear the Minister, so I will just say it again. You will have the economic survey of the northeastern portion of British Columbia finalized and ready to table in this House in three weeks?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** I will have a condensation of the material we have gathered together for release within three weeks.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Fine, I appreciate that. I just want to tell the Minister that it is urgent that we get some economic development in the northeastern part of the province. Recent information that I have in that area shows — and don't fall off your chair, Mr. Minister — an unemployment rate of 29 per cent in the northeastern part of the province. Part of it I just have to blame on the government because the one economic development project that was going to go in that area, the Sukunka coal deal, was delayed by this government saying that they were going to go in as partners and then backing out. I feel that project was delayed for at least two years by this government.

Interjection.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Yes, it would have gone ahead. It was all set to go. Don't give me that. I remember well. In August of 1972 it was all set to go. After your government came to power, you said: "Well, we're going to become a partner in this." Then the whole deal was set back and held up. So, as I am saying, there is an urgent need in that area to get something moving.

There is also an urgent need in the northwestern section of the province, in the Chairman's riding. If you go through those towns, you find empty buildings where previously flourishing companies had existed. There is a great deal of discontent in the north, a great deal of discontent. I realize, Mr. Chairman, that the responsibility rests on the shoulders of the Minister of Economic Development. How he is going to overcome the problems he has with the Minister of Mines (Hon. Mr. Nimsick) I don't know, but that is his problem and he will have to solve it.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Shall vote 34 pass?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** No! The Minister was on his feet to tell me something. Don't rush.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** I'm not rushing.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** We are talking about the economy.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** That's right.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** You know, tax dollars. For you, Mr. Minister of Finance.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member raises the issue of coal development. I think that where the government has intervened it has been to the overall benefit of that development of the province; but I won't get into an argument. I hope that coal development will proceed very rapidly in the northeast. Of course, Mr. Chairman is in close contact with both myself and my department with respect to his riding. I might say that he contacts me continuously and keeps me up to date about economic matters in his riding, and we act on them.

**MR. FRASER:** Oh, put it on the record.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Chairman, I have been in contact with the Minister a great deal. If I talk to him any more in the hallway, why, he would never get in the House. I don't want to leave in *Hansard* any idea that I haven't been talking to the Minister of Economic Development, because I talk to him on an almost daily basis representing that great riding which I have the honour of representing.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS (West Vancouver—Howe Sound):** I just have a couple of short questions for the Minister. I think the Minister has done an admirable job in handling the estimates so far.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Let's have it.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Seriously, I think the Members of the opposition have been far too hard on the

Minister, far too hard on him. He was a skilled member of the bar before he got into politics; now he is an executive vice-president and he has risen to the occasion. The reason he is getting another \$1,000 in travelling expenses is quite clear. It is to differentiate between that Minister and the fellow who sits just two seats to his right, the half-million-dollar man.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** The Minister Without.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Also, I know that the Lieutenant-Government-in-Council has got a new task for the Minister of Economic Development. He is going to be appointed as Minister under Bill 90; he is going to have charge of Bill 90.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Bill 90?

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** That's right. That's the Free Public Toilets Act. He will be the Minister appointed by the executive council charged with the order of that bill.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** No, no, that's for the three independent Members.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** No, I'm not a member of

[ [Page 2856](#) ]

the executive council. That is why he gets \$3,000 more than the half-million-dollar man.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Oh, yes, but you've got to be identified with something here.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Well, do I get a robin's-egg-blue suit too if I...?

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** You get a suit of many colours.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** That's right. Terrific. And it will be the majority movement that will see the defeat of you and that Minister over there. The majority of the people will rise up and put that Minister in his place.

I had a question. I had a question to....

Interjections.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** When the Minister attends the formal opening of the railcar plant in Squamish, whenever that is, I wonder if the Minister could advise the committee whether on that day he will announce that the British Columbia Railway will, from that moment on, pay to the municipality of Squamish taxes on the assessed value of that plant in the same way as would be the case if that plant were operated by a private concern. I ask the question very seriously because, with the advent of this car plant in Squamish and assuming that it ever begins to perform as the Minister and the railway have suggested that it will, it brings to Squamish jobs — there is no question about that. But with those jobs there are people, and people have children, so it increases the costs of schools, it increases the costs of fire service, the police, recreation and all the heavy burdens that fall upon a growing community as industry moves in.

Now with private industry moving in, as this occurs the private industry pays its proper share through the tax roll burden to the municipality for the services that must be provided. Unfortunately, when the Crown corporations move in, such as British Columbia Rail.... BCR is renowned for this position; they don't pay any taxes — nothing. I think the time is long come, and it would be a great announcement for this little Minister when he opens that car plant, when he cuts the ribbon and the first car rolls down the track — it may be some months after he cuts the ribbon that it rolls down the track -if it would bring with it to the municipality of Squamish a proper share of tax revenue that that community deserves from this plant.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Little Minister. After all these years, that's what you call me — a little Minister.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** I was very complimentary to you at the outset. I was only quoting the Hon. Attorney-General.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** No, you weren't. He said: "A great little Minister."

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Well, he's changing his mind. He's getting worried. Anyway, that's my question to the Minister. Are you going to pay taxes on B.C. Rail?

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Well, Mr. Chairman, that's a question that has been raised on several occasions in all kinds of municipalities and jurisdictions with respect to Crown corporations.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Well, this one particular riding.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Well, just a minute now. I appreciate you talking about your riding. This is a situation which prevails in many other jurisdictions and many other Crown corporations as well. It is a situation of the responsibility or the situation with the provincial Crown corporations. You know, the B.C. Rail is a very, very unique line. There's no other railway like it in the world. It's a development line. It's very costly and it's not a money-making corporate entity in the sense that a Safeway is or something else.

**MR. FRASER:** It used to be.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Railways in North America are built to develop the social and economic structure of underdeveloped areas.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Yes, I know that.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** But I appreciate the Member's comments. These matters, as always, are under review.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Ohhhhh!

**MR. GIBSON:** I raised this topic the other day with respect to North Vancouver, and the Minister didn't give an answer then and he hasn't today. I don't think he understands that it is the policy of this government, as enunciated by the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Hon. Mr. Lorimer), that Crown corporations should pay full local taxes, and BCR doesn't B.C. Hydro at least pays some kind of a grant; ICBC pays a grant in lieu of taxes. It's a typical position taken by the government that that is their

[ [Page 2857](#) ]

policy.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** ICBC loses more money than BCR.

**MR. GIBSON:** That's right. ICBC loses more money than BCR, but it still pays taxes. Mr. Chairman, the Minister says that BCR is a very unique line. It is; it doesn't pay taxes. That's how it's unique. It doesn't share the community load of those areas where it operates. Mr. Chairman, I suggest that now that the Minister is executive vice-president of the railway — and we wish him well in that task — the first thing he should do is to get that company into paying its fair share of the taxes to the municipalities along its route, including in excess of \$125,000 per year to the District of North Vancouver and some to the city as well.

Vote 34 approved.

Vote 35: general administration, \$2,839,608 — approved.

Vote 36: salary contingencies, \$479,600 — approved.

Vote 37: shared programmes and grants, \$1,595,663 — approved.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Just a couple of moments' recess until the Members bring their notes. Are you prepared to go on the Minister?

Interjection.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Certainly. Okay. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bennett) is....

Interjections.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Mr. Chairman, do I understand that some Members in this committee have got more rights than other Members in discussing the votes?

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** No, not at all. How's your back?

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** My back's great.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** The official opposition asked for a couple of moments' recess, which has....

**MR. BENNETT:** Go ahead.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** All right. Is it all right with the official opposition? Oh, fine. Okay.

## ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

*(continued)*

On vote 120: Minister's office, \$94,135 — continued.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** I just hope that *Hansard* has recorded for posterity that the Premier and House Leader (Hon. Mrs. Dailly) are now deferring to the opposition as to what business is conducted.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Certainly. I'm very gracious.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Great. Terrific.

I have one matter to raise with the Hon. Minister of Labour. It arises out of an announcement he made with regard to the appointment of Mr. McKee as a special officer with regard to British Columbia Rail. I found that to be, I think, a very worthwhile appointment, and I congratulate the Minister on it.

As I read the press release, I was concerned that Mr. McKee was going to probe into the historical labour difficulties there have been with B.C. Rail. While I know that there have been conflicts between union groups, I was concerned in the way that it came out in the press release as some suggestion that somehow or other B.C. Rail was unique in its labour-management problems. I would be anxious to hear the Minister discuss this matter for a few moments so that there would be no doubt cast with respect to the words used in that press report. I know that there are frictions within B.C. Rail and I wouldn't want those to be intensified in any way by what may be a misreading of that press release. Many industries have difficult times with their labour-management relationships. I wouldn't want anyone to suggest that some long, deep-seated history of problems with that railway is just suddenly coming to the surface today. I think at the time of the appointment of Mr. McKee, it would be worthwhile that the Minister make certain that he gets off on the very best foot in the resolution of some pretty serious difficulties.

**HON. W.S. KING (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say to the Hon. Member for West Vancouver–Howe Sound that there was consultation with all of the unions involved in B.C. Rail and the management of B.C. Rail some months ago, at which time there was an expressed desire on the part of unions and management to have some kind of independent third party have a good look at the structure of bargaining that

prevails in B.C. Rail and to perhaps make some recommendations for improvement which could act as a catalyst for bringing the parties to some voluntary restructuring.

[ [Page 2858](#) ]

One of the problems that has really intensified labour strife on the railway is the fact that historically, up until about three years ago, most of the B.C. Rail unions were part of the national wage negotiating arrangement in Canada and, in fact, usually did not conclude negotiations or did not even enter into any real spirit until the national wage agreements were signed on CN and CP. Once that pattern had been established, then B.C. Rail, as part of the same unions generally, picked up those national agreements with minor modifications to suite the local circumstances.

Two years ago the unions moved away from that approach and sought to negotiate their own wage agreement. As a consequence, it disturbed the historic pattern and accentuated the problem of a multiplicity of unions involved on the property. There are about 11 unions involved in separate sets of negotiations with B.C. Rail. That presents a major problem in terms of the simple mechanics of negotiating contract expiry time. Inevitably, there is a delay in dealing with all of the unions involved by simple numbers.

So what we hope to do is have a look to see if that bargaining structure can be "proved in any way. In addition to that, there has been quite a groundswell of complaints all over the property that the actual relationship between supervisory and trade union representatives has not been good.

We hope that Mr. McKee will consult not only with the trade union officials and management officials but also with the workers and the line supervisors to find out what is causing the breakdown in communication and how, perhaps, also the relationship can be improved on the property. I think that is one of the inherent reasons why there has been so much dissatisfaction at the time of bargaining.

I am not sure what the Member is referring to in terms of his concern over the press release. More significant than the press release, of course, are the terms of reference under which the special officer was appointed. In general terms, that is the function and that is the direction for the special officers.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Mr. Chairman, just very briefly, I thank the Minister for that statement. I wasn't suggesting that there was anything wrong in the terms of reference. But the use of the term "historic difficulties" and so on conveyed to me, and I wouldn't want it conveyed to anybody else, that there was some deep-seated friction between the employees and the railway which is causing this problem. I felt certain that it was because of the structure that existed with regard to the number of unions and the railway itself and, as the Minister pointed out, the dependency upon the national negotiations, as has heretofore been the case. I think your statement makes that clear. Thank you very much.

**HON. MR. KING:** I would just respond that according to the story I received from the parties when I met with them some months ago, there were indeed historic frictions in terms of a proper dialogue, proper mechanisms for solving grievances at the local levels, in the northern part of the province particularly. So in that sense there certainly are historic problems.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I wasn't going to bring this subject up, but since it has been debated, I want to wish Mr. McKee success in unravelling the mess that that Minister of Labour created in the management-union agreements while he was a director of the British Columbia Railway. The problem rests directly on that Minister's shoulders. It was that Minister who, in settling wage negotiations with the engineers, created this problem. I guess he thought that because he was an engineer at one time....

It was that Minister of Labour, the director of the railway, who broke away from the time-honoured trend that the railway did settle on the same basis, with minor modifications, as he said, with the senior railroad.

I would just like to have the record set straight, Mr. Chairman, that it was under that Minister of Labour and his meddling with the conflicts of interest between the unions and the railway, that created the problems. We have



had more strikes on the British Columbia Railway in the two and a half years under this government than we had in the previous 20.

As good a job as the Minister might be doing elsewhere, this responsibility for the problems of labour-management in the British Columbia Railway must rest solely and squarely on that Minister's shoulders because he is the one who went in and meddled in the affairs, as it were. This is why the other unions are unhappy at the present time.

**HON. MR. KING:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to say in that regard that the Member is certainly entitled to his opinion. But I would point out that, certainly, the fact that I was a member of the board of directors of the railway at the time the unions decided to negotiate on a different basis was in no way my decision. In no way was I involved in it.

The unions and the company had the opportunity and, indeed, the right to negotiate on whatever basis they chose. They were not restricted by legislation in any way. It was strictly a pattern that they had followed up until that time. I would suspect the main reason they decided to change that pattern was in view of the general disparity between British Columbia wage agreements and those existing across the length and breadth of this nation, in other provinces. Certainly British Columbia is higher. The railway workers perceived that and decided they

[ [Page 2859](#) ]

could do a more effective job for their membership by negotiating in the BCC. They are entitled to do that.

My involvement was certainly minimal in terms of contract bargaining. Two years ago I was involved in a direct mediation attempt with two of the unions involved in the dispute. Those were the 1972-73 negotiations. Last year I was not directly involved in any way other than to offer the normal services of the Department of Labour which are offered to any trade union.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister says that it is my opinion. It is an opinion which I have taken as a result of talking and hours and hours of deliberating with members of all of the unions in the railway. I think I know fairly well what I am talking about. But I am glad that the president of the railway saw fit to remove the Minister of Labour as a director of the railway because of a conflict of interest, which the Member for Cariboo (Mr. Fraser) brought up several times. As I say, I wish him well, because if he doesn't straighten out the mess, we are going to have real problems with that railroad.

**MR. FRASER:** I would just like to say a few words to this Minister to remind him of his bad handling of the strike on his railway last November. For seven weeks it went on. It could have been terminated in three weeks but he wouldn't do anything about it.

On that subject, I'd like to know — I asked him earlier in this session — if he is going to repay the people that had all the losses in the interior of the province. They're waiting for recompense of some kind, and they blame you for the length of the stoppage. I think you certainly should do something about it. I want to congratulate the president of the railway for firing him, but he was a little late in firing him from the executive vice-presidency. I said during that time in November that he had a conflict of interest. Of course it turned out to be so when the president acknowledged the fact by removing him.

There's another thing I'd like to hear the Minister's comments on. How does he feel the government's getting along with the B.C. Federation of Labour? I've got a column here that I would think is kind of disturbing that would indicate they're not very happy with you people.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What? Who?

**MR. FRASER:** The B.C. Federation of Labour's not very happy with you. There's an article here that says...  
Interjection.

**MR. FRASER:** Right.

"The truth of what goes on in the relationship between the NDP government and the B.C. Federation of Labour is getting harder to unravel every day. The leaders of the provincial labour body must have a pact to keep quiet about this subject, because all an inquisitive reporter can get at is off-the-record comments."

Interjections.

**MR. FRASER:** I'm reading out of a reliable newspaper of the Province of British Columbia.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** What's the name of the paper?

**MR. FRASER:** I'm not too sure. I think they call it the *Sun* or the *Star*. (Laughter.)

"This means the reporter has to be the judge of whether the information is genuine or not.

"What brings up this melodrama is the latest round of reports that trouble is brewing with the labour side of the NDP alliance, pitted against the party government in Victoria.

"Ever since the NDP was elected in 1972, there has been an uneasy truce between the two over labour legislation. Every once in a while the two threaten to break out into a real fight, but never do.

"Amidst all this is the puzzle over why the central labour body is so unhappy. Since 1972, unionism has been making some gains in organizing the unorganized, due to improved legislation. At the bargaining table, its gains have been substantial to the point that B.C. will have a \$6 an hour rate for ordinary labour by mid-year, which has to be higher than anywhere else on this continent.

"What else do they want? The answer to this question is fairly clear. They still think legalistic minds are dominating the new labour board, and it should not be that way when people's problems are involved. They want stronger provisions for organizational or informational picketing, and technological change. There are some straightforward complaints. But what these problems are doing to the organization known as the federation is another matter.

"On the weekend" — and this should be disturbing to the Minister of Labour — "the federation president, George Johnson, who is the second vice-president of the provincial NDP, failed to attend the party's convention out at UBC. Reporters, looking for Johnson on Saturday, were advised he was shopping. When he got back to the office Tuesday, he had a 'sorry, no comment' answer for anyone asking

[ [Page 2860](#) ]

why he did not attend the convention.

"Why the secrecy? Other executives from unions affiliated with the federation were there as delegates, and many are not happy with the government's performance on labour. Insider stories say there's a division within the federation leadership over how far the organization should go in putting on pressure to get the amendment it wants. Some don't want any pressure put on at all, while others are talking about varying degrees.

"Labour's dilemma is that it cannot elect the NDP government by itself, but the government's re-election becomes a lot less precarious if labour's not attacking it. If the federation takes on the government over the labour laws, the rank and file unionists may misconstrue the objective and vote for another party in the next election."

Hear that, Mr. Premier?

Interjection.

**MR. FRASER:** We've got news for you.

"The federation can't let that happen because the present leadership still believes there's no alternative to the NDP party for the next government.

"This dilemma is one reason the chief executive secretary-treasurer, Len Guy, has a low profile. He is steering the ship through the tricky waters in a quiet, behind-the-scene manner. The federation is described as really uptight about the legalistic minds involved in the new Labour Relations Board."

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order. Before the Hon. Member proceeds too far, would the Hon. Member seek in some way to relate what he's reading to the administrative responsibilities of the Minister of Labour?

**MR. FRASER:** Well, it certainly does. This is about all labour....

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** That's politics.

**MR. FRASER:** Well, isn't this politics, here? (Laughter.)

**MR. FRASER:** "The federation says chairman Paul Weiler is a lawyer." Mr. Chairman, the labour board is talking about the chairman....

Interjection.

**MR. FRASER:** Oh, it comes under that Minister's jurisdiction.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Vote 124.

**MR. FRASER:** I know you didn't know that by the way he operates it, but it really does come under his....

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** You're bringing up politics.

**MR. FRASER:** That's right. "The federation says chairman Paul Weiler is a lawyer, even though he says he's actually a law professor." What's the difference? He says that vice-chairman John Begend...I've heard that name somewhere before.

Interjections.

**MR. FRASER:** .... and Nancy Morrison are lawyers. "Only Jack Moore and Ed Peck, the other vice-chairmen aren't. The federation doesn't even count Ron Boone who recently was named a vice-chairman."

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Come on, Alex, sit down.

**MR. FRASER:** Who's Mr. Begend?

"But Boone kept his job as registrar and the federation insists that is really who he is. That gives the federation a majority of lawyers running the board's top offices and influences the decisions as chairmen of panels investigating labour disputes. Their tie-breaking votes make it a board dominated by the legalistic viewpoint."

Do you agree with this, Mr. Minister?

**HON. MR. KING:** I'll tell you, Alex. Sit down.

**MR. FRASER:** Oh, no. There's a little more here yet.

"Others who want to defend the board don't count Weiler as a lawyer, and include Boone among the vice-chairmen. They come out with a majority of non-lawyers running the operation. It seems like a childish game, but it has the federation leadership sizzling. Next month the federation will hold a special one-day closed-door convention to discuss tightening up procedures when a union is going on strike. Some observers are suggesting that the real reason for the meeting is to discuss their relationship with the government."

Interjections.

**MR. FRASER:** You've got more trouble ahead.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Order.

[ [Page 2861](#) ]

**MR. FRASER:** It goes on:

"But the insiders' story says the reason for the meeting is real enough since some unions have been going on strike and affecting others without giving any advance notice according to the federation's policy of co-ordination. However, that doesn't mean the matter won't come up.

"A new labour law the federation would like to see dumped quickly is the one allowing the labour board to arbitrarily impose a first contract for a union having trouble negotiating one after getting certified. It could be used to settle a strike that begins Tuesday at ICBC."

Where's that Minister of lost leaders?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order, please. Again I would....

**MR. FRASER:** "It is concerned that the labour board, a government agency, might be inclined to give ICBC, a government corporation, the best...." Just a few observations.

I'd like to hear from the Minister now, to see what he has to say about all these charges that your friends and supporters are making about him. He has even lost them.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Shame! Bringing up politics.

**HON. MR. KING:** The first thing I have to say, Mr. Chairman, is that the Member's reading was very haltingly done. But I want to assure him that there are no unholy alliances in this province.

As far as the newspaper reporter's speculation about the inner politics of the trade union movement in this province is concerned, that does not come within the jurisdiction of the Minister's vote. I have enough problems in the Department of Labour without answering for trade unions or management groups. Thank you.

**MR. GIBSON:** If the Premier wishes to intervene in this debate, I'll naturally defer to him.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** I move the committee rise....

**MR. GIBSON:** I don't think he was recognized, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order, please! We have a little problem: the Chair recognized the Member for North Vancouver–Capilano.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Would the Hon. Member defer to....

**MR. GIBSON:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again. (Laughter.)

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** It's out of order. It's "resolution."

**MR. GIBSON:** Resolution, Mr. Chairman.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Speaker, the committee reports resolutions.

## Presenting reports.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 35 of the Motor Carrier Act, I wish to table the annual report of the motor carrier commission in manuscript form.

Hon. Mr. Barrett files answers to questions.

Hon. Mr. Barrett moves adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

[ [Page 2862](#) ]

## APPENDIX

**69** The Hon. *R. M. Strachan* to move, in Committee of the Whole on Bill (No. 69) intituled *Automobile Insurance Amendment Act, 1975*, to amend as follows:

By deleting section 3 and substituting the following:

"3. Section 24 (1) is amended:

"(a) By striking out 'or damage to property to the extent of two hundred dollars or more' and substituting ', or damage to property exceeding \$250,'.

"(b) By adding at the end '; but recovery on an action as it relates to property damage shall be limited to the amount by which the damages exceed \$250.'"

**88** The Hon. *Phyllis F. Young* to move, in Committee of the Whole on Bill (No. 88) intituled *Trade Practices Amendment Act, 1975*, to amend as follows:

Section 2, lines 2 and 10: By deleting "person" where it first appears in each line and substituting "supplier" in each case.

Section 3, in the second to last line: By inserting "at least" between "representation," and "equal".

---

[ Return to [Legislative Assembly Home Page](#) ]