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

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**MONDAY, MARCH 8, 1971**

**Afternoon Sitting**

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

The Honourable W.D. Black presented to Mr. Speaker a Message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

On the motion of Mr. Black, Bill (No. 49) intituled *An Act to Amend the Department of Highways Act* was introduced, read a first time, and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting after today.

On the motion of Mr. L.T. Nimsick, the following Bills were introduced, read a first time, and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting after today.

Bill (No. 63) intituled *Prevention of Restraint of Professional Practices Act*.

Bill (No. 64) intituled *An Act to Amend the Attachment of Debts Act*.

Bill (No. 65) intituled *An Act to Amend the Annual Holidays Act*.

On the motion of the Honourable W.A.C. Bennett, the House proceeded to the Order "Public Bills and Orders."

**HON. W.A.C. BENNETT (South Okanagan):** Second Reading of Bill No. 13, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 13, *An Act to Amend the Provincial Home-owner Grant Act*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** This Government pioneered the homeowner grant, in 1957, to reduce the burden of local taxes on home-owners, especially small home-owners, and encourage every family throughout the Province to acquire their own home. The annual grant was originally set at \$28 and has been progressively raised and reached \$160 in 1970. At the same time, per capita local government grant for municipalities has been continually revised upwards, as have the grants to local school boards for primary and secondary education.

To continue the programme started in 1957, this Government now proposes to increase the home-owner grant by a further \$10 to a maximum of \$170 in the 1971 taxation year. It is estimated that the additional cost to the Province for the increase will be about \$5½ million and, now, the total home-owner grant, annually, in 1971-72 will

cost a total of \$66,200,000.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that, in my opinion, there is no better way to spend the public money of this Province than to help people first, to own their own homes and, second, to help them pay the taxes on their homes.

In the early days, when this was first brought out as a Government policy, it was after a long search to see how we could stop these increases in local taxes on retired people and so forth with very small homes, so that, even if their taxes went up \$2 or \$3 a year, it would have been a burden on these old age pensioners. We started out, when everybody said it was impossible, it wasn't done elsewhere, with \$28. This bill will make it \$170 per year, which means tens of thousands of people with small homes throughout the Province will only pay \$1 a year. Everybody, irrespective of how much taxes they pay, will receive up to \$170. The greatest benefit naturally comes to those people with the small homes. It is part of the Government's policy to encourage everybody in this Province to own their own home and be able to pay their taxes, because, after all, the great struggle around the world is between the "haves" and the "have nots". We want every person in British Columbia who wants to, by their choice, own their own home. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move the second reading of this bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Burnaby-Willingdon.

**MR. J.G. LORIMER (Burnaby-Willingdon):** Mr. Speaker, I've been around long enough to know that we will support this bill. I would like to point out that this is a grant to individuals in the Province. It bothers me sometimes when I see it listed as a grant to municipalities. It is a grant to individuals rather than to municipalities.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister without Portfolio.

**HON. G. McCARTHY (Vancouver-Little Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear the remarks of our Premier and Minister of Finance and equally delighted to hear that the New Democratic Party is going to support this bill so strongly. This hasn't been the case and, if the Member who has just taken his place will remember, that Party was not so delighted with this when it was \$28 a year, Mr. Speaker. Neither was the Member who has just taken his seat. However, we can both read history, as the people of British Columbia have done over the many years. That's why we sit on this side of the House and they sit on that side.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that our Premier and Minister of Finance did not mention in the second reading of this bill, and I think it should be brought out, is the fact that the annual home-owner grant will give an opportunity to very many people in this Province to have home ownership who would not have been given the opportunity if it were not for this grant, coupled with the home acquisition grant, which is available, of \$1,000.

To give you an idea of what a difference this makes to a home-owner in this Province, I would like to state that a man who wishes to assume the cost of a \$20,000 home, if he has \$1,000 to put down and the mortgage is 9½ per cent over 25 years and his gross taxes are \$360 per year, his monthly payments, without the \$170 home-owner grant, would be \$193.60 a month. With this grant, made possible through Bill 13, his monthly payments will be \$170.89, which means, in effect, you can say that British Columbia contributes \$22.71 per month on the payment for such a house. Then, we can take it the other way around, Mr. Speaker. When we consider the qualifying income, as you know, all of our applicants for homes in Canada, in assuming a mortgage, are based on their qualifying income...A man who earns \$8,000 per year should not have his principal, interest and taxes, that is, his monthly payments, exceeding \$180 a month, that is according to the qualifying income, based on 27 per cent of his monthly income. Assuming that gross taxes are \$360 per year, again, and that the applicant has \$1,000 of his own, or the home acquisition grant, for a down payment, and, again, assuming a 9½ per cent mortgage for 25 years, the maximum costs of a qualifying house bought by that same person, earning \$8,000, without the \$170 grant, which we are

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discussing in this bill, would be \$18,500. He would be able to purchase a home with that amount of money. However, with the \$170 home-owner grant this man can now enter into agreement for a \$21,100 home. So, what we are really saying is that a person living on an \$8,000 income could afford to buy a house costing \$21,100, with the

help of the \$170 home-owner grant and the \$1,000 home acquisition grant. Without those benefits, available only in the Province of British Columbia, this man would have to confine his purchase to an \$18,500 home, which is a difference of \$2,600.

What we are saying, in effect, is that with this legislation, the British Columbia Government is contributing the sum of \$2,600 to the qualifying income of that home-owner, I felt that this kind of information, the kind of information that isn't told and isn't brought out, should be re-emphasized in the reading of this bill, because there is no doubt in my mind and, surely, in the many hundreds of people that have taken advantage of this legislation, that this is the most enlightened home-owner legislation in all of North America.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the First Member for Vancouver–Point Grey.

**MR. P.L. McGEER (Vancouver–Point Grey):** Mr. Speaker, I quite agree with the lady Minister without Portfolio that there are certain facts regarding the support of low-income people that aren't completely brought out in this bill. One of them is that there are many, many people in British Columbia who cannot afford to buy a home — home-owner grant or not. Those people have no choice, Mr. Speaker, but to rent. This home-owner grant continues to help more and more those who can own a home but the consequence is to punish more and more those who cannot afford to own a home.

I would hope that the Minister of Finance, one year, could find in his heart to introduce in this annual *Homeowner Grant Amendment Act*, a way of assisting those who cannot afford to buy a home. We've got to find a way of easing the additional tax burden that is placed on all tenants in the Province of British Columbia. Mr. Speaker, as well, we must find a better way of assisting those who are on fixed incomes and are continuing to live in a home in some area that has very high home-owner taxes because of expensive municipal services. They will find their home-owner taxes increasing even more than the home-owner grant does.

There are many, many such retired people in the city of Vancouver and in the area which I represent. These people need something in addition to these few dollars extra each year. It would be a wonderful thing, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance, one year, in his amendment to the *Home-owner Grant Act* could say that all retired people on fixed incomes would have their taxes looked after through a fund set up under the home-owner grant and, then, have the excess taxes owing taken away at the time succession duties were collected, under a separate act. It would be a way of combining the two and allowing the people, who are on fixed incomes, to maintain their residence with some dignity.

We will support this amendment because it is better for the people who own homes than if it did not exist. Still, in all, we wish to draw attention to the Minister of Finance, through you, Mr. Speaker, that improvements are required and the coverage that is given has to be broadened to other groups.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Cowichan-Malahat.

**MR. R.M. STRACHAN (Cowichan-Malahat):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid what I'm going to say is going to take considerable time. I want to examine the relative abilities of those who can afford to purchase a home at \$18,500 and those who can purchase a home at \$80,000. I want to examine the proposal that came from the lady Minister without Portfolio that this is not really a grant of \$170 but is an added income of \$2,600. I want to examine the number of "howevers" that the lady Minister without Portfolio included in her speech on this proposed upping of the home-owner grant. I want to relate it to the assessments within the Province of British Columbia, and with every other aspect of home ownership the lady Minister without Portfolio managed to bring into this bill to increase the amount of the home-owner grant to \$170.

I think you will agree that that is a pretty extensive field of examination, all related to this fairly simple bill. However, the contents of this bill are limited to the matter of the \$170 home-owner grant and I won't reach out into an examination of the NHA regulations, the \$8,000 limitation or requirement in order to meet it. I'll simply say that I, too, am going to support this particular piece of legislation. Similar to the Member from Burnaby, who spoke and who stuck to the bill, he expressed a little amazement that, although it's a home-owner grant, it's listed and talked about as an aid to municipalities.

As usual, this afternoon, as I walked in, I took a look at the Votes and Proceedings and I found that a question I ask every year had been answered by the Minister of Education. But it is answered a little differently this year — they answered questions that I hadn't even asked, which, I will agree, is a substantial difference from the usual procedure. That makes up for the questions that they don't answer when you do ask them — but it is surprising. The whole question I asked was: what percentage of school operating costs was paid by the Provincial Government in each school district in the Province in the calendar year 1970. In past years, I have been given a straightforward answer to the question: what amount of money was taken out of the Department of Education grants towards education directly to the school districts. I notice that, instead of simply answering the question straightforwardly this time, it says: the percentages of net budgeting expenses paid by the Provincial Government to each school district, inclusive of direct grants and the estimated portion of home-owner grants applicable to the local school taxes for the calendar year of 1970 were...which, of course, is a different set of figures and not a set of figures that you can relate to the previous figures answered under the same question I put on the Order Paper each and every year.

So, it is not only a home-owner grant, really. It's a grant to municipalities and it's a grant to the school boards. Under this particular bill...as I say, I am supporting it. I'm also going to have another question on the Order Paper in order to get the right answer, the usual answer, the comparable answer, to the question which was answered by the Minister of Education last week.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Esquimalt.

**MR. H.J. BRUCH (Esquimalt):** Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to see that the Opposition Members, after being

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dragged, screaming and kicking into approval of the homeowner grant, now, are quite pleased to see the change and the increase; however, they are still giving us the same arguments that they have in the original incident, which show that they don't understand the principles of the home-owner grant and they don't want to understand it.

First of all, when we get this little bit about it should go to the municipalities," they should full well know that, if we gave this money to the municipalities, at least half of it would be going to business and industry in this Province in reduction of taxation. The other argument that we constantly get, and, unfortunately, there are one or two Members on this side who come up with this argument, is that we should be giving the renter equal treatment. Well, Mr. Speaker, the very basis of this home-owner grant is to put the home-owner on equal footing with persons who happen to reside in properties where they can write-off taxes, where they can write-off repair, where they can write-off depreciation, as the cost of doing business. The home-owner has always been penalized because he didn't have that opportunity of writing-off his cost of doing business, even though he owned his home. This home-owner grant has, at last, put the home-owner on an equal, fair footing with the other people in the community, whether they own a home that they commercially rent, or even if it is reflected in the renters in an apartment, in that the depreciation cost is and should be reflected in the cost of rent. Most certainly, we not only approve this amendment but look forward to an increase in future years.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Revelstoke-Slocan.

**MR. B. CAMPBELL (Revelstoke-Slocan):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to see that we are not only unanimous in this House, apparently, although the vote has not been held on this piece of legislation, but also that the financial policies of this Government and particularly its policy with respect to home-ownership in assisting the taxpayer, are recognized in other parts of the world as well. I have with me a copy of the February 15 issue of the Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate in Australia, this particular edition of the paper being published within only a couple of weeks of the Budget being brought down in this Chamber. Before commenting on its remarks with respect to this Government's policies regarding home-ownership, it also has taken other ideas from the Province, because there is also an advertisement in it for lingerie for instant slimming for girls who love the good life. This particular article, and it contains a picture of the Finance Minister of the Province, says that, "Financial Magic as a Government Works Debt-free." It goes on to tell about the modern marvel of the public finance, whom they identify as the Premier of this Province. They go on, and I will relate it strictly to this bill. "Climbing debt can seriously impair State budgeting, stunt public services and slash the tax dollars' impact in direct relation to rising

debt pay-offs to moneylenders. A solution to debt pay-off has been formulated by British Columbia, the most westerly Canadian Province, and the big idea involves noninflationary budgets, a debt-free economy and eventually the issuing of payments to the people of the profits from State prosperity..." — such as we see here in the increase of the home-owners grant. It says that, "The Premier's philosophy also holds that governments must help people, not councils or governments. That is why he pays the B.C. prosperity bonus direct to the ratepayers, because they are the persons it is meant to help. As a result, Mr. Bennett slashes costs, the roots of inflation, and the public is given a degree of relief." That is what we see, as the Member from Esquimalt has just pointed out. One final little comment from the article says, "It is, of course, the secret to perpetual office-holding. While the Premier has made no such claim, he only says 50 years, but he renews that claim each year."

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Kootenay.

**MR. L.T. NIMSICK (Kootenay):** Listening to the different remarks here, you would think this was something for all people, because the Honourable the Premier stated the main effort was to help out the low-income people, the people with small homes. Then, along comes the Johnny come-lately, the Cabinet Minister without Portfolio, and she plays up that it is for the purpose of helping out those who can buy a \$20,000 home (*interruption*). Nevertheless, she wasn't here at the time when this bill was first brought in. The New Democratic Party at no time, at no time, I want this to be made clear, because I was the one that spoke on this bill at the time it was introduced...at no time, and I want you to get it clear because I want the people throughout this Province to get it clear, that at no time has the New Democratic Party been opposed to it. Had we been doing it, we would have done a lot better job on this question of the home-owner grant (*interruption*). You weren't even here, then, you weren't even here, at all, at that time. I was here. This is one of the values of having some background history — you know that you can speak from experience and not just hearsay — like some of the people here, today.

I can well see why you are boosting it, because if you didn't boost it, it would lose all its effect. The property taxes throughout the Province are continually going up and up and up, and they are outstripping even the home-owner grant — you have got to agree with me on that point. It's outstripping the home-owner grant in a great many areas, so, therefore, it is not what...When we speak of Australia and that very fine talk the Honourable the Member for Revelstoke-Slocan gave, you know, it is marvellous that, at a long distance away, everything looks green. When they talk about a debt-free Province...now, I don't know who wrote the articles for the Australian papers but it must have been the Premier, himself, probably, who sent them the information. They continually talk about a debt-free Province and it is not so. The only unfortunate part about it...it's a good thing that you can pick up a paper from Australia, because you couldn't pick up one from British Columbia and say that it is definitely a debt-free Province — because they know better. I want to say that I have always supported the bill from the very start. You'd like it to get around that the NDP was opposed to helping out the people. We wouldn't only solve this problem but we would help out all the rest of the people as well. We do endorse this bill. We've always endorsed the home-owner grant, right from the very start.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Shuswap.

**MR. W.F. JEFcoat (Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to watch the Opposition switch from one foot to the other when it comes to this home-owner grant. I remember it used to be the Leader of the NDP Party standing up here and all of the NDP Party opposing the increase a few years ago, all during the week. The next Monday, the Leader

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of the Opposition stood up there, in his place, and he said, "Mr. Speaker, anything that we have said against the home-owner grant, we want to retract now." He said, "We were home over the weekend and our people spoke to us, and, so, this week we are supporting the home-owner grant." It amuses me to see them switch from one foot to the other. I, too, am supporting this home-owner grant and always have. I think it is good and I hope it increases.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for New Westminster.

**MR. D.G. COCKE (New Westminster):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting debate and not too unlike

most debates in this House. I would suggest, however, Mr. Speaker, that we examine this just a little bit. Of course, we will go along with this bill. It is an excellent bill in this regard, that it helps home-owners but they are not the poor of this Province, Mr. Speaker. They are not the poor of this Province. The poor of this Province are the people in New Westminster who, during the last election, read in the headline on election eve, "Tenants to receive the home-owner grant." Beautiful stuff! Nice. It almost won you an election in New Westminster, Mr. Speaker, but I've seen no evidence of any legislation in that regard in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I now understand that the tenant, now, has the right to write-off repairs, according to the Member from Esquimalt. That's news in this House and I'm sure it will be news in Ottawa tomorrow. The fact of the matter is that the tenant has never had the right to write-off the repairs, it is the landlord who has those rights. Those rights are not reflected in his rents in this Province, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that this is not a poor people's Budget, anymore. It is a Budget for those people whom the Honourable Minister without Portfolio described, those people able to buy a \$20,000 home. There has been no switch on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. Even I was able to read newspapers in those days. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Dewdney.

**MR. G. MUSSALLEM (Dewdney):** I have to comment on the remarks of the Honourable Member from Kootenay, when he was commenting on the remarks from the Honourable Member for Revelstoke-Slocan. He said it is all very well when you live a long way off, the grass is very green. I say to him that he didn't add this one point. When you live right here and see it is green, that's really remarkable.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Premier will close the Debate.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I want to say how pleased I am to see all the Members of the House rallying to the support of this bill, at long last. I recall, as if it were yesterday, the day I stood in the House... (*interruption*). I wouldn't attack your group because you've got nothing there to attack. But I remember just yesterday first bringing this bill to this House. At that time, the Opposition, the CCF said that if they were elected they would repeal the bill. I want to say that the present Attorney-General asked the then Leader, Mr. Strachan, if he would repeal the bill and the answer was yes. I want to say that, later, as the debate on the bill kept going a few days, the Honourable then Leader in the House, a very brilliant leader and a good Member for Cowichan-Newcastle and a good personal friend of mine, even though he was Leader then, and even though a Member of his Party, close to him, the CCF Member for Port Alberni, said he would never, never, accept it, but, later in this House, sessions later, he admitted that he was accepting it. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, the then Leader of the Opposition, the Member now from Cowichan-Malahat came up in the House and said, "The Opposition has changed its mind because I have made a review of how it affects my riding — Ladysmith and Duncan — therefore, we must vote for it." Mr. Speaker, everybody in the Province knows that the Social Credit policies are dynamic policies and that we represent, not special interest, not the labour bosses, not the manufacturing bosses, not the industrial bosses, not the financial bosses, not the B.C. Electric bosses, but that we represent the public everywhere, that we are the genuine grass-roots movement in this country. We are the only genuine grass-roots movement that represents all the people in British Columbia. I now move second reading.

**MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. The Premier indicated that I had made a statement "...after having checked with Ladysmith and Duncan." I checked with all of the municipalities in the Province of British Columbia. I wrote to them all.

Bill No. 13 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 48, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** *An Act to Amend the Provincial Home Acquisition Grant.* The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, this is a similar act to the last bill, to help people to own their own homes.

This Government introduced the Provincial home-owner grant, first in 1957, to reduce the burden of local property taxes on home-owners and to encourage every family to acquire their own home. The annual grant, originally set at a maximum of \$28, has been progressively raised until, in the coming year, it is recommended, as I said before, to be \$170. To further assist individuals to own their own homes, effective April 1, 1966, the *Provincial Home Acquisition Grant Act* provided a grant of up to \$500 towards the purchase of a home. In 1968, the act was amended to encourage the purchase of buildings or building of new homes and the applicant could obtain a grant of up to \$1,000 for this purpose. In 1969, to additionally assist in this field, a loan, by way of a second mortgage up to \$5,000, was introduced. Last year, in the period of tight money conditions and high mortgage interest rates, the Government decided to assist persons who had rented a home for at least two years in the Province to buy a new home, not only the one they rented but, if not some other to buy a new home, not only the one they rented, but, if possible, some other grant or a \$2,500 mortgage loan towards the purchase of an existing home.

This opportunity was to be initially effective for a one-year term as a test to see how broad the acceptance was. The Government has now reviewed the question of this one-year limitation. Mortgage rates are still high and because of economic conditions over the past few months, many prospective purchasers of older homes have not been able to

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complete the financing. It is Government policy to encourage people to own their own homes, particularly those people who have been renting in the Province over a period of time and thus be able to get the annual home-owner grant. This bill, therefore, extends the \$500 outright grant, or \$2,500 low-interest second mortgage, on the purchase of an older home, and, while this bill covers one year only, it is the Government's intention — I will announce that policy now — that we will review it each and every year.

To ensure there is sufficient funds available to carry out this policy, the Minister of Finance is authorized, in this bill, to utilize funds from the Province's revenue surplus account, if required. Mr. Speaker, we can estimate fairly clearly how much money is required regarding new home construction. It is more difficult, almost impossible, to estimate how much money is required on the older homes, because there are tens of thousands of them and you never know how many people will apply. Therefore, it is fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that this Province has a substantial amount of money in the revenue surplus account, because unless we had this money in the revenue surplus account, we couldn't have these dynamic policies to help the renters of this Province. It is estimated by the people in the Finance Department, who handle this fund, that they expect and have so suggested that they will dip into the revenue surplus fund by many millions of dollars in the coming year for this purpose. That can only be an estimate, because nobody knows but the people, themselves, who will apply for these grants or loans. It should be easy, now that the people have had one year's experience, for a renter to approach, first of all, his own landlord, and say, "Mr. Landlord, I have been a good tenant. I have paid my rent. You don't get the home-owner grant on this house because you can charge your expenses up as a cost of doing business. But if you will sell this house to me that I rent from you, if you will sell this to me on a time payment plan, I will get the home-owner grant." On these older homes, the home-owner grant would pay a large portion, if not all, of the taxes on these homes. Therefore, the renter can say to the homeowner, his landlord, "You will no longer have to pay the taxes on this home. You will no longer have to pay for the upkeep of this home. You will no longer have to pay for the insurance on this home and you will receive the same monthly payments you are receiving now, but with no charges and costs against you. It will be like a monthly pension that you will be receiving until the mortgage is paid off."

I want to tell you that the best investment any person can ask for is a home for himself. I am not going to review the history that I have reviewed many times before of my own personal situation, but I would say this, that when a person... I recommend to the tenants of this Province, even though it costs tens of millions of extra money out of revenue surplus, I recommend the tenants of this Province to consider the purchase of a home this coming year because they will save money two ways. Their money will now be paying to buy something, instead of just going down the drain. Two, they will save money another way because we live in a world of inflation. Sometimes, it goes up a little and, sometimes, it goes down a little, but the trend, since 1900, has been up, even allowing for the zig-zag. It will continue to go up and the Provincial Government has no power to control that. That is handled not Nationally, but internationally and there are many economic forces working. Therefore, the homes will be more

valuable. Therefore, you will save, firstly, by getting a home paid off and there is equity. Then, as the home goes up in value you will earn more wealth for yourself. Many people throughout this Province, their chief asset is their own home, and it is their best bet. I would be a happy Premier indeed if every person in this Province who rents could buy their own home. People have the right of choice and, therefore, it is up to them to choose. A renter isn't stuck just with his own landlord. If he can't make a fair arrangement with him, he can go out and deal with other landlords who rent homes. The field is wide open. This is a bold policy, it is going to take millions and millions of dollars out of revenue surplus over the years to come, but I'll say this. The reason why we only put it in one year at a time is because of the great amount of money it uses, and you must make sure you have enough money in revenue surplus to take care of it. But, in time to come, ten or twelve years from now, goodness knows, I don't think any other... But, ten or twelve years from now, if this policy is to continue, we will have revolving funds there to take care of it.

I am glad to see the Honourable Members of the Opposition nodding their heads, because this is good policy and I am sure it will have the unanimous support of the House as well. As long as the Social Credit Government has these dynamic policies, we will always remain the Government of British Columbia. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Burnaby North.

**MRS. E.E. DAILLY (Burnaby North):** Mr. Speaker, through you to the Honourable Premier, we certainly are nodding our heads over here because, if I recall, this proposition that you should extend this grant to older homes originated from this side of the House. It was proposed, and I was in the House at the time, by the Honourable Member from Kootenay and it simply proves that once again the Opposition has come up with the ideas and the Government has acted upon them.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Kootenay.

**MR. NIMSICK:** Mr. Speaker, the Honourable the Premier was speaking about reversing decision a few minutes ago and I notice, since the beginning of this Session, he certainly has reversed his decision in regards to the older homes. He was going to delete that part of the act covering older homes and he has had a change of heart since that time. I think it was a good idea and I congratulate him for accepting our ideas that we put over from this side of the House. He did that. This is one thing, especially towards older homes, if you want to help out the people in the lower income, this has done more than any other part of the act. It has given the people in the lower income a chance to get a foothold on owning their own home. I think, though, that your regulations need a little bit of a brushing up at times because, Mr. Speaker, I just had a letter today from a fellow who made application for a \$500 grant towards an older home. He is a man of 15 years in this Province. He hasn't owned his own home. He was renting. They sold the house over his head, some years ago, and he was forced to go into a trailer and pay rent for land. Since that time, he has always wanted to get his own home and, now, they say he can't have the \$500 because they don't class renting this land for the trailer as a renter.

I've sent it down to your committee, today — the eligibility committee — to cover. I am sure that it is going to

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be handled very well because it is these little things, sometimes, that create a little feeling of injustice, especially if a person is an oldtimer in the Province. I think one of the things we want to do away with is these trailer renters, if we can possibly do it, and have them have homes rather than trailers. I don't think trailers... I know people have to have them, people who are moving around, but, nevertheless, I think that it is a nice thing to see a person get a spot of land and his own home. I feel, whether he was living in a trailer or not, that he should be eligible for this. This bill I am sure is going to get unanimous approval of the House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Esquimalt.

**MR. BRUCH:** It just goes to show that if you ride both sides of the fence long enough, you can claim you were right all the time.



Most certainly, Mr. Speaker, we welcome the announcement that the Premier made today regarding the annual review because certainly we did not know how it would work out last year. It has worked out to be a real boon to the young family starting up. In particular, the extension this year will be even more beneficial than last year, because home prices were at an all-time high last year. Many of the older homes in Greater Victoria have dropped a thousand to two thousand dollars. It will make it possible for the young people to take advantage of this situation. I hope that the annual review will repeat this opportunity, until Ottawa introduces a proper fiscal structure with reasonable interest rates.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister without Portfolio.

**MRS. McCARTHY:** With five ladies in the House, Mr. Speaker, none of the five have ever questioned that you recognize us.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, how pleased I am that he has taken the advice of some of the Government Members in regards to the change. I was very pleased, too, to hear the Member from Kootenay state that this bill, or the policy expressed in this bill, has done more for the little people in the Province than very many other forms of legislation. Really it was that philosophy that I spoke of in the last bill — that this whole home programme, the whole home acquisition programme, is the most enlightened legislation in all of North America. I might say, too, speaking about the slowness with which some of the applications for this grant and this second mortgage were processed, it really is the extensive popularity of the bill that has caused the slowness. But I understand from the department, and I do quite a lot of work with Mr. Chatterton's department, that there is added staff and the applications will be processed very much more quickly this year than they were in the last.

I would like to also just refer to one particular application that I had in this past year, where a young postman, father of four children, wrote to me and said that his limited dividends housing, which he was in in North Vancouver, which to him was a reasonable rental, would be going up \$25. He was writing to me in desperation. He could not find like accommodation anywhere in the lower mainland. I wrote back to the postman and said that if his monthly payments were going to go up to \$175 a month, on his limited income, why did he not take advantage of our second mortgage programme as expressed through this legislation. Well, to make a long story short, Mr. Speaker, that father, wife and four children were able to borrow \$750 with no interest from their mother-in-law and were able to take advantage of the \$2,500 second mortgage and now have home ownership in a very nice, attractive home in the 29th and Renfrew area in Vancouver East — the Member from Vancouver East would be pleased to know. A very nice, attractive area and one in which they can bring up their children and have a better way of life and security and an equity which they will be building which would not heretofore have been available to them without this legislation. I am very pleased indeed that the Premier has seen fit to put it in for another year, with a commitment to review it for the ensuing year.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Alberni.

**MR. H.R. McDIARMID (Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say one word. Having spoken on this subject during the Minister of Finance's estimates, for those in the Opposition, who think the Prime Minister is not listening, this is an object lesson that he is always listening — and to whoever is right, my friend, whoever is right — which happens far more often on this side of the House than on that side of the House. I think that we have canvassed fully the great boon that this is going to be to people at the lower end of the scale to get into their own homes. I can tell you from a practical point of view that this does work and that I am most happy that the Government has been farsighted enough to extend this programme for a second year.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Cowichan-Malahat.

**MR. STRACHAN:** I agree that a home acquisition grant is, in essence, basically, a first-class idea. I won't argue as to whose idea it was. It is the best way to have a regularly built home but the fact still remains and I, unlike my friend from Kootenay, realize that there are many thousands of people in British Columbia who, because of multiplicity of circumstances, find it advantageous to live in the so-called mobile home. So far, the Government has not seen fit to give this type of home the same recognition as other types of homes within the tax structure or in any other way. If it's on a firm foundation, nailed down and so on then it is applicable. But, Mr. Speaker, in this Province,

because of the kind of development that takes place and because of the kind of Province it is, the last figure I saw, a number of years ago, was that 25 per cent of our people change their address every year. A part of this is due to the fact that many of them are in the construction industry and go on a job and stay on a job two and three years, then, move on to another job and take their homes with them.

Somewhere along the line, I think, we are going to have to get some form of recognition and legislation with regard to mobile homes. Within the municipalities, because of the absence of legislation and the absence of many of the benefits that accrue to those with homes, there are problems within the municipalities.

I would like to see the home acquisition grant extended to those who are going to purchase a so-called mobile home, because they fully intend to make it their home for a long time but, because there are job changes, from place to place, they take it with them. If we recognize it, then, of course, they would be entitled, not only to this grant, but to the

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home-owner grant. I agree that the used home is a lower priced home but, when you take a mobile home, they are there with furniture, everything complete, and this is even more within the range of people in a lower-income group than even the so-called used home is. If they were giving consideration to the mobile home, it would reach even further into that lower-income group and make homeownership possible to them, because it does, as I say, include the furniture in most cases.

Now, the only drawback, of course, is the fact that the Premier has pointed out he expects inflation to continue in the years ahead and I wouldn't disagree with him on that...the ownership of a mobile home tends to depreciate each year and this is the only drawback. Nevertheless, initially, it brings home-ownership within reach of people in a much lower-income group than the legislation that now exists does.

**MIL SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Saanich and the Islands.

**MR. J.D. TISDALLE (Saanich and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, the most exciting thing about this bill is the effect of escalation that it will have on jobs. This type of home-ownership has a stimulating effect on new housing, as well. Many of our newly married couples go for a small residence that, sometimes, has been the home of a senior citizen who has moved into an apartment. This picks up the slack in the ownership of these small homes, which have been hard to sell to anybody other than retired people. Because the new home-owner hasn't got his down payment, quite often, this acts as the down payment. So, what we have done is move through the line into the new housing.

The most exciting thing, as I said, is the effect that it is going to have on jobs in the community. I recall, too, that the Opposition looked at the first legislation that we brought in, the \$500 grant, with a great deal of dim acceptance. In fact, they repudiated it, saying that it would have an inflationary effect on the older homes, it would be swallowed up in the price. It was the Member from Kootenay who said that very thing in this House. I recall it very well because, the following year, when it was \$1,000, they said, "All that has happened is that the price of the house has gone up \$1,000." This did not happen last year, or the year before. Housing, actually, has levelled off and this has afforded a wonderful opportunity for the new home-owner, the first-timer, to get into his own quarters and avoid paying rent and only having rent receipts. He will build up an equity in those older homes, because we have found that the municipalities are reluctant to allow anything in the neighbourhood of 650 sq. ft. to be build in their municipality. Those older homes, that were built many years before zoning and regulations prevented them from being there, now have become a very desirable commodity for the first-time home-owner. This has become the down payment.

The only problem that I see is that the financial institutions have decided to get into the act and act a little bit like Scrooges. They have decided they don't like a person using the Government guaranteed grant as the down payment. I asked the Minister of Finance and all the powers that he has at his disposal to have a firm talking to the investors in the mortgage field because they are misusing the honour and the guarantee of this Government to make out that this is not recognized as a down payment. I think it is a reflection on their faith in the country and I repudiate the financial mortgage companies that try to act this way. I ask them, today, to honour, once more, the Government

guarantee as the down payment for the first-time home-owners in this province.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Second Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. R.A. WILLIAMS (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, I think the point made by the Honourable Member from Cowichan Malahat is an important one. I urge upon the Premier to consider this question of mobile homes. Mobile homes now represent 20 per cent of the housing starts in Canada. That is one fifth of the people, in fact, buying mobile homes. The figure is even higher in the United States, so it is clear that this is the route toward cheap, low-cost housing on an individual basis. I am sure the Premier would agree that it is better than public housing, because it does involve an equity and it does involve ownership. So, why should these people be discriminated against? The Premier has suggested that one of the problems is that they depreciate whereas other things go up (*interruption*).

Oh, I see. Well, the Premier seemed to agree on that point. There was joint agreement. The point is, if a site were acquired, or if your strata titles or condominium were used, or legislation were used for mobile homes so that there was a tie into land...the Premier knows the reason that houses don't depreciate really is land plus the basic economy. Those are the two reasons. I would urge upon the Premier to think about this lower-income group that is buying, now, 20 per cent of the population, which is buying mobile homes. Every consideration should be given to those people because that is generally the lower-income spectrum or the lower-middle income spectrum for retired, older people. They are the kind of people that legislation should be developed to help and, by cutting off that 20 per cent, we are cutting off the very people we should be propping up, so I urge the Premier to support the suggestion by the Member from Cowichan-Malahat. I point out, further, that the chartered banks are starting to see mobile homes in a different light, as well. The chartered banks, now, will lend on a ten-year basis for paying off the mobile home, where, before, they would only lend on a five-year basis. So, the banks are starting to see these as a kind of semipermanent or near-permanent housing form that they, in fact, are. I urge the Premier to give every consideration at this point.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Premier will close the debate.

**MIL BENNETT:** I listened very attentively to what the Member from East Vancouver and the Member from Cowichan-Malahat said, but I listened more attentively to the Member from Kootenay, who has a lot of experience in this regard. I think what happened in the United States — the 20 per cent — I don't think happens here. Here is the problem. In the sale of cars, there is a great selling agency built right up to sell these cars and there is a great selling agency built up to sell mobile homes. There is not the same pressure in the selling agency to sell used homes, and, therefore, that is the reason why I made the appeal, today, to the renter to buy. If he buys a used home, in a period of years, like the Member from Cowichan-Malahat agreed with me, it would go up in value and the others go down in value. We must think in long-term planning for these families and not be carried away just with the pressure sales on mobile homes — that is where

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the pressure is. But the real values are in the used homes (*interruption*). Well, everybody is in some kind of business, somewhere. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Members of the House to support the second reading.

Bill 48 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, there are two bills on the Order Paper that we would like the permission of the House to refer to committee. I will call them in order, 39 and 37. Bill 39 first, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 39, *Synthetic Food Products Act*. The Honourable the Minister of Agriculture.

**HON. C.M. SHELFORD (Omineca):** Mr. Speaker, in moving second reading of Bill 39, as the Premier indicated, it is my intention to refer the bill to the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture. The purpose of the bill is to prevent a manufacturer's plant or distributor, wholesaler or retailer, from offering for sale a synthetic food

product, where the package or label on the same, would lead the purchaser to assume that the product being purchased was a natural, agricultural product. Now, the best example of that is this right here — it has two, nice, rosy red apples on it and it has never seen an apple. Now there are other products similar to this, which, we are concerned about and, no doubt, the producers are concerned. The bill will also prevent the sale of synthetic food products in British Columbia, without first obtaining a permit from the Minister to do so. There is no question that we are interested in stopping the sale of synthetic food products. What we are trying to do is to make it very clear to the consumer that, if he sees an apple, for instance, on a package like this, he knows he is buying a natural product and that is really all we are trying to do, make sure the consumer knows very clearly what he is buying. If he wishes to buy an inferior, synthetic product, well, then, I would say he should have the right to do so. I think he should also have the right and the producers of natural products should have the right that the consumer does know. If a consumer doesn't like a synthetic product, quite often, the natural product producer gets blamed for this inferior type of product. We don't intend, for one minute, to try to eliminate things, such as orange crush and lemon jello and those sort of things that have been on the market for many years. As I said before, if people want these products, they will still be able to purchase them, but we want them clearly marked and that is all. I move second reading of the bill.

**MR. STRACHAN:** I appreciate the efforts of the Minister and I agree it should be referred to the committee. I think it is a first-class idea to try to get some truth in advertising into every area possible.

You recollect the other day, I mentioned to the Attorney-General a bill that was passed, relating to advertising, in the United Kingdom two years. It's not going to be easy to outdo the advertisers, Mr. Minister, as you well know. I am thinking, for instance, a picture of margarine, a picture there of something that looks like a pat of butter — and a pat of margarine does look like a pat of butter — with a background of a silo and a barn and cows wandering in the field — a vegetable product. It could have been a product right off the farm but, still, it's not a dairy product. This is the sort of thing you will be up against in trying to correct it, but I agree we have to take every step possible to assure that the customer can be as sure as possible that what he is getting is the kind of product that is demonstrated on the package.

Bill 39 was referred to the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 37, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 37, *Air Space Titles Act*. The Honourable the Attorney-General.

**HON. L.R. PETERSON (Vancouver–Little Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, under the present *Land Registry Act*, we, of course, have the facilities for the registration of title to the surface rights of land. We have, probably, one of the best systems, I think, of land registration, in that respect, that exists anywhere in the world. Now, with the trend, especially in the redevelopment of the downtown core areas of major cities and the utilization of space, we want to develop a simple and effective system of registration for these parcels of space. It stems, of course, from the old legal maxim which is interpreted from Latin. I have enough trouble pronouncing French — I am not going to begin to try Latin in this Session. Translated it is, "To whomsoever the soil belongs, he owns also the sky and to the depths."

I must say there is an old case that some of the learned Members of the profession may be aware of... (*interruption*)...to the depths, you see, not necessarily, could be excluded from the title, of course. But, unless they are excluded, you would own both. The principle was in an old case. It involved an action of trespass arising out of a neighbour's quarrel, culminating in an altercation about the boundary line fence. This is the judgement of the courts: "It is one of the oldest rules of property known to the law that the title of the owner of the soil extends not only downward to the centre of the earth," which answers the Honourable Member for Kootenay's question, "but also upward, although it is, perhaps, doubtful whether owners, as quarrelsome as the parties in this case, will ever enjoy their property in the latter direction, that is, upward." In any event, we think, in this bill, we have developed a system which will enable the registration of parcels of space, whereby the owner of the lot can subdivide the parcel of space above his land, and then, he can sell a parcel of air space, lot 3, and get a certificate of title for it in the same way that you can, presently, with surface rights. The distinction from the existing legislation, namely the *Strata Titles Act*,

which involves, of course, the development of corporation and etc. and utilization of surface rights, is that, under this bill, you can have different ownership of the surface rights from the air space rights. This has particular significance, of course, where a municipality may want to have someone else build a structure over a street, or over railways, and still retain the use and the ownership of the surface rights, that is, of the road or of the railway. It will be possible, under this, to do so but, as far as the access to your parcel of air space, that would have to be arranged by a separate instrument, because mere ownership of the air space title does not give you access or ownership of the surface rights. In many instances, you would get to it from another property, of course, built over. So, that is, basically, the principle. In view of the difficulty in terms of understanding and dealing with not rock or soil but space,

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gas, etc. and the problems involved in terms of registration, to make sure that we haven't missed anything in the drafting of the legislation, I would like to refer it to a committee, which I will do following second reading. I move that the bill now be read for a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the First Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. A.B. MACDONALD (Vancouver-East):** Mr. Speaker, the problem, after the Attorney-General's explanation, is not so much that we don't understand the bill, it is that, perhaps, we do. I would like to move adjournment of this debate until the next sitting of this House. Oh, it's not going to the Committee of the Whole... well, I think, in that case, we should support the bill and support its reference to the committee where Project 200, no doubt, will be able to make their representations. Are they not up in the air? Is it a Project 200 bill? I support the motion, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for West Vancouver–Howe Sound.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS (West Vancouver–Howe Sound):** Mr. Speaker, we, too, will support the motion. The Attorney-General, however, has touched upon a matter of principle. I would ask him, when he is closing this debate, if he would indicate whether or not the committee, in considering this bill, might also do a more comprehensive job and consider the matter of subterranean titles, as well, because, if we are concerned with what happens above the ground, in your opening remarks, Mr. Attorney-General, through you, Mr. Speaker, you mentioned also the depths below the ground to which one may go. We are seeing increasing examples of this certainly in the urban areas. I wonder if, perhaps, this might be considered by the committee, even though it isn't in the bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Attorney-General will close the debate.

**MR. PETERSON:** Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Honourable Member from West Vancouver–Howe Sound, I doubt that it could be usefully explored by the Select Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, because this is specific legislation dealing only with one aspect, that is, air space. I think that it is, perhaps, a difficult enough problem. The legislation is very definite and the committee has precise terms of reference to deal with the legislation, to examine it, to see that it will be effective. I move that the bill be read a second time.

Bill 37 was referred to the Select Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 14, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Gasoline Tax Act, 1948*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Because of British Columbia's rocky and mountainous terrain, it has the highest highway construction costs in Canada, reaching well over \$1 million per mile for construction in certain areas. In addition, maintenance costs are also high. The revenue from the present motor fuel taxes is not providing the appropriate share of costs; therefore, to ensure the continued improvement of our highway system and a proper maintenance programme, the gasoline tax is to be increased 2 cents a gallon, from 13 cents to 15 cents. The cost of this tax

increase to the average motorist will probably be in the neighbourhood of from \$5 to \$10 a year, while a major portion of the new revenue will come from industry, large users and tourists. Even though it may seem to cost the average motorist from \$5 to \$10, if we have better highways, perhaps, he will save it on tire wear, and the upkeep of his car and so forth.

The gasoline taxes in Canada, Provincial taxes, range from a low of 15 cents a gallon, that's what is suggested here, which will still be the lowest in Canada, to a high of 25 cents per gallon. The effective date of the new tax is, as announced in the Budget, February 5, 1971, the date of the Budget.

Mr. Speaker, there are two reasons for this tax. One is for the reason that I have already outlined and the other is to get more money — that is number two. Number three is to make sure that the revenue from car users will be in proportion to the expenses in building and maintaining of highways, including our grants to municipalities for the roads within the municipalities, so that it will not be a drain on the funds that are needed for those social programmes that we have in this Province — our health programmes, our social welfare programmes and all the medicare and hospital insurance and so forth, and to keep them properly balanced. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Second Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. R.A. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a somewhat different tone that we have had from the Honourable the Minister of Finance with respect to this bill compared to the previous one. He was his bubbly, charming, enchanting self, a few minutes ago, and, now, we see the other side where he is going to get the money. It's not quite good enough for the Minister of Finance to say that his money is going to come from the tourists, to a great extent, it's going to come from industry, to a great extent, and so on. That's a smoke screen. This is a sales tax, pure and simple, and it's the kind of tax that gets transferred. It's a tax that is transferrable and it's transferred to the people at the bottom of the ladder, like all these kinds of taxes. It means that people will have to pay more for transportation. It means people will have to pay more for all goods in the Province of British Columbia. It is simply an added-on tax and it gets transferred, and it gets transferred to the consumer at the end of the line. So, it is a consumer tax. In the crunch, the Minister of Finance of this Province always turns to this kind of tax, a sales tax that ends up getting transferred to the people on the bottom of the ladder. Now, he could have picked worse taxes and he could have picked better taxes, but he didn't. He could have picked a tax that would weigh more heavily against resources. He could have grounded the roadrunners of British Columbia, a decade ago. He could have done a wide range of things but, instead, he chose the kind of tax that will, in fact, be transferred to the consumer at the end of the line.

One of the gas companies used to talk about the go-further gasoline. The people of British Columbia are going to have to find out what that gasoline is, now that they are faced with this added bill and have faced this added bill for the past month. It will mean that the lower-income groups

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will, in fact, be affected. You can all very well say, "You can buy a smaller car," or something of that nature, but, in fact, the lower-income groups end up having to spend all of their income. The lower-middle-income groups end up spending all of their income and, so, a sales tax, a consumers' tax, ends up more heavily on their shoulders than on the people who can save or those people who can invest. This isn't a tax against those who can save or invest. It is a heavier tax on those people who are spending all of their income, all of the time, just trying to get by. It reflects on the people, say, for example, who are trying to acquire homes, which the Premier was talking about just a little bit earlier. Those in the lower-middle-income brackets end up having to go out on the edge of town, because they can't afford to buy in the centre of town — they see that as an escape from the high cost of housing, but they often forget to tote up the journey to work and the journey to other facilities and the gas tax ends up as being an additional tax on their shoulders — these people that have moved out to the edge of town because they can't afford housing centrally. It ends up as being a kind of housing tax on those people. It is that kind of transferred tax that ends up with the guy at the bottom of the line.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, this tax is unacceptable to the Opposition. There are other reasons why it is unacceptable to the Official Opposition, too. We don't need to increase taxes in British Columbia. It is as simple as

that. The Premier has been hoarding away surpluses, annually, in British Columbia, putting them into one fund after another. He is almost running out of names for special funds for the Province of British Columbia. What that means is that he is currently overtaxing the people of this Province. By the kinds of taxes he is applying, he is overtaxing the people who can afford it least, the kind of people on the edge of town, who I mentioned. He is taxing them more right now in order to build up his huge surpluses to put into Hydro and so on. These are taxes that do not, in fact, have to be applied at all. That's why it is inexcusable. What this means is that the Minister of Finance is prepared to cut the standard of living of the lower-income groups and the lower-middle-income groups of this Province so that he can appear to be a financial Machiavelli. Well, he is a financial Machiavelli, because he is putting a load on their backs and, somehow, giving them the idea that all is well, that he really is a financial genius. In fact, it's no genius, at all, to take more money than you need from the people. It is no genius, at all, to take it from the lower-middle-income groups. For that reason — the reason that you are prepared to cut the standard of living of the lower-middle-income groups of this Province — we are opposing this bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the First Member for Vancouver–Point Grey.

**MR. McGEER:** Mr. Speaker, we intend to oppose this tax increase on the simple grounds that it is unnecessary. The Premier of the Province, as Finance Minister, is a great tax master. He's been overtaxing the people for years and this is one more instance of overtaxation. Those extra revenues that are brought in by our tax master are not revenues that are used for services to the people, whether it is for highways or anything else. Mr. Speaker, during the 1966-67 year, the Minister of Finance predicted the revenues would be \$657 million. They were \$731 million. The following year, the Minister of Finance predicted the revenues would be \$739 million. They were \$814 million. The year after that, he predicted the revenues would be \$866 million. They were \$979 million. The following year, he predicted they would be \$1,024 million. They were \$1,179 million.

Each year, an enormous tax surplus. Each year, people's tax money being taken out of their pockets and put into the B.C. Hydro and the PGE. That is where these tax increases have gone. Some, Mr. Speaker, have gone back to the people in the form of loans to them, when they pay their home-owner taxes and interest on their own tax money. That's where some of the surpluses in the perpetual funds have gone, right back to the people, in the form of loans for their schools and hospitals, which they pay interest on and which are levied against their home-owner taxes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think, with respect, the honourable Member is straying quite far now from the subject of the *Gasoline Tax Act*.

**MR. McGEER:** Well, let me come right back to this gasoline tax, Mr. Speaker, because it is going to bring in about \$14 million a year. I predict, right now, Mr. Speaker, that, when we convene again, a year from now, the revenues that have been brought in, during this current fiscal year, will be far, far in excess of that \$14 million that is provided for with this tax increase, and that the expenditures that the Minister of Finance has put before us and which we are debating in our estimates will be more than covered by the taxes that he has collected from the people.

This gasoline tax is totally unnecessary. The revenues derived from it will not go to improving highways. They will go for other purposes. Mr. Speaker, we are not against tax increases when they are absolutely necessary, but, when the taxes are collected from the people, we want those taxes to be used for services to the people. If there is going to be a tax increase on gasoline, or for any other purpose, we want the people to derive the benefits of that tax increase. In this case, the people of British Columbia are not going to derive that benefit. The tax increase is unnecessary. It's another move of British Columbia's great tax master and we're opposed to it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Skeena.

**MR. D.G. LITTLE (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I agree with the principle of this particular bill and, although we have the opposition that has been voiced here, you can understand that very easily from the city of Vancouver or the surrounding areas. However, I know that the people, with even limited incomes, in the northern part of the Province won't mind paying an additional tax for the roads that are being built and improved up in that area.

What I would like to speak about, today, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister of Finance, is that there is an oversight I think we'll find. This is bound to happen in different areas, but we have areas in which they pay taxes and the Government has never spent any money whatsoever, on roads or on schools or in any of the services. I am speaking, now, today, of the little community of Kemano. The school buildings are owned by Alcan. The teachers are on Alcan's payroll, and the road was built from...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. I think that the honourable Member cannot discuss this under this particular bill. You may wish to bring it up later.

**MR. LITTLE:** I am speaking about the taxes that we have

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to pay on gas, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that the Government hasn't spent any money on highways. I think it's not just. I would just like to ask the Premier if he could find a way to relieve the people of the taxes they are paying for which they are receiving no benefit.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please! The Member for Cowichan-Malahat.

**MR. STRACHAN:** I just heard the Member from Skeena say the Government hasn't spent any money on highways. Well, they do spend some money on highways, but there is no indication that the money being raised by this additional tax is going to be spent on highways.

I'm standing in my place to try to hold the Premier to the pledge he gave the people of this Province a year and a half ago, during the last election...the Premier is going to check his estimates to see whether or not there's an increase in the Department of Highways spending between last year and this year...you won't find it in that book, Mr. Premier. What I'm speaking of is the pledge you gave to the people of this Province, in the last election, that there will be no increase in taxes. "The Premier pledges no increase in taxes" were the exact words in that full-page ad, which your group placed in all of the newspapers. "No increase in taxes," and I am just trying to hold you to that election promise. I don't think anything should be promised in elections, unless you're going to hold yourself to it.

The Premier spoke earlier of surpluses and what he was going to do with them in other circumstances. It's obvious that he is overtaxing the people in order to build up these surpluses. If a tax increase were necessary, I would support it, but there is no indication that any tax increase is necessary. The Member from Vancouver East referred to the load on the lower-middle-income group. I wish, Mr. Premier, Mr. Finance, once in a while, you would talk to your Minister of Industrial Development, Trade, and Industry. You must get introduced to each other, sometime. The Premier and some others in the House might think that the matter of additional taxes is some sort of game to be played. But it isn't. It is a very serious impost on the people.

The reason I wanted you to discuss this matter with Your Minister of Industrial Development, Trade, and Industry is the fact that, in his Business Outlook for 1971, which you, no doubt, read, you'll find two things. One, he is forecasting increased sales of petroleum products and, secondly, he is forecasting increased prices for gas and oil. So this means a double impost on the car users of this Province in this one year, first, through his increase in taxation and, secondly, through the increase in prices, which you'll find on page 12 of the Business Outlook for 1971, put out by your Minister. What that increase in price will be, we don't know. We have no way of knowing until it happens. It may happen in one jump and it may happen in two. But your Minister is forecasting an increase in prices, so that the people will not only be faced with this unnecessary tax but will be faced with an unnecessary price increase. Nowhere will you be able to do anything about that, either. So I am suggesting that, in order to keep this inflationary increase...You take the additional 2 cents per gallon on gas, plus whatever increase the oil company monopoly is going to inflict on the people, and think what an inflationary impact that will have on the whole economy of British Columbia. I ask you to reconsider this unnecessary impost, to at least keep the inflationary factor of increased gasoline prices to a minimum within the Province of British Columbia.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The First Member for Vancouver East.



**MR. MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, supporting my colleague here, I might have trouble with this bill, Mr. Premier, if you were raising, I make it, an additional \$16 million a year, by the extra 2 cents, and you were devoting it to some necessary social service in the field of transportation. But you compare that additional revenue that you are taking in and you still leave the public transportation subsidy at \$2 million and that's just ridiculous. If this money were being used to fight pollution occasioned on our highways, if it were being used...and with \$16 million, you could give almost free, basic, public transportation in the major urban centres of this Province with that sum. The whole bill, now, is only about \$20 million per year...free public transportation from this kind of an increase in taxes. Both the Premier and the Member from Skeena have said that we're going to build roads with this money. Well, it's not in the bill and it's not in the estimates. Last fiscal year, \$80 million spent on roads; projected for the next fiscal year, vote 108, \$80 million. No increase. What is happening to this money? You're just socking it away.... (*interruption*). No, no, I want the Floor. I want the Floor, here. I think you're just socking this money away and, as my colleague from Vancouver East has said, quite unnecessarily you have a surplus. The gasoline tax revenues are increasing, anyway. In the year ending March 31, 1971, they were \$70 million. They are going up, anyway, and I don't think this takes into account the 2 cents, to \$93 million in the coming fiscal year. I presume that figure doesn't include the 2 cents, because I don't think the Premier would dare to forecast that this legislation would go through, when he was drawing up this book. I don't think it does include that. It shouldn't, should it? So there is a huge increase, anyway, in your gasoline tax revenue of \$23,500,000. You're raising large, additional sums and you're not devoting them to ease the congestion on our highways. You're not devoting them to new roads or bridges. You're not devoting it to...you could pay for a completely no-fault automobile insurance compensation fund with this kind of revenue, just from the 2 cents, the basic protection for everybody without charging premiums. Now, if any of these things were being done, if the money were being returned to the people, in some kind of a social dividend, that's one thing but this is simply a broken promise. It is increasing taxes merely to sock that money away. I am prepared to join my colleagues and oppose this bill, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Premier will close the Debate.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I am greatly interested in this debate. First of all, I want to deal with the question of the First Member from Vancouver East, who said "...in the revenue submitted in the Budget, this money wouldn't be in it." Of course, he knows very well the estimate is there, that it's included (*interruption*). Certainly, I am optimistic it will pass (*interruption*). I want to say that there he was wrong. I want to say to the Leader of the Liberal Party who spoke and then left the House before the reply, this, that the Federal Government...and, oh, how I hate to make reference to the Federal Government, because they do so little (*interruption*).

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Oh, I have friendly letters from the Prime Minister even though he's on his honeymoon. Sends me a letter saying how pleased he is that British Columbia is going to do something about unemployment and so forth. I'm not going to refer to that letter because it's more or less a confidential letter and he is on his honeymoon.

I would say this, the Federal Government, as of December 31, has removed itself completely from the Trans-Canada Highway. The Liberal Leader, having three Members on the North Shore to oppose this bill, when millions of it will be spent which should have been the Federal Government's share of the Upper-Levels Highway in North Vancouver, is something that I am going to tell the people on the North Shore in the next election — come when it may. I want to tell you this — these people talk with two voices at the same time. These people talk about increased high taxes in British Columbia. British Columbia has the lowest tax rates in all of Canada. Why don't the Liberals use some of the Liberal Provincial taxes across this Nation? Why doesn't the NDP look at the tax rates in Manitoba, or in Saskatchewan, when they were the Government in Saskatchewan? Why don't the Conservatives look in Ontario? The reason why our tax rates are the lowest in Canada, Mr. Speaker, is because we, in the first seven years of this Social Credit Government, this people's Government, this grass-roots Government, got rid of the tax-paying part of the debt, Mr. Speaker, the direct debt. So, in British Columbia's Budget, this year, there are not these tens and tens of millions of the people's taxes used to pay interest. When we became Government, it took 15 per cent of the Budget to pay the debt services. What would it be if the 15 per cent of \$1,300 million... You know what it would be — \$195 million. That's what the Social Credit Government is saving the people of this Province. That's the reason why we have the lowest tax rates in this country.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can we get back to Bill 14?

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, but I want to say this. This Government, as we head into this decade of the 1970's, the second century of Confederation, as far as British Columbia is concerned, in Canada, that we have dynamic policies, This money is needed to create jobs in this Province and I want to tell you that that will be the issue. If the Opposition votes against it, I will tell it everywhere in this Province. I move second reading.

The House divided.

Motion agreed to on the following division:

YEAS — 33

Messieurs

Wallace	Jefcoat	Wolfe
Ney	Tisdalle	Smith
Marshall	McCarthy, Mrs.	McDiarmid
Wenman	Dawson, Mrs.	Skillings
Kripps, Mrs.	Kiernan	Chant
Mussallem	Williston	Loffmark
Price	Bennett	Gaglardi
Vogel	Peterson	Campbell, D.R.J.
LeCours	Black	Brothers
Chabot	Fraser	Shelford
Little	Campbell, B.	Richter

NAYS — 14

Messieurs

Brousson Hall	Macdonald	
Gardom	Williams, R.A.	Strachan
Cocke	Calder	Nimsick
Hartley	McGeer	Dailly, Mrs.
Lorimer	Williams, L.A.	

PAIR:

Messieurs

Merilees Clark

Bill 14 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, second reading of Bill 15.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Bill 15, *An Act to Amend the Gasoline Tax Act, 1958*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, since 1928 the Province has had two gasoline tax Statutes, one which is operative, being chapter 152 of the Statutes of British Columbia and the other chapter 59 of the Statutes of 1958, which is inoperative. The latter act has existed for a considerable time because of possible legal complications. While the 1958 alternate Statute will not be proclaimed, unless adverse circumstances are required and we don't expect that to happen, it is deemed advisable, however, to keep the Statute up to date. Accordingly, amendments are hereby submitted, which correspond exactly to the amendments presented just a moment ago to the operative gasoline tax. The effective date of the new tax is, of course, the same, February 5, 1971. I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Second Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. R.A. WILLIAMS:** Mr. Speaker, for the Premier to say that this is the way you create jobs, just really won't wash at all. This isn't the way one creates jobs. The Premier is the one... (*interruption*) regarding gasoline taxes.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Same thing. Same argument.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** Anyway, you know the Premier and the Minister of Finance, both of them are fond of talking about the free market and some of the benefits of the free market. We would concede some of them but, you know, when it comes to the crunch, the Premier is not willing to see people spend their own money. In fact, he overtaxes, in order to prevent them from spending their own money their way. The Minister of Finance wants to spend their money, his way. That's what we are seeing with these tax increases. The Premier is clearly showing that he doesn't really believe in the free market. He wants the kind of market that he can manipulate like a toy. That's why he overtaxes the people of British Columbia. If he had to test some of his schemes before the market, they probably would never get approved.

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That's the test he is not willing to have applied to his pet projects in British Columbia. The very test he says he supports is the test that he is not willing to undergo. He is not willing to have the free market test his ideas. In fact, he wants to overtax the people of British Columbia so that he doesn't have to face that kind of test. That is what he is really talking about in economic terms.

This is the same Minister of Finance who was buying full-page ads in the newspapers of British Columbia in 1969 and promising in two-inch headlines, "No Tax Increase." All the people who voted for him for those reasons know, now, that they made a mistake and that they can't rely on those kind of guarantees from the Minister of Finance. "No Tax Increase." This is what we are facing, now, with all this group of bills. These are tax increases that are unnecessary tax increases. But, the interesting thing, as I said at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier is unwilling to undergo the kind of test he says is so important — in the marketplace. He won't face the marketplace. He wants to avoid the marketplace. He wants to avoid the kinds of tests that he says are good tests. I think that's an interesting matter to reflect on, with respect to this bill.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The First Member for Vancouver—Point Grey.

**MR. McGEER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe this bill offers an opportunity for the Government to take one of its famous second looks, if not the Members of the Treasury benches, at least, the backbenchers. There was a promise that this would make possible more highway construction, and that the automobiles would pay their fair share and so on (*interruption*). The Member says it is.

Mr. Speaker, right in our estimate books, we have exactly the same amount of money being spent this coming year on highways as in the past year — \$80 million. If you look at the revenue that's expected to come in from gasoline, alone, it's \$93 million, yet the people of British Columbia are now expected to pay more in gasoline tax than they are to get in the way of road construction. It's right there in the estimate books you placed before us. This is why we say the tax is completely unnecessary. If we couldn't make our point on the last bill, maybe we can make it on this bill.

Let me carry on for a minute or two, while the Minister of Finance looks in his estimate books and probably discovers, for the first time, that, if he looks under revenue, he sees that there is more income projected from the gasoline tax than he's prepared to spend. If you want to look at the vote number, it's vote 108 — \$80 million, the same as last year. This is what we say is so disgraceful — the way our whole Budget is presented in this Province — the fact that we are asked to vote for taxes, when we know perfectly well it's for the purpose of accumulating surpluses that find their way, directly or indirectly, into those hydro-electric projects and the construction of track on the PGE. This is completely unnecessary. Mr. Speaker, it's the kind of thing that we can do without in British Columbia. We stand for honest and direct Budgets, for taxes on people in order to provide services to people. This principle is being violated every single year and it's being escalated. There is no more disgraceful example of it, Mr. Speaker, than this particular bill. When you compare it with the votes in our estimate books, it's a sham.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Yale-Lillooet.

**MR. W.L. HARTLEY (Yale-Lillooet):** Mr. Speaker, through you, to the Premier and the Government, you know that this bill is actually in complete negation of many dollars that we spent in having the Morrow commission go about the Province, holding hearings, asking opinions and, finally, bringing down a report. Of the recommendations the report made to this Government, they have failed to act on one, single worthwhile recommendation. Those recommendations would have lowered the cost of gasoline to the consumers in this Province. The Morrow report failed to tell us what it costs to produce a gallon of gasoline and, yet, our neighbour Province, when they held a similar enquiry into gasoline, it cost less than a cent a gallon to produce gasoline. Your report was a report that this Government had asked for, a report that would favour the gasoline combines, the great corporations. More and more we see this Government is a government of corporations and not of people.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Will the Member come back to Bill 15.

**MR. HARTLEY:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am suggesting that here we have Bill 15 that will raise the cost of gasoline to the people. Had we a proper plan of distributing gasoline, properly organized, instead of excessive service stations in a most wasteful and inefficient fashion, if we had a cooperative oil refinery, or a publicly-owned refinery, with the Province owning the transmission lines, I dare say that gasoline could be reduced to half the present price that the people are paying today. Before they do that, they will have to elect a government that will stand up for people and not for corporations.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Member for Kootenay.

**MR. NIMSICK:** Mr. Speaker, I didn't speak on the last bill but this is a similar bill. I was rather amazed at the response throughout the House to this bill compared to the ones on the home-owner grant and the others. They couldn't get up fast enough on that side of the House to support that bill but we haven't heard much support of this bill.

This is a tax on the workers of the Province. You take every one — a car is an absolute necessity, today, whether you are looking for a job, or you've got a job. Many people, the average, I would say, drive their car about... who are using it for work... 6,000 miles a year. This means, at 15 miles per gallon, \$8 a year increase in their taxes per year. When you try, on the one hand, you said you were helping out the little people and, now, you're taking it away from them. You take it from them so that you can give it to them some other way. Well, I don't think that is really good enough. I don't think that there is a necessity for this tax at this time. The economy of the country is such that we should have reduced taxes rather than increase them if we really want to build up our economy. To increase taxes at this time, on the little people throughout the Province, is taking the bread and butter off their tables, not only of those who are working but of people who are not working, people who are unemployed, who have got to use their cars to go out looking for jobs. You're taxing those people under this bill.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Premier will close the Debate.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, once again, there is more heat than light from the Opposition. I notice, again,

that the Leader of the Liberal Party makes his speech and then runs out of the House and never waits for the reply. He brought up the same speech that I answered before and, then, he repeated it again, wasting the time of this House, Mr. Speaker, not representing the people of Vancouver–Point Grey at all. He just goes out and makes his speech and tries to get on the radio and on the television.

Mr. Speaker, it shows the Members opposite do not do their homework. On page 19 of the Budget Speech it shows clearly that the total expenditure of the Department of Highways will come to \$158 million and the revenue, \$137 million. Therefore, to try to say that we give more money than we need for highways is ridiculous in the extreme.

One day we hear in this House that the poor people are the people without cars. They are the people who use the buses, but, today, they try to change their argument and say it is the people who use the automobile who are the poor people. Well, if they are the poor people, then, they would have the smallest cars. The person who was rich, owning the largest car, would pay more gasoline tax than the poor, even then. It just shows, Mr. Speaker, the limits to which the Opposition will go to try to create chaos in this country, try to create unemployment, try to stop the Government and its dynamic policies of putting more people to work to try and create jobs. I move second reading.

The House divided.

Motion agreed to on the following division:

YEAS — 33

Messieurs

Wallace	Jefcoat	Wolfe
Ney	Tisdalle	Smith
Marshall	McCarthy, Mrs.	McDiarmid
Wenman	Dawson, Mrs.	Skillings
Kripps, Mrs.	Kiernan	Chant
Mussallem	Williston	Loffmark
Price	Bennett	Gaglardi
Vogel	Peterson	Campbell, D.R.J.
LeCours	Black	Brothers
Chabot	Fraser	Shelford
Little	Campbell, B.	Richter

NAYS — 14

Messieurs

Brousson Hall	Macdonald	
Gardom	Williams, R.A.	Strachan
Cocke	Calder	Nimsick
Hartley	McGeer	Dailly, Mrs.
Lorimer	Williams, L.A.	

PAIRS:

Messieurs

Jordan, Mrs. Dowding  
Merilees Clark

Bill 15 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 16, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Bill 16, *An Act to Amend the Coloured Gasoline Tax Act*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, as a result of a survey of the Provincial tax structure carried out last year, it was determined that the rate of 1 cent a gallon for off-the highway use of gasoline was out of date. The bulk of this gasoline is used by industry and commercial aircraft. Accordingly, this bill proposes an increase of 2 cents a gallon. The provision remains in the *Coloured Gasoline Tax Act* for the effective rate of coloured gasoline purchased by farmers for use on their farms and bona fide commercial fishermen for use on their fishing boats to remain at 1 cent a gallon. The effective date of this tax is, of course, the date of the Budget, February 5, 1971. I move second reading of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable the First Member for Vancouver–Point Grey.

**MR. McGEER:** Mr. Speaker, once more, this is an unnecessary, an unfair tax. It's taking revenue that isn't going to be used for the services which the revenue purports it will be used for. Once more, we oppose it. Once more, we call for straightforward financing and an honest declaration of the taxes required and the purposes for which they are going to be used.

The House divided.

Motion agreed to on the following division:

YEAS — 33

Messieurs

Wallace	Jefcoat	Wolfe
Ney	Tisdalle	Smith
Marshall	McCarthy, Mrs.	McDiarmid
Wenman	Dawson, Mrs.	Skillings
Kripps, Mrs.	Kiernan	Chant
Mussallem	Williston	Loffmark
Price	Bennett	Gaglardi
Vogel	Peterson	Campbell, D.R.J.
LeCours	Black	Brothers
Chabot	Fraser	Shelford
Little	Campbell, B.	Richter

NAYS — 14

Messieurs

Brousson Hall

Macdonald

Gardom Williams, R.A. Strachan  
Cocke Calder Nimsick  
Hartley McGeer Dailly, Mrs.

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PAIRS:

Messieurs

Jordan, Mrs. Dowding  
Merilees Clark

Bill 16 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 17, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Bill 17, *An Act to Amend the Motive-fuel Use Tax Act*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** In line with the 2 cents per gallon increase in the gasoline and coloured gasoline taxes to provide a better balance in highway revenues and costs, this bill increases the levy on diesel fuels used by commercial vehicles on the public highways from the present 15 cents to 17 cents per gallon, effective February 5, 1971, the date of the Budget.

The British Columbia diesel fuel tax for highway use at 17 cents a gallon, the new rate, will still be the lowest Provincial rate in Canada and still will be well below the other rates in other Provinces, which go up to as high as 27 cents a gallon. In addition, this bill changes the tax collection system from the user reporting his own purchases, to the vender collecting and remitting the tax. This eliminates the complex monthly returns now required from the users. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Second Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. R.A. WILLIAMS:** It's clear, again, that this tax on diesel fuel will be transferred from the mover of the goods, say, for example, groceries to the various grocery stores around the Province, to the grocery shelves. It will be transferred, in fact, right down to the kitchen table, and that's where the payment will end up. That's where the buck ends. That's where the money will have to be paid for this tax. That's why we will be voting against this bill as we voted against the others.

It is clear, now, that the Premier's statements, in the heat of an election, his commitments, are completely meaningless, and the people of the Province should note this day because the Premier is making it abundantly clear that what he says in an election doesn't mean a thing, that a promise made by the Premier in an election is totally meaningless, that a year or so later, he will renounce what he said in the heat of the campaign and do whatever he pleases. That is exactly what we are facing, today, another tax on the people, an unnecessary tax and a complete abandonment of the position taken in the last Provincial election.

The House divided.

Motion agreed to on the following division:

YEAS — 33

Messieurs

Wallace	Jefcoat	Wolfe
Ney	Tisdalle	Smith
Marshall	McCarthy, Mrs.	McDiarmid
Wenman	Dawson, Mrs.	Skillings
Kripps, Mrs.	Kiernan	Chant
Mussallem	Williston	Loffmark
Price	Bennett	Gaglardi
Vogel	Peterson	Campbell, D.R.J.
LeCours	Black	Brothers
Chabot	Fraser	Shelford
Little	Campbell, B.	Richter

NAYS — 14

Messieurs

Brousson Hall	Macdonald
Gardom Williams, R.A.	Strachan
Cocke Calder	Nimsick
Hartley McGeer	Dailly, Mrs.

PAIRS:

Messieurs

Jordan, Mrs. Dowding
Merilees Clark

Bill 17 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 18, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Bill 18, *Cigarette and Tax Act*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Honourable Members are aware that expenditures for education, health and social services, and hospital insurance have risen dramatically over the past years. In this next fiscal year, alone, these services require a \$112 million increase in the budgeted expenditure — an increase of \$112 million in one year. At the same time, the Provincial revenues are not rising at a rate anywhere near the rate of the past few years to take care of the expanded services as we go through the decade. This being the case, a review of the Provincial tax structure was undertaken to determine the best method of providing additional revenue. It was noted that all other Provinces in Canada imposed a cigarette and tobacco tax and it was decided that British Columbia should now seek additional revenues from this source.

This bill, therefore, proposes a cigarette and tobacco tax at the lowest rate used by the other Provinces, and, at the same time, it eliminates the payment of the social services tax on the purchases of tobacco products. The tax imposed is eight twenty-fifths of a cent per cigarette, or 8 cents a package of 25. Since the social services, or sales tax, is 3 cents on such a package, this is a net increase of 5 cents a package. On a package of 20 cigarettes, the net increase is 4 cents. The increase proposed for cigars and tobacco is proportionate to that of cigarettes. The administrative procedures outlined in this bill follow those contained in the *Social Services Act* and that is the reason



why they are so long. The Act will be administered by the Director of the Consumer Taxation Branch, with his present staff. The effective date of the new cigarette and tobacco tax is February 5, 1971, the day of the

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Budget. I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Cowichan-Malahat.

**MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Speaker, if I thought this tax would achieve a worthwhile social purpose I would be in favour of it but, once again, I am standing up to remind the Premier of his pledge of no increased taxation. I am reminding him of the fact that, in earlier debates this afternoon, he has talked about the surpluses and the uses to which he was going to put them. If this Government had demonstrated a policy of leadership in social change, I might have been able to support the raising of this additional \$18 million. I want to remind the Minister that we already have a special fund set up with regard to education, with regard to addiction to alcohol, tobacco and drugs (*interruption*). No, but we've got legislation here, somewhere. Oh, it was adjourned. I knew I had spoken on it. Oh, yes, I have been doing my homework. As a matter of fact, I have already spoken on that particular piece of legislation which is more than you have. I would remind you also that we already have this special fund...that it is going to be set up. The Premier said earlier that he was optimistic about certain legislation passing in order to bring in certain income.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We are now dealing with Bill 18.

**MR. STRACHAN:** That's right, and I have no doubt that he is optimistic about that particular piece of legislation. If I thought that an increase in taxes might reduce the consumption, I, again, might reconsider my position on this but there is absolutely no indication that it will bring any change whatsoever. The taxes, again, are unnecessary. The Premier isn't quite stating the facts when he talks about a 4 cents increase in the price of cigarettes. As a matter of fact, they went from 50 to 55 cents. That is what happened. If you work it out, you will find that it is actually more than the bill would indicate the amount of the increase to be. That's not the important point. I am just opposed...(*interruption*). Oh yes, yes. Part of it is due to the tax (*interruption*). No, sir! You will get more than 4 cents per packet out of this tax. You bet you will.

I'm simply here to, again, express my concern at the fact that the Premier has, once again, for the fifth or sixth time this afternoon, and I want the people of British Columbia to note this, for the fifth or sixth time this afternoon, the Premier has broken the pledge he made to the people of this Province during the last election. "I pledge you," he said, "no increase in taxes."

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable First Member for Vancouver-Point Grey.

**MR. McGEER:** Mr. Speaker, as we've said many times this afternoon, the revenues in this coming fiscal year, without this tax increase, will be more than adequate to cover the expenditures set forth in the Budget and detailed in that red estimate book given to us. We do not need the income from this tax to cover the estimated expenditures on services to people.

I can understand the reason why someone, who declares this tax is completely unnecessary, might think of supporting the bill, nonetheless. This is because smoking is a curse on humanity. The one thing that disappoints me about this particular bill is that the Minister of Finance is forecasting revenue to come from it. If the bill were really going to serve the people well, the income from it would be zero, because it would discourage people from taking on a habit that would, at the best, impair their health mildly and, at the worst, shorten their lives by anywhere from 20 to 60 years.

We witnessed one Member of the Cabinet retire because of lung disease and one of the great contributions he made each year was this plea to the people of this Province to cease smoking. He got support from all over this House. It isn't just cancer and emphysema, it is heart disease, chronic bronchitis and a whole host of ills. If there were one, single, public health measure we could undertake in the world, today, that would advance the health of

humanity, it would be the total elimination of tobacco. I think we've missed the speeches of the former Minister of Health. I think the people in this Legislature should stand up, as one, each year and condemn this habit of smoking. I am in dismay at our Federal Government for not having taken stronger action. I, particularly, condemn the Federal Government for permitting advertising on television and radio in this country for cigarettes. When the United States has, finally, screwed up enough courage to do something about it, we, in Canada, are so interested in protecting the revenue of our public broadcasting corporation that we haven't the guts to eliminate cigarette advertising. It's a disgrace and I condemn the Minister of Health and the Federal Government for not having shown more courage in that regard.

I must recall, Mr. Speaker, that the B.C. Hydro used to carry cigarette advertising on the buses, until some Members of the Opposition raised a fuss and blew a few smoke rings from this side of the House. I must say that the B.C. Hydro...that was one thing, one bit of advice they accepted.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can we get back to the *Cigarette and Tobacco Tax Act*?

**MR. McGEER:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the only excuse at all for anybody supporting this bill is that it would discourage smoking. There are many people who are doubtful about this result being achieved. I think even the Government is that way because they forecast \$18,500,000 revenue from it. It's dirty money. We should tell everybody who smokes that they are being taxed unfairly and that the one thing they should do is to quit smoking in order to cheat the Minister of Finance.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Oak Bay.

**MR. G. S. WALLACE (Oak Bay):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Government for bringing in this tax, Mr. Speaker. If there is any mistake, it isn't large enough. I just regret that the tax is as small as it is on cigarettes and tobacco. I feel that it would have been quite reasonable to leave the sales tax on, as well as the new tax.

I think, while I would echo many of the sentiments of the previous speaker, I think it would be very wrong of this House to gloss over the particular conditions which the honourable Member mentioned because, in terms of morbidity and...mortality, the main killers in our society are, in fact, heart disease, vascular disease, which is a disease of the blood vessels, chronic obstructive lung disease, such as we have already heard described, and cancer. As I mentioned in an earlier speech, I'll just briefly repeat that the statistics

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are undeniable that cigarette smoking plays a very definite part in causing these diseases. Admittedly, there may be other factors, including the air that you breathe. If it's polluted from other sources, one would agree that this also would cause ill health. At least, cigarette smoking is an entirely preventable aspect and it seems to me that, with Government requiring to put another \$30 million into hospitals and \$10 million into medicate, \$40 million dollars is a lot of hay.

I look at this in a very practical light, Mr. Speaker, that it is predictable that persons, in our society, who are doing a great deal of smoking will be doing a great deal of using our hospitals. I look at this in rather a practical way that, if they are inflicting a certain amount of illness on themselves and will, subsequently, be using hospital and health facilities, medical care, oxygen therapy, with prolonged periods of disease, when they can't work and so on, then, it doesn't seem to me at all unreasonable that they should contribute something towards the cost.

I mentioned earlier on that I look upon booze and cigarettes a little bit as I took upon original sin. I don't think the tax on cigarettes will be, in any way effective as a deterrent. The important thing in this bill, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is that it is emphasizing, at least, that the person who is going to be the future patient, while he is causing his own disease, to some degree, is at least contributing towards the cost of looking after him, once he is sick.

In this regard, while I would much prefer effective programmes to deter people from smoking, I think it's been around a long time and, while I would continue to beg that we institute programmes in the schools since it is in

the early years that people begin smoking, when the motives for smoking, in my opinion, at least, are to try to emphasize your maturity when you are 13 or 14, is rather a false god which we should try and get across to the children of that age...Undoubtedly, this is when most people begin to smoke and, therefore, any money that we can put over for the education of children or the preventative aspect, emphasizing the preventative aspect, is money well spent. Nevertheless, people are smoking, they will smoke and, since there is no way that I am aware of, medically, whereby we can prevent cigarettes from doing the damage they are doing...all this we read about filter tips and long filters and short filters and any other kind of filters is just a mirage. It, in no way, other than by a small percentage, reduces the impact of smoking on the lungs. I can't imagine how anyone in this House, today, would oppose this bill.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**MRS. DAILLY:** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Honourable the Premier that, in presenting this bill, he did not lecture us or moralize on the pros and cons of smoking. I don't think that is the basic reason for the presentation of this bill. I believe that he gave it to us fairly straight. It's another example of...it's just a straight tax increase. I think this is what we should all consider in this House, when we are voting on it. Certainly, the last Member feels very strongly about smoking, as many people should but, I think, he should disassociate his strong feelings on the pros and cons of smoking from what this bill, basically, is. It is another sales tax on the lower-income bracket people in this Province. They are the ones who are going to be affected far more by this sales tax than those in the higher-income brackets (*interruption*). Yes, rich and poor they may smoke, alike, but, when they have to pay the tax, the people in the lower-income bracket, as applies to all sales taxes, are going to be affected more, as far as their income is concerned. I, therefore, say that this is the fifth bill we have been presented with, with the same basic principle.

Now, the Honourable the Premier says he represents the grass roots of the Province and here he is imposing five taxes which will certainly lower the general standard of living of the grass roots people of this Province. That's why, once again, on principle, we oppose this bill.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Saanich and the Islands.

**MR. TISDALLE:** The statistics by those who make a study of this say that where there are two parents smoking, it is inevitable that the children do. The image of influence is very strong and I think, before we blame our 13 and 14-year-olds, that probably the emphasis as displayed by our former Minister of Health, is worthwhile reciting. We, the older ones, have got to cease and desist from smoking, so that our influence is felt down the line.

Now, we do have something in respect to saving lives in the Motor-Vehicle Branch where they say, "Slow down and live." I wonder if we couldn't say, "Stop smoking — the life you save may be your own," and have this put on every package. "Stop smoking — the life you save may be your own." I'd like to consider that we ask the people to sloganize things like this so that people, when they are buying, it may be brought to their attention that they would be saving their own lives.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Second Member for Vancouver–Point Grey.

**MR. G.B. GARDOM (Vancouver–Point Grey):** It seems to me, and I completely concur with the remarks of the other speakers, that we don't have any need for tax increases. This falls exactly into the same category as the other tax bills that were before the House. There is no question but that it will hit the poor the hardest. Not for one minute, Mr. Speaker, can I buy the argument that this is going to reduce smoking one whit. The way to reduce smoking, and the way to reduce the effects of smoking, of bronchitis, is to stop smoking. That is absolutely correct. The way to go ahead and have people stop smoking and stop suffering the consequences of smoking, like the two good doctors discussed a little bit earlier, is to cut down, Mr. Speaker, this type of thing which we see in the paper all the time. That's the way to get to the root of the thing. Quite frankly, I think it would have been a very nice thing, Mr. Speaker, if the Government...

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can you get back to the principle of Bill 18?

**MR. GARDOM:** That's exactly where I am, at the principle of the bill. It would be a very nice thing, Mr.

Speaker, and I know that all the Members would like me to talk about this, today, but I can't by virtue of the rules of Parliament...But, if Bill 9 had been called, before this one, you would have seen total support through the whole House. I certainly hope that Bill 9 is going to come up on the final day, Mr. Premier, and we'll have your support that day (interruption). Good. Thank you very much. I think, Mr.

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Speaker, we need in the Province some assurances that we've got a policy, that we have some degree of preventative medicine, we have some education, we have some films in the schools, so we can go and educate the young about the grief that can occasion from the consequences of smoking.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Will the Member come back to Bill 18?

**MR. GARDOM:** Insofar as this tax is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I note that it's not labelled for the purposes of the thing that everybody in this House is concerned about and that is the prevention of smoking. It's not labelled — this tax for that, at all. It's just going to end up in B.C. Hydro or end up in the PGE or end up in another fund. You know, Mr. Speaker, a similar tax situation arose, way back in 1954, when the Premier made a pledge to the people of B.C. that two fifths of the sales tax would be utilized for hospitals. We find, today, that about \$100 million of that money has never been expended on hospitals and the Government would...*(interruption)*. Well, who's got the Chair — him or me?

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! When an honourable Member makes a statement, the Members in the House will accept that statement.

**MR. GARDOM:** What's all the fuss about?

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Will the Member deal with Bill 18?

**MR. GARDOM:** It's an absolute fairy tale, Mr. Speaker, to think that this is going to reduce smoking one iota in the Province. It's the same type of...

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Will the Member refer to Bill 18 and not Bill 9?

**MR. GARDOM:** This is a needless tax. It's a silly tax. It's a ridiculous tax and I intend to vote against it.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for New Westminster.

**MR. COCKE:** Mr. Speaker, we heard two rather good speeches on the evils of cigarettes and, on that basis, I suspected that other people who smoke would be permitted to discuss the sin. As a matter of fact, while the Member from Oak Bay is sitting there, I'd suggest that if he wants to discuss original sin, he had better look at Bill 19. We can get on with that after this bill is over.

Mr. Speaker, I think that there should be a tax on advertising if we want to aim at education. I believe it should be aimed at education, Mr. Speaker. Punitive action has been proven completely irrelevant over the years. Cigarette taxes and prices have gone up and there has been no reduction in the consumption of cigarettes. The Government has proven that they don't expect there will be any great reduction in the consumption, by virtue of the amount they have in their estimates as being the result of this tax. Mr. Speaker, this grass roots Government is proving to be grass roots pickpockets. That's about the size of it, because you promised, you went around the country in the last election and promised you wouldn't raise taxes. Who cares whether or not you break your pledges? Well, we care and we'll vote against this.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Just one moment. I think the Member should withdraw his reference to pickpockets. That is an improper reflection.

**MR. COCKE:** Now, Mr. Speaker, how else could you refer to getting money out of people's purses?

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The honourable Member knows full well he cannot cast an unfair reflection against...

**MR. COCKE:** Against whom, Mr. Speaker?

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** ...unfair parliamentary statement

**MR. COCKE:** I have been listening to statements about our Party all afternoon.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question has been raised and I think the honourable Member...

**MR. COCKE:** Mr. Speaker, now that it has been raised, I'll withdraw the word, pickpocket.

Mr. Speaker, this kind of tax is the kind of tax that affects those people closest to the poverty line. It is all very well and good to say that they should pay for their medical care in the future and that they shouldn't have started. Once they did, they were hooked and they have a great deal of difficulty getting away from this habit. My suggestion is that those people who are well off can well afford this tax, but those people who are close to the poverty line are in real trouble...the problem is poverty. It is all very well and good for a nonsmoker to sit in the background and suggest stop smoking, snap his finger and say very easy. But he hasn't got the worries of those people. As a matter of fact, it's the worries of the people who are so impoverished that keeps them smoking, Mr. Speaker. Some other Member over there suggested they should roll their own. That's right. There is one honourable Member over there, I notice who smokes a great deal and I know he has a lot of worries over the leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Kootenay.

**MR. NIMSICK:** Mr. Speaker, you hear this eulogizing about the dangers of smoking when all the time I am sure the Minister of Finance is hoping to goodness they don't quit smoking, because that's how he figured out his Budget. That's how he figured out how much collection he was going to get from this. There is no tax against the advertising, nor is there any move to stop advertising. It's pretty hard to tell people about the bad effects of smoking in a place like Trail.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The matter has been raised indirectly that there is Bill 9, which deals with advertising.

**MR. NIMSICK:** Well I'm not talking about advertising now. I said it is pretty hard to tell a person who is working in the Trail smelter where he is breathing in gases all the time, it's pretty hard to tell people when you see all the effluent coming out the stacks, to tell those people that smoking is bad for them. It's pretty hard to tell them they could stop breathing...

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**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Just one moment. Let's get back to Bill 18.

**MR. NIMSICK:** Well, the Honourable the Member for Saanich, he spoke about every thing but the tax and you didn't say a word. Let's be reasonable about this and let's give a fellow a chance to say something.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It was the Honourable Second Member from Point Grey who raised the point when he spoke about his own bill and drew to the attention of the Chair that the bill...

**MR. NIMSICK:** I'm not talking about advertising now, I'm talking about effluent from pollution. This is what the bill is all about — they are trying to stop people from smoking. The only people whom you are going to stop from smoking are the people on the bottom end of the buck. Have you ever been in an old folks' home, with men and women of 65, 70 and 80 years old? If they are smoking, it's pretty hard to tell them that smoking is detrimental to their health. It's the only pleasure they get out of life, so these are the people that you are taxing. These are the people that you are really hitting. Because, any time that you use the dollar bill to try to correct an evil, you are not going to correct it, because the only ones you are correcting...you're saying to the people at the poverty level

that it's for them. They are the only people to whom we want to say it is wrong to smoke. The people with lots of money are going to smoke, they are going to continue to smoke. This tax is not going to affect this issue. Then, the Honourable Member from Saanich said, "Oh, you must go after the parents." I smoke and my children, neither one of them smoke. I didn't have any influence on them to make them smoke so don't think that that's going to stop it. I think that we've got to get down, if we want to, and cut out all this foolish advertising and let's put a tax on the pollution that is coming out of these great smokestacks throughout our country. Let's tax the industrialists for polluting the country far more than a lot of smoking does.

I think you over-rate this idea about the excuse for putting a tax on. Your excuse is that smoking isn't good, so you put a tax on it. The only people you are going to stop by that method are the people who can't afford it, not the people who can afford it. So your tax on cigarettes and tobacco is only another tax and it's breaking the pledge that the Premier made to the people of British Columbia that there would be no increase in taxes. He didn't say there wouldn't be any ifs, buts or ands about it. He said, "No increase in taxes." He should have held up to his promises, because there is no visible reason why any increase in taxes should take place at this time.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Attorney-General,

**MR. PETERSON:** Mr. Speaker I want to take issue with some of the remarks that have been made here this afternoon on this particular bill. Particularly, the statements made by the Honourable Member from New Westminster that once hooked, always hooked, because there are many of us on this side, and I am sure on that side, of the House who were once addicted to cigarettes and have given them up. Some of us are quite expert at giving it up, we have done it several times. I don't think the message should go abroad that it's impossible, particularly as the honourable Member said, for the poor people who haven't enough money for everything they want to have and they just can't give up smoking. That's a lot of nonsense and it's not true. Anybody can give up smoking if they have the will and the desire to do so. You shouldn't offer that kind of encouragement, that kind of motivation, that kind of crutch to people.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can we get back to the tax bill?

**MR. PETERSON:** I would be happy to get back to the tax act, Mr. Speaker. I was just responding to the statements that have already been made on the floor of the House. On the question of taxation it has always interested me that the honourable Members of the Opposition are so quick to suggest ways and means of spending more money, but the minute you come along with measures to increase the revenue to the Province to enable these expenditures to come forward, then they stand in opposition, Mr. Speaker. If you're going to have taxes to increase revenue, what better place to place those taxes than on nonessentials, especially nonessentials, luxury items, that are harmful to individuals who use them. I cannot understand the honourable Members opposing the realization of revenue from the use of what can only be called luxury items, in addition, items that are actually harmful to health. They should be the first, I suggest, to stand in their place and support this kind of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

The House divided.

Motion agreed to on the following division:

YEAS — 32

Messieurs

Wallace	Tisdalle	Smith
Marshall	McCarthy, Mrs.	McDiarmid
Wenman	Dawson, Mrs.	Skillings
Kripps, Mrs.	Kiernan	Chant
Mussallem	Williston	Loffmark
Price	Bennett	Gaglardi

Vogel	Peterson	Campbell, D.R.J.
LeCours	Black	Brothers
Chabot	Fraser	Shelford
Little	Campbell, B.	Richter
Jefcoat	Wolfe	

NAYS — 13

Messieurs

Gardom Williams, R.A. Macdonald  
Cocke Calder Strachan  
Hartley Clark Nimsick  
Lorimer Williams, L.A. Dailly, Mrs.  
Hall

PAIRS:

Messieurs

Merilees McGeer  
Ney Brousson  
Jordan, Mrs. Dowding

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Bill 18 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 19, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 19, *Hotel and Motel Room Tax Act*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** In our review of the Provincial tax structure, it was noted that nearly all Provinces in Canada levied a hotel and motel room tax. The climbing expenditures required for our tourist facilities were also noted. It was, therefore, considered that our tourists should make a modest contribution to the expenditures on their behalf by way of a 5 per cent tax on the price of their hotel and motel rooms. This is the lowest rate used in Canada for similar taxes. While local residents will contribute a portion of the new revenues towards recreational facilities, by far the bulk of the taxes will come from the tourists to our Province.

In order to protect the permanent residents, this bill exempts from the tax, accommodation that is let to the same person for a continuous period of more than two months. It is also intended to exempt, among other things, and I emphasize among other things, one, lodging in a lodging house, boarding house or rooming house, having accommodation for less than four tenants. They will still be exempted under the two-month rule as well. Two, lodging supplied to students, patients, residents or employees in the educational institutions, hospitals and nursing homes or homes for the aged. Three, lodging supplied by religious or charitable organizations at summer camps and similar places. Administrative procedures outlined in this bill follow those contained in the social service or sales tax, and the act will be administered by the Director of the Consumer Taxation Branch and his present staff. The effective date of the new hotel and motel room tax is April 1, 1971. I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Second Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. R.A. WILLIAMS:** Mr. Speaker, this is broken promise number 6 — just for today. The Premier did say there would be no increase in taxes. He is proving again that his words are not to be taken seriously during an election campaign or, in fact, possibly on other occasions. This is another consumer tax and it's a bed tax. The Premier wants to tax people in their sleep. This is the method he is going about to do it. Well, it's just a good thing that air is still available in this Province, because he'd be looking at a means of putting a fee on that as well.

The idea of a bed tax has been turned down time and time again by this Government. That's the interesting thing. The city of Vancouver, where we receive many of the tourists in this Province, has for years wanted to have such a tax and, while I haven't endorsed the city's position, if the city had any just position, the Government should have approved the city's request years and years ago, so that the city of Vancouver could have had this kind of revenue for the city, since you don't provide the city of Vancouver with special revenues in any real sense. If the city wanted these kinds of powers, you should have granted them, because if you people think this is a just tax, then, you should have granted the city those powers. You have refused to do so, year after year.

It's essentially, though, Mr. Speaker, a nuisance tax. We have many areas of potential revenue in this Province, just revenue, without having to go into nuisance taxes, such as this. I would compare it with the kind of tax we used to have, Federally, the little three cent stamp or whatever it was on all the cheques. Everybody had to have one of these Federal stamps to put on their cheques and it cost more money to buy the stamp, put it on, and deal with the Government than the revenue that was collected. This is really in the same kind of realm. It's a nuisance tax, the kind that this Government is happy to live with. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance for some more details on the question of accommodation and where this tax will end up being levied because there are a good many hotels in Vancouver and in the larger cities that are used as semipermanent residences. The people pay by the week. The people don't pay by the month. These people pay by the week and these are the genuine lowincome people. Well, I appreciate the Premier's guarantee, but...*(interruption)*.

I appreciate the guarantee because correspondence with the Director of the Consumer Taxation Branch by people in this kind of business has not, to date, provided a satisfactory answer for them. I have received several letters...*(interruption)*. I am aware of that. The act may not have been passed, yet, but your boys had those notices out there a month and a half ago, or whatever it was, so they are very active and very efficient and well ahead of time. But these people who are provided... I appreciate that point. I still say, however, Mr. Speaker, and I'll certainly remind the Minister of Finance if it turns out that these people do run into problems *(interruption)*. Oh, no. I know about the letters you received. Nevertheless, it's a nuisance tax. It's a consumer tax and we will not vote for it.

The House divided.

Motion agreed to on the following division:

YEAS — 33

Messieurs

Wallace	Tisdalle	Smith
Marshall	McCarthy, Mrs.	McDiarmid
Wenman	Dawson, Mrs.	Capozzi
Kripps, Mrs.	Kiernan	Skillings
Mussallem	Williston	Chant
Price	Bennett	Loffmark
Vogel	Peterson	Gaglardi
LeCours	Black	Campbell, D.R.J.
Chabot	Fraser	Brothers
Little	Campbell, B.	Shelford



NAYS — 14

Messieurs

Gardom Williams, R.A. Macdonald  
Cocke Calder Strachan  
Hartley Clark Nimsick  
Lorimer McGeer Dailly, Mrs.  
Hall Williams, L.A.

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PAIRS:

Messieurs

Merilees Brousson  
Jordan, Mrs. Dowding

Bill 19 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 21, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 21, *An Act to Amend the Taxation Act*. The Honourable the Minister of Finance.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, for sometime now the Government has been concerned about the disposition of land sold as a result of unpaid taxes, under the *Taxation Act*. The past procedure was to sell, by public auction, lands on which taxes were owing for a period of two years. The taxpayer then had an additional year in which to reclaim his property. While there would appear to be sufficient safeguards in this procedure, it has been determined that often, not always, the result of the sales was not in the best interest of the citizens of British Columbia. It is for that reason that I, as Minister of Finance, postponed the Provincial taxpayer proceedings last year. This bill now proposes a new procedure in the case of properties where taxes are owing. Instead of selling the property at public auction after two years of a delinquent period, it is proposed that the property reverts to the Crown Provincial. The taxpayer is still offered the same one year redemption privilege. If his property is not redeemed in the appropriate time, it is then forfeited to the Crown Provincial. The bill makes provision for a real property administrative committee, composed of certain interested departmental representatives to determine the best possible use or disposition of the forfeited property. I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Burnaby-Willingdon.

**MR. LORIMER:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the introduction of this bill. I think it would have been much better if it had been introduced 20 years ago but it is certainly better late than never. I also regret that it took an article in a National magazine to really bring home to the Government what was going on with the tax sale problems in the Province, and the fact that valuable property was being taken up under tax sale through organized efforts, a lot of it to people outside the Province who were using it generally for a summer retreat or whatever they wanted and certainly in some cases, to the detriment of the local people of this Province.

I would hope that the policy of allowing more than one year's delinquency...I notice in one of the sections, the act refers to after one year's delinquency that the matter would go for tax sale. I presume it will be the policy of the Government to carry on the way they have been, I think, two to three year's delinquency period. We will be

pleased to endorse the bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the Member for West Vancouver–Howe Sound.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS:** Mr. Speaker, we, too, will support this bill. In passing, however, I would like to say that I would have thought that the Government would have taken this opportunity to set out in the legislation, the policy of the Government with regard to the subsequent disposition of lands which fall into their hands under this new legislation. It places on this committee the responsibility to determine how the property will be disposed of. I would like to think that, and I sincerely hope that, this committee in carrying out its responsibilities will ensure that Crown properties don't continue to fall into private hands, except perhaps on a lease basis. I think this could have been clearly demonstrated in this legislation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Second Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. R.A. WILLIAMS:** It is true, Mr. Speaker, that the Government is a slow learner in the land field and that it did take a national expose by Maclean's magazine for the Government to move on this matter. It is clear that the main beneficiary of the Government's lack of action was Mr. Weinberg, an American who was fully described and was quite open with the Maclean's reporter. But the Government is a slow learner generally. Mr. Weinberg brings up the whole question of foreign ownership of land in British Columbia. This foreigner was the main beneficiary of your poor policies of the past. Many foreigners will continue to be beneficiaries of bad land policies today. I urge the Government to move in other areas as well, with respect to the foreign ownership of the land platform of the land of British Columbia.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable First Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. MACDONALD:** Yes, I agree that the foreign ownership of B.C. has reached alarming proportions and we have talked about it in this House. This may help, for the future, but I really think you ought to apply the home-owner grant principle, too, and tax the foreign-owned nonresident holdings of land in B.C. at a higher level than the taxation for local British Columbians. It's not forbidding, Mr. Premier, their ownership of land but make them pay for it when they are nonresidents at a higher rate. Try to recapture some of B.C. for the people of British Columbia, using taxation as one of your weapons.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Kootenay.

**MR. NIMSICK:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, am very pleased about this bill. But I don't know why, when you take the land back into the Crown, it shouldn't be disposed of as Crown land, then, with all of the restrictions placed on it. There is nothing in this bill to say that this land, when taken back, couldn't be sold to anyone, a foreigner, an outsider or any one else. I feel that, once this land is taken back into the Crown, then, it should be Crown land. I, too, would like to see the time coming when people would make use of land by leasing it rather than by purchasing it. Many people are prevented from purchasing land, even for a home, due to the cost item that it would entail. I thought that your bill, here, was a move in the direction of trying to keep British Columbia for British Columbians or Canadians, but it's not. There is nothing in this bill that restricts the sale of the land or the disposition of the land after it has been taken over by

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the Crown. I think there should be something in there and I heartily agree with the Member for West Vancouver–Howe Sound, when he said there should be something in there explaining how this land will be disposed of.

Bill 21 was read a second time and Ordered to be placed on the Orders of the Day for committal at the next sitting after today.

**MR. BENNETT:** Second reading of Bill 22, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 22, *An Act to Amend the Assessment Equalization Act*. The Honourable the Minister of

Finance.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Bill 20?

**MR. BENNETT:** Twenty-two is the bill called. I am sorry if the honourable Member had a speech already to deliver. I hope he hasn't given it to the press ahead of time. I withdraw that. Mr. Speaker, we are now discussing the second reading of Bill 22, *An Act to Amend the Assessment Equalization Act*. Mr. Speaker, this Government introduced the *Assessment Equalization Act* in the first Session in the first year of its life, in 1953, towards the goal of equalizing real property assessed values for school taxation purposes throughout the Province. The act now ensures the property owner will not pay taxes on more than 50 per cent of the assessed value of land or 37½ per cent of the assessed value of improvements, that is, 75 per cent of 50 per cent. The act also limits increases in assessments of school districts, excluding new construction to 5 per cent over the previous year.

In spite of these provisions, it has been drawn to the Government's attention that some home-owners, and I've heard it in this House, have received too steep an increase in the assessment in this period of inflation. To ensure that any increase is not too sharp, effective in the 1971 assessment year, amendments to the act propose to limit the increase in any assessment of land or improvements to a maximum of 10 per cent of the previous year's assessment. Excluded from the 10 per cent limitation calculations are: a change in the classification of the property, if that changes, the 10 per cent won't apply, and the physical characteristics or new construction. In addition, to ensure that the equity of assessment continues and that limitation does not lead to abuses, the assessment commissioner is empowered, in this bill, to order a reassessment of any property regardless of the 10 per cent limit.

Mr. Speaker, this is a move to make sure that the home-owners in the Province won't face, without any new improvement in any one year, more than 10 per cent increase in the assessment and, thereby, eat up our home-owner grant. This is the important thing in the act, Mr. Speaker, that we have full protection here, because to ensure the equity of assessment continues that the limitation does not lead to abuses, the assessment commissioner is empowered in this bill to order reassessment of any property, regardless of the 10 per cent limit. Of course, if there is any change in the status of the land, it's not protected by this 10 per cent, as well. Regarding what the Member from Kootenay said about reduction in the 5 per cent, the assessment commissioner can reduce the rates down or put out others more than 5 per cent but not more than 10 per cent to get that adjustment. My friends, I am responsible, as Minister of Finance, to the people of this Province, and I move second reading.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Burnaby-Willingdon.

**MR. LORIMER:** Mr. Speaker, I don't accept for one minute the remarks of the Premier with reference to this act in that it is going to save the little home-owner from an increase in taxes by limiting to 10 per cent. Of course, the small home-owner isn't involved in that way, in that his taxes are not going to increase by 10 per cent in any event. This act is certainly not for the benefit of the small home-owner. Actually, this is rather a sad day in the Legislature to see legislation of this type brought in, in my opinion. It's Robin Hood legislation, in reverse. We are taking from the poor and giving to the wealthy. We're helping out the fat cats of this Province by giving them complete release from their proper taxation. It's clear that the purpose of this act is to reduce the assessments of the land developers and the people who have large holdings, especially people having holdings near apartment blocks, or near developments, or so on. Now, at the present time, the total assessment in a community or school district cannot be more than 5 per cent of the total. But the present legislation means that any one area, any one parcel, can be increased by any amount at all and, as a result, if there were an increase in values or assessments in certain areas, certain plots, then, the small home-owner, to balance off, his assessment is reduced and, as a result, he receives a smaller tax bill and the one whose value has increased receives the large tax bill. This is going to go down the drain and what is going to happen is that the assessments in the school districts are not going to relate to the values of the properties. Because of the loss of values in the areas, such as apartment houses, industrial sites, shopping centres and so on, because they are increasing by over 10 per cent, they won't be assessed at that amount. As a result, to catch up, the small home-owner's assessment is going to be increased by a considerable amount; therefore, the small home-owner is the one that's going to pay under this legislation. It's not going to be paid for by those who have the money to pay and those whose values have increased in value. I suggest that this type of legislation is certainly not helping the small people of this Province. It's only helping those who are involved in the development field, in the

highway developments, in the shopping areas and in the industrial sites of the Province. We are giving them the benefit at the expense of the small home-owners.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the First Member for Vancouver–Point Grey.

**MR. McGEER:** Mr. Speaker, one of the unfortunate aspects of this bill, as we understand it to date, is the lack of really good information we are able to garner in this House regarding the effects of the particular bill. The people who know most about this field are the Provincial assessors and, because we haven't had an opportunity yet to hear them, I'd like to read to the House a letter from one Provincial assessor. Here's what he has to say. "Enclosed is a photostatic letter from the Surveyor of Taxes to all Provincial assessors in B.C. It's the first time, to my knowledge, that assessors in this Province have been officially gagged. The letter may be innocent. On the other hand, it could mean that we, as assessors, will be involved in some underhanded scheme that should not be discussed in public. If this assumption is correct then permission would be granted to assessors to speak at a meeting only when it is certain that the nefarious

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scheme would not be a topic for discussion. Maybe the letter is designed to prevent comment on Bill 22. Assessors know" — I want all Members to listen to this, Mr. Speaker — "Assessors know that the main purpose of this bill is to keep property taxation down on promoters who are wheeling and dealing in real estate. In many cases, their properties go up 300 per cent to 400 per cent in one year. A 10 per cent limit on assessment values would effectively curtail tax increases on such property. P.S. For reasons for which I am sure you will understand, I would not like my name to be made known."

Here's an assessor, Mr. Speaker, who feels that there may be some nefarious scheme to which he will become a party as a result of this particular bill. Let me read the notice to all Provincial assessors that went out on February 5, 1971, Budget Day, Mr. Speaker. This one is from J.O. Moore, Surveyor of Taxes for the Province of British Columbia. "Dear Sirs: *re* Public Meetings. As a Provincial assessor, it is probable that you have at some time been invited to address public meetings on the subject of assessment and taxation or to take part in public forums on subjects related to your official duties. It is one of the duties of an assessor to deal with taxpayers and members of the public on an individual basis. However, the department takes a very conservative position in regard to the Provincial assessors dealing with taxpayers, municipal councils, regional boards and school trustees, etc., on a group basis. It is recognized that the result of any meeting between a Provincial assessor and a rate-payer group, service club or any public forum would be quite beneficial. On the other hand, experience has proven such engagements also contain considerable potential for embarrassment or misunderstanding. In view of these considerations, you are asked not to accept commitments for public appearances without prior, written approval of this office."

Mr. Speaker, what has gone out from the Government is a directive gagging all Provincial assessors in the Province of British Columbia. We are not to be told what's going on in the assessment field because it might prove embarrassing. An assessor writes a letter anonymously to me, I'm sure, with the expectation that I would read it to the Legislative Assembly, suggesting that there might be a nefarious scheme under foot by which certain wheelers and dealers and promoters will come off as the beneficiaries of this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, that may not be the case and I'm not pretending to be an expert in the assessment field but there is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that those who have knowledge of the consequences of this bill are being gagged by the Provincial Government. Under those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I demand that this bill be withdrawn, until we have had an opportunity to hear what assessors all over the Province have to say on this subject. This bill should not go through second reading. It should be referred, at this stage, to the Committee on Municipal Affairs. We should have before that committee witnesses who are assessors, who know this field and who understand the implications of this bill. We should have others who are experts in the municipal taxation field appearing before us to give us their views, too, because we do not want to pass legislation in this House that is going to give opportunities to wheelers and dealers for land speculation. We have had too much criticism in the past on this kind of thing, yet, here we have a bill placed before us, in the most innocent of ways. Those who understand the field are telling us that there might be some nefarious scheme afoot and we would be most unwise to have it go ahead.

I ask the Minister of Finance to withdraw second reading of this bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable the First Member for Vancouver East.

**MR. MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, what is needed in this Province is not a bill to limit increases in assessments. I can't think of any small home-owners that this will help. What we need in this Province are true assessments of all of the property of the Province, whether it is held by commercial development or industry in the city of Vancouver, which, generally speaking, is underassessed at the expense of the home-owner, who is overassessed as a result.

What we need is some protection for the public of this Province against the land speculator because this is what this act should be called, Mr. Speaker, an act for the protection of the land speculator. The people who are holding, for example, acres of land around the important highway sections of this Province... what about the Del Cielo holdings, where private land speculators have acquired this land cheaply at low assessments and are holding it while the market value is rising astronomically to sell it off for gas stations and motels and residential subdivisions? Are these people, who are going to reap a bonanza, anyway, out of increased land values having got in on the ground floor, are these people not to pay true taxes in the meantime? Is this additional bonus to be given to them so that they will be underassessed, while the rest of the people of the Province are assessed at true market value? (*interruption*).

How about what? Tax all of the property, whatever it may be in this Province, at its true assessment value, because this is a road runner protection act.

I say that the properties, and especially the speculative properties, which are well-known to all of the people of this House, which are being held at Cache Creek, which are being held at Del Cielo, which are being held at McBride, which are being held at Blue River, which have been bought cheap and which are going to be sold very, very dear for a tremendous speculative profit to a very few people who are mostly friends of the Government opposite. I say, for goodness sakes, if they are to walk off with that kind of a bonanza, let them be paying true taxes, in the meantime, at the very least. That's what this bill is failing to do. There is only one class of beneficiary of this bill and that is the dynasty, that is the speculators and, I say, Mr. Speaker, it should be withdrawn. Where you have unfair taxation, you have unfair Government. You have a situation that should not be tolerated by this Legislature which is supposed to pass laws of equal impact to all of the people of the Province. True assessments we will support, fair assessment we will support, but special privileges to a limited class of speculators we must oppose.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Alberni.

**MR. McDIARMID:** Mr. Speaker, speaking to this, I would have to agree to a certain extent with the Members of the Opposition, although I don't think that this is really particularly aimed at assisting speculators. I am sufficiently convinced of the Prime Minister's track record that this is not what's involved. What has happened, in fact, in the past, is due to the fact that assessors find that they have far more properties to assess each year than they can possibly handle, and many small people, with very ordinary homes, find that every fifth year their house is reassessed and, all of a sudden,

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the taxes may go up in terms of fair market value, possibly by 50 per cent. This imposes a very considerable hardship to get this jump in one particular year. I can't help but think that, if we artificially limit the rate of interest to 10 per cent a year, the real equalization aspect will be lost over a period of time. I think that, while it may be of some value to hold this down, eventually, say, five years or ten years, to get equity again, that we are going to have to possibly re-examine the thing. Rather than that, what I think we should be doing, Mr. Speaker, because this is something that hits home to each individual in a very real way and that's the question of his taxes and his land worth and he's always comparing it with the next fellow... This is human nature. I think, before we are going to get equity, that we are going to have to assure ourselves that we have enough assessors to really handle the job so that they can stay on a situation that may be very volatile in terms of increase in land values, possibly along highways, or islands, or whatever. There are many reasons for precipitating increases in value of various kinds of property and I think that what we must do is to assure ourselves that we have enough assessors in the field to really keep on top of it. If we

had that, I don't think that we would artificially have to tamper with the situation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for North Vancouver-Capilano.

**MR. D.M. BROUSSON (North Vancouver-Capilano):** Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the last comments, because it is my understanding that some of the Provincial assessors are so busy they rarely have time to get out of their own offices. I would support the proposal that we need more assessors and, especially, Provincial assessors.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear, judging from the remarks of the Minister when he spoke to this bill, that he really doesn't understand his own bill as it was written originally and as he is trying to have it amended today. In view of the importance of this, I think it is worthwhile to review the original objectives of this bill as it was passed in 1953, which says, "...to attain equalization of such assessments within the Province, for the purpose of securing uniformity in land and improvement assessments within the Province, and to establish equalized assessments of land and improvements in municipal corporations and rural areas." The original act was a good one. It had excellent objectives and it's been subscribed to by all sides of this House. Equity could have been attained until about 1966. That's when the first monkey business began to creep into it. In 1966, there was a 5 per cent limit placed on any individual property something like we have today. Well, in the two years between 1966 and 1968, equity was destroyed, whatever equity had been attained by 1966, was destroyed in the Province. So, we had some monkey business in 1968 and, in that year, the individual 5 per cent limit was cancelled in an attempt to restore some equity. There was a new limit put on of the total of 5 per cent within an entire school district. That allowed some equity to be established within a school district but it made it absolutely impossible to have equity between different school districts around the Province. Again, we've made it impossible to achieve the objectives of the bill, of the original act. Now, here we are, three years later, monkeying again. The Government wants to tinker with it and limit individual increases to 10 per cent. We've lost equity between districts and, now, we're going to lose equity all over again within the individual school districts.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the House had better make sure it understands what we mean by equalization of assessment and why it's important.

I would like to read two or three lines from the Province of British Columbia *Appraisal Manual* the instructions that are given to Provincial and municipal assessors. "Assessments to be just, must be equitable at all levels, be it between parcels, neighbourhoods, subdistricts or jurisdictions, as well as between the divergent land uses within these components." They go on to demonstrate this at great lengths.

Why is this equalization important, Mr. Speaker? Well, there is one fundamental reason and that is the Provincial school grant, because this grant is based on a common levy throughout the Province. This common levy is based on the assessments in the school districts. Now, if a particular area is incorrectly assessed, if it's assessed too low, for instance, in relation to the other areas, what will happen? That area is going to receive an unduly, unfairly, large Provincial school grant in comparison to other areas of the Province. The Member from Oak Bay spoke of this last year in the House, pointing out that this was already happening in terms of the present degree of equalization that we had. Now we are going to make it worse, because we are going to limit individual properties to 10 per cent. This is applying, Mr. Speaker, more and more in other areas, not only to the school grants, but to matters of sewage and hospitals and a variety of other programmes of this sort which are becoming based on our assessments. As we have more regionalization taking place, more assessments throughout an entire region, not just a school district, by using the basis of the regional assessments to arrive at the proper division of costs, this equity is becoming more and more important. If we don't have it, how can we possibly obtain the fairness of taxation between different areas and different properties?

There has been a strong suspicion, Mr. Speaker, for many years that the Equalization Assessment Commissioner was not really trying to obtain equity. For many years, the assessors and the municipal officials have been very doubtful how much equity actually existed, because no figures are ever released by the Equalization Assessment Office. There has been no way of comparing the percentage relationship of assessment to actual value in different areas — no way of comparing it, just the suspicion in many people's minds in the municipal and taxation field that there was something going on they didn't like, that was unfair. But the office has refused to give any

meaningful figures that can be compared between different parts of the Province. No figures are released and the commissioner, whenever he has been requested, has refused to release any figures or to make any comparisons whatsoever. The fact is, which is being hidden by the Minister of Finance, that virtually no equalization orders are ever given. We simply don't have any semblance of equality around the Province.

Mr. Speaker, who will gain from the 10 per cent limitation? Well, as we have already heard, primarily, the speculators — I'll leave others to suggest the names of some of these speculators and who these major benefactors might be, but it's quite clear that it's the speculator who will benefit. The rural areas are going to gain at the expense of the city and the industrial areas, in terms of the Provincial education grants. Mr. Speaker, let's be positive. What should be done, instead of this kind of action" Let's be positive. Let's assess, first of all, all properties by their true market value. Let's follow...*(Interruption)*. If you don't know the definition

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of true market value, read the *Appraisal Manual*. It's clearly laid out, Mr. Member. It's quite clear that the Government should follow its own original act and I read you the objectives earlier.

First, let's equalize between all areas and publish the figures to prove that equalization does exist. Then, Mr. Speaker, if the Government desires, there are many ways to assist the home-owner and other special cases. For instance, tax deferment or a moratorium for senior citizens who have special problems with increases in assessments. Second, there are many ways to make special mill rate adjustments for home-owners caught by these large, sudden increases. Let's keep equalization of assessment first and make the adjustments of the taxation, by other means, right out in the open, where everyone can see it. Let's get away from secret assessments and secret financial benefits.

One more suggestion, Mr. Speaker, I think would be valuable in this regard is that if we could follow the practice of a number of other Provinces in Canada, let's take the equalization of assessments away from the Department of Finance, for the Minister of Finance to monkey with, and let's put it where it belongs, in with the Department of Municipal Affairs.

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

**MR. BROUSSON:** Now, one further objection, Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in this House, particularly on this side of the House, should object to retroactive legislation.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear.

**MR. BROUSSON:** Government by press release. Last fall, the Government decided they were going to pass a bill some time in March. So, by press release, first, by press release, they announced to the assessors that they had better get their rolls fixed up because there was going to be legislation coming in. Then, a little bit later, the Cabinet passed an Order-in-Council and, finally, the Equalization Assessment Commissioner got around to writing a letter to the assessors saying we are going to do this in the new year so you had better get ready for it. The same kind of approach as the *Succession Duties Act*, last year, Mr. Speaker, retroactive legislation — another example of the arrogance of the Government and the contempt in which it holds this Legislature.

Mr. R.M. Strachan moved adjournment of the debate on Bill 22 until the next sitting of the House.

**MRS. DAILLY:** I would like to ask the Premier what the order of business will be tomorrow for the House.

**MR. BENNETT:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question, it is hoped that the Government will deal with the estimates of the Minister of Education and, following the Minister of Education, the Minister of Highways.

The House adjourned at 5:54 p.m.