

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

---

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

---

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1973**

Afternoon Sitting

[ [Page 555](#) ]

CONTENTS

Routine proceedings

Oral Questions

Businessmen invited to NDP fund-raising dinners.

Hon. Mr. Lauk — [555](#)

Plans for renovation of ferry, Queen of Nanaimo.

Mr. McClelland — [556](#)

Trading of posthumous stock in Vancouver Stock Exchange.

Mr. Gardom — [557](#)

Standing committees. Mr. Curtis — [557](#)

Need for housing. Mr. Rolston — [557](#)

Termination of employment of Victor Parker.

Mr. Williams — [558](#)

Motion Motion to adjourn on matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Phillips — [558](#)

Hon. Mr. Macdonald — [559](#)

Mr. Phillips — [559](#)

Hon. Mr. Barrett — [559](#)

Mr. Speaker's ruling — [559](#)

Speaker's ruling Recording of amendments — [560](#)

Point of order Withdrawal of Motion 2. Mr. Gorst — [560](#)

Routine proceedings

Motions Adjourned debate on Motion 7.

Hon. Mr. Hall — [560](#)

Mr. D.A. Anderson — [561](#)

Mr. Speaker — [561](#)

Mr. D.A. Anderson — [561](#)

Hon. Mr. Strachan — [562](#)

Mr. Wallace — [564](#)

Motion 9.

Hon. Mr. Hall — [564](#)

Mr. Phillips — [564](#)

Mr. McGeer — [565](#)

Mr. Smith — [565](#)

Mr. Wallace — [566](#)

Mr. Gardom — [567](#)

Hon. Mr. Hall — [567](#)

Motion 11.

Mr. Steves — [568](#)

Mr. Gorst — [569](#)

Mr. Gardom — [570](#)

Department of Consumer Services Act. (Bill 48).

Second reading. Hon. Ms. Young — [570](#)

Mr. Schroeder — [572](#)

Mrs. Webster — [573](#)

Mr. McGeer — [575](#)

Mr. Curtis — [576](#)

Mr. Kelly — [576](#)

Mr. Wallace — [578](#)

Mr. Lewis — [579](#)

Mr. Gorst — [580](#)

Mr. Rolston — [580](#)

Mr. Steves — [582](#)

Mr. Gardom — [582](#)

Mr. Phillips — [583](#)

Hon. Ms. Young — [585](#)

An Act to Amend the Distress Area Assistance Act. (Bill 67).

Hon. Mr. Stupich. Introduction and first reading — [589](#)

---

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers.

**MR. D.M. PHILLIPS (South Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to adjourn the House on a matter of urgent public importance.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I wonder if there could be some introductions first.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It won't be forgotten.

**HON. E. HALL (Provincial Secretary):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to the House, sitting in the public galleries on your left, Mr. Speaker, a number of students from the Fraser Valley Christian High School in Surrey who are keen students of the democratic process. I'm sure that they are going to look forward to the debates with interest.

Also sitting in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, are three members of the National Defence College, three of some 44 members of that college who are visiting British Columbia and other parts of Canada and who I had the pleasure of addressing and lunching with earlier today: Dr. J.M. Stewart, Paul LaRose, and Colonel L. Williams. I wish the

House would welcome these members of the National Defence College.

**MS. K. SANFORD (Comox):** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce a guest who is seated on the floor of the House this afternoon — a guest who is a dedicated Canadian and an intrepid navigator. Mr. Dave McTaggart of the Greenpeace has skippered his own vessel twice into the South Seas waters where the French were carrying out atmospheric testing of nuclear devices.

His defiant voyages have done much to draw the attention of British Columbians, Canadians, and, indeed, the whole world to the folly of nuclear testing, and also to the dangers inherent in the proliferation of nuclear arms. I think that he has also shown what an individual, a brave individual, can do on his own to affect the course of world events.

In addition to having his vessel damaged this summer and seized, Mr. McTaggart himself suffered personal injury and has suffered permanent eye damage as a result of his brave adventures.

Now I feel sure that we all honour Mr. McTaggart's high-minded sacrifice, and welcome him very warmly to the House this afternoon.

### **Oral questions.**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Excuse me, Hon. Members, standing order 35 clearly states that any motion such as the Hon. Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) contemplates take place at a specific time in standing orders. If you consult standing order 35, clause 1, you will see that question period comes first, and that will be the next order of business.

## **BUSINESSMEN INVITED TO NDP FUND-RAISING DINNERS**

**HON. G.V. LAUK (Minister of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to answer a question that was raised yesterday by the Hon. Member for Columbia River (Mr. Chabot)?

The questioner asked me whether or not it was the regular function of the Department of Industrial Development to send out invitations to people in the business community to attend fund-raising functions of the NDP. He indicated further that one of the participants at this dinner maintained that he received an invitation from my department.

This allegation is totally false. There was no such invitation issued. No person in my department or staff communicated with anyone with respect to this fund-raising dinner.

**MR. J.R. CHABOT (Columbia River):** On a point of order. I wish the Minister, if he's going to take 24 hours to prepare his answers...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are you making a statement or asking a question?

**MR. CHABOT:** ...and prepare his alibis.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order! Would the Hon. Member be seated? In this House you don't question the motives of any other Member in the fashion you are doing.

**MR. CHABOT:** I'm not questioning....

**MR. SPEAKER:** I ask you to withdraw that.

**MR. CHABOT:** I'm not withdrawing anything. I didn't make any allegations whatsoever. Mr. Speaker, you misconstrue it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You said that the Hon. Member made his alibi. You know perfectly well that that is imputing a motive to another Hon. Member and you should not do so.

**MR. CHABOT:** Mr. Speaker, I think that you should really, in good conscience, suggest to the Minister, who's new in this House, that he will take

[ [Page 556](#) ]

the question as notice and give the answer the following day instead of just ignoring the question when it's put to him, because it's embarrassing when he has no answers.

**HON. MR. LAUK:** Mr. Speaker, the allegation made by the Hon. Member was a very serious one. I thought it would be apparent even to a three-year-old child that what I was about to do was to check out his story. I resent him bringing false allegations into this House reflecting on my character. I'm just fed up with that Member doing it.

### PLANS FOR RENOVATION OF FERRY, QUEEN OF NANAIMO

**MR. R.H. McCLELLAND (Langley):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan) with regard to the continuing problems in the B.C. ferry fleet. Would the Minister confirm that the Queen of Nanaimo is going in for stretching in the immediate future, and that there are no plans for a dining room aboard?

**HON. R.M. STRACHAN (Minister of Transport and Communications):** I heard the question. I can confirm that, but the ability to feed people will be increased. I'll have more to say about that later.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question on the same subject. Has the Minister given any consideration, because of the unrest in the ferry system among the employees, to implementing a management survey of the entire system as quickly as possible, as has been suggested by some of the employees?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** It's obvious, of course, that the Member gets information about the ferries as quickly, or perhaps more quickly than I get it.

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

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Just a minute, just a minute. This Member raised a question yesterday.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** What about the one I raised today?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Just a minute, it's the same question. There was a letter sent to me dated October 1. I was away all last week. I got to my office on Tuesday; yesterday you raised the question; this letter was on my desk and I have only had time to look at it; I have not had time to consider it. And you raised the question just the minute I was in this House. The question you just raised today...it's obvious.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** No, no. Mr. Speaker, the Minister himself referred to the telegram which was on his desk, as he admitted, before the walkout of the ferry personnel; that's what we were talking about, not some letter of which I have no knowledge that was on your desk yesterday.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Speaker, in *Hansard* it will show that he got up and referred to the fulfilment of a promise that was made. I asked him to refer to the telegram. I have considered the telegram, and I'm checking it out as to what was said afterwards because, in going on strike, the ferry workers rejected the offer that was in this telegram.

I also received a telegram from Local 2, rejecting the offer that I have made to have a survey of the whole situation. So that was the situation as I had it in mind yesterday. What I was considering was that particular

viewpoint. I have no objection of any kind to having such a survey — none at all. I intend to have one.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** In regard to the ferry system, would the Minister confirm that it is true that many of the people the Minister has accused of standing around in the dining rooms with nothing to do all carry lifeboat certificates and are necessary for the safety of the passengers on board the ferry system?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** There is a set crew that is required. Our crew requirements right now are beyond the requirements.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** A further question, just a very....

**MR. SPEAKER:** You are taking up a great deal of the time of the House, of the 15 minutes allotted.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Is the purpose of the question period not to concern itself with urgent problems?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, and I think you have had a considerable share of the time.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Mr. Speaker, I understood....

**MR. SPEAKER:** One more. All right, if it's good.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Give him more time. (Laughter.)

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the Minister if it is true that the cut-back

[ [Page 557](#) ]

in staff to which he referred to conform with the winter schedules were made two days before the long holiday weekend when the ferry capacity was at its peak.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I couldn't give you the exact date when they were made. It is my understanding that they were made at the same time of the year as they always have been made. The ferry has a certain time when it goes on the winter schedule.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Will you look into that?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Look, it happened and I'm told it was at the usual date. Whether it was two days before — I'm not exactly sure of the date that it happened, but that's when it happened. It's the normal time of the year to cut back to the existing crew.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You're the boss,

#### TRADING OF POSTHUMOUS STOCK IN VANCOUVER STOCK EXCHANGE

**MR. G.B. GARDOM (Vancouver–Point Grey):** A couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I asked the Attorney General about the problems dealing with the trading of posthumous stock in the Vancouver Stock Exchange and he took the question as notice. I do hope he is doing a little more than just taking it as notice, because we haven't had any replies.

I would ask him today whether or not it is true that the provincial government is investigating charges of fraud in the Vancouver Stock Exchange. And were 36 brokerage salesmen, mining promoters and officers of some 18 companies subject to RCMP raids last weekend? If that is true, I would ask the Attorney General what protections are going to be offered to the innocent members of the public who are ignorant of these matters and who continue to trade in the stocks that may well be under inquiry. Does he have any proposals to see that these people will be

prevented from suffering loss, or are there any restrictions on their trading in these securities today being suggested by his department, at least until such time as the investigation is complete? Because a great deal of loss can happen from now until then.

**HON. A.B. MACDONALD (Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I would assume that the companies under investigation are no longer listed at the present time, either by the stock exchange or....

**MR. GARDOM:** You don't know?

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** No, I don't know for sure.

**MR. GARDOM:** You'd better find out.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** I'll take your question as notice, but I would think it is well known in the investing community that that is going on. I wouldn't imagine they are still trading shares, but I will take your question as notice.

It's a little bit broad, you know. You have mentioned 36 companies and I am not sure. If you have more particulars so that my answer will be more definite as to what companies you are referring to and so that I can tell you definitely whether they are listed or de-listed, I would appreciate that.

**MR. GARDOM:** A supplemental to the Attorney General. If you do determine that these stocks that are under investigation are currently trading, will you order them to desist?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. The Hon. Member knows that under the rules, when a question deals with a matter either before the court or where an investigation is going on before charges are laid, there is some limit to the amount of questions you can ask on that subject.

**MR. GARDOM:** No, with every respect, Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about charges, nor am I talking about matters before court, nor am I talking about the consistence of the investigation. I'm merely asking the Attorney General if he's going to put a cease and desist order on the trading of any stocks that are under investigation. It is a perfectly simple question and he is taking it as notice.

## STANDING COMMITTEES

**MR. H.A. CURTIS (Saanich and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Premier, in view of the fact that there are several matters of important but unfinished business, does he intend to re-establish or reconstitute any or some standing committees of this House within the next few weeks?

**HON. D. BARRETT (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact on private Members' day, today, we will immediately proceed to motions, and one of the motions to be dealt with will be the committee motion.

## NEED FOR HOUSING

**MR. P.C. ROLSTON (Dewdney):** Mr. Speaker, a question of the Minister Without Portfolio on housing. What has the response been to date on letters sent by your predecessor and a letter you sent

[ [Page 558](#) ]

to the municipalities pointing out the need for housing and help regarding land, or assembling of land that they own?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oh, come on!

**MR. ROLSTON:** The second question is, could you elaborate a little bit on your press release of yesterday? Are you restricting...?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. One question at a time, please. Would the Member be seated?

**HON. L. NICOLSON (Minister Without Portfolio):** Mr. Speaker, I could open up this briefcase and, I think, answer that question, strangely enough. But it was not a cooked-up question. (Laughter.)

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

**HON. MR. NICOLSON:** I think I will take it as notice, however, and not show off my preparedness. (Laughter.)

**MR. ROLSTON:** A supplementary, while you are on your feet. Could you elaborate a little bit about your press release yesterday regarding the mobile homes? (Laughter.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. There are no invitations for speeches.

## TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT OF VICTOR PARKER

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS (West Vancouver–Howe Sound):** A question to the Hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. May I ask the Minister if he has taken steps to terminate the employment of Mr. Victor Parker who has been engaged by the government on matters of urban transportation?

**HON. J.G. LORIMER (Minister of Municipal Affairs):** No. (Laughter.)

**MR. WILLIAMS:** A supplemental question, Mr. Speaker. If you haven't terminated the employment of Mr. Parker, would you please tell the House what he is going to do in view of the ultimatum that you delivered yesterday to the members of the Greater Vancouver Regional District?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** On instructions from upstairs.

**HON. MR. LORIMER:** Mr. Member, you should know that I never deliver ultimatums. (Laughter.)

**MR. WILLIAMS:** A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Is it not true that you delivered the ultimatum from upstairs to the members of the Greater Vancouver Regional District canceling any rights they had to negotiate with this government on rapid transit?

**HON. MR. LORIMER:** No, I have never cancelled anything of that sort. I think I told them that they were going to have to start thinking about their share of the financing, and I think some of them were upset about that. Other areas in the province have been financing their transit for a great length of time and the Greater Vancouver Regional District has been told that they are going to have to assist in the financing. They were told by me over a year ago. I reminded them again that I expected that they would have their tackle in order by January 1, because that is when they are going to start to pay.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** A last question, Mr. Speaker. Is the soaking of the property tax owner the NDP's view of free public transit?

**HON. MR. LORIMER:** I at no time suggested to them that they had to tax by way of the property tax. I told them that the method of taxation would be an amount equal to what could be raised on a mill basis. Now at no time did I suggest that there should be a straight overall tax over the whole of an area or anything of that sort. They could arrange their own taxation. I gave them a few suggestions.

**MR. CURTIS:** On the same subject, Mr. Speaker. How else, Mr. Minister, are the municipalities to find the funds to which you have referred if it is not by property tax increases?

**HON. MR. LORIMER:** Property tax increase can take a variety of methods of raising this money by

property tax. You can have a general tax, or you can have a tax of benefiting areas, or you can have business tax, you can have a number of different things, a number of different features that can be used. I think the questioner is considering only the idea of having a flat rate of taxation over the whole community and I at no time suggested that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I point out that asking a legal opinion, as it were, or how to solve a problem is not part of question period.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to adjourn the House on a matter of urgent public importance.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do you wish to state the matter?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Yes I do, Mr. Speaker. I have been

[ [Page 559](#) ]

informed that members of the United Fruit Growers in the Okanagan Valley are talking of violence, are talking of militancy, and I have further been informed that some of them are starting to pack firearms. The members of this group feel they are justified in protecting their rights, their produce, their assets and their way of life. They know that a market exists in the lower mainland and are continuing to service that market.

The reason for the militancy is that they will no longer stand for the continued harassment they are receiving in moving their produce to market.

In view of the Minister's remarks about a proposed plebiscite to establish the wishes of the fruit farmers with regard to one or more selling desks, I ask that the House be adjourned to discuss this matter of urgent public importance.

**HON. MR. MACDONALD:** On the question of the urgency of debate of this matter, if the Hon. Member has information that is of a serious nature with some definiteness to it, I wish he'd draw it to my attention as Attorney General, where it will be treated as a normal matter of the protection of citizens and their rights in their business and other occupations.

But there is no urgency for debate, in my submission, Mr. Speaker. The laws are there; they are observed by the citizens of B.C. If there is a threatened breach by some group or individual, I would appreciate being informed of that matter.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Speaker, it is a sincere matter of urgent public importance. I was just informed of this this morning. The matter is growing worse daily and the idea of debate would be to ask the Minister to ask the Fruit Board either to cool it or do something to alleviate the situation immediately.

I have my responsibility as a legislator in bringing this matter before this House and if something happens, if there is violence, the responsibility will rest on this House. I am merely bringing to you, Mr. Speaker, the matter that has been brought before me. Being a member of the agriculture committee, I am aware of the situation and I think it is very, very urgent. I think this House should take time right now to debate this situation because if it grows worse there is a possibility of violence and the responsibility will be on this Legislature.

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

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Mr. Speaker, there are laws in this land that govern all people. If people make a conscious decision to break the law, it is their responsibility for making that decision — not on this House. Laws are made for people to obey. It is the responsibility of this House to pass laws and we expect people to obey. If someone breaks the law, that is a decision by them, not a decision of this House and we urge all citizens to be law abiding.

Now, to bring to the attention of this House the possibility that someone will break the law and to have a debate on that possibility would mean that this House would be in debate every single day about that possibility. We have a law enforcement agency. We ask all people to be law abiding. If some law is harsh or people find difficulty in



handling that law, then an appeal must be made to the legislators to consider a change in that law. But while a law is in effect we expect all citizens, regardless of their walk of life, to obey that law.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate....

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

**MR. PHILLIPS:** May I just say one word, please?

**MR. SPEAKER:** No, it is not a debate. You are now, I presume, attempting to commence a debate. May I point out to you in *May*....

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Allow me to....

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

I have got your statement; that is what you are required to give. I am required to look at it. I have listened to points of order on this and it is clear in *May*, 16th ed., page 372 — when the British rule is exactly the same as ours and has been, prior to that, for centuries — that this is a matter which must involve more than the ordinary administration of the law. And it gives examples on page 372 — including a deputation that was threatening parliament...marching on Westminster Bridge, stopped by the police...a Member gets up to move the same motion, urgent...importance of debate.

That fact of the matter: this is a matter involving the ordinary administration of the law. To give countenance to it is to give countenance to other than the administration of law in its present form. Therefore, the rules of our House clearly say that this would not be a purpose which I could put to the House in view of the rulings that have previously been made — page 372.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your ruling, but I want to point out that there is pending an amendment to this law coming. The Minister has said that he may allow a plebiscite. An amendment to the law is pending; therefore it is different to somebody just saying they are going to break a law.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order.

[ [Page 560](#) ]

**MR. PHILLIPS:** The House has a right to amend laws as well as make laws and see that they are enforced. An amendment to this law is....

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** We will not be blackmailed by anybody.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Don't threaten this House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Then the obvious answer to that is that the Hon. Member is anticipating a debate that he says is going to happen. Nonetheless, it is still the present law that exists, the law to which every citizen is bound. This does not include anything other than the ordinary administration of the law, therefore, I must rule it out of order.

**MR. GARDOM:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave of the House to withdraw the amendment in my name on orders of the day, page 27, dealing with section 31 of Bill 11.

Leave granted.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before we proceed, Hon. Member, my staff and I looked at the question raised in regard to reporting from committees. If you look at our standing orders, it states clearly that there shall not be reports of this

kind involving what happened in committee, under our rules, unless the unanimous leave of the House is given. Therefore, it has not been considered a practice in our rules for many years to have reports of what has transpired in committee.

Over the years what has happened, though, not having had a *Hansard* of debates in committee, this means was used to bring from committee reports of votes that took place and divisions that took place. Now we are getting a request that the particulars that deal with amendments to bills be brought into the records of the House — *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Journals*.

I suggest to the Hon. Members, after looking at the problem, and I promised I would report back to you on it, that now we have a *Hansard* that records the debates and the divisions in committee and records the amendments in particular from committees in the *Hansard* every day when they occur, when we have reports, a bill on report where amendments have occurred, the amended sections are then included in the reprinted bill. There's ample coverage of the situation without burdening again *Votes and Proceedings* by this additional printed material which causes great problems for the staff and the Queen's Printer.

I would ask the Hon. Members if they would agree to the underlining of the amended sections so that the public will know that amended sections were made in the bills. When it comes up for report, it is put in your books and is given to the public with the underlining of the amended sections to whatever bill was amended. That should cover the situation, I hope, and avoid this problem of reports from committee.

**MR. GARDOM:** (Mike not on) ...is this point yesterday and it is one which has been troubling certain Members of the House for a number of years. I think this is an effective compromise, providing the amendments are underlined in the bill as reported. It's not really so much keeping the Members of the House properly informed as giving the general public an opportunity to be properly informed, which heretofore they were not.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think the circumstances are such that it would make it possible that the public would be properly informed.

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

**HON. D. BARRETT (Premier):** This is private Members' day. I move we proceed to motions and adjourn debates on motions.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do you want a motion on that? You don't need a motion on this matter of procedure.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Motion 2, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Hon. Provincial Secretary adjourned the debate.

**MR. J.H. GORST (Esquimalt):** A point of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'm sorry, a point of order? What is your point of order?

**MR. GORST:** I ask leave of the House to withdraw motion 2 standing in my name on the order paper.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, it takes unanimous consent of the House to withdraw a motion that's before it where there has already been debate commenced. Shall leave be granted?

Leave granted.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Motion 7, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Hon. Provincial Secretary adjourned the debate.

**HON. E. HALL (Provincial Secretary):** Mr. Speaker, the House will remember that I actually adjourned

this debate on behalf of the Minister of

[ [Page 561](#) ]

Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan) who was absent on government business in the east of the country. In so doing, I assured the Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) that he would not lose sight of this motion, as indeed I thought he would be pressing the case either privately with the Minister or publicly on the floor of this Legislative Assembly. I did welcome his assurances that those of us who have observed the odd tussle between the members of the Hibernian race realize it wasn't as serious as it appeared to be at that particular point in time.

In adjourning the debate, I really adjourned it on behalf of the Minister. I will now take my seat and let the debate take its normal course.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON (Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, on this debate on this motion I would like to say a few words.

You will recall that the debate arose out of the questioning in this House on the decision of the Minister to give a contract for \$10,000 to an American firm of marine architects — Nikum Spalding — to do preliminary design work, sketch-work, for two new ferries. And the debate or at least the questioning and the replies — I guess we could call it debate in a general sense — the debate arose over whether or not this could have gone to a Canadian firm.

That was the first question which was raised and then later on we got onto the question of safety.

To briefly recapitulate: the two principal concepts which are in opposition are those of the American and Canadian coastguards. Essentially the American coast guard has a concept whereby if a ship gets into trouble — at least if the Washington state ferries get into trouble within an area which is relatively shelving, islands nearby, a good amount of other traffic nearby, the safest thing to do is to keep people on the boat and not give them the opportunity of drowning themselves by their attempt to escape from a vessel on fire, a vessel involved in a collision or a vessel involved in grounding. It's the Titanic concept: you make a boat safe and you don't let people get off.

The Canadian coast guard concept, by contrast, if you will permit me to recapitulate again, is that you provide the full opportunity for people to get off the boat — full opportunity to abandon ship, in other words.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Mr. Speaker, point of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Point of order.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** This motion says to ask the Minister to consider tabling with the Legislature the full details and guidelines of a proposal made by British Columbia Ferry Authority.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** That's right.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** That is details of correspondence. The government has indicated that it is willing to table such documents....

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** ...and it has not.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** He's way off the motion.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier would perhaps show a little more patience — he's not a particularly patient man — he would realize that the government has not yet promised to table this documentation, and has not done so up to the present time.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Well, we will....

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** That's why this motion still remains on our order paper; that's why it's on the floor now.

Interjections.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I take it that the Hon. Member is persuading the House and the government, by his speech, of the advisability of tabling. Is that the purpose of your...?

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Mr. Speaker, that is the purpose of my speech.

**HON. R.M. STRACHAN (Minister of Transport and Communications):** If I could get the floor, I would accept the motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Well, we can save time in the House. If the government, the Hon. Minister, accepts the motion, there is really nothing left to debate.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Mr. Speaker, how on earth can we on this side of the House know what the Minister is going to say when the motion comes up? The motion was adjourned by the Hon. Provincial Secretary (Hon. Mr. Hall) prior to....

Interjections.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** We are going to table the correspondence.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** ...It's no criticism of him; the Minister was not in the House. But can we not debate motions? The Minister can at any time....

Interjections.

[ [Page 562](#) ]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. I don't think we need to debate a motion if it's accepted. I think the motion is accepted; therefore, it would help the business of the House if we went on to some other business. I'll put the motion now if the Member wants to....

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have the floor. I'm interrupted by the Minister — two Ministers: one the Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Barrett) and the other the Minister of Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan). They have their opportunity to speak in this debate. They may now have realized the foolishness of their previous decisions...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Order.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** ...but I at least should have the opportunity of partaking in this debate like any other Member on the basis of the fact that I had the floor.

Now if you disagree, or if any Minister disagrees — fine. But unfortunately the rules of our Legislature give me a right to speak. If you wish me to sit down for reasons of allowing the Minister to speak...if you would make a polite request, I might do so; but I'm tired of the arrogance of that Minister. I'm tired of his rudeness and I'm tired of his refusal to consider questions on this subject and many others.

Interjections.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order. On the point of order, I wish to draw to your attention that a motion of this kind is confined to the motion that the details and guidelines of a proposal made by the B.C. Ferry Authority to a Seattle firm in seeking a design for a new ferry be tabled. That is the scope of the debate, not on what is a good ferry and what is a bad ferry and so on. It must relate to the advisability of tabling the details between these two bodies or

persons.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** That is precisely, Mr. Speaker, why I am indicating why it was necessary to get the original American designs which were presented to CSI in Ottawa, which the Minister consistently refused to reveal in this House or even mention in this House. He talked consistently about later designs which were the result, of course, of conversations with CSI.

The reason that I am on my feet discussing this is that it's a matter of a certain amount of concern, in particular to people who live on Vancouver Island and have really no other means of getting off — not having Citation jet aircraft, and now Beechcraft, like the Minister or other people who have the opportunity of getting off.

If the firm hired by the Minister were putting proposals forward for a ship which... and I am sure that the correspondence he is going to give us will indicate what the type of proposal was: a ship which would allow life rafts for less than 10 per cent of the crew and passengers of the vessel; only four rescue boats — man-overboard boats; no double hull; a double bottom only under the engine compartment; no davits except for the man-overboard boats; no fire protection at the point where people get off the car deck and onto the passenger deck, and also at the point of embarkation and, finally, a reduction of crew.

Interjections.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I interrupt the Hon. Member for a minute to point out to him that the advisability of a different hull, the advisability of more boats or less boats, is not the subject of this motion. We are not debating what a ferry should be. We are debating whether certain details that were given between one body and another should be tabled with this House. The government has indicated that they will table it. We are not debating what kind of ferries we will have in British Columbia.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask you, on a point of order, whether or not you will take cognizance of every interjection of a government Minister, designed to cut off debate of opposition Members, such as he has just done.

**MR. SPEAKER:** No, I won't. If the Hon. Member wishes to debate the motion I will urge him to debate the motion, but I will not permit him to debate the advisability of what kind of ferries we will have in British Columbia.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Mr. Speaker, the motion reads that "the Hon. Minister of Transport and Communications table with the Legislature the full details and guidelines of a proposal made by British Columbia Ferry Authority to the Seattle firm of Nikum Spalding in seeking the design for a new ferry." Now the only way I can get any indication as to why this information on new design should be made public is to give what information I have about the original proposals concerning safety. I don't see how, under the suggestion you have made, it would be possible to discuss any motion whatsoever if we cannot talk about the substance of it.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** As I indicated across the floor of the House, I have every intention... and the government accepts the motion. When? Right now. Right now we accept the motion. It's the first chance I have had to speak on the motion, and I don't think

[ [Page 563](#) ]

I can accept it any quicker than that, with all due deference to the Hon. Member.

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** All right, all right my friend. Anyway, to repeat: the government accepts the motion. A lot of things have been said about the ferries. I think we have a reasonably good ferry system. I think we can agree that there are some problems.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. The Hon. Minister is not entitled to debate the ferry system. (Laughter.)

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm like the Member for Victoria (Mr. D.A. Anderson).

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** Discuss the new ferry proposal.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I'm going to discuss the new ferry proposal. The reason is that I must do this in order to support the motion for tabling, because the proposals that were made were made on the basis of the allowance by the CSI to the CPR when they constructed the carrier Princess.

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Now this is the proposal.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Order.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** We thought perhaps the CS1....

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. I must draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the fact there's only one question before the House; whether you will table the full details and guidelines of a proposal.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** That is a proposal that was made. That is a specific fact — a proposal that was made. I'm giving the House the reasons why they should support this motion. I'm giving the House the reasons why they should support this motion, and I'm giving the background to the papers that are referred to, and I have that right.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You have the right to discuss the advisability of tabling the proposal.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I'm giving the reasons why we should support the motion, because I want this motion to pass. I want the people to know why I support it.

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** As I was saying, the CPR have built a new carrier ship with a design that had some attraction, and because this design had been approved by the CSI we thought perhaps the Government of British Columbia and the people of British Columbia would get the same prerogative to change design as that enjoyed by the CPR.

On that basis we put forward some proposals — and I have the CPR plan here — and there are three sections that have double bottom and two major sections that haven't got a double bottom. It's only a two-compartment design, and the CPR were given approval to build that, and it carries 450 people.

We assumed that the CSI would allow the Government of British Columbia to put forward some alternative designs.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. A point of order raised?

**MR. H.A. CURTIS (Saanich and the Islands):** I am a new Member in this House, and the Minister has had many years experience. But for the life of me I cannot see what this has to do with the motion before the House.

**MR. P.L. McGEER (Vancouver–Point Grey):** Didn't you read the *Vancouver Province* this morning? (Laughter.)

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I want to quote from one of the documents that will be tabled to indicate what's in mind and what the documents contain so you will support the motion. We are speaking of the original submission to them. "We are seeking approval for design concepts for ferries"...and incidentally your reference to an American firm — the individual who has been doing the objecting — when he applied for design when they were accepting designs for the Walla Walla and the Spokane said, "I will have no problems because I'm an American citizen." We

made the submission.

"We are seeking approval for design concepts for ferries, travelling on scheduled routes in the Gulf of Georgia south of Nanaimo, operating in sheltered waters, where rough weather conditions resulting in high seas are rare. In fact, the Swan Wooster Engineering Company Limited design criteria for Roberts Bank Coal Terminal was based on the highest wave being 11.5 feet in a westerly direction, with a predicted incidence of once per two years. B.C. Ferries has had a policy in effect right from the commencement of its operations that masters are not to operate in severe weather conditions.

"As a result, over the years service has only

[ [Page 564](#) ]

been disrupted for an average of two or three days per year a few hours at a time. Damage and injury involving ferries, terminals and passengers has been minimal."

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I say in interrupting again, Hon. Minister, that I can understand advisability being debated of whether a motion should be complied with where it deals with something that is still secret and should not be revealed publicly at some stage of delicate negotiations and the Minister standing and defending that secrecy as an important matter of government policy, But I don't think either the first person who spoke today or the second person, the Minister speaking, should indulge in a complete debate on ship design, the standards of safety for ships, when the real question is whether there's any reason that this material should not be tabled with the House. Therefore I would ask the Minister to confine it simply to that question.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I'll accept your strictures, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the rules of the House as you've outlined them. I just wanted to point out to you that we get complaints that things are said outside of the House before they're said inside the House and this is the first chance that I've had to make any statement. But it's obvious that the rules don't allow me to and the Members across the way don't want to listen, so I would ask the House to support the motion so the documents may be tabled.

Interjections.

**MR. G.S. WALLACE (Oak Bay):** Mr. Speaker, in closing the debate first of all let me say that I am pleased that the motion is acceptable to the government. It's not always that opposition Members have this exciting privilege afforded to them. But in further comment to the Hon. Provincial Secretary, the motion was placed on the order paper for the specific purpose of public debate in relation to possible safety precautions on the new proposed ferries.

I feel that the Minister, while he's a very busy man and was out of the House, and so on, is rather late in tabling the document when he now gives the impression that he meant to do it all along. I don't think that is what I expect of that particular Minister because when he was on this side of the House probing into matters of public safety, he did just what I am doing.

I think that while it's a delayed agreement by government to table these documents, I think in all fairness they could have been tabled when we asked the Minister in question several weeks ago in the oral question period.

However, Mr. Speaker, on the issue of informing the public the Minister, I believe, has met his responsibility. But I think he could have done it much sooner.

Motion approved.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** With leave of the House, Mr. Speaker, I move we proceed to motion 9.

Leave granted.

**HON. MR. HALL:** In motion 9, the government seeks to change the names of the standing committees of the House. There are, Mr. Speaker, eight standing committees of the House and they have currently the names that are so well known. It seems to me that in order to carry on this new work of the House that has been so remarkably

well accepted in the last few months we get a little bit more modern in this way.

There could be a debate that lasted a long time as to whether this went with that subject, or the other subject went with the one you first thought of and all that kind of thing. I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that if we look through the lists of committees in other jurisdictions we can find perhaps the same kind of criticism about this new list. You know, why does transportation deserve one of its own when you've got education mixed in with something else? Why should labour and justice be in one when you've got something else over on the left-hand side of the ledger and all that kind of argument.

Mr. Speaker, I think we're masters of our own destiny. We can send whatever we want to whichever committee we want. I think that we can work with this kind of listing.

In looking at the committees in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, I see that they too have from time to time strayed from what could be a rather pedestrian approach to the naming of these committees and the duties that they would have as a responsibility on direction from this House.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that in doing this kind of change we're following the patterns that were formed when we moved that *Legislative Procedure and Practice Inquiry Act*. We're getting on with the job and I take pleasure in moving motion 9 standing in my name on the order paper, and then we can get the committees to work again.

**MR. D.M. PHILLIPS (South Peace River):** I certainly can agree with the principle of this bill. However, there is a question I would like the Provincial Secretary to answer, The government has seen fit to put sufficient attention upon consumer affairs in this province as to form a special department of consumer affairs with a Minister of

[ [Page 565](#) ]

consumer affairs who will be drawing a large salary, and a very, very small staff.

I'm wondering under which one of these committees he would recommend that consumer affairs go for study. Because if it's important enough to form this new portfolio, it should be important enough to come under the scrutiny of one of these committees. Maybe the Provincial Secretary would answer that for me.

**MR. McGEER:** Mr. Speaker, certainly we'll support this motion. It's very much in order to change the name of committees and I think that the House and the government shouldn't hesitate to rearrange the committees of the House, their titles and their functions, in the same way that they rearrange the cabinet portfolios.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I don't think we should delude ourselves into thinking that the changing of names of these committees will make this House function in a committee way, in the way a parliament really should. Because in the final analysis, what this Legislature does is to recommend and pass bills. These bills provide the guidelines for the cabinet to carry on the work of government when this Legislature is not in session.

In this particular sitting of the House, we've been going on for a month now without a single bit of committee work having been done, without a single matter or a single bill having been referred to any committee of the House. So, Mr. Speaker, for practical purposes, the committee system in this particular sitting of the Legislature is nothing but a sham and a delusion. It's all very well to have had these committees junketing around the province, but it does cost money and the public should be aware that the Members who travel get an income for that particular work.

They bring recommendations before the House in the form of reports, but when you get right down to the crunch of drafting legislation and having legislation introduced into this House being referred to these committees whose purpose in travelling around the province should be to prepare legislation and to study legislation that's introduced to the House — when you get right down to the final crunch, the committees and their functions disappear.



We don't have properly functioning committees in this Legislature, even though this is the heart of democracy. While we support the motion, and while I personally believe that it's entirely in order to have appropriate names for committees in this House, Mr. Speaker, I also think it's appropriate that committees of this House should do the kind of work that committees are intended to do.

What that means is that every single piece of legislation that's introduced into this House should automatically be referred to one of these standing committees and should not appear for full debate in this House until it has been combed by the elected Members who've been trained in a particular line of legislative endeavour, with the help of properly appointed legislative counsel, then brought before the full House for debate.

When you have a Legislature that starts to function in this manner, then the level of the bills in their competency that are passed will of course escalate very sharply. Perhaps then we'll have the kind of open government, the kind of working MLAs, the kind of successful legislation that the Premier has talked about, but hasn't yet fully introduced into the democratic process in British Columbia.

**MR. D.E. SMITH (North Peace River):** I wish to make a few comments concerning the motion and perhaps echo some of the sentiments of the speaker who has just taken his place, and that is that the changing of the name of the committees to bring them into the sharper focus of the public eye will not necessarily do anything to help improve the type of work the committee will be able to do.

I, too, believe that much of the legislation that comes before the House could be put, after first reading, into the hands of the committees or, for that matter, even before it comes before the House, if that was the pleasure of the government. Because I can well recall pieces of legislation which have been introduced to this House, then went to the standing committee where a great deal of discussion and debate took place and amendments were made....

**HON. MR. HALL:** Name two.

**MR. SMITH:** Okay, the mining legislation that went to the mining and railways committee with a number of major changes in the legislation before it came back into the House. The Minister who was then Minister of Mines, the Hon. Member for Boundary-Similkameen (Mr. Richter), accepted the amendments.

**HON. MR. HALL:** That's one.

**MR. SMITH:** It was certainly an improved bill from what we had before us in draft form. I would hope that that type of procedure would be carried on with much of our legislation in future sessions of the Legislature.

I'd also like to ask the Minister, when he closes the debate on this particular matter, a question. I may have missed his remarks in this respect, but I see that we are doing away with the name of the mining and railways committee and the forestry and fisheries committee, and presumably that is being replaced with a committee called the Committee on Environment and Resources. Is it the intent of the

[ [Page 566](#) ]

Minister that all resource functions of the particular portfolios will come under this committee, with the exception of agriculture? I would like him to comment on that when he closes the debate.

I feel that the committees have, over the last year, proven that they can be a very effective arm of the process of government. I know from experience that the Members who sat on the committees were able to function, to their credit, without bringing party lines and party politics into play as much as we do here in the House. I think that had a great effect on the type of recommendations that the committees were able to come up with because there was not a matter of playing politics for the benefit of the press in the committees that I travelled with. I think that we were able, on the forestry committee, to have a better appreciation for the individual Members of the House and their respective vocations, their areas, because of the fact that we travelled in a smaller group than the 55 of us sitting in the House today.

I would hope that the government will make more use of the committee system and also perhaps pay more attention to the type of recommendations the committee makes, because the recommendations are only a reflection of what has been said to the committee in meetings and in public assemblies throughout the Province of British Columbia.

**MR. WALLACE:** I had to be out of the House when the Minister introduced the motion but I assume that we're debating the change in title, and I hope, a change in philosophy from the previous administration. We've had evidence of that already by the work which this government has encouraged standing committees to do, and I would like to echo the comments of the former speaker with particular relation to the committee that studied the hospital problem of intermediate care and home care. I think, particularly in subjects of that nature, getting around the province to listen to people whose needs vary quite a bit from the people in the urban areas is of extreme importance, and I think the committee was well worthwhile.

I'd like to say, and I say this not so much to criticize as to offer suggestions for the future, but one of our difficulties was that the notice available to people prior to our going on tour was somewhat short and inadequate, and lots of people who apparently would have wished to appear before the committee had inadequate time to prepare any kind of brief. I realized that this was the first time the committees had gone on tour, and I'm not suggesting that probably that difficulty could have been avoided, but I think in future the terms of reference for the committee should be very clear and, if possible, fairly brief, and they should be available quite some time before the committee does go on tour.

The other point which I think perhaps just was not considered, but which I feel very strongly about, is that I do not believe that cabinet Ministers should be on touring committees. Now if the cabinet Ministers can attend committee work while the House is in session, and they don't have to travel, I would certainly accept that. But on this particular committee on which I served, there were three cabinet Ministers, all important to the work of the committee in my opinion: the Ministers of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke), Education (Hon. Mrs. Dailly), and Human Resources (Hon. Mr. Levi), I just don't think, Mr. Speaker, that it's really reasonable or fair to expect that cabinet Ministers can attend two or three days every week, perhaps for four or five weeks on end. It just is not practical in the pattern of their work and their responsibility here in Victoria. So, with no disrespect intended to the input which they could give if they were able to attend the hearings, I would hope that in setting up committees in future, cabinet Ministers would not be included.

I've already mentioned the terms of reference, and again this is a new ballgame, to use a popular expression. Many of the people who had attended the public hearings were miles off the mark in regard to the terms of reference. In some rural areas they had travelled a considerable distance and then proceeded to talk about something which really had very little to do with our terms of reference, but it was the feeling of the chairman and the committee that nevertheless, out of courtesy, we should listen to what they had to say. Perhaps these are all teething problems, Mr. Speaker, which can be got around with experience, and I'm sure they will be, but I think they're not small points, they're pretty important. If nothing else, it's an expense to the government and the taxpayer to send us around the province. We must use our time and our energies economically, and I'm not sure that we were doing that on this first experience of public hearings in different parts of the province.

I like the change on the title; I like to think we have a committee on the environment and resources. The renaming of the Health, Education, and Human Resources, that title I also think is an improvement. But my last comment would be, I'm just wondering, in the light of the fact that committees haven't functioned at all this session, just how intent and conscientious the government is regarding the use of these committees during sessions of the Legislature. We've had some examples and, without being out of order, I would say we've already got a motion on the order paper suggesting the referral to a committee in relation to legislation.

It would just be my hope that in the future the government would show a greater propensity for submitting important public issues to committees first, before bringing in legislation, and a greater tendency, once contentious legislation has been

tabled, to hold hearings of the appropriate committee to perhaps hear all points of view regarding the proposals in the legislation. Again, I'm thinking of such matters as the bill to give public service employees collective bargaining rights. It might never change the ultimate legislation, Mr. Speaker, but the most important function of any legislator is to have big ears and to listen. If, in a democratic system, someone listens to me and then ignores me, that really doesn't bother me, but it certainly bothers me that, in the public area, people responsible for legislation don't even listen sometimes, or don't provide the opportunity for people to present their point of view.

If these committees are given the opportunity, and if they're used fairly frequently and yet judiciously, if the terms of reference are sound, and if the committee members are appointed in such a way that they can attend the hearings, then these committees hold tremendous potential for the improvement of legislation in this province and, in my view, they hold great potential to enhance the system we were accustomed to not too many years ago in this House.

**MR. G.B. GARDOM (Vancouver–Point Grey):** A few short observations, Mr. Speaker. I think that all the Members of the House will agree that the committees over the years that functioned did, on the whole, a good job and I think with a rather remarkable lack of political partisanship. But I find it somewhat surprising that in bringing forth this amendment, with the experience the Members of the government have had on committees over the years, they did this without consultation of the other parties. I think if that had occasioned, we could have come up with a list more suited to the needs of the people of British Columbia than has the Provincial Secretary (Hon. Mr. Hall).

I do indeed recognize his dilemma; it is quite impossible to please everyone. But just in taking a look at his list here, it seems to me that we've got certain areas which do not necessarily clash but they don't obviously combine: maybe environment and resources. Maybe the philosophy there is that you did wish to have a situation where there was an obvious conflict of interest. If that is the case, perhaps there is some logic to it. But if that is not the case, it is totally illogical.

Secondly, labour and justice. It would seem to me that justice is rather a hallowed thing that should be separated unto a committee, really, of its own. I certainly hope there is not any inference that, when talking labour and justice, on the other side of the coin one would find management and injustice. It is a peculiar link to see that justice has been brought into this one particular section.

The one re health, education and human resources could become literally a back-breaker for Member participation. I think it is too large as it is, and, in view of the fact that our economy has expanded, the numbers of our people have grown, the potential that we have in British Columbia is almost limitless, it would seem to me that it would have been much more prudent if the government had not only altered a few names but had increased the number of committees and had, in certain instances as I have illustrated, broken them down into other areas and other portfolios.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Hon. Provincial Secretary closes the debate.

**HON. MR. HALL:** Mr. Speaker, I'm just answering the questions and commenting on a couple of the remarks.

In answer to the Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) the consumer affairs legislation would likely — but I can't prejudge the wishes of the House — it would likely go to committee No. 2. That would be, I think, logical in that it is dealing with monetary and economic affairs.

Secondly, I want to deal with the request from the Member for North Peace River (Mr. Smith), who I think looked at the committee work in a more reasonable way than the one-time Liberal leader. He asked a definite question about mining, the railways, forestry and fisheries. I think it's fair to say that mining, forestry and fisheries would go to the resources committee, and railways would go to transportation and communication. I never really did know why, any more than we know today, what occasioned the split in the first place, which perhaps is my way of answering the now-departed Member for Vancouver–Point Grey.

Interjection.

**HON. MR. HALL:** There you are.

Now then, the first Member for Vancouver–Point Grey (Mr. McGeer) in my view, Mr. Speaker, insulted every Member of this House by calling it junketing. The tragedy about that Member, Mr. Speaker, is that he insults the Members of the House without knowing he's doing it. Perhaps that's even more important to realize than the fact of the insult itself. But anybody accusing the members of the committees of this House who travelled the length and breadth of this province last summer with junketing really is disgraceful and only proves the misgivings that we've all had about his leadership of that one-time great party.

Mr. Speaker, to consider his speech in connection with his seat-mate's speech, who realizes the value of committee work, really shows perhaps the dichotomy of that party if nothing else does.

The Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace), who has

[ [Page 568](#) ]

also left, asked if the committee work would start this session. I don't know. I'm just the Provincial Secretary. I don't have control of everything in this House, although some people think I have. The House will decide when the committees meet; the House will decide what work is sent to those committees. Resolutions, I am sure, will appear on the order paper in the fullness of time.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we have got a dichotomy of viewpoints — I use that word again because the Member for Columbia River (Mr. Chabot) didn't know what it meant.

**MR. J.R. CHABOT (Columbia River):** What does it mean?

**HON. MR. HALL:** Some people think everything should go to a committee before any action is done. Mr. Speaker, time after time after time, bills have gone through second reading and nobody on the other side has said a word except, "I support it." So really, I think they have to be a little bit more consistent.

There have in the last 10 years been two bills that have gone to committee and the Member could remember one. I can remember the other one: the *Workmen's Compensation Act* went there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think our record speaks rather highly of the new approach. We shouldn't mistake a new name for anything other than a sincere attempt to reflect some of the portfolios and to combine some of the interests.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, may I say that one of the problems we've had — and really this has been looking after the opposition — is that if we were very, very rational indeed, we would probably have 20 committees. If we had 20 committees there's no way the opposition could be on them because they just don't have enough Members. If they get a little bit better, maybe we can increase those committees and have a Member on each one. At the moment we are stuck with eight because we're stuck with them.

I move the question be asked.

Motion approved.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** With leave of the House, Mr. Speaker, I move that we proceed to motion 11.

Leave granted.

**MR. H. STEVES (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in moving the motion standing in my name on the order paper and seconded by the Hon. Member for Esquimalt (Mr. Gorst).

Mr. Speaker, everyone is aware of the concern expressed over the past couple of years for the bomb-testing at Amchitka, and, in 1972 and 1973, French bomb tests in the south Pacific. The feelings of thousands of Canadians and particularly British Columbians were expressed in the historic voyages of the Greenpeace. I would like to pay

tribute today to David McTaggart and the people who sailed on the Greenpeace with him, and to those who otherwise expressed their desire for an end to nuclear testing, who spoke out against the physical and environmental dangers of nuclear testing, and who spoke out against the dangers of the spread of the nuclear power block.

Last March I received a letter from the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Norman Kirk, who stated that New Zealand's clearly- expressed desires and the growing weight of international opposition to nuclear testing would not go unheeded by France. Unfortunately, this international opposition — the views of New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Peru and at least a dozen other countries — did go unheeded by France. The tests, as you know, were carried out and further tests are being proposed by France at the present time.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Canada's voice against these tests was weak, and it is still not too strong. It is time, Mr. Speaker, that Canada took a stronger stand against the French tests and the spread of the nuclear power block. It is time, Mr. Speaker, that Canada also encouraged other countries to do the same so that in the future, international opinion will not go unheeded by France.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go on to the boarding of the Greenpeace, the blatant and brutal boarding of the Greenpeace, which was carried out by the French navy on August 15. There is little doubt that the French navy, using brute force and commando tactics, illegally boarded and seized the Greenpeace in international waters, waters that were outside the 12-mile limit near Mururoa Atoll on August 15. Greenpeace crew members have made sworn statements and have produced photographic evidence to prove it.

Prime Minister Kirk of New Zealand, upon this evidence on October 3, protested to the Government of France about the boarding of the Greenpeace. Mr. Kirk said that two New Zealand crew members had made sworn statements on the incident. He said that there is some conflict of evidence as to exactly what happened at the time of the boarding of the Canadian protest vessel, but there appeared to be no dispute that the incident occurred on the high seas outside the 12-mile limit, that force was employed by a boarding party, and that the yacht's crew was taken against their will into French territory.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to present to the House photographic evidence taken by a Greenpeace crew member that indicates how the boarding occurred; photographic evidence that shows Mr. McTaggart being rough-handled by French navy

[ [Page 569](#) ]

crewmen; photographic evidence showing the crewmen with rubber truncheons and sheath knives boarding the Greenpeace; photographic evidence showing Mr. McTaggart being severely beaten, showing one of the crewmen swinging his arm in a downswing with a rubber truncheon in his hand, having just beaten him on the head; and evidence showing Mr. McTaggart with his damaged eye coming conscious again in a French navy boat alongside the Greenpeace while French crewmen are again boarding the Greenpeace to go after further members of the Greenpeace crew. I would like to pass these around so that you can take a look at the photographs firsthand.

Mr. Speaker, these photographs were produced when crew members of the Greenpeace, suspecting that the cameras might be thrown overboard, were able to keep an extra camera, take a film, hide the film, replace it with another one and allow them to throw the camera overboard after the film had been hidden. They had learned from past experience the previous year exactly what they might expect.

On June 4, prior to the French testing, Prime Minister Trudeau praised Mr. McTaggart's courage, determination and perseverance. Yet, unlike the New Zealand government, Canada has not made its views clear. In fact, Mr. Speaker, unlike the action of the New Zealand government in condemning the actions of the French in the boarding of the Greenpeace, the Canadian government is merely only going through the motions of protesting that boarding. They obviously consider maintaining friendly relations with France more important than the just claims of a Canadian citizen under international law — a citizen who was savagely and deliberately beaten with clubs in such circumstances that would warrant criminal proceedings in any civilized nation, a citizen who had his property and an undefended sailboat, flying a Canadian flag, supported by the B.C. government and by many people in Canadian politics and the federal government, illegally boarded and seized in international waters.

The Canadian government has failed to carry out its obligations to see that flagrant violations of international law have been properly investigated and condemned. It is imperative that the Canadian government take vigorous and strong action now to assure that Mr. McTaggart is compensated for the serious eye damage inflicted when the Greenpeace was boarded, to be sure that Mr. McTaggart and his crew are compensated for their vessel, which to this date I understand is still under seizure by the French government.

It is imperative that the Canadian government also demand restitution for the damage when the Greenpeace was rammed by the French government in a similar incident in 1972.

In moving this motion, I ask the support of this House for the brave Canadians who sailed on the Greenpeace, who had the courage to stand up to one of the world's great powers and say "no".

**MR. GORST:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with my hon. colleague, the Member for Delta or Richmond — we had that Delta-Richmond mix-up last session, didn't we? — in supporting this motion.

**MR. L.A. WILLIAMS (West Vancouver–Howe Sound):** You haven't got it straight yet.

**MR. GORST:** Well, I didn't have anything to do with it.

I am supporting this motion on behalf of the Greenpeace mission, David McTaggart, who is here today and the other members of the crew, and opposing the French nuclear test programme in the Pacific.

But not only the French nuclear programme. I am sure we all oppose — I do — other nations and their nuclear testing programmes. I personally took part in the protest on the Amchitka programme and I know that there are other countries that test and we are not able to protest against those countries, as we have been able to protest against the Americans and the French. That may be because it is the French and Americans who are more accessible to our protests.

However, I know that these protests would be made by all those concerned if they could have access to those other nations and their testing programmes in the nuclear field.

Speaking on the Greenpeace, there is the serious question that this ship was apprehended and boarded in international waters, not territorial, and that poses the question of piracy by a country on the high seas against a ship registered, in this case, in Canada — a Canadian registered ship, carrying Canadian citizens. The aggression that was committed thereby, by France against Canada, must be deplored by all Canadians and I am very pleased and I am proud in this House to make our position in that regard.

I think that we should all, particularly here in British Columbia, join with all our friends and the families of the Pacific Rim in this case. Because there is more than just the Greenpeace itself at stake here. There is the whole general question of the proliferation of nuclear capability and nuclear weapons, not always in the concept of the bomb itself, but in the development of tactical weapons that can be used on the battlefield. We have today in the Middle East a tremendously serious situation which is not going to be readily solved excepting with great destruction and great distortion to people in those countries. Let us ask ourselves if the testing for nuclear capability and weaponry continues to develop destructive weapons to destroy mankind, destroy your enemy in such a

[ [Page 570](#) ]

horrible manner, it is only a question of time, and not a great deal of time, until that capability finds itself into the hands of less-powerful nations, such as those that are engaged in warfare today in the Middle East.

I am sure that when those tactical weapons of nuclear capability are available to what we call the smaller nations, the less wealthy nations, where they can acquire that kind of weaponry, then placed in the context of the situation in the Middle East today, those weapons surely would be used.

When that happens, we all know what the final result of that will be, That will be a broadening of such a

conflict to bring us all in on the resulting holocaust that only nuclear weaponry can bring upon mankind.

I support the motion.

**MR. GARDOM:** It has been my pleasure to know the very exceptional, adventuresome Mr. McTaggart and his family for a number of years and I would say through a number of highlights in his life. I recall his most colourful and outstanding exploits in the field of racket sports, especially in the very precise and demanding sport of international badminton where he gained worldwide prominence.

I would say that if Mr. McTaggart continues to exhibit the same determination in his present endeavours as he has in others and with the same degree of success, that nuclear blasts, hopefully, could well become things of the past as I indeed hope they will. I indeed wish him well with his endeavours.

Motion approved.

**HON. E.E. DAILLY (Minister of Education):** I move we now go to public bills and orders, Mr. Speaker.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** I thought it was private Members' day.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Tomorrow!

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oh! Just like old times.

Motion approved.

**HON. MRS. DAILLY:** Second reading of Bill 48.

## DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER SERVICES ACT

**HON. P.F. YOUNG (Minister Without Portfolio):** In speaking to the principle of this bill, I would like to go back in history and discuss the origins of the consumer movement as we know it today.

It all began when an inspector in an automobile plant complained about the shoddy assembly techniques and components of a particular model of car. He kept rejecting the assembled components, but in spite of this, the component was installed over his objections. He complained to his superiors, but they refused to take any action.

Finally, in desperation, he voiced his concern to the very highest level of the company. These corporate executives took a very dim view of his constant criticisms and warned him that if he didn't keep his mouth shut, he would lose his job. He was a conscientious man. It worried him deeply. He knew that the weakness in the assembly weakened the whole car and conceivably such a car could be responsible for killing its occupants.

He wrote to his congressman asking him what to do. The congressman knew of a brash young lawyer who seemed to be interested in things that the public bought in good faith and later found to be defective. The young lawyer contacted the inspector and learned of the problem. He went on to investigate the situation in depth and then he wrote a book about his findings. It was called *Unsafe at Any Speed*. The lawyer's name was Ralph Nader.

In car-crazy America, the book became an instant best-seller. Nader became the focal point and the complaint repository for every car owner who had paid good money for what was purported to be the best engineered vehicle in the world, only to find out later that it wasn't — and to find out at great expense and frustration.

Ralph Nader had awakened a sleeping giant, a giant that had been repeatedly brainwashed into believing that American enterprise and ingenuity made only the very best and finest of everything in the whole, wide world, and that somehow they alone were the only ones in 200 million people who had somehow gotten stuck with the only lemon in the bunch.

They had believed that they had been either stupid or unlucky. But now they knew different. They were not alone; they were legion. Nader helped them find their voices and the consumer movement spread. It leaped boundaries and borders. It spread from automobiles to every aspect of consumerism, from quality of goods to credit granting. Governments responded to the pressure and today we find in nearly every industrialized country in the world some government agency established to deal with consumer complaints.

It is a marked shame, Mr. Speaker, that our province has to be one of the last jurisdictions in the western world to consider seriously the problems of everybody — because everybody is a consumer.

In 1967, the *Consumer Protection Act* was passed in this Legislature. It was part of a package of what I have long maintained to be "eyewash" legislation passed during the dying years of the former administration; "eyewash" legislation that had great titles and no teeth: the *Pollution Control Act 1967*,

[ [Page 571](#) ]

the *Human Rights Act*, the *Consumer Protection Act* — beautiful-sounding but lacking in substance, precisely as they were meant to be.

Here's what the former Attorney General (Mr. Peterson) said about the *Consumer Protection Act*:

"Our approach is to provide the best legislation possible to give as many rights to consumers as possible, but not to look over their shoulders as they sign their contracts. In other words, we're not going to perform a policing function in consumer affairs."

In other words, Mr. Speaker, "Don't expect us to solve your problems; go through a cumbersome legal machinery instead. Of course it may cost you more to recover your loss than the amount of your loss, but that's your choice. Swallow your loss or take a chance." Some choice!

In a manner that implied tokenism, a consumer affairs officer was hired and assigned a secretary. He and his office were then promptly buried and his existence unpublicized. He remained in limbo for about three years, a very conscientious man who grew more and more frustrated with the disinterest his superiors displayed in the matter of consumer problems and resolution. He was not allowed to speak to students in schools. If he wanted to address any group of people interested in consumer matters, he had to do so on his own time. His frustrations were great.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the record of the consumer affairs office over the past four years. In 1970, approximately 54 complaints were handled each month. In 1971, there was a 15 per cent increase to 62 complaints a month. In 1972, the level was up a mere 8 per cent to 67 complaints a month.

But in January, 1973, in a free-time political broadcast on the CBC, I revealed the existence of the consumer affairs officer and the dam broke. In the past nine months, complaints have averaged 163 per month — 142 per cent increase over 1972. The refunds, rebates and cancellations the consumer affairs officer was able to arrange rose from \$2,700 a month in 1970 to \$4,600 a month in 1973, almost doubled. This does not take into consideration the amounts of money that perhaps were recovered simply by somebody indicating that they were going to file a complaint with the consumer affairs officer. The complaints the consumer affairs officer dealt with are only one part of the story. Since my designation as Minister Without Portfolio responsible for consumer affairs, I have had to respond to about 400 complaints dealing with the price of food, the price of gas, the price of animal feed, the commodities' future market, the unsavoury practices in the mobile home industry, and just about every aspect of consumerism there is. Some of these were referred to the consumer affairs officer and are indicated in the previously-mentioned statistics.

In the process, we've discovered the inadequacies in the existing legislation. We have found that jurisdiction over a particular consumer field may be spread over several statutes.

A good example lies in the mobile home field. The park situation and mobile home standards are determined by the *Municipal Act*. The health regulations determine the distance required between mobile homes in a park. The



*Motor-vehicle Act* deals with the width, axles and braking systems on mobile homes. And now, with the proposed advent of the department of housing, that department will have jurisdiction over homeowner grants, home acquisition grants and second mortgages for the purchasers of mobile homes.

We get into the contract sales field in the matter of purchasing. The landlord and tenant relationship is a constant problem. The mobile home mess is but a demonstration for the need to investigate, legislate and regulate consumer matters as proposed in this legislation.

In June of this year, the Hon. Attorney General (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) called a conference of all groups interested and involved in consumer matters. They consisted of representatives of the Consumer Association of Canada, the Consumer Action League, the Better Business Bureau, the Legal Aid Society, the Vancouver Community Legal Assistance Society, the Vancouver *Province's* "Action Line," consumer representatives from radio CBC and some just plain interested citizens.

As the conference was totally unstructured, we had a good roundtable discussion of all aspects of consumerism. Subjects covered problem areas such as motor vehicles, sales practices, warranties, the legal system to deal with resolution of problems, credit practices, licensing deficiencies and, in the matter of warranties, implied and explicit and that growing "cancer," the disclaimer clause.

What came out of the conference was a consensus that what we need is a thorough examination of all consumer legislation now on the books to see if it is relevant in today's world, a consolidation of such legislation under one authority and an urgent need to give the consumer avenues for redress other than exclusively through the courts.

Another consensus arrived at was the need for greater consumer education. Many excellent ideas were suggested for this process and, with the consent of this Legislature, I hope to be able to implement some of them.

The Hon. Attorney General had the foresight to ask the *Hansard* staff to record the proceedings and as a result the transcript has become almost a "Bible" among the participants. They constantly refer to it for fresh ideas and suggestions.

Suggestions and ideas are coming from other sources too, Mr. Speaker. The business community

[ [Page 572](#) ]

have come to us and asked us to introduce legislation to halt the underhanded practices of some of their members. Trade and business associations have asked us to help them police their own industries. Trade associations have found that they can police their own members with no difficulty, but their members are reputable businessmen and women who join the association because they are principled.

It's the operators who are outside the association that cause the trouble and frequently throw the entire industry into disrepute. Over these a trade association has no power and unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, these operators are the ones with the biggest advertising budgets and the least conscience. Their salesmen orally promise everything, but nothing is written into the contract, which is usually filled with so many disclaimer clauses that it is virtually worthless to the purchaser.

Then we run across the constant problem of who is responsible for warranties — is it the dealer or the manufacturer? This problem exists not only in Canada but in the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and most European countries.

I think the Firenza situation best illustrated it for everyone. General Motors, under terrific public pressure, finally acknowledged that the product left a lot to be desired and gave a niggardly 10 per cent trade-in allowance on the car.

Just in passing Mr. Speaker, we seem to get more complaints about GM products than any other line, but in

the Firenza fiasco it was the dealers who took the flak, and they should not have had to. They didn't build the cars, they only sold them; and as franchise dealers of GM they were required to do so. So that is a relationship where ultimate responsibility for quality and performance must be sorted out.

There are now on the books, Mr. Speaker, approximately 16 Acts that deal directly with consumer interest, and another 16 or 18 that deal indirectly to some degree with consumer affairs. We see the need to examine this body of legislation, to update it, and to phase it into one department over a period of time and in an orderly manner.

We see a pressing need for thorough investigation into recurring areas of consumer complaints, and the necessary staff to do so. We also see the need to inform the public, to warn them and to educate them in this highly technical age.

This Act is an enabling Act which will give us the legislative framework upon which to build adequate protection for consumers. Some Members opposite in the past have pointed out areas of consumer interest that needed more protection. We welcome their continued concern and their suggestions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. H.W. SCHROEDER (Chilliwack):** I would like to commend the new Minister in her new portfolio, and would like to guarantee her our support as soon as she tells us what it is she is going to do.

The bill is an enabling bill. It tells us that something is going to happen; it doesn't give us any clear indication of what it is. There is no way that we can analyse the bill and be critical, either constructively or otherwise, of any section.

A disappointment comes chiefly in the area — and I agree with the Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) when he said the other day that it's almost embarrassing to have to come repeatedly to this area of criticism — but again the Minister's duties and her powers are not outlined at all.

What has happened, for instance, to the days when bills were introduced in this House and the duties and powers of a Minister were clearly outlined? I have several examples here of bills introduced in former years with nothing to do with the political party that happened to be in power, but just strictly looking at them and seeing the duties of a department clearly outlined.

For example, may I refer, Mr. Speaker, to Bill 104 of a previous year: "The duties of the department are to collect, to abstract, to compile and publish statistical information relative to the commercial, industrial, social, economic...." It gives clear indication.

That's one section only of the duties. There are 10 clear and distinct directives as to the duties and the powers of a department. I wish that the government would return to the principle of telling the House what it is that the duties and the powers of any Minister would be under any enabling Act such as we have here.

Other than that, we were waiting with bated breath to find out what's going to happen in the new department of consumer services. We trust that the new Minister will not fall into the same category of criticism that the dear Mrs. Plumptre has fallen into. I trust that she will have better and greater success. There are areas that we would like to suggest that she look into immediately, not only the area of weights and measures, and making sure that the people are being charged the right and constant price for the same article on any given day.

We are not only concerned about quality control, but we wish that she'd look into the area of guarantees and make sure that a guarantee is a guarantee; that the producer can be held to the warranty that is given with his product; not only that he stands by the servicing of it, but also the replacement of that product if it should prove to be faulty; and as to the accuracy of machines and tools that are used for dispensing any product. We would like her to be sure that everyone in the Province of British Columbia can go to bed knowing that he made a good deal today.

[ [Page 573](#) ]

We will be asking some more questions in committee stage. Just now, we would like to say that we will

support the bill in principle.

**MRS. D. WEBSTER (Vancouver South):** I am very happy to be able to speak in support of this bill and look forward to the new department of consumer services. I am also delighted with the choice that has been made for the Minister to head up the department.

I have had a long association with the Canadian Association of Consumers, Groups of consumer associations were started across Canada following World War II because of the new technologies for producing goods from synthetic products, both for clothing and for foods, that the public did not understand. These new technologies, because of automation of systems, created other problems for consumers. Some of the early studies of research and of demands that were made went into things that seem simple to us now, such as the banning of staples for sealing food products. At that time they were still stapling the tabs onto cottage cheese cartons and stapling the plastic covering on food products. There was concern about some of these staples getting lost within the food product and the dangers that might result.

In clothing the new synthetics created a problem, particularly where it came to the cleaning processes. Very often clothes would come back damaged or marked, and the manufacturer would take no responsibility because he would blame the cleaning agency. The cleaning agency would say it was a new product and that it had no control over how it had to be cleaned.

Finally, through pressure and through research from the consumer association, they brought in laws by which there had to be labeling on the various garments to show the type of product and the best way of cleaning. Now I am not going to go into detail on these things, but I would like to be able to let this House know just how things started in a small way.

Another thing that they researched quite thoroughly was that of children's toys, so that there could be safe toys for children. There are more and more toys now being produced with a type of paint that won't wash off or scrape off. In the early days following the war a great deal of the paint and the sharp corners on toys were very harmful to small children.

They have also worked on the standardization of clothing sizes which has been a great improvement. But those are only a few of the things. That is just the beginning. Then CAC started to go into other things such as various problems regarding housing construction — shoddy construction in portable homes, or mobile homes. There's been a great deal done by the Consumer Association of Canada in regard to advertising that pressures children, or that is directed to children so that children can pressure parents. I think these are very, very important steps that have been taken.

At first all the members of the Consumers Association of Canada were women, but within about 10 or 12 years after the association was formed the men started to take an interest too, because they realized that other things such as cars and strata titles were things that they studied. Also pyramid selling and problems of that type were being discussed and the men were just as interested as the women in seeing that these improvements were being made.

But the consumers association had to go to a variety of places to be able to get legislation through. Now, with the department of consumer services, I hope that we will have just one place in which we have to go to get legislation that will take care of some of the complaints that are coming in.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that the setting up of this department is widely welcomed by far more than just the Consumer Association of Canada. The Canadian Consumer Association last spring presented a brief and the first thing they asked for in their brief was a full department of consumer affairs.

In their brief it stated, "Our research indicates that every province other than Prince Edward Island has a full consumer department or equivalent with more staff than exists in the present office in British Columbia." Hopefully, now that will be changed.

Another group that will be very, very happy is the Consumer Action League, who also a year ago presented a

brief in which they asked for a department: of consumer services, or a department of consumer affairs. In their brief they stated their proposal that the government of B.C. establish a full Ministry of consumer affairs; that the government establish a debtor's assistance bureau under that department" that the government establish the office of ombudsman under that department; that the government set up a consumer advisory council with representation from consumer groups, business and government to review and discuss consumer legislation, and that the government put the enforcement of relevant consumer legislation such as the B.C. *Consumer Protection Act* under that proposed department.

Another group that will welcome it is the Better Business Bureau of Vancouver. Vince Forbes, who has for years been the head of the Better Business Bureau, has mentioned that perhaps 80 per cent of Better Business Bureau complaints involve consumer matters. He says that often these involve misunderstanding on the part of the consumer.

But he mentioned specifically used car dealers as an area of concern. The answer to consumer problems in that area was to get a reputable dealer, as was the

[ [Page 574](#) ]

answer to home repair rip-offs. But he said that, in general, what we need more than anything else is consumer education, rather than more legislation.

In regard to that, I would like to go on and say that the Community Legal Assistance Society will also be pleased because they have also proposed that education is the answer. I hope that through this department there will be consumer education. They say, "The basic answer to consumer problems lies in a two-pronged attack: that is, both legislation and education." Education is the most difficult. He said:

"If grade 12 students were taught consumer awareness, then one missed those students who dropped out before reaching that level. On the other hand, if consumer education starts too early, the students might be too young to understand. In legislation two basic changes need to be made: firstly, fast action should be included in many of the laws."

[Mr. Dent in the chair]

I am particularly interested myself in consumer legislation in regard to food and food products, Mr. Speaker, and the reason is because I have seen too many of these vending machines and the sale of soft drinks and potato chips and things of that kind in relation to students in schools and colleges and other places where, instead, they should be getting something that is a little more nutritional. From the Canadian Consumer of January and February of this year, a study was done across Canada concerning "junk vendors" as they call it, and they said in it:

"In an effort to raise the nutritional standards of the community, home economics classes teach the principles that should form the basis for the selection of good diet. Parents pay taxes to maintain expensive kitchens and equipment in schools and pay teachers to carry out the homemaking programmes in the classroom so that children can learn Canada's food rules.

"They learn that it's easy to have a diet overloaded with carbohydrates, that pop is essentially water and sugar, and that potatoes converted into chips have lost most of the important nutrients, adding only some fat. The parents who earnestly try to provide the children with these good diets have excellent reason to protest the decision of any school board to permit the sale of junk foods in the schools.

"The junk advocates claim that children should be provided with pop, candy bars and potato chips because, if they don't get these things in school, they will buy them in stores."

Isn't that a sad commentary by junk advocates? These junk vendors violate one of the consumer's basic rights, the right to choice.

"How many vending machines offer fresh apples, although they're the hottest sale item in many places at this time of the season? Students are subjected to a powerful campaign, the purpose of which is to persuade young people to consume high-carbohydrate snacks. Pop has become the symbol of fun. Contests that encourage young people to collect pop bottles and pop

bottle caps, potato chip bags and other tangible proofs of the consumption of these foods are being conducted without intermission.

"There is no comparable campaign to counteract these sales appeals directed at the young people who comprise the market for pop, candy and chips. The burden of teaching children how to evaluate the sales programmes concerning the foods they eat falls mainly on the parents.

"While mothers have some knowledge of the basic principles of their diet, they do their best; they serve nutritious meals and try to restrict the purchase of junk foods by their children as much as possible. These parents have every right to protest vigorously against the sale of these objectionable foods in the schools to which they must send their children.

Parents do not have an adequate knowledge, in a great number of cases, of what constitutes a proper diet, but they must not be subjected to these pressures. Good food should be substituted for junk food. Where milk is supplied, it should not have to compete with pop.

There are many other items regarding foods that are researched. For instance, in this same magazine, there is a research programme on the organic products, organic foods, that are being sold. There is a research programme on different types of stews that are being sold as canned stew, showing the amount of meat and the amount of vegetables and water and all the other substances that are in these various stews so that people can make a decision on them.

Another thing that the Consumer Association of Canada has done is to pressure the federal government to the extent where, at the end of 1973, all book matches in Canada will have to have the striker strip on the back of the book rather than on the front to prevent fire, for instance. I could go on; there are many more subjects that they take up.

For instance, CAC researchers have gone into the supermarkets and they have checked on various foods to check why some foods are being put in see-through plastic bags and others aren't. For instance, if

[ [Page 575](#) ]

potatoes are put into see-through plastic bags, they start to sprout. So that is another thing that they have checked up on.

The objectives of the Canadian Association of Consumers, Mr. Speaker, are those that I would like to see as part of this department, and I am certain they will be. One is to unite the strength of consumers to improve the standard of living in Canadian homes; secondly, to study consumer problems and make recommendations for their solution; thirdly, to bring about the views of consumers to the attention of government, trade and industry, and to provide a channel from these to the consumer and, fourthly, to obtain and provide for consumers information and counsel on consumer goods and services, and to conduct research and tests for the better accomplishment of the objects of the corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that those will be the objectives of the new Consumer Services Department, and I wish the new Minister the very best. I am sure that she will do everything she possibly can to make this a strong department through which consumers can channel their complaints and get an education into consumer problems and consumer affairs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McGEER:** As the shadow cabinet Minister in the Liberal group for this new portfolio of Consumer Affairs, I want to...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** A very shadowy group.

**MR. McGEER:** ...say that we support this legislation in principle. There are one or two minor amendments that we might introduce, and I am not going to dwell on those at this time. But I think it's a wonderful thing that British Columbia is going to have its own Ralph Nader and Beryl Plumptre all rolled into one. We know that those of us who've been Members of this House know that she can be very tough and very fair, We have just presented, from

the Liberal caucus, some flowers for the Hon. lady Minister because we know that it's not been easy to get prices down.

Interjection.

**MR. McGEER:** Everybody's...the Minister of Mines (Hon. Mr. Nimsick) wants to know why he didn't get flowers. Mr. Speaker, he's going to get lumps of coal before many more of his policies come forth.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** He's going to get lumps.

**MR. McGEER:** Just lumps, I'm advised.

**MR. D.E. LEWIS (Shuswap):** As long as you don't throw them.

**MR. McGEER:** Everybody wants this all-out war on high prices, but everybody recognizes that it's not an easy thing to accomplish. So we know that the Minister has taken on a very challenging job indeed. She's been given a piece of legislation which is quite permissive...perhaps not as permissive as the, one the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Stupich) had.

I don't really know what kind of male chauvinist Legislative Counsels draw up these Acts.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shame.

**MR. McGEER:** But I think that it was a dirty cut for this Act to come forward saying that "the Minister may establish such branches or divisions of the department as 'he' considers advisable."

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shame.

Interjections.

**MR. McGEER:** We certainly intend to bring in an amendment to correct that oversight. I know that the Minister is very fair and open-minded and that she's going to have a male secretary; I know that.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** And she's going to chase him around. (Laughter.)

**MR. McGEER:** That's the only fair and equal thing to do. But these are details of how one manages one's office, and the Minister has had very good experience in that. In the more general field of tackling the many abuses that various businesses and people who sell goods put across on the innocent consumer in British Columbia — that has to be where her effectiveness will tell.

We've known for many years, in speaking of the necessity for a Department of Consumer Affairs, that this is an area which requires more federal-provincial cooperation to achieve a final result than almost any other. The federal government some years ago established a Department of Consumer Affairs, but found itself thwarted again and again in bringing the effectiveness of that department down to the individual citizen of the country because the companion effectiveness in administration at the provincial level was lacking, especially in the Province of British Columbia.

The Ministers — and there have been more than one at the federal level — have made the particular point that of all the provinces that the federal government had to deal with across Canada in trying to get effective action in the area of consumer affairs, the most difficult was British Columbia because of

[ [Page 576](#) ]

the lack of cooperation at the provincial level.

Well, the Premier has stated that British Columbia is going to become part of Canada once again; he has put

the signs up on the highways saying "Trans-Canada Highway," and has done many things to try and make the province work with the federal government for the benefit of all the citizens. This is one of the ways — through consumer affairs — that this cooperation can be developed. So, Mr. Speaker, we have high hopes for the Minister. We have high hopes for the portfolio. We recognize that it will not be easy, and we wish her well.

**MR. CURTIS:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we have no flowers to offer, as the Liberal benches did, but I would like to assure the Minister that I can offer a complimentary gift certificate for dinner at a well-known Greek restaurant in New York city, which would be good any Monday prior to 6:15 p.m., should she wish to take advantage of that.

I think *Hansard* will also understand the full impact of that kind gesture, Mr. Speaker.

As the Member for Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) observed, it is unfortunate that the bill to establish this important new department is so sparsely worded — a flimsy piece of paper comprising some nine sections, including the interpretation. Again we have, I think, the spectre of government by regulation, government which is beyond the reach of this Legislature.

Section 7: "For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act" ...etc., "the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may make such regulations and orders as are ancillary thereto and not inconsistent therewith; and every regulation shall be deemed to be part of this Act and has the force of law."

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that the new Minister, as she gets her department rolling, will approach the problems of consumerism with sincerity and with energy and with the interest of the community at heart. But how unfortunate that for some reason or other this government just does not find it possible to spell out in any detail whatsoever precisely what it intends to do in a number of new areas of activity; and I find that most regrettable. It's the barest skeleton of a bill dealing with a department which is of vital concern to all citizens of British Columbia.

Now I am going to say something that perhaps might be a little unpopular, but I think that the Minister responsible for consumer services will agree that not all consumers are deserving of full government support and protection. It is the other side of the coin, and I've spoken with her in informal conversation in the corridors about this problem. I think she has an understanding of that particular side of the story.

Talk to merchants, through you Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister. Talk to men and women who are engaged in providing various goods and services in our communities in British Columbia and make certain that you hear their side of the story. Some of the examples perhaps haven't made the consumer affairs magazines. Some of the examples would not be cited by all Members of this Legislature.

But we have instances — and I'm sure the Minister knows of them — where merchandise is purchased by a man or a woman and used for a specific purpose over a very short time, and then is returned the following day, or after the weekend, with a demand for full refund.

I know personally, on the basis of association with a family engaged in the shoe business in this greater Victoria area, of an instance where a pair of men's shoes was returned — the Hon. Member looks at mine but these are not the ones — one full year after they were purchased with the flimsy excuse that they were defective and could the purchaser please have his money back. How do we know it was one full year? Because the stock record inside the shoe, the stock record of the purchases made by the shoe store bore out the fact that these shoes had not, in fact, been in stock for something in the neighbourhood of 11 to 12 months.

I don't in any way, Mr. Speaker, attempt to suggest that all consumers are so oriented or so inclined, but I do hope that the department will objectively, carefully and with reason investigate both sides of any particular complaint and particularly, I think, move out into the community and identify those typical merchants and providers of goods and services in the community who can be of assistance to the department in analyzing ways in which the relationship between buyer and seller can be improved.

**MR. D.T. KELLY (Omineca):** I rise with great delight to speak on the creation of this new Ministry. I think that I have lived just long enough to understand the plight of the average citizen of this province in all facets of our

everyday life, whether in the home, at work or in the recreational end of our everyday lives. I have all my life pleaded, somehow or another, for a department of consumer affairs or somebody in our government to defend the consumers in this province.

When I am at home, I'm a homebody. I do some of the shopping for our home. In fact, we have a small lodge and when I go to town 100 miles away from where I live, I buy the commodities for our home. I think I am every bit as good a shopper as the average housewife in this province.

When I buy light bulbs, for example, I buy them by

[ [Page 577](#) ]

the case. When I get home I find that in that case there are two or three of those bulbs that won't even go on in the first place and that in many instances these bulbs only last two or three weeks before they are burned out.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You have to connect the hydro.

**MR. KELLY:** Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, but I am getting little barbs here and there from the opposition.

I think that it is about time that our department of consumer affairs and our Minister should look into the quality of light bulbs that are produced in Canada today. For heaven's sake, you go to flick the light on and it doesn't go on, and yet we have had people who have had light bulbs — I think some of them around this building — which they put in 30 and 40 years ago and which are still working today because in those days they built something to last for a length of time. The excuse that it is a market for people today — a buyer's market .... They are truly reaping the profits and giving very little in return.

Garden hoses are another thing. "Lifetime guarantee," it says. But when you buy this thing, after three or four or five years there's a little leak here and a little leak there and you can't even find the place where the hose was purchased because they have either gone out of business or there is no guarantee.

Interjection.

**MR. KELLY:** That's right. That lifetime has already reached its end.

The Minister referred to the Ralph Naders, and I think that's one thing we should have had in British Columbia a long time ago. Canada has regulations as to what standards automobiles should live up to in terms of being allowed to be sold to the public, but I think British Columbia should have their own, as far as automobiles are concerned. Apparently years ago automobiles were supposed to have been thrown together. Well, don't believe that that doesn't happen today because it does.

I was one of those saps who bought a brand new car last year, over \$6,000 worth, and up to today I have spent many hundreds of dollars keeping that vehicle running. It is just a piece of junk. When we arrived home with our automobile, a Chevrolet, the bracket holding the torsion bar to the frame was hanging loose. We found that only one side of this clamp that holds the torsion bar to the frame had been fastened. Now, this is a mechanical fault. At the same time the body bolts had been only run up hand tight. Other things that were wrong with that automobile could have caused a serious accident, and yet nobody had to bear the responsibility because of these things happening. Certainly I didn't have an accident and I fixed them all myself. But it shows you what can happen. I think that these are some of the things that should be looked into.

In my area of the country, where there is a tremendous amount of logging going on, millions of dollars of heavy-duty machinery are brought in for the forest industry. British Columbia is a proving ground for these large companies for this equipment. Some of these companies, of course, are United States based and the balance of them are in eastern Canada — Caterpillar, International, Allis-Chalmers and many other companies. When they bring equipment into British Columbia and put it into the forest where these contractors are working, in many cases this equipment breaks down within a few days or a few weeks. There are many reasons for it breaking down — cold,



severe weather, the soil or rock that the machine is working in and in some instances the operator. The fact remains that if this machine breaks down because of a mechanical failure because of design, I feel that these contractors who buy these machines are really taking it in the neck, because they are the ones that are out of production and they are the ones that have to bear the cost in a lot of these cases to repair these machines.

I have a friend who bought a brand new snipper (a machine used for shearing off trees) two years ago from a large manufacturing company right here in British Columbia. He paid cash to have that machine delivered to his job site, and he didn't work it for three or four hours before the machine broke down because of design, That machine was out of production for over one month, and yet he bore the cost of the whole thing himself.

I know that this happens in many instances in large machines. I have a large machine of my own. It has broken down on the job and it was strictly through construction at the factory that this happened. There is, in fact, no proving ground here in British Columbia for any of these large firms where they might take their machine out and test it for a matter of weeks or months on an extreme type of job where there might be rock work or handling of timber to see whether that machine will work.

I'm really looking forward to this department that is being created having people go into that field and seeing whether this equipment should, in fact, be sold to these contractors. We're talking about many hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars in terms of overall sales for a year — in fact, individual pieces of equipment are over \$100,000. I have seen brand new equipment laying idle because of a broken part which certainly was caused by poor design at the factory. It is easy to talk about it when you are in the design room and making the equipment, but when you put it on the job it will falter.

[ [Page 578](#) ]

This summer, while the agricultural committee was travelling in the Peace River area, we were approached by delegations and individuals talking about farm equipment. Farm equipment is the very backbone of that industry in the Peace.

In many cases farmers had brand new equipment that broke down and they waited for several weeks for a replacement part. Once you take this piece of equipment out of business, out of work, the farmer is not able to operate and he either has to rent or borrow another machine if he can find one. Either that or lose his crop. That has actually happened this fall because of the lack of equipment and because of equipment that has broken down and parts were not available.

We found, for example, in many of the large centres, that for two or three types of tractors and other types of farm equipment they didn't even have an agency in a local town; a parts place wasn't available. Also, much of this equipment broke down through the slightest bit of overwork. It didn't break down because of wearing out or other causes; faulty design was really responsible for this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am really looking forward to much action by that consumer affairs department. I don't know where the Minister will find these people to look into the facets of consumerism that I've been referring to because of the kind of people who would have to be available. In the odd case, I think you might be looking at an engineer, but I think there are many people who could handle this kind of a job. In reference just to these few items, I'm certainly looking forward to action from this department of consumer affairs.

Thank you.

**MR. WALLACE:** As the Member for Saanich (Mr. Curtis) has pointed out, we support this bill. Despite the flowers, Madam Minister, I'm sure your job will be no bed of roses.

While we do support the bill, I would like to sound one or two notes of caution. Many ideas of this kind originated in the United Kingdom when I lived there. We often finished up with people whom we called super-snoopers, who were so busy exercising the job within their own bureaucracy that they forgot to achieve the purpose for which they were first employed.

It is obvious — and the Member who has just spoken makes it very plain — that you can buy shoddy goods and workmanship which breaks down readily and so on. This, indeed, must be the function of the department: "to investigate," as section 5 makes very plain, to investigate complaints...and to carry out inquiries into alleged contraventions...."

But I just say, let's not lose sight of the fact of individual rights and freedoms, also. In an overzealous desire, perhaps, to protect the consumer, certain minorities or individuals might find themselves being subjected to unwarranted criticism or an undue amount of investigation perhaps based on inadequate evidence. I'm only saying, Mr. Speaker, that there could be a danger in this kind of bill. A zealous member of the consumer affairs department, on flimsy evidence, might start to investigate alleged complaints. I admit that the wording of section 5 says "alleged contravention," but let's not forget the importance of the word "alleged."

As individual providers of goods and manufacturers of goods and providers of service, I hope it will never be forgotten that when some complaints are laid, investigation shall be done with fairness and justice and tact. Certainly if the individual is found to have contravened the legislation, the whole weight of the law should then be brought to bear on that person.

I just worry a little bit about setting up a department of this kind when I think of the tendency of this kind of civil service structure possibly to lose sight of the purpose for which it was set up and not to be simply an investigative agency per se.

The word "guarantee" has been mentioned in the debate today already. I think we are all aware of the tremendous campaign put on by the Midas Muffler people who create the impression — I don't know how valid it is — that they are the only people whose guarantee really means what it says. I think that's a shocking reflection on the fact that, by and large, society has come to more or less accept that the word "guarantee" doesn't mean anything, that it means a bit of paper, but when you try to make it stick by complaining there are very often considerable difficulties.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Attorney General is back in the House holding his head. I hope it doesn't signify any sickness.

We are to set up a department, and, like charity, it should begin at home. I have a copy of a letter here as recently as September 26, where an individual, a constituent of Oak Bay, mentions that he went into the liquor store and took the trouble to look at the price labels on three bottles of wine which had been priced upwards. The original price was for \$12. Superimposed on the \$12 price ticket was \$14.20, and three of the bottles bore this second label. If you doubled back the first label you could find the \$12 label underneath. This was on September 15.

So I hope, Madam Minister, that you are in close conversation with the Attorney General. He's setting a bad example for your department to get off the ground, and I notice he's hiding his head in shame.

But it is too serious a subject to joke about. I merely raise the point that the government must view this seriously because of the points I have mentioned: it has to set its own example, and it has to remember that you are investigating alleged complaints against

[ [Page 579](#) ]

individuals. We must not lose sight of the importance of the rights of the individual to provide goods and services in the marketplace.

Interjection.

**MR. WALLACE:** I didn't comment on that. It was Pommard wine. I wouldn't want to be accused of conflict of interest, Mr. Attorney General.

Another part of the bill surprises me and I would like the Minister to comment on it in closing this debate on

second reading. There may not be need, but there is no clause such as there usually is in many of these bills allowing for federal-provincial agreements. It may be that this is not necessary, but it seems to me, when I read the newspapers, that when consumer problems arise there's always somebody passing the buck. It's either the federal people saying, "Well, that's a provincial problem," or the provincial people are saying it's a federal jurisdiction. Perhaps the Minister could explain to the House how much of a difficulty this really presents in deciding where the jurisdiction lies. I would think there should be something in the bill mentioning the potential for the provincial and federal governments to work in cooperation and perhaps under written agreements such as we have in many other areas.

In general, Mr. Speaker, we support the bill. But let's not build simply an investigative, bureaucratic office of civil servants. Let's remember the true goal and intent of the bill.

**MR. LEWIS:** I want to rise in support of this bill; I've always been one who felt very strongly that we should have a consumer protection Act of some sort in this province. I'm also most pleased to see the Minister who is in charge of this; I think she is most capable. I am looking for some great things from that department.

My hon. friend here from Omineca (Mr. Kelly) touched on the subject of machinery and farm machinery. It's one subject I would like to touch on too. I've had a farm dealer tell me that the only piece of equipment he won't stand behind is a manure spreader, and I don't believe that this is fact. (Laughter.) I've had the chance to deal with many of these dealers. I'm not blaming the agents because they work on a very, very narrow margin. But the parent companies, such as John Deere International and Massey Ferguson, are the people who are in the driver's seat. If you were a farmer or if you worked in the logging business, or any of these areas where you require farm machinery or logging equipment, you would soon be in a position where you would be wishing you had a consumer affairs association.

I can give you instances of a fuel pipe that I had go on a new tractor which I own. After a period of 18 months the pump became malfunctional so I took it in for repair. There was one little part in that pump that they found didn't work so they put out a new kit which cost \$119 for a part that cost 60 cents to manufacture.

If you go to buy parts for fuel pumps, carburetors, generators or any of this type of equipment, you often have to buy a whole kit where one little part will do the job. I think this is one area that this Consumer Affairs Department could take a very close look at.

As a Member for Omineca (Mr. Kelly) said, much of this equipment is never tested out properly, and the dealer doesn't carry adequate parts to service the equipment — he can't afford to because he's working on a very low margin.

I say it's the responsibility of the parent companies to see that these parts are in stock in the dealers' stores and to see that the people who use this equipment have some access to these parts for a breakdown during crop periods. Often during a time of harvest, a farmer or rancher will have to wait for three weeks to obtain a part for a tractor to get in his crop. Often during that period a storm will come along and he'll lose a big portion of the crop.

Another area that I think would stand some looking at in regard to machinery is the Caterpillar tractor corporation itself. Finning Tractor, which is the sole distributor of Caterpillar tractors in this province, is a monopoly in my view. It has the consumer totally in its grip. There's no agent for the Caterpillar tractor in all of B.C. other than Finning. I say this is one area that should be looked into.

There's no way we know if Caterpillar is ripping off the machinery owner, and no way that we know if Finning is ripping off the machinery owner. We've had many people in this House complain about the monopoly of the insurance company that the government is setting up. I never once heard them complain about the monopoly that Finning Tractor has in this province.

There are other areas I think that the Consumer Affairs Department can look at, one being an area that the former Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Shelford) complained about many times, the gas price across the province. There are many other products that we buy in this province that are one price across the province; but when you go

to the gas and oil products, the price varies as much as 20 cents a gallon, I'm hoping that this is one area where we can close the gap.

I would like to compliment the Minister on being named. I look forward to a very good job from her department.

One of the Members quipped here a while ago, "It's probably another Mrs. Plumptre." Well, knowing this Minister, when she gets hold of an offender I think they'll call her "Mrs. Crabapple," or "Ms.

[ [Page 580](#) ]

Crabapple." (Laughter.)

**MS. YOUNG:** Right on. Right on.

**MR. LEWIS:** Or they may even call her "Ms. Pear," because they'll think she's two people when she starts to work. Thank you very much.

**MR. GORST:** I rise to support the formation of this department and to congratulate the Minister on her appointment. I know that it's going to be a very difficult task. However, I'm very confident that she will be more than equal to the job.

I know that consumer affairs has been for a long time one of her very main interests, not only in an academic way but in an active way. This Minister has been involved in consumer associations in British Columbia and has given a great deal of study to this subject. I know that she comes to this job with a very sound knowledge of consumer affairs.

She mentioned in her opening remarks in introducing the bill that areas of concern were mobile homes, contract sales, problems in landlord and tenant relationships, warranties — who is responsible for a warranty and how good are they — and I would add another: truth in advertising. One of the other Hon. Members speaking today mentioned advertising and the claims that are made for certain products, their qualities and what they will do. That could well be one of the concerns of this new department.

I have another thought on consumer affairs. It's one that I have never heard before but it's one that I have thought of for some time, and I would like to put it forward for the consideration of the Minister. It's a proposition that I think might one day be placed before us for consideration.

I would like to see something that we might term a "Consumer's Compensation Act." When a consumer makes a purchase, really a contract is made for that product or item which is purchased on the assumption that the item purchased is in good working order, of durable quality and will stand up and do the job that it was advertised and sold to do.

Now what has happened today, which brings so many complaints from consumers, is that mass manufacturing methods seem to have all too often resulted in products having the opposite effect: they are not in working order; they are not of durable quality; they do not stand up to the claims that are made for them. The result is that the purchaser is continually returning goods purchased for correction or exchange.

You have only to ask any homemaker about the frustrations, the inconvenience and the delay that result from these products that the purchaser continually has to take back on a complaint that it is not in working order and is not the product that they contracted to buy.

I know of a case here in Victoria — which I'm sure is not unusual but I know of it personally — involving the purchase of a chesterfield suite last October from a store in Victoria. I don't fault the merchant, I fault the manufacturer; but that chesterfield suite had to be taken back and forth from the home to the store on five occasions since last October, 1972. Only now, in this month of October, 1973, has it been delivered to the satisfaction of the

purchaser.

Mr. Speaker, while all that is going on, that consumer is being charged 18 per cent a year service charge if they are buying that article on the budget plan, unless of course the consumer makes a particular point with the retailer, at great time and inconvenience and persistence, to insist that the article not be placed on their account until it is delivered as contracted for.

Now most people don't do that because (1) They don't probably realize that they can make that complaint or that demand; (2) they're not that persistent or that dogged about it; and (3) they probably haven't got the time to see it through.

Now in the commercial world of business these contracts often have a penalty clause, so that if the article or the job that is contracted for is not as it should be in the contract, if it does not stand up to the claims made for it, the arrangements in the contract, the penalty clause usually compensates the consumer in that case for time delay and loss of use of the article.

The Member for Omineca mentioned tractors which must lie idle for a period of time because of parts or defective mechanisms, at a great loss of income to the person who wants to use that machinery. Well, why shouldn't that apply to the consumer? I would think that the great majority of complaints of consumers fall in the realm of purchases for the home and for the family; yet thousands upon thousands upon thousands of cases of home purchases — appliances, clothing, any number of items — have to be trundled back and forth to the place of purchase. Arguments take place, complaints are made to get corrections but the consumer is never paid for the time that is used in correcting that wrong. That is why I think that one day we'll have to have a "Consumer's Compensation Act" that will pay the consumers for their time in correcting these wrongs.

In closing my remarks, I wish the Minister well in this portfolio. I reiterate that I know it's going to be a difficult task, a great deal of research will have to be undertaken, a lot of study will have to be given to this because we know that attempts at consumer protection in many other jurisdictions have been very difficult to police and enforce. But I wish the Minister well and good luck in this portfolio.

**MR. P.C. ROLSTON (Dewdney):** Well, Mr.

[ [Page 581](#) ]

Speaker, this is a very responsible position and a very capable Minister, and we expect great things of her. I especially would like to emphasize the words "supervision, investigate" and "educate."

Something that amazes me as a person who is marrying 40 kids a year is the commitments these people have already made by the time they are 21. My experience with couples getting married is that the girl is 20 and the fellow is 21. By this time, as far as consumerism, they've already got themselves very heavily into debt and have usually bought a car that's at least \$4,000 which is sitting out on the turf. When it is over 24 months, it has lost its warranty, depreciates very seriously and a whole pattern of bad consumer practices start. This has untold havoc later on on that relationship, on that family.

I'm sure that the sins of the parent are visited on the children later on as poor patterns of consumerism are developed. So I'm certainly hoping for education, My wife is one who feels very strongly that when children are very tiny you can develop a practice, a tendency to educate towards wise purchases, even if it's cereal. We could get into the whole "Kellogg's Corn Flakes versus Crunchy Granola" hassle. I'm jealous of the Member for Langley (Mr. McClelland) who in his constituency has the Crunchy Granola factory. I'd love to have that kind of forte.

There are things like that in consumerism on which I think we should really do an educating job. It must be done in elementary school. I think a great deal of the patterns are long developed by the time the kids are into high school. So I'm certainly hoping that this is part of your practice.

I hope you take a very aggressive stance. Nader is only one who has a very aggressive, persuasive and I

think, very morally-responsible, consumer education-supervision-investigation kind of stance. If you are, with grace, the aggressor, often you can get your point across; you don't need to be submissive to General Motors or to some Japanese toy company that's pushing stuff in here.

My brother is selling about \$400,000 worth of toys a year, and it's shocking, Mr. Minister, the lack of quality to just single out the toy industry alone. If the stuff arrives at any department store broken it's not even worth repairing. And we're talking about \$4 and \$5 items; this kind of waste. So I appeal to you to take an aggressive stance. It can be with grace.

For goodness' sake, we're wasting resources which we can't afford to waste. We can't afford to waste tin or plastic or wood or steel anymore. We hear some pretty alarming comments on the energy crisis. We're supposed to be buying anti-freeze very shortly, and we're told that those ingredients are just not that available this fall as they are the same ingredients being used in synthetic fibres for ladies' clothes. So we need to take this aggressive stance.

I would certainly expect that the Minister would promote British Columbia products; British Columbia consumers consuming our own products. I think we need to promote and expect quality in our merchandise.

You and I have talked about the lack of quality of certain companies in making mobile homes. We all talk about CSA standards, but this can be euphemistic, really. It doesn't really mean what we would like it to mean. If CSA isn't adequate, I'm sure you'll put down standards and expect standards. Let's start with British Columbia-manufactured mobile homes for a good start.

I would like you to remind the House that some of the most worthwhile British Columbia manufacturing firms have now been bought out by Americans. I heard this week that a very well-known trailer manufacturing company in Burnaby making quality trailers has been bought by a Portland company. What happens to the quality?

I could ask the House what happened to Beaver tools — quality, Canadian-made power tools, which were bought out by the U.S. Delta firm 15 years ago. The quality has gone, What has happened to the Atlas diesel engine? We should be proud of some of the early engineering that went into Atlas and many other well-known Vancouver-based companies.

Power Machinery Ltd. Vancouver was the centre of the chainsaw; the chainsaw was designed and first built in Vancouver. What's happened to that kind of industry? Where has it gone? It's not Canadian any more; the quality isn't the same. Pacific Truck. We could go on and on and on.

My appeal to you is to take an aggressive stance. We want secondary industry. We hope that in our purchasing and in our consumer practices that there would be a real preference given to B.C. products. I understand that our Purchasing Commission gives at least a five per cent preference. Maybe we should even consider more as an example of quality consumerism, quality B.C.-made products.

It's tempting to pull an old sermon on this subject because we are wasting a great deal of material. I think the amount of stuff, the amount of waste is alarming.

I went through a subdivision two weekends ago and I was shocked, Mr. Minister, to see the lack of quality in doors, the lack of quality in locks. If you don't have a good quality lock on your house, you're going to be asking for trouble. Maybe it's worthwhile if the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Hartley) spent a lot of extra money in the quality of locks and doors in the suites and offices in this building as it's refurbished. Things have an accumulative disastrous effect; security becomes a problem.

I am very happy that a sash and door company is hoping to locate in my riding. But we have to ask about the quality of those products that are made. I

think that you can exercise supervision; you can investigate. I think the industry expects that of you.

I strongly ask that you educate children and that you get propaganda into those schools. Don't be afraid. Affirm what you're doing. We are aware, as a New Democratic Party of the morality of waste. I strongly support you. I wish you a lot of support, and I think our own lifestyle has to be an example of good consumers.

**MR. STEVES:** I rise to support this bill with a great deal of pleasure. In the election campaign, we promised that we would expand and strengthen the consumer affairs branch of the provincial government. I'm really pleased to say in this particular policy that we have gone beyond that policy in setting up a full-fledged department.

In speaking to the bill, I would like to refer to one of the clauses mentioned by one of the other Hon. Members referring to "he or she." I'm not concerned so much about the words to be used, but it mentions in the bill that we would be setting up branches and divisions of the department as he considers advisable. I would hope that in considering this particular aspect of the bill, the Minister might consider setting up regional branches throughout the province.

I think it's very important that consumer affairs be on the level of the ordinary people of the province and be within easy reach. I get a lot of calls in my riding over consumer problems. If the branch is in Victoria or located in Vancouver, it would be fairly easy for me to relay these problems. But I think that people throughout the province should have easy access to a consumer affairs branch and I hope to see that we would have regional branches throughout the province.

I would like to comment on some of the aspects that others have mentioned: some of the reasons for the high cost of food, the wasteful use of containers and packaging that are disposed of and thrown away. People pay for these containers when they buy their food.

Some of the other aspects of packaging of objects that people buy are household goods that wear out rather rapidly, washing machines and stoves and so on that have built-in, planned obsolescence. I would like to see a department such as this looking into the wasteful use of our resources in packaging containers and in machinery that we use in the household. Why leave it at that? The cars and so on that have built-in obsolescence have become wastes on the junk pile.

I would like, as well, to discuss for a moment some of the items that I mentioned in the throne speech debate. I don't want to reiterate what I said there, but I am very much concerned that much of the high cost of food is due to the vertical integration of the food industry whereby we have producing companies producing the food, as I mentioned in the throne speech — the fishing companies which can the food — and then the same vertically-integrated multi-national corporation that owns and controls the fishing company also owns the wholesaler and also owns the retail outlet.

So we see, through the vertical integration of the food industry, that the same monolithic ownership is taking off profits at various levels of food production and packaging. I would like to see the Consumer Affairs department taking a very close look at these companies. I would like to see us have an open-book policy on such corporations and demand that the books are open and that we know exactly where the profits on food are going so that we can take some meaningful steps to reduce the price of food.

I would suggest that, unless we are able to do that, it will be very difficult to keep food costs down.

I would also like to mention, while on the price of fish, something that has come to my attention in the herring industry. The herring fishermen this year received about \$72 a ton for herring, working for the companies — the major Weston and New England fishing companies. The co-op fishermen received \$380 a ton for their herring.

There is a difference between the two prices of \$308 a ton. The co-op, of course, gives the full value of the fish sold back to the members and this difference of \$308 a ton that the fishing companies did not return to the fishermen represents \$308 a ton that could have been distributed between the primary producer — the fishermen — and the consumers.

I think that this is one example of the reason for the high cost of food.

I would also like the department, as well as looking into the production, the canning, the wholesaling and retailing of food such as in the fishing industry, to consider some of the other comments I made in the throne speech regarding cooperative wholesale outlets and providing funding for the growing co-op movement in the province, and also to look into the establishment of a Crown corporation such as I mentioned for fish marketing and processing of salmon.

I think that these are positive steps that could be taken some time in the future for keeping down the growing costs of food and seeing that the people that produce the food and the people that consume the food have a major or say in how they are charged for that food and that everyone gets an equal return.

In other words, the producer himself is a consumer and most consumers produce something, whether they produce food or whether they are producing something from the sweat of their labour. I would like to see the Consumer Affairs Department develop a system whereby both the primary producer and the consumer receive the benefits of that production.

**MR. GARDOM:** You know, the Minister has

[ [Page 583](#) ]

received this afternoon a whole bunch of unsolicited advice as how to run a department, whose parameters are not designed and whose duties are not really assigned under this statute. I see that she is in the fortunate, or unfortunate, position, depending upon her point of view and degree of public success, of inheriting responsibilities under any other statute and also from any other Minister. I had rather hoped that this Minister— who I think has emphasized, certainly in debate in the House since she has been a Member, possession of rather considerable powers of direction — is not going to be just a response mechanism within this particular department of which she has control.

I would just like to mention a couple of items, the first dealing with packing and containerization, which other people have talked a little bit about this afternoon. I do feel very strongly that we should press forward in B.C. in trying to induce the manufacturers of liquor products to come up with a bottle that could be put to other use, other than being thrown onto a highway or byway once the contents have been consumed.

There is no reason why these things could not be usefully turned into glasses or water pitchers or lamps or jam jars or what have you. Secondly, you perhaps could become the ladybird of cleanliness in B.C. Why not go ahead and be the Minister within government....

Interjection.

**MR. GARDOM:** That's a no-no. Oh, what would you call it? Daddybird? A conservationist. Well, anyway, the ladybird of cleanliness appeals to me more than it does to you.

I feel that it would be most useful if you would be the prime mover within the cabinet of this government to be sure that refunds are available for all liquor containers in the Province of British Columbia as opposed to just beer as they are at the present time, and let's just clean up the countryside.

Lastly, I think it would be a very good thing if you went to the general public with a contest, and the contest being: — let's have in B.C. one truly distinctive dish. Let British Columbia... we were known for the flower, the dogwood that is the emblem of the province; but British Columbia certainly has not had at any time in Canada, or anywhere else for that matter, a reputation of being able to produce just one thing a little bit better.

Fortunately, over the past 10 to 15 years, we have had a restaurant trade that has improved from the abysmal to the satisfactory to the sometimes very good. Notwithstanding that fact, there is not a unique British Columbia dish and, of course, I am talking about something to eat.

I also do feel that it has been a peculiar thing that any time a person wishes the best B.C. apple, one has got to go to Idaho to buy it — or somewhere else in the United States. For the life of me I can't see why the very best



Delicious apple, which is produced in the Okanagan, is not available for sale and for consumption in our province, as opposed to exporting all of them.

There's a couple of little tidbits for the Hon. Lady Minister to hang her hat on. I wish her well with her portfolio and I hope she enjoys the flowers and that they haven't given her hay fever this afternoon.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I want to add my words of congratulations to the Minister. I think she has a tremendous responsibility in front of her. In the world of merchandising I know that there are always those who would like to take advantage of the innocent. All they do, in many instances, is give a bad name to the entire industry.

If you want to refer to the automobile industry, refer to the automobile industry. I think those people...and it has now happened through legislation that used car dealers have to have a proper franchise and a bond.

Prior to that legislation coming in people were taking used cars from people as a deposit and were going to get them a new car — and the new car never came. The used car dealer went flying off. But those people put their trust in these fly-by-night outfits. Now there are no fly-by-night outfits among the car dealers because they have to provide a bond.

I think that this is the type of thing that gives, you know, the automobile dealers, whether new or used, a bad name. You know, you build up a resentment and call them a used-car salesman. Well, there are many good used-car salesmen and many honest used-car salesmen. This is the type of thing where we have to protect the integrity of everybody.

I want to say that in our own business, being a merchandiser, we have a policy of satisfaction or money refunded, and we stick by it. And I will say right in front of this Legislature, if somebody buys an automobile from us and they are not happy with it, they get their money back. I think that's the way business should be done — on an upright basis. But, as I say...might as well.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Might as well.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Now I would like to say that one of the first jobs the Minister is going to have will be to jack up her own government. Because during an election campaign in August of 1972 they, as I consider, did some misleading advertising.

The ad didn't really say that you were going to get automobile insurance for \$25. But I suggest to you, Madam Minister, that the inference was there and that it was implied. So the first job you have to do is either make your government provide that \$25-a-year

[ [Page 584](#) ]

automobile insurance or jack them up and make sure your government doesn't have any more misleading, misrepresenting advertising.

This didn't concern just one little group of people or one little item; it concerned all of the motoring public. And a lot of the young people of this province were sold into voting for your government because of this particular ad, I think you have a great responsibility to go to your Premier and to make him make reprimands to those people, or indeed to provide that \$25-a-year car insurance to the people as your ads implied.

The Minister who is in charge of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia is sitting with his back to me, and the Premier is sitting with his back to me. I would suggest that they turn around and face the music because that is misleading advertising.

Interjection.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** No, no. (Laughter.) You were turning your back not on the Member for South Peace River, Mr. Premier, you were turning your back on the people of British Columbia. You were turning your back on the

people who were misled by this \$25-a-year advertising for car insurance. Those are the people you were turning your back on. If you can't trust them, Mr. Premier, I don't know who you can trust, because they are the people who elected you to government on the promise of getting \$25-a-year car insurance.

Now I would like to just give a word of caution to the Minister, because she's going to be watched. Oh, indeed, she's going to be watched by her fellow cabinet Ministers and she's also going to be watched by the general public. I want to wish her luck. I don't want her to lose her credibility, but I read shortly after she came to power a general condemnation of General Motors. Well, now, I'm not a General Motors dealer and there's no love lost, but they are good, clean competition, and I want to warn you that you cannot go around making general statements of this nature.

Maybe General Motors made a mistake in one automobile, but they are what I would consider a responsible corporation. A lot of people drive their products.

So what I'm saying to the Minister is that she should not make general statements. To condemn and "condemn" the whole corporation the Minister will automatically lose her credibility, and I don't want her to lose her credibility.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** On a point of order, I would like some clarification. Is there any special pecuniary interest in this particular reflection of General Motors? You're not a General Motors dealer? Oh, that's fine. (Laughter.)

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order, Would the Hon. Member proceed?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Mr. Speaker, had the Premier been listening to the remarks....

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** I'm not a masochist. (Laughter.)

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Had the Premier been listening to the remarks of the Member, I said there was maybe no love lost between myself and General Motors. However, I do think that a general condemnation.... And you, Mr. Premier, should be listening to what I'm saying, because its you who are creating this position, it is you who named the Minister and it is her responsibility to be responsible to the people of the province and to be responsible to you the cabinet. You should be listening to what the Member is saying.

Now, here we have it — and I want you to pay attention to this, Madam Minister — they insured their vehicles with government insurance for less than \$25 a year.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shame, shame!

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Tell them enough is enough.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** That's what they did.

**MR. CHABOT:** Misleading advertising.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** This is misleading advertising. This is your first responsibility to the people who created you.... (Laughter.) This is your first responsibility to the cabinet.

Madam Minister, you must go to the Member for Cowichan-Malahat (Hon. Mr. Strachan), consult with him, and tell him you owe the people of British Columbia 25....

**AN HON. MEMBER:** An apology.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Not an apology. An apology doesn't straighten out misleading advertising. Restitution. Provide the goods.

You know what misleading advertising is. If you advertise that you are going to sell an automobile or a product, if you advertise pork chops at 25 cents a pound, I can go into that store and demand pork chops at 25 cents a pound. You know the law as well as I do. The retailer can't say "Oh, that was just a promise. We're out of those at this particular moment."

I have my rights as a consumer to demand the pork chops at 25 cents a pound. I have my rights as a ratepayer, a resident of British Columbia, to demand

[ [Page 585](#) ]

insurance at \$25 a year for my automobile. Stand behind it. Provide it.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Can we get the money back on the Columbia River? Nothing is freer than free. That's \$400 million. Do we get it back?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Dragging red herrings across the whole deal is not going to solve the problem. I'm not prepared, and the rules of the Legislature will not allow me, to debate the Columbia River. But I'll debate it with you someday, my friend, because it will go down in history as being a good deal for the people of British Columbia. You know it. You're making short-term political hay out of the Columbia River Treaty.

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

**MR. PHILLIPS:** After 1990 there's nothing freer than free power, and you know it.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** You've got the first Member for Point Grey (Mr. McGeer) ill.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I would suggest also to the Minister that some people might consider her as being a biased Minister. This automatically, Mr. Speaker, will help her lose her credibility. I would suggest that the Minister be very careful indeed as to the statements she makes. She must also realize that the consumer has also an obligation to the retailer.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Huh, to pay her bills.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** The consumer has the obligation not to misuse or misrepresent the products that he has purchased. Until recently there was a law that stated that no automobile dealer could tamper with the speedometer or the odometer of an automobile; and yet the consumer could take that same odometer and set it at any mileage that he wanted to.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** A lot of them did it.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** So if you are going to do your job, Madam Minister, I suggest to you that you must be very objective. Don't try to tell the people of this province how they should live. In other words, don't follow in the steps of the Premier by going around telling people they should turn off their light bulbs, by telling the people of this province that they should boycott beef and eat pork ...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oh, never do that.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** ...or by telling the people of this province they should spend their nest-egg. Your job is to protect the consumer, to protect the merchandiser, not to tell the people of this province how to live.

Now in closing I want to say I wish you well and don't hitch your horses to Mr. Nader. Because I want to suggest to you, Madam Minister, that Mr. Nader at the present time has gone just a little bit too far, and he's just about to lose his credibility in North America. Because I suggest to you that the motoring public are not going to pay the cost of some of the safety equipment that he wants installed in these automobiles.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You're prejudiced.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I'm not prejudiced at all. I'm merely stating a fact. There's a backlash already. And I don't think that you, Mr. Minister of Health Services and Hospital Insurance (Hon. Mr. Cocke), are going to be satisfied with some of these automobiles that you are going to get in the late '70s.

So don't hitch your horses to Mr. Nader. I would suggest that you look at everything very objectively. I want to say that you have a fantastic responsibility and in all cases, Madam Minister, you must be unequivocally fair. I wish you luck.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Hon. Minister Without Portfolio closes the debate.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye. Aye.

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** Can I say something first? Is this all right?

I'd like to thank the Liberal Party for their lovely gift. I think it is very charming. I'm sure that Mr. Nicolson will receive congratulations in the same form when he too speaks to his legislation.

I think that this debate has illustrated very, very much the wide range and the complexity of the consumer problems throughout Canada and in this province. I think this has been well demonstrated.

Just going through the various notes I made as the Members have spoken, the Hon. Member for Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) questioned the duties. He felt they weren't spelled out enough, I'd like to remind him this is an enabling Act. This is just to get us a department, to get us staff that we need, the investigators, the researchers, the consumer services officers; and to get us going, get us started, and to be in a position to do all the things that you have just now told me that I should be doing. I'd like to remind him that weights and measures, although I hate to say it, is a federal responsibility.

Now, he mentioned guarantees. Well guarantees are actually warranties and I've discussed that a little bit in my speech. But right now this warranty situation is a real can of worms, so much so that Ontario referred the whole question to the Ontario

[ [Page 586](#) ]

Law Reform Commission and asked them for a study and a report. I think it took them 18 months to 2 years to study the situation and they submitted the report to the Ontario government, which has just recently come down with a Green Paper on it — they haven't even come down with a White Paper. But every province of Canada is looking at the Ontario Law Reform Commission report on the subject.

Another Member mentioned liaison between federal and provincial. I'll tell you right now that between provincial governments the liaison is excellent. We are driving, striving, all of us, for uniformity between provinces in all areas as much as possible in consumer legislation. We have found that it's been necessary for the 10 provinces to get together and present a united front to the federal government in order to get them moving on an issue. They hang back. It seems that the 10 of us have to get together and push them.

The Hon. second Member for Vancouver South (Mrs. Webster) mentioned that she hoped that we would have liaison with the Consumer Association of Canada. They have been one of the most cooperative groups. They have had the greatest input and have made some of the best suggestions. That will continue.

I liked her ideas regarding contests pertaining to pop bottles, particularly the one dealing with poker. I think it's quite unnecessary to teach kids how to play poker unless I'm in the game, and then that's a different thing. (Laughter.) So I think she has a very good point, one that I think bears looking into.

As far as researching in the areas of nutrition et cetera, one thing we do not want to do if we can avoid it, is duplicate research. If research is being done in another jurisdiction, at the federal level or in another province, it would be pretty pointless of us to duplicate what they're doing. We are finding areas as we work that bear looking

into, that bear research and further investigation.

Somebody mentioned complaints. I'd like to point out that of the complaints that are received by the consumer affairs officer and myself, 75 per cent of them are valid complaints, which is a pretty high percentage. And we are very, very impressed that in easily 95 per cent of the complaints we receive the consumer involved has attempted to get redress from the dealer, the manufacturer, the salesperson or whoever, prior to ever approaching us. They have exhausted all avenues before approaching us and we are really a last resort for them.

When they advise us of their complaint, they document it very well, We receive photocopies of contracts, warranty agreements, receipts. We receive everything so we have a pretty substantial idea. Then we are able to approach the other party in the dispute, ask for their reaction, their response to this matter, and from there we can sometimes arrange an agreement between the two parties to resolve the issue. Sometimes we can't and we have to advise — at the present time — advise the consumer to take court action. This is something I personally want to get away from.

The first Member for Vancouver–Point Grey (Mr. McGeer) mentioned the high food prices. Well there are so many factors involved in that. The Member for Richmond (Mr. Steves) also discussed it, and I think the Member for Richmond happened upon one of the key problems.

We all are aware that there is a food meal shortage in the world. Protein meal is short at the present time. Hopefully in November with the new soybean crop coming in in the United States that will be alleviated to some degree. The anchovy catch off the coast of Peru has failed for two years in a row. But it is my opinion that many of these food companies have taken advantage of these worldwide food shortages to use this device as an excuse to raise prices. I think the future commodities market has had a direct bearing on this too, but how you get at the commodities market provincially is pretty tough.

I mentioned the cooperation that we have had between the provincial governments and we seem to be able to start pushing the federal government into some kind of action.

The Member for Saanich and the Islands (Mr. Curtis) suggested that we should discuss matters with merchants. We have. In fact, the merchants have come to us to discuss matters and we are most appreciative.

I have had occasion to ask to see merchants. I've gone to them and they have given me some of the best advice, the best expertise in the field — I am thinking specifically right now of the case of a mobile home dealer who showed me what a good mobile home looked like and what a bad one looked like, and gave me the entire picture of the mobile home field. And I will say that I've never received a complaint about that particular dealer. In fact, I received a letter of praise from one of his customers.

So when I speak of these things happening I'm not speaking off the top of my head; I'm speaking from facts that I have at hand. So we would definitely keep in contact with the merchants.

The Member for Saanich and the Islands spoke about a pair of shoes that were returned a year later. Well I would like to tell him about a pair of shoes, the most expensive pair of shoes I ever purchased in my life, from Eaton's not too long ago. One week later the buckle fell off. Now I haven't got time to go back to Eaton's and say, "You know, you sold me a \$30 pair of shoes and the buckle has fallen off and I can't put it back on again because the metal is so trashy that the flange broke." So I have to take the decoration off the other shoe in order to make them match. Now that's Eaton's for openers.

[ [Page 587](#) ]

I won't tell you about the two slippers I bought there, and when the straps broke the first time I put it on. (Laughter.) But I could do a hatchet job on Eaton's any day in the week. (Laughter.)

The Members for Omineca (Mr. Kelly) and Shuswap (Mr. Lewis) spoke about — one Member spoke about light bulbs. I think everybody is aware that the light bulbs around this building for the most part are 40 years old and

still operating. That tells us something. Some are 70. The Hon. Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Hartley) tells me that some are 70 years old and still operating.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Turn them on and see how long they'll last.

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** We have looked into the possibility and the desirability for requesting somebody to provide testing facilities to test products that seem to be causing recurring complaints. This is one of the areas that the department will be looking into. Of course, as I said earlier, we don't want to duplicate efforts that are being made elsewhere.

I agree with the Hon. Members for Shuswap and Omineca that there is obviously a need for research into heavy-duty equipment in the north, and under northern conditions. I also know that in the farm industry safety in farm equipment leaves a great deal to be desired, that actually farm vehicles are some of the most unsafe vehicles on ground. They can turn over just like that, a tractor can turn over and a man can be trapped underneath and killed.

Now something the Members spoke about is the need for having replacement parts available, this business about having to wait anywhere from two weeks to six months for a part, your machinery is tied up and you can't use it. There is a study being done elsewhere on requiring automobile companies, farm equipment companies, et cetera to have on hand more than a two-year supply of parts. This has been suggested at the federal level and will certainly be looked into.

As to car testing, I would recommend to anybody who is anticipating buying a new car, that before they do so they do as I did and that was go to the *Consumer Reports* magazine and look at the ratings on the particular year that they want, and also look at the repair rate on the particular vehicle. I spent a year looking at automobiles and looking at *Consumer Reports* et cetera before I purchased my car, and I think I got one of the best buys on the market. And it was a Japanese car.

The Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) was concerned about the rights of the individual and that we might be tempted to use flimsy evidence to defame somebody or destroy their name. I would like to point out that the consumer affairs officer who is now in that position has never, to my knowledge, been accused or even the suggestion made that he defamed anybody.

**MR. WALLACE:** I didn't say he had.

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** No, but...

**MR. WALLACE:** ...a good-sized staff.

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** Yes, but that man is going to be in charge of consumer services offices. A pretty good-sized staff? Yes, you'd better believe it. I don't know if you are aware of it, but he is an ex-English or London policeman. He is not about to make flimsy accusations on flimsy evidence. He's the last person in the world to do that.

The Member for Esquimalt (Mr. Gorst) spoke about the need for getting satisfaction for goods after you had purchased them, having to wait a long time before getting satisfactory goods for money that you had put out in good faith.

Recently we had a story, and this happened in the Victoria area, where a couple had purchased a mobile home. They were rather unhappy about the fact that the dealer was not fulfilling his obligations under the warranty to do certain work as far as blocking and skirting the home.

The salesman suggested that they withhold \$1,000 until such work was completed, and so they did that. They subsequently paid \$300 and that left a balance of \$700, They said, "We're not going to finish paying for this until you finish doing the work you are supposed to do under the contract you have with us."

The next thing, they find themselves summoned to small debts court for the \$700. They explained their case to the judge as to why they were withholding the money. They had the money — they were withholding it until the work was done. I believe the court ruled against them, so they were very upset about that. That was a case where the dealer was tied into a mobile-home park. I'm not sure, but I think they also lost their pad in the park.

The Hon. Member for Dewdney (Mr. Rolston) has suggested a very important facet of this department and that is education. That is of course, where it all really starts: in education.

I am currently working with the Hon. Minister of Education (Hon. Mrs. Dailly) in a programme for schools. We have discovered that there is a deficiency of teachers who are qualified to teach consumer matters in schools. Some teachers have a real knack for it; they enjoy it and communicate that interest to their students in a very effective, dramatic way. Others have no knowledge of it themselves, and therefore they teach you percentages on loans, credit buying and that sort of thing, and it goes over everybody's head.

We are working right now with a group of people

[ [Page 588](#) ]

who will be instructors to teachers hopefully. We're also working with another group who will be working with the parents of grade-school children. These are some things that are starting to happen, and, of course, the department will have an education facility.

The Hon. Member suggested that we emphasize buying B.C., and I think this is something that I would have to confer with the Minister of Agriculture on. Somebody brought up the price of apples and so on, and this is where there will have to be conferences and liaison between the departments. Our fruit and vegetable industry is of great importance to everybody in the province.

Another thing the Hon. Member for Dewdney brought up that I thought was very, very important was the junk that is being manufactured — pure, unadulterated junk. He spoke of toys, specifically, but we all know of other instances of doodads and hickies and advertising gimmicks that are pure and simple junk.

Most plastics are made out of petroleum by-products. He spoke about the need to conserve energy for energy is definitely a consumer item. We have to look at this very, very carefully.

There was a suggestion made some months ago in *Time* magazine which I think should be seriously considered. Every piece of equipment or machinery made should indicate on it the amount of energy input there is in that product. For instance, you have an aluminum toothpaste tube. Well, aluminum, I understand, takes a heck of a lot of electricity. Maybe we should start pricing items on the basis of the amount of electricity or power or energy that they use. This is a new concept we could kick around because I think we are going to have to go in this direction eventually, whether we want to or not.

He mentioned the chain-saw industry. I happen to be very familiar with that particular case. The company was based in Chicago, Illinois but it had a plant in the lower mainland. It turned out that the plant in the lower mainland was very successful, was doing very, very, well and the plant in Chicago was not. Consequently — these corporate decisions are really weird — they decided to close the Vancouver plant and move all the production to the Chicago plant because, let's face it, they were American-owners and they were going to look out for number one and number one's work force. So we get into an argument there again about Canadian ownership or something of that nature.

The Member for Richmond (Mr. Steves) brought up a very important point about the need for regional offices. This is definitely in the plans. There will be an office, of course, here in Victoria. We plan to have one in Vancouver. Hopefully, we will have them in the interior and in the north. I would like to advise you, though, it might take a little time; it won't be any overnight thing.

The second Member for Vancouver–Point Grey (Mr. Gardom) discussed recycling glass. Well, I don't know if

he is aware that glass is being recycled right now. I do believe that we should definitely standardize whiskey bottles. But inasmuch as it is imported from all over, it's rather difficult to specify these things. Maybe we should go into making our own scotch, our own gin, our own vodka and a few other things, and then we'll have uniform bottles and we'll also have a great industry.

But as far as recycling glass goes, right now colored glass can be smashed up, sold at a profit and is used in decorative stucco work in homes. White glass is ground up and used to paint the centre lines down the highways because it reflects. So glass doesn't go down the tube completely.

The Member for North Peace River (Mr. Smith) was concerned about my castigating the automobile industry, particularly General Motors. Well, I said some nasty things about General Motors, particularly reference to the Firenza. I said them in public and, interestingly enough, when the subject was raised again some three months later, I received very good mail from many owners of GM cars saying, "You couldn't be more right. I'll never buy another GM car again." It was really tremendous; I didn't receive one unfavourable response from that.

**MR. R.H. McCLELLAND (Langley):** How much did this Ford dealer pay you?

**HON. MS. YOUNG:** Not even from General Motors. As far as General Motors being a responsible corporation, I find it difficult to take their responsibility seriously when they do such things as they did to Mr. Nader — putting a private detective on his tail, trying to incriminate him with call girls. They admitted this in front of a senate investigating committee, so let's call it what it really was.

Another thing they tried to do even more recently than this — and a former Member from your side of the House testified that this was true on the air. There was a strike in the U.S. last year between the United Auto Workers and General Motors. There were some cars in the process of assembly when these strikes happened.

In September of 1972, the new emission standards came into force in the United States. Ours were very similar but they would not come into force until November of 1972. The strike was over in October of 1972. These cars could not be sold in the United States because they did not conform to the emission standards, so they tried to ship 1,100 of them up to Canada prior to our emission standards deadline. I thought that that was a pretty shoddy thing to do.

So I have really no great sympathy for General Motors. I've even seen *Business Week* magazine,

[ [Page 589](#) ]

which is a pretty top business magazine, take a good swipe at them for their inability to respond to consumer complaints. The magazine complimented General Electric, and I must say that I have never had a complaint personally about any General Electric product. But they took a swipe at General Motors, and I sure have had a lot of complaints about General Motors.

I think I've answered all the questions, Mr. Speaker. I now move second reading.

Motion approved.

Bill 48 read a second time and referred to Committee of the Whole House at the next sitting after today.

**HON. MR. STUPICH:** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to withdraw Bill 9 standing on the order paper in my name.

Leave granted.

**HON. MR. STUPICH:** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

Interjections.



**MR. SPEAKER:** Oh, it's a notice. Before we proceed, that was a notice you were talking about, not a bill — was it?

**HON. MR. STUPICH:** Bill 9 on the order paper.

**MR. SPEAKER:** So ordered.

**HON. MR. STUPICH:** I'm sorry, it's a notice.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I thought it was a notice. It's just a notice that's being withdrawn. So ordered.

You had a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor?

## AN ACT TO AMEND THE DISTRESS AREA ASSISTANCE ACT

Hon. Mr. Stupich presents a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, a bill intituled *An Act to Amend the Distress Area Assistance Act*.

Bill 67 read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON (Victoria):** I'd like to inquire of the Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan) when he's going to table the documents promised this afternoon.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** As soon as I can get them together.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, could you clarify the motion that was made by the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Stupich) as to what he removed?

**MR. SPEAKER:** What he did, as I finally discovered, is that he asked leave to remove from the order paper a notice of introduction of a bill, not a bill that's on the order paper, as I gather. Item 9, not Bill 9.

Interjections.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I hope and trust that that is what the Minister asked for. Is that correct?

**HON. MR. STUPICH:** Yes, that's correct.

Interjections.

**MR. D.A. ANDERSON:** I'm sure that that's what he would like to do. But what did we actually do? Did we withdraw Bill 9?

**HON. MR. STUPICH:** Shall I put it in writing?

Interjections.

**MR. F.X. RICHTER (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I can inquire from the Premier what the order of business will be tomorrow.

**HON. MR. BARRETT:** Legislation, Mr. Speaker. We'll be dealing in committee stage with a number of bills and perhaps we'll have a bill introduced tomorrow — a message tomorrow.

Hon. Mr. Barrett moves adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

---

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

Copyright © 1973, 2001, 2013: Queen's Printer, Victoria, B.C., Canada