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DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
(Hansard)

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Afternoon Sitting

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The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers.

MR. C. LIDEN (Delta): Mr. Speaker, we have in the gallery today a large group of students from Delta. They're from the Burnsvew Junior Secondary School along with their teachers, Mr. Godwin and Mr. Wenman. I hope the Members will make them welcome.

MR. D.E. LEWIS (Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, at 4 o'clock this afternoon a group of students from Pleasant Valley school at Armstrong will be in the House and I would ask the Members to be on their best behaviour during that period as it's very seldom that a class of students comes down from Shuswap. I wouldn't want them going back with a story that would upset my constituents. (Laughter.)

MR. R.H. McCLELLAND (Langley): It gives me pleasure to introduce two people today. First I did want the Members to recognize in a little more formal manner a person seated on the floor of the House who served as a Member of this Legislature from 1966 to 1972, Mr. Bob Wenman.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome the mayor of the great municipality of Langley, George Preston, who is in the Member's gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: May I say before we proceed, under the House rules it's really not permitted to bring newspapers into the House, even ancient Egyptian ones. Would the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Point Grey explain what that newspaper is doing there? The Egyptian one?

MR. P.L. McGEER (Vancouver-Point Grey): Mr. Speaker, there are a few friends here today I'd like to introduce. (Laughter.) I'll resist a temptation and at this time only introduce Mr. Frank Low-Beer who is in the gallery and who led a delegation to Victoria to present the signatures of 12,000 people who think the University Endowment Lands should not be turned into a housing development. Mr. Frank Low-Beer is in the gallery.

MR. C.S. GABELMANN (North Vancouver-Seymour): In the gallery this afternoon are a group of students from North Vancouver Senior Secondary School. The group is so large that half of them are coming in now and the other half will be here at 3 o'clock. They're accompanied by their teachers. Mr. Rossetti and Mr. Scott. I'd like the House to make them welcome.

MS. K. SANFORD (Comox): Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce two citizens from Campbell River who are in the Member's gallery this afternoon: Chief and Mrs. William Roberts of the Campbell River Indian band. I wish the House would make them welcome.

HON. D.D. STUPICH (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it must be student day in the galleries today. There's another group — from the junior secondary at Cedar. I suppose Cedar's main claim to fame is that it's near Nanaimo. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKER: Would the Hon. Member withdraw that statement?

HON. MR. STUPICH: Let me finish it; there may be much more reason to withdraw it. (Laughter.) They're just the advance group of some 90 students who would like to come in. I'd just like to ask the House to remember that they'll be reporting to their fellows, so I would like you all to be on your best behaviour.

Introduction of bills

HUMAN RESOURCES FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Hon. Mr. Levi presents a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled *Human Resources Facilities Development Act*.

Bill 82 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES ACT

Hon. Mr. Levi presents a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled *Community Resources Act*.

Bill 84 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

LOTTERIES ACT

Hon. Mr. Hall presents a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled *Lotteries Act*.

Bill 83 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Presenting petitions

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MR. McGEER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition. It is a petition from: Mr. Frank Low-Beer, Sarah McAlpine, Anthony Tripp, Janet Sutherland and Kate Parfitt, all of the City of Vancouver, praying that your Hon. House may be pleased to recommend the necessary legislation to preserve substantially all of the undeveloped portion of the University Endowment Lands as a lower mainland regional park, backed up by the signatures of more than 11,000 residents of the lower mainland and other parts of British Columbia.

HON. E.E. DAILLY (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to table a paper, "The Public School System. Directions for Change."

Leave granted.

Oral questions

TRUTH OF *SUN* REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHWEST

MR. W.R. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources. Yesterday *The Vancouver Sun* had a headline baring a leak of a secret report of a vast development for the northwest. I would just ask him if this is true.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS (Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources): Is what true, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: I think the Hon. Member is faced with a problem of how to phrase the question. According to *Beauchesne* you can't ask whether a newspaper article is true. That's not the way to go about it.

MR. BENNETT: Then I would like to know if the environment and land use secretariat report for the Pacific northwest which was reported in *The Vancouver Sun* exists and if it will be tabled in the Legislature.

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: The answer is that there is such a report. We haven't given the question of tabling any consideration, so I couldn't answer that at this time Mr. Speaker.

AWARDING OF HELICOPTER CONTRACTS IN THE NORTH

I might answer a question of yesterday with respect to the awarding of helicopter contracts in northern British Columbia. It's my understanding that the bid was awarded to Frontier Helicopters at a price of \$37,470 for forest inventory work in the northern part of the province.

Frontier Helicopters is a company licensed to operate in British Columbia with registered offices at 475 Howe Street. The company's major operations are on both sides of the British Columbia-Yukon border. Its headquarters are at Watson Lake. The company pays sales tax on equipment used in British Columbia. It has a hangar in Delta municipality where much of their maintenance and overhaul work is done. The bid was 10.5 per cent less than the next lowest bid, which was an Alberta company.

MR. J.R. CHABOT (Columbia River): On a supplementary to that, I beg to differ with the location of Frontier Helicopters. They're licensed under the Ministry of Transport in Watson Lake, Yukon. It involves three various locations in the province. They're not in northern British Columbia; they're in Quesnel, Port Hardy, and Invermere, B.C. There are people in British Columbia as well that have helicopters. I realize that....

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me. Will you come to the question, please?

MR. CHABOT: The tenders are called for the use of three helicopters. What would have been the attitude of the Minister had one of the bids for one of the locations been a lower bid?

MR. SPEAKER: May I point out to the Hon. Member that questions must not be hypothetical.

MR. CHABOT: It's not hypothetical.

BCHA-RNABC IMPASSE

MRS. P.J. JORDAN (North Okanagan): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the Hon. Minister of Health. In view of the fact that the Minister's unprecedented intervention in negotiations between the B.C. Hospital Association and the Hospital Employees Union and the resulting agreement is the basis of conflict in the current nurses' strike vote, is the Minister prepared to intervene on behalf of the registered nurses to allay this tension and the dangers to health care in the province at this time?

HON. D.G. COCKE (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker the unprecedented intervention, of course, is the

political speech. We don't have to answer that other than to say that the problems that were created for me were vast. I've had to do some heavy, heavy work in the last 18 months to overcome some of those problems.

Mr. Speaker, naturally I'm concerned about this RNABC situation. I've had informal discussions with

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a great many people with respect to that; I continue those informal discussions but I am not making any formal approach at this time.

MRS. JORDAN: A supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I just want to dry my tears. Has the Minister had informal discussions with the RNABC?

HON. MR. COCKE: Not personally.

FEASIBILITY STUDY ON OCEAN FALLS

MR. G.F. GIBSON (North Vancouver-Capilano): My question to the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the feasibility study on Ocean Falls is expected to be in the hands of the government this week, would the Minister undertake to table it in the Legislature before his estimates are considered?

HON. R.A. WILLIAMS: No, Mr. Speaker.

EFFECT OF FEDERAL BEEF SUBSIDY ON B.C.

MR. H.A. CURTIS (Saanich and the Islands): To the Minister of Agriculture: has the Minister or his department given views to the federal Department of Agriculture on the effect on British Columbia of the newly introduced and apparently ill-fated federal beef subsidy?

HON. MR. STUPICH: No, we haven't yet. "Ill-fated," of course, is your appraisal of the situation.

MR. CURTIS: A supplementary. The Minister would agree, I'm sure, that the matter is contentious, to say the least.

MR. SPEAKER: Surely that's not a proper question.

HON. MR. STUPICH: I would agree that it's ill-fated.

MR. D.M. PHILLIPS (South Peace River): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, on the same subject: in view of the fact that the federal government is implementing a beef subsidy, is the provincial government negotiating in any way to participate in the cattle industry in any way, shape or form in British Columbia?

HON. MR. STUPICH: In the beginning of our talks on income insurance we have said we would negotiate with the producers. The cattlemen have said they want no part of this subsidy programme, and actually don't want to participate in our income assurance programme either.

MR. PHILLIPS: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker: are you negotiating to participate with any ranch or on any piece of land where the government will participate in a cattle company livestock operation, like Panco Poultry?

HON. MR. STUPICH: Are you asking me something about Panco Poultry? I don't know what you're asking about.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm asking you: are you negotiating a deal in the cattle industry similar to Panco Poultry

where you become a co-owner of an operation raising cattle?

MR. SPEAKER: Is the Hon. Member making a statement in his question? If he is, he ought to take responsibility for the facts. If he's just groping around at large the question is just not proper.

MR. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the question is proper. I asked him if he is negotiating in the cattle industry. He didn't understand my question, but I can't help that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: You can ask any question you like, but it will not be a proper question unless it relates to a real situation that exists now.

HON. MR. STUPICH: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take a shot at it. I think he may be asking whether or not we are continuing the talks that I discussed last fall when I said we were talking with representatives of the cattle industry about the possibility of developing a feedlot in the Interior.

Yes, we are continuing them. We are waiting now to hear further reports from the cattlemen themselves as to the possibility of going ahead with this project.

MR. SPEAKER: I apologize to the Hon. Member if that's what he was thinking about.

LEGALITY OF DISMISSAL OF JOHN BREMER

MR. G.B. GARDOM (Vancouver-Point Grey): I've been doing knee bends here for five minutes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister of Education whether or not there were legal grounds to order the dismissal of Mr. Bremer.

MR. SPEAKER: There again, this may be a legal question. Are you asking for a legal opinion?

MR. GARDOM: No, I'm just asking for her

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opinion. Were there grounds to order the dismissal of Mr. Bremer?

HON. MRS. DAILLY: I'm not able to give that legal opinion. I'll take that as notice.

MR. GARDOM: Is the hon. lady Minister prepared to table in the House the agreement the government had with Mr. Bremer and the settlement agreement?

HON. MRS. DAILLY: I'll also take that one as notice.

MR. McGEER: A question to the Minister of Education: in the event that the above-mentioned Mr. Bremer's salary is to continue, as Mr. Adams' of the ICBC is continuing, do the government and the Minister have other assignments for Mr. Bremer so that the taxpayers' money is not totally wasted?

HON. MRS. DAILLY: Not at this particular time, Mr. Member.

STAYS OF PROCEEDINGS IN VANCOUVER DRUG CASES

MR. McCLELLAND: My question is to the Attorney-General. Would the Attorney-General inform the House whether or not his department has ordered any kind of a study or inquiry into certain stays of proceedings in relation to drug cases in Vancouver over the past three years or in any other time period?

HON. A.B. MACDONALD (Attorney-General): Mr. Speaker, the answer would be no, because these are federal drug prosecutions. I suppose the Hon. Member is referring to one in New Westminster where there was a stay of proceedings in a fairly major case. That would be an act of the federal government.

MR. McCLELLAND: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker: has the Attorney-General's department entered into any kind of a survey of stays of proceedings for any purposes, then?

HON. MR. MACDONALD: Not to my knowledge, but I'll take it as notice and have the thing checked out.

PROVINCIAL ASSISTANCE IN WEST KAMLOOPS FLOODING

MR. D.A. ANDERSON (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: in the light of yesterday's decision by the Kamloops city council to support by legal means the residents of West Kamloops in their efforts to have their serious flooding problems and the expenses involved dealt with by the provincial government, is the Minister reconsidering his decision to not accept the responsibility for the problems and damages which occurred in that area through Highways department mistakes?

HON. J.G. LORIMER (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Well, I'm not quite sure of what you are talking about on that matter. I at no time made any statements regarding the acceptance or denial of any responsibility regarding Westside Road.

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: A supplementary to the Minister. I appreciate the fact that he's not accepted responsibility. The impression was given by the Member for the area that the government rejected it. Can I assume from his reply that he is still considering the question of assisting the residence of the west side?

HON. MR. LORIMER: The whole thing is under consideration.

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: No decision has been made?

HON. MR. LORIMER: No, no decisions.

NUMBER OF PROVINCIAL ICBC WRECKING YARDS

MR. H.S. SCHROEDER (Chilliwack): For the Minister of Transport and Communications. Under ICBC, how many wrecking yards are being planned for the province?

Interjections.

MR. SCHROEDER: While you're looking, you could also tell us where they are going to be located, and what you are doing with wrecks now.

HON. R.M. STRACHAN (Minister of Transport and Communications): Nanaimo, Kamloops, Upper Okanagan, Prince George. Holding yards have been located as required, wherever they are required.

MR. McCLELLAND: A supplementary on the same subject, Mr. Speaker. Is ICBC planning to include any currently privately operated salvage depots in their plans, or are they forcing them out of business?

HON. MR. STRACHAN: I'll take that as notice to be sure of what's happening.

HUNTING BY PERMIT

MR. D.E. SMITH (South Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Minister of Recreation and Conservation. Prior to introduction of hunting by permit in three game management areas of the province, did the Minister consult with, or seek recommendations from the B.C. Wildlife Federation concerning this particular move?

HON. J. RADFORD (Minister of Recreation and Conservation): Yes, meetings were held.

MR. SMITH: A supplemental question. Did the Minister meet or seek recommendations, prior to making this a law, with the Western Guides and Outfitters Association?

HON. MR. RADFORD: Yes, discussions were held with them also.

COMPENSATION FOR CHERRY TREES

MRS. JORDAN: My question is to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture. In view of the fact that a number of Interior cherry orchardists, particularly those in the Naramata area, are being ordered to tear out their healthy cherry trees in order to try and stop the spread of cherry fruit flies, what dollar compensation is the government contributing to these orchardists?

HON. MR. STUPICH: \$50 per tree.

MRS. JORDAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. That's \$50 per tree for the loss of seven years income? Is this the total compensation?

HON. MR. STUPICH: The level of compensation was one worked out with representatives of the industry who felt that under the circumstances it was an equitable figure.

MR. A.V. FRASER (Cariboo): I rise to ask the Speaker's ruling on a matter which affects the order paper and the work of a special committee of this House, namely the committee on assessment. We have now introduced into the order paper a message bill which totally prejudices the work of this committee. The introduction of the bill is an affront to the clear terms of reference given to this special committee by the House. I would like your ruling on the position of Bill 16.

HON. D. BARRETT (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly welcome your ruling. It is definitely my impression that that bill in no way hinders the committee in its work; but I would welcome your ruling, Mr. Speaker, on that question.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave of the House to read a section of a telegram from the Prime Minister and table the full telegram and my reply.

Leave granted.

HON. MR. BARRETT: The lengthy telegram arrived in my office this morning and the last paragraph goes on to say, "... In these circumstances..." and I would advise the Members of the House to read the circumstances, which are really not too consequential to the conclusion, but part of it. "I feel it is essential that the First Ministers plan to meet privately here in Ottawa" — that is on the energy question — "On March 27, Wednesday next, if at all possible."

Mr. Speaker, I have replied by saying that I will be there next Wednesday to meet with the Prime Minister. With leave of the House I will table the total of his telegram and my response.

Leave granted.

MR. BENNETT: On the question of privilege made by the Member for Cariboo (Mr. Fraser), may we have a ruling on that?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I would naturally want to study the matter with my advisers as to what the actual status is in view of a precedence motion that is introduced and passed by this House unanimously at the commencement of the session: that introduction of bills shall have priority over all other business — then the appointment of a committee. I think I understand the point taken by the Hon. Member. But as you can imagine it's a serious matter of study, and I will report back to the House at the earliest possible moment.

Orders of the day

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

ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER SERVICES (continued)

On vote 37, Minister's office, \$80,184.

MR. D.M. PHILLIPS (South Peace River): I can appreciate the Premier's concern that he has asked for this vote several times, but he must realize, in setting up this department, that it was in his estimation and his mind that it was a very important department; otherwise he would not have anticipated spending millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money to set up

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such a department.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to discuss with the Minister of Consumer Services a question that I discussed with her last fall, and one for which I was not given a satisfactory answer. I'd like to see if she has possibly changed her views in this regard since that time.

I refer to the fact that she has stated in this House that she intends to go into the schools of this province to educate the persons taking learning in those institutions regarding certain products that are sold or merchandised, or indeed available within the province.

At that time I stated that I thought it was a very dangerous situation where she could take a particular product and possibly promote it over and above other products. I agreed with her that consumers should certainly be educated with regard to common law and about their rights in contracts. They should be educated with regard to interest rates, and mortgage rights, and so forth.

But I was concerned about her taking this step regarding particular products and advising the advantages of one product over the other, because I think it's a very dangerous situation.

For instance, Mr. Chairman, there are several types and brands of holiday trailers and campers on the market. All of these must be manufactured to very, very, very rigid specifications, laid down by the Department of Public Works, with regard to propane hook-ups and with regard to the type and quality of the plumbing, in order that they may indeed be safe for the consumer. However, some of these particular products have much better quality than others.

Now if you get into a situation where you're going to advise against one of these manufacturers who might be a manufacturer from out of the province, would you be discriminating in a round-about way against products entering the province from, we'll say, Manitoba, over and above the products that are manufactured here in British Columbia?

I would like really to have some assurance from the Minister that she's going to be very, very cautious in this regard. She has mentioned on previous occasions the book called *Consumer Reports*. Well, this book is printed in the

States and I feel in many cases it has been ill-advised in some of the advice that it has given citizens.

There were also rumours that editors in this book were being paid off by certain companies, so I don't have that much faith in that particular book. I would appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, if the Madam Minister would give me some more assurance and then advise me how she intends to do this, because she mentioned yesterday that she would be going into closed circuit television in the schools when it becomes available — that you were studying television techniques.

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, I'm sorry. I misunderstood. All right, filmstrips. And if there happens to be television within the school it would be....

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right, you can clarify the point and I'd like to have it in the record.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to discuss with the Minister the point that there are products on the market which are definitely harmful to our youth; I refer to tobacco products. I would like the Minister's assurance that if she's going to take the time and effort to go into our educational institutions and advise the children about various other products that may not be harmful, advise them on the quality of these products, one above the other, is she going to plan an educational programme for the students about the harmful effects of tobacco? It's been proven, and there are medical records to prove that tobacco is definitely harmful to the body.

I think she has a fantastic opportunity here to assist the Minister of Health, if indeed this is going to be her purpose. She has stated that she is going to discuss, in the educational institutions, products that are on the market. I feel she has a fantastic opportunity to assist the Minister of Health to educate the youth of this province against the harmful effects of a product which is sold openly.

I was pleased in a recent newspaper article, just this week, where a druggist, who feels very strongly about tobacco products, put a sign up in his drugstore that no tobacco products were sold in his drugstore because of the harmful effects.

We go on spending, and the cost of health services continue to climb in this province. Many of the people who enter our hospitals, which are subsidized by the Crown, enter them because of self-inflicted health injuries which are caused from tobacco, and I refer to those who suffer from lung cancer which in my thinking is a self-inflicted disease caused from the use of tobacco.

I would like some assurances from the Minister this afternoon what her intentions are in this regard.

There is one company in Canada which maybe the Minister doesn't have as high opinion of as I have, but one large department store in Canada which will not sell any tobacco products whatsoever. There are certain pieces of clothing that they sell which may not be as good as some other stores, but at least this particular department store does ban in all their stores the sale of tobacco products. I think this is being a very good citizen and showing a lot of civic responsibility.

The second item: I would like to have some assurances from the Minister that she is going to point

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out the ill effects of one product from which this m provincial government rakes off millions and millions and millions of dollars a year in taxes. I refer to alcoholic beverages.

I think this is a very important subject also, Mr. Chairman, because recently in the United States the wine industry promoted very successfully the sale of what is referred to as "pop" wines. Not father wines, pop wines.

I'll have to admit that this particular alcoholic product has, indeed, been helpful and healthy for the agricultural industry in the States of Washington, Oregon, and California. Surplus apples, for instance, from the State of Washington are being sold at very, very high prices to the wineries in California who are converting this particular fruit into pop wines, selling them in cartons of six with pop-open bottles and in a sort of pop carton. This has been a very successful operation in the United States of America.

Should our wineries be given permission to do then same thing here in British Columbia, what would the Department of Consumer Services...what attitude would the lady Minister take, because this is a war of in promoting alcoholism in our youth? These pop wines are not that strong, I understand, but they get the idea starting to drink wines and they go on to bigger and better hangovers.

There is a third product, Mr. Chairman, that gives me a great deal of concern. This is the product which the provincial government doesn't reap any benefits from; it doesn't even get the sales tax — as a matter of fact, no taxes whatsoever. I refer to the various drugs that are being consumed by citizens in British Columbia today.

These products are available, Mr. Chairman. They are available. As I say, they're not available legitimately, but they are products that are available in British Columbia. During the course of the last three weeks in the estimates, particularly those of the Attorney-General, if we've heard in this Legislature thousands of words by the opposition and the Attorney-General regarding the use of drugs in the province. Here again, I think if the Minister of Consumer Services is going to go into our educational institutions, she should carry a very, very strong message to those whom she is endeavouring to influence about those products which are available on the illegal market.

I would appreciate, Mr. Chairman, having the Minister give me her views and assuring me, and the other Members of this Legislature because here is this great opportunity for her to do a great service to all of the citizens of British Columbia. I certainly hope she will take advantage of this opportunity.

The one other subject I would like to discuss with the Minister is with regard to government operations. She explained to me yesterday afternoon that she was not going to be an ombudsman. I mentioned Hydro, I mentioned insurance, the Energy Commission, the railway. The people dealing with those corporations, if they had a complaint against a particular government agency...and she explained to me that she was not going to be an ombudsman.

However, now we have the government, particularly in the Department of Agriculture, going to be co-owners and operators of secondary manufacturing in the food industry — agricultural products.

The Province of British Columbia, or the department of Agriculture, has already entered into an agreement with Panco Poultry to own a large share of that particular operation, and they will be offering food products for sale. Here we have a situation where if you have a complaint about that particular operation — your chicken is rotten or it's been frozen then thawed and it's tough, or the price is not right or there's something wrong with it — the lady Minister, Mr. Chairman, is not going to act as, indeed, is her role in the retail trade.

In other words, if the government has some interest in it and there's a complaint against it, well, she's going to wash her hands of it.

We just heard from the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Stupich) that he was negotiating to become partner in the cattle operation, and that beef would be sold on the retail trade. So, there we have another situation. I can see, as years and months go by, that the government that you represent, Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, could be involved in the processing of fruit, could be involved in the processing of vegetables. Indeed, you could be involved in many, many industries which are processing products for the retail trade.

Yet, Mr. Chairman, the Minister informs me that she is not going to act on behalf of any consumer who has a complaint against any institution of which the government is a shareholder. I would appreciate it if the Minister would give me further assurance that she will indeed act on behalf of the consumer because she is the head of the Department of Consumer Services.

Another situation could come up, Mr. Chairman, whereby the Minister would have to have a laboratory to

test certain products. I would like to know just how she intends to test, particularly, children's toys.

In the past we have had situations where toys are imported. We had a case not too many years ago where inflammable dolls which caused in homes were on the market. Toys every year come into this province by the hundreds of thousands as new products.

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: Playboy? Is that a toy? The inflammable doll is just one aspect of it. We have

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coming into the market every year hundreds of thousands of pieces of toys that are manufactured everywhere from Japan to Taiwan to eastern Canada to the United States. You name it; these products come in. Are you going to check each one of these? There are many, many war toys that are coming. Are you going to advise against the purchase of them? What is your attitude going to be? This is a multi-million-dollar business. It's one which has, in my estimation, many, many problems. I would like to know just exactly what your intentions are in this regard to protect.

In most cases parents of children who purchase these toys are working. The mother is working, the father is working, and they don't have time to selectively shop. Many of these toys are purchased out of the catalogues because they are busy and they want to make sure the children have something they can get enjoyment out of. There isn't, in many cases, in the purchase of toys as much thought given as there would be, for instance, to a piece of clothing or something. I think this is a very important aspect of consumerism.

I have some other questions I would like to ask the Minister, but maybe if I take my place now she would elaborate on some of the points I have raised this afternoon.

HON. P.F. YOUNG (Minister of Consumer Services): In relation to what the Hon. Member said about instructing or advising young people in schools about good purchasing habits and good credit habits, yes, I intend to do that. My department intends to teach quality and how to recognize quality. I can give you an example. Isn't it better to teach young people to eat Okanagan apples instead of potato chips? That's the kind of consumerism we need. There's a case for nutrition in education.

In reference to the magazine the Hon. Member couldn't remember, it's *Consumer Reports*. It's an American magazine but it reports on many products sold in Canada. It is an independent agency; it has never, ever been convicted of any fraud or any charge of influence of any kind. There is another excellent magazine called *Canadian Consumer* put out by the Consumers Association of Canada (CAC) and I do not think, in all conscience, you can fault that magazine. They do a fabulous job of testing products. It's a voluntary organization and they are just first-rate.

As far as teaching tobacco in the school, this in my view would come under the Department of Health.

As far as alcoholic beverages, you've already exhausted that point with the Attorney-General's department. Where pop wines are concerned, I don't know if they have entered the Canadian market or not. I think you are anticipating something that is not a fact as yet.

Drugs. You are looking at the food and drug law and that's under federal jurisdiction. It's also the federal people who have controlled standards.

In the matter of food products, the quality of food and the standards for food, regardless of who owns the plant or processor, it is controlled by the federal authorities. All plants must come up to federal standards: they have total control about that.

Are we going to test toys? It would take a budget twice as large as this to test all the toys that come into this

country. The CAC does an excellent job; the federal people under the *Hazardous Products Act* do a good job of product testing in the matter of toys. In one case you are telling us not to warn young people about what to buy and what not to buy, and on the other hand you are telling us to. So I am slightly confused.

Yes, we may do some product testing that has a great impact, particularly on the B.C. market. But in these cases we will contract to private laboratories or the B.C. Research Council to do the testing for us and give us independent views.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Hon. Member for South Peace River on a further point. I would ask the Hon. Member to try to make his questions more appropriate to the administrative responsibilities of the Minister of Consumer Services. Some of them are obviously more appropriately directed to other Ministers.

MR. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman, I am not following you. Have I brought up something that is not rightfully under the Department of Consumer Services?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am not directly ruling the Hon. Member out of order. I am just simply indicating that the Department of Consumer Services is a new area of responsibility and the opposition Members are merely feeling their way. I would ask them to make their questions more appropriate in terms of who they are to be directed to. For example, tobacco would obviously be more appropriately directed to the Minister of Health. In regard to alcohol it would be more appropriately directed to the Attorney-General or the Minister of Human Resources. Therefore I would just ask him to consider his questions when he is directing them to the Minister of Consumer Services.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I find it very difficult to follow your line of reasoning. We are talking about a Department of Consumer Services. Certainly there are millions and millions of dollars worth of tobacco consumed in this province every year; there are millions and millions of dollars worth of alcoholic beverages consumed in this province every year; there are I don't know how many millions

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of dollars worth of illegal drugs consumed in this province every year. And this is a Department of Consumer Services. I fail to follow your reasoning. However, I would be perfectly willing to abide by your decision.

If I have never seen a double-shuffle and a sidestep, the Minister of Consumer Services just performed it in this Legislature. She is going to advise, in the educational system, people to eat Okanagan apples rather than potato chips because it's better for them. Yet when I mention a product which is much more deteriorating to the human body than potato chips, she says it should come under the Department of Health.

As I said before, Mr. Chairman, I feel this department is costing the taxpayers of this province a million-plus dollars. I fail to follow through the estimates where they are actually going to get value for their money unless, indeed, some of the problems which exist today — and these are very obvious problems — are corrected or an endeavour to correct them is made by the Department of Consumer Services.

Certainly if she is going to talk about foods, and some are better for you than others, I feel she has a real responsibility to discuss the harmful side-effects of tobacco and alcohol. If you are going to follow one line of this product, you must follow another. I don't buy that argument at all, Mr. Chairman. I would like further explanation by the lady Minister.

MR. W.R. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): On this same subject, I would refer back to *Hansard* when this Department was introduced in the fall — from the Minister's own statement. I thought it was a good idea at the time.

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....

I believe that was part of the rationale for bringing these subjects and these areas all under one department

where they related to the consumer and to have one Minister rather than a myriad of Ministers responsible for many different areas.

It's under this, and I am referring back to the same *Hansard* of last year:

...that I think we need a more definitive statement on many areas that may be coming under this department, one of which may be the censorship department, or the censor, which is under the Attorney-General now, but which is directly related to whether consumers go to movies or whether it ties into the advertising with which people are brought to theatres, which ties into the area of what may or may not be misleading advertising.

I only bring this in as an area that deals directly with consumers, and is not, in fact, a legal matter any more but more a matter for this Minister. I feel not only should the censor be under the Minister, but also the type of advertising that tries to draw people into entertainment events these days. Certainly if there is misleading advertising anywhere in the province, it has to do with the field of entertainment.

Perhaps you might even investigate some of the sporting events and the type of advertising that deals with enticing people to go and see some of the Vancouver hockey games. I'm sure some of that must be misleading advertising. At \$7.50 a throw, that's the same value as a defective electric kettle or steam iron.

But there's one area, and another point I would like to bring out to the Minister. This is in discussing consumers' magazines. The difficulty with American publications is the fact that many of the products covered in American magazines are not the same products that end up in the Canadian market. I refer particularly to electrical appliances or products with electrical parts that have to be changed to meet the Canadian Standard Association, so the models that are reported in the American consumers' magazine are not the same models or the same standards that are eventually delivered in Canada.

I refer particularly to things like electric razors, where the Canadian Standards Association demands we have fuses in electric razors, and of course the American standards don't call for this, so the public isn't getting a true picture of the relative merits of those products. I think it is incumbent upon the Minister to encourage more and better use of Canadian publications, and to point out the dangers in using American information, because it may not be the same product.

Another area brought up by the Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) and the type of thing he talked about — pop wines.... But something more serious where it affects the young is pop now delivered in beer bottles to the grocery store shelves. It is only one particular brand, but brought out in a particular effort to precondition youngsters to maybe develop a taste or an affinity for a certain type of beer. I believe the Minister should look into this in British Columbia.

The other area I was interested in is: in the definition of your department, we talked a lot about hard goods which are easy to identify — whether there is a defective toaster or a defective automobile. But we haven't gone into that area of services promised and not delivered. I refer particularly to a lot of complaints I get. Perhaps the Minister can advise how she intends to investigate these — services that should be delivered by professional groups.

What do you do when you get bad legal advice? Is there a complaint through the Consumer Services

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department?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. BENNETT: What do you do when an accountant makes a serious mistake in advice to a client? Is the Consumer Services department going to look into this? The medical profession, dentists — all of these other areas are consumer services and consumer oriented and are subject to many disputes. What about disputes about architects who take no responsibility for mistakes that lead to overruns in costs of houses and public buildings, and their responsibility. Is the Minister of Consumer Services going to deal with this area?

There is a whole area of consumer services that we haven't dealt with because we have dealt with the most obvious ones, and these are areas of professional services that are intangible. These are ones that concern the public the most. It is easy for us to identify when we have taken on a bad car; we can complain. But who is going to help us and show us the way when there are all these areas of services. I'd like the Minister to advise how her department will react to this.

HON. MS. YOUNG: I think the Hon. Member has raised very good points. In reference to the legislation that I mentioned last fall, already the *Consumer Protection Act* has been delegated to this department, and the, *Trading Stamp Act*, the *Closing-out Sales Act*, the *Pawnbrokers Act*. We will be receiving the *Fair Sales Practices Act* very shortly, and eventually, in the not too distant future, the *Personal Information Reporting Act*.

As I mentioned earlier in this debate, we are going to be absorbing those Acts that have a consumer interest, as we are able to take them on, establish the staff, and absorb them into the department.

In the matter of the difference in qualities between American products and Canadian products. That's a very good point. There has been some talk by all provincial Ministers as to the feasibility of the federal department, inasmuch as these products flow across the provincial lines, of establishing a product-testing facility themselves, or financing one. It is more or less in the discussion stage at the present time.

In relation to misleading advertising in reference to entertainment. As you know, in the matter of films we already have the classification board. We are definitely planning steps that we will bring before this House at this session to correct that problem of misleading advertising. Right now, as I know the Hon. Member appreciates, the legislation on the books deals with goods. Right now we have a very large portion of our economy service oriented, so our legislation will encompass services as well.

As far as services by professionals such as lawyers, accountants dentists and doctors, I empathize with the Hon. Member, and I feel that perhaps in some cases something should be done in this regard. These are all self-policing organizations, societies, as you know, and we, the Legislature, in establishing these societies, assume that they will police themselves. We hope they do, but I know we occasionally have doubts.

Whenever I have had occasion to receive a complaint regarding one of these, a lawyer, an accountant, a doctor, a dentist, of course it is referred to the applicable society and we ask them to take whatever action is deemed necessary, or to investigate.

MR. G.F. GIBSON (North Vancouver-Capilano): I'd like to join in the felicitations to the Minister on her choice of a new Deputy, and wish her good fortune and good judgment as she builds up her staff during the coming year in expanding her department.

I would suggest one of the principles she should follow is that the best guardian of the consumer, in my view, is the maintenance of a healthy, competitive system in our economy, and an educated consumer, as has been said by many speakers here. I would suggest to her that that, where it is possible, is far preferable to an attempt by government to regulate every detail of commerce. I think this government would rapidly find that to be the case if it tried to do so. There are just too many problems that not even the largest bureaucracy can handle. So, a lot of the protective work of her department has to be, in essence, in an educated consumer and in a good, healthy competitive system.

I'd like to refer to two specific topics today, Mr. Chairman. The first of these relates to credit cards and the general acquisition of consumer credit in our economy, because we are moving to something of a cashless society, but it is not being done at zero cost. It's being done at two kinds of cost. One kind of cost, of course, is the invasion of privacy on general credit checks, and there have been actions taken in this regard, which I commend.

The other cost which I want to talk about at greater length is the cost to the economy in dollar terms of the credit card system, especially the cost to those not using credit cards, Mr. Chairman. What the use of credit cards does, in effect, is raise the price to all of us who don't use them.

It is getting to be that there are a lot of credit cards in circulation. The figures for Canada — and I don't have specific figures for British Columbia, I'm afraid, but perhaps as a rule-of-thumb we could divide by 10 — are quite astonishing: Chargex, 3.8 million cards out; Eaton's, 2.5 million; Simpson Sears, 1.2 million; American Express green card, 1 million; Simpson's, 775,000; Hudson's Bay Company, 700,000;

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Master Charge, 600,000 — that of course is one of the newer cards and growing rapidly; Avis and Hertz, 200,000 each; Air Canada, 175,000 and so on.

Now these cards can be used for a considerable volume of purchases. In the Chargex system, for example, one of the officials calculated that the average card holder uses it about 30 times a year. The average purchase is around \$18 a time with Chargex. Others may be larger or smaller. Let's say — a little quick arithmetic — that's around \$700 a year and the Chargex cost ranges from 2 to 5 per cent; so this can be a significant cost factor which is paid only in part by those who use the Chargex card, because really it comes out of the cost that the merchant charges to the consumer. All of us that don't have a Chargex card have to pay that cost, because we can't get a reduction. I'll move to that specific point later of not being able to get a cash reduction.

Now the co-chairman of the National Research Committee of the Consumers' Association of Canada had some interesting things to say in this regard. She's quoted in the February 23 article of the *Financial Post* and it's prefaced by saying that people who don't have credit cards these days are thought to be as odd as those who did have cards 20 years ago. Here's what Helen Morningstar said:

" 'Anything that extends credit encourages people to overspend. If a person has a credit card, he feels that he can spend more than if he just had a certain amount of cash in his wallet,' Mrs. Morningstar says. 'Bank credit cards in particular have greatly increased the use of credit. It used to be considered socially acceptable to borrow money from the bank but not from the finance companies, so when the banks brought out credit cards, the use of credit greatly increased.' "

I think this is probably true. So what's the economic impact? The charges by the companies putting out the credit cards vary a great deal from one card to another. The Chargex and Master Charge, which are the ones mostly used to buy goods of ordinary commerce at retail, run from 2 per cent to 5% per cent, depending on the volume of the particular merchant.

Now as to other cards, I think some of the restaurant cards go as high as 10 per cent. One of the most vexatious things of this credit card system is that many of the contracts, Madam Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, provide that the merchant may not give a discount to someone who wishes to make his purchase for cash. In many cases that is actually written in the contract, and it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that that is wrong.

It seems to me that the person who is prepared to go to a merchant or to a restaurant and say, "I will give you cash, and therefore it reduces your costs because you don't have to go through this credit card system," should be able to get that discount. Any contract that says he can't get that discount should be illegal.

I would ask that the Minister might study the possibility of legislation to prohibit sections in contracts that prevent merchants from giving a discount for cash. It's absolutely wrong to me. If somebody else wants to use a credit card company either to extend their credit or keep their records for them, that's just fine by me, but I do argue very strenuously that those who do not use credit cards in those circumstances shouldn't have to pay those charges. In effect, that's what's happening now.

I think, in a general sense, it might be a very instructive exercise for the department when the Minister gets the staff to have a general investigation of the terms and conditions of credit cards and the extent of consumer credit outstanding. I think it unquestionably contributes to inflation, Mr. Chairman. It's difficult for any one province to do much about this, but we can perhaps give some leadership of ideas in the field.

Now the Minister stressed — and many of the speakers have stressed — the need for education in consumerism. I very much endorse that and the importance of it. I suggest to the Minister that the place that

education must start to be most effective is in the schools. We can try and educate consumers at every level, but the time when people are getting their training for life is during their schooling years. Schools hopefully teach people to be whole citizens, to be whole people and realize their potentialities; that's their most important function. They teach people to contribute to the economy.

But the other thing that every person does as they move through life is to participate in the economy on the taking-out side, on the consumer side. I think our schools have lacked in training for this before.

The old thoughts of savings and thrift and getting a good deal and buying in bulk and where to get consumer information; how to get credit if you need it, and to assess its cost in particular; how to shop around — the fundamentals of buying the major capital commitments that most people make during their lifetimes of a house or a car or major household appliances; how to judge repairmen, or repair persons, if they're going to fix your TV set or your car or whatever it is: that's just as important to the ordinary person as judging doctors or lawyers, and just as hard too — judging supermarket specials and co-operative buying; freezer clubs...all of these things.

These kinds of training programmes at the school level, I suggest, wouldn't take a great deal of time away from the students' other studies. It's perhaps something that the Minister can negotiate with her counterpart in the Department of Education and have the students as well get out into the community to see consumerism on the spot and have people from

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the community, merchants, Better Business Bureau, people from her own department, come into the schools and give quick lectures on these kinds of topics.

That's all I have to say at this point, Mr. Chairman. I wish the Minister well as she works towards expanding her department in the coming year.

MR. G.H. ANDERSON (Kamloops): I just have a few things to say on the estimates of the Minister. I think all of us who have lived very long have certainly got a few complaints about consumer affairs that they'd like to bring out. Now that we have a Minister of Consumer Services, there's no better place to bring them.

One of my worst hang-ups I think is on bargains. We've all seen these advertisements that come in the paper — usually just after Christmas when people haven't money to spend any longer. The advertisements go in such as a big sale on ladies winter coats, half price. So the result is, you might take a day off from work and bundle your wife into the car and head down there to buy one of these fabulous bargains, only to find that there's only six on the rack; five of them are size 65 and two are about size 2.

However, you're informed that: "Well, I'm sorry you didn't get here in time. They're all sold out, but we do have some very good buys over here." Well, how can they be sold out? You were maybe the third or fourth customer in the store and all the decent sizes were sold out.

Another one, of course, is shoes. When you get down to these sales you find that they have a sale on shoes all right, but they're only size 12 and 14; all the rest — well, you just weren't there in time, even if you were the second customer in the store. It might fit me, Mr. Member, but most of the public I don't think they would fit. I think this is one of the worst things we see in merchandising today. It isn't false advertising really; the coats are there and there are the bargains, except that they won't fit anyone that wants to buy them.

The Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) was speaking yesterday in this debate and he was referring to how much protection people should have if they make a stupid bargain, or make some mistake, and how much they can be protected. Well, I know several cases where people have signed a contract to have a home built in my own riding.

The contractor gets most of the work; but, let's say, the asphalt drive that was supposed to be installed is not there. When he doesn't show up to put it in, the buyer contacts him to find out when it's going to be done. He finds out that the contractor is not going to come back; he's been paid his final amount of money, the mortgagor has

released it to him and he's no longer interested in completing the work.

I know several cases where this has happened, and it just depends on how much is involved whether something is done about it or not. In one case it was about \$2,000 that was involved and by the time the man had finished the court case and was out \$500, it was worth his while to go to court to get the \$1,500 for unfinished work. But in the case of a driveway or some unfinished work inside the house that only amounts to \$500 or \$700, it usually isn't worth his while.

A builder that can do this 5 or 10 or 15 times is making extra money to put in his pocket and the consumer is suffering.

The people that get involved in these situations are not necessarily stupid. They have signed a contract in good faith and there hasn't been good faith on the other end. This is the kind of thing, I think, that can be handled with education and advice in the local offices that you open.

Marketing boards have been referred to a couple of times. The Second Member for Point Grey (Mr. Gardom) said that they never were marketing boards, they were producer boards, and of course this is true.

There was a time when anyone who went into the building of, let's say, a chicken farm with all of the equipment and buildings and money that was involved, only found themselves in business for a year or two, very little of the debt paid off, and so many had gone into the business, the bottom fell out of the market and you had several of these people who were bankrupt.

Now I'm not saying that the marketing boards are right in everything they've done, but I feel that they have been unduly criticized in many ways in this House, because one of the things they have done is stabilize the market for the producer so that when he makes the big investment that's required to take to go into one of these ventures, he has some reasonable hope of getting his investment out and making a decent living.

We've seen quite a lot of news in the paper today about beef and the subsidy that's being paid by the federal government — \$2.75 million a week being paid out of the taxpayers' pockets by the Liberal government in Ottawa to sustain some of our beef producers in business. I think it's a necessary thing to do. The information that I have is that there's two feedlots have gone bankrupt in Manitoba and at least one in Alberta to the tune of \$170,000. So no doubt there's been a shock to the market.

The thing I find hard to understand is that the price of beef went up in Canada when the price freeze was on in the United States. The Americans were holding back their cattle until the price went up to a place where they would be satisfied to market their beef. This resulted in a rise in the price of Canadian beef as some was going down to the United States

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and their buyers were coming up here.

But when the freeze went off in the United States and the American cattle flooded the market and started coming up to Canada, I would assume that they were getting the price they now wanted for their beef and yet they knocked the bottom out of the market in Canada for our producers, for our feedlots and our producers both. Now we're faced with \$2.25 million a week and possibly, I understand, today it could be more if they put it up to 9 cents a pound rather than seven.

It's too bad the Second Member for Point Grey isn't here. I'd like to know what his legal mind would think of the government in Ottawa assessing all the citizens of Canada a certain amount of tax money to pay this subsidy when I understand there's quite a good percentage of them are vegetarians that never eat meat. I would think that this would be sort of an unequal or illegal levy to put on these people who have no interest in meat of any kind but have to put some of their tax money into a subsidy for beef.

The previous speaker, Mr. Chairman, referred to the education. I agree with him wholeheartedly. I hope Madam Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, that one of the largest parts of your budget will be on education for the general public. There are a lot of people that get into bad situations, not because they're stupid, simply because they don't know the situation and there is no equality in that marketplace. You could talk all they want about everybody should know exactly what they're doing and what they're buying, but if you put one fox in the chicken run you haven't got equal opportunity once that fox gets there. And we have many foxes out there trying to trim the consumers every day of the week.

HON. MS. YOUNG: I think the Member for Kamloops raised a very good point, that it is an unequal marketplace. I recently attended a meeting where one of the members of the audience asked if there was any way we could investigate the quality of tires because there seem to be so many grades of tires on the market. I explained that in the United States some studies were going on at the time, and in the same audience was a man who sold tires for a living.

He said: "I don't know the difference between the various grades," and he said, "all I can do is take Goodrich, Goodyear and Firestone's word for it, on what's good." But he said, "I am no judge of what is a good tire and what isn't."

So there we have a case where it's so complicated, it's such a technical issue that it's just impossible for the average person, including the suppliers, to know precisely how good his product is.

In the matter of building homes, we are receiving some complaints in this area. This is not only happening in British Columbia, it's happening across the country, and the federal people are looking into it along with provincial bodies. We are beginning a concerted effort at all levels to examine this problem because the number of complaints dealing with home building is increasing.

The Member for North Vancouver–Capilano, I too concurred heartedly with his remarks vis-à-vis education in schools. We certainly are going to direct a great deal of our attention to that because as I said before a well-educated consumer will have no need for our complaint services. That's our goal. Our ideal is that someday there won't be a need for a Consumer Services Department, period. That's nirvana I'm sure because we'd also like to see the day we don't have to have a police force either.

In regard to credit cards, a very interesting subject that the Member brought up. There were amendments to the *Consumer Protection Act* a few years ago that drastically reduced the number of unsolicited credit cards in British Columbia. The reason was of course, as you're aware, banks and every credit card company in the country were flooding the mail with these cards, and once they were used, you were billed. So the Act was amended to say that you could use the card to any degree you wished because you didn't ask for the card in the beginning. So now that stopped that right off the bat. Of course the companies require that you sign a request for the card.

We interestingly enough have done a cursory investigation into the percentages of the credit card business, and they range from about two to seven per cent. We contacted about four or five of the major card companies and they charge between two and seven per cent to the merchant. That does not include the one and a half per cent if your account is over 30 days or beyond. So they're not doing too badly in that regard.

What the merchants are also not aware of, it so happens that I worked for Diners' Club once, so I know the credit card business pretty well, there's a cash flow law also. While your money is out there tied up in a credit card for maybe two to three months before you get the money back from the charges, you have the loss of that cash flow.

So I don't know, I sometimes think that merchants might think again about the advisability of using credit cards. Of course from the consumer standpoint, some people cannot tell the difference between cash and their credit card and they over-use it. Well, of course, that's their responsibility. It's unfortunate that some people have that problem. Others don't.

I think the idea of bringing in legislation prohibiting the contract provision to refuse discounts is something we would have to look at. I think that the Nader organization in the United States has started an action on this very

matter and it's before the courts in the United States at this time. It will be

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interesting to see the decision coming out of that.

MR. P.L. McGEER (Vancouver-Point Grey): Mr. Chairman, I barely got in this debate up to my toenails last night when the clock was noted by the Premier and the House adjourned. At that time, I was in the midst of reading a letter to the Minister from a constituent of Vancouver-Point Grey which dealt with one of the big fellows that the Minister of Consumer Affairs is going to have to cope with if she's to do her job.

Of course the biggest fellow of all in British Columbia is the government itself. If you're going to protect the consumer, there are many ways in which you must gain access to the government and to government corporations.

This particular letter which I was in the midst of reading when I was so rudely interrupted by the Premier last night dealt with one of these corporations, the ICBC. Yes I'm going to read it slowly and I hope to have the attention of the Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) and the Chairman and the Minister and all the other Members who are not particularly interested right at this moment. I'm sure that they'll listen because it's a well-written letter, and the constituent makes a point.

"As a constituent of Point Grey, I would like to add my voice to the many already bemoaning 'Autogouge'. This scheme may be beneficial to the majority of drivers but I personally feel as if I am being shaken down by a legalized extortionist.

"First there was the car insurance. I own a 1967 Ford Ranchwagon. It is badly rusted and has 132,500 miles on the odometer. To insure this car for the compulsory \$250 deductible collision policy, I must pay an extra \$70 above the basic PL and PD (Property Loss and Property Damage) for the 1966 model. This is a joke. Though it is listed in the Gold Book at a retail value of about \$1,200, my car is probably not worth even \$250. I am paying a premium based on the value of a car worth nearly five times the value of mine.

"Today I received a further insult. I must pay \$13 to renew my driver's licence. 'Autogouge' called this one euphemistically a 'driver's insurance policy.' This kind of insurance, I believe, is offered for sale on the south side of Chicago, only there it is called 'protection.' Strangely enough, that is the word used in the 'Autogouge' pamphlet where this marvelous policy is outlined.

"As I understand it, this \$10 per year fee — a thousand per cent increase over the old system which charged \$5 for five years — protects me from liability in the unlikely event that I should be hit by an uninsured driver or in the even more unlikely event that I should have an accident while driving a car which I did not know was uninsured. It probably also protects me from liability against air sickness while riding bareback on a two-ton canary. Mostly what it protects me from is the \$250 fine for not having it. Such a policy is sheer extortion as it offers virtually no hope of return for a compulsory fee.

"It's not the \$10 I resent but the deliberately sneaky method 'Autogouge' is using to separate me from my savings."

Now, Mr. Chairman, how about that for a shakedown system? Of course, the man is absolutely correct. He probably is protected, as he says, "from air sickness while riding bareback on a two-ton canary." He's paying a lot of other protection that he doesn't need any more than the people on the south side of Chicago needed the protection of their friends in Cicero.

I don't find any consumers sitting on the board of ICBC. Oh, there's the Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan) but he's in that different category now. He's not one of the boys and he's not an ordinary union member; he's a big important Minister.

MR. N.R. MORRISON (Victoria): He drives the company car.

MR. McGEER: There are provisions for one or two other Ministers, but they aren't ordinary people any longer. If you look at the board of directors of ICBC, B.C. Rail, B.C. Hydro, Can-Cel, or any of these other Crown corporations, you just don't see ordinary people represented at all. There is no meeting of the shareholders where they could complain.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, the points made by the signer of this letter, Mr. Mason, are absolutely correct. When it comes to these gigantic state operations, the consumer is entirely at the mercy of the state and completely unprotected as a consumer. I'm sure the new Deputy (Mr. Neilson) we brought from Osgoode Hall at \$39,000 a year didn't come here just to deal with dance studios and credit cards and all the other small matters. I'm not going to call them trivial because they aren't; the people are injured. But they are small in comparison with these great big things like "Autogouge." Even though that corporation may not make a profit, it still may unfairly charge a significant percentage of the people who are obliged by compulsion to accept that policy and that service. These people need to have protection by consumer representatives being on the board.

I want to deal with another set of boards where there should be consumer representation. I refer to

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the marketing boards.

Think how different the decisions of the Egg Marketing Board would have been had a representative of the consumers been there. I thought the Minister really made the best contribution of any government Member to that debate on the Egg Marketing Board when we were discussing the Minister of Agriculture's estimates and then the Premier's estimates. She did get up and speak for the consumer, as I understood her address at that time. She felt the Egg Marketing Boards were setting prices that were unnecessarily high.

The Second Member for Vancouver–Point Grey (Mr. Gardom) has spoken out about how these are really producer boards that control production, except when an agreement is made between the Premier and, one of the producers. Then the Premier is in the position of controlling the production.

It's worth something to have a quota from these Egg Marketing Boards. The Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Stupich) couldn't remember anything about the meeting between Sy Kovachich and the Premier at the time his estimates were being discussed, but then when the Second Member for Victoria (Mr. D.A. Anderson) began to bring forward definitive evidence that the whole truth had not been told in this chamber...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I would ask the....

MR. McGEER: ...the Minister and the....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order! I would ask the Hon. Member to confine his remarks to the administrative responsibilities of the Minister.

MR. McGEER: I was coming right to that just right now. That letter the Minister of Agriculture and the Provincial Secretary (Hon. Mr. Hall) called a press conference to release, which talked about the agreement that the Minister has reread between Mr. Sy Kovachich and the Premier, also mentioned the value of these quotas. Do you know what they were worth, Mr. Chairman? — \$300 a case. That's the value of one of those egg-marketing production units. I ask you, who in the final analysis is paying that \$300 a case? You're right; the consumer. It's on the price of those two eggs you eat for breakfast.

Interjection.

MR. McGEER: Well, they sell. They sell, and they sell at a good price. The price is so good that the right to produce is worth \$300 a case. The price is so good that a man can support the NDP, pay \$200 at election time, come down and exert muscle on the Premier and the Member for Shuswap (Mr. Lewis)....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

MR. McGEER: I'm just telling you what these things are really worth because the consumers are paying the shot. What I'm about to say, Mr. Chairman, is simply this: if there were consumers sitting on these marketing boards, this kind of political hanky-panky wouldn't be possible.

Mr. Chairman, you're an open-minded man and you know that. If there was a consumer there watching what was going on, they'd know these quotas were being slicked around in Minister's offices.

Interjection.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I would ask the Hon. Member....

MR. McGEER: Well, I'm only....

MR. CHAIRMAN: This subject has been canvassed very thoroughly.

MR. McGEER: There was a press conference on this letter. I regret, Mr. Chairman, sincerely that that particular letter was not tabled in this Legislative Assembly. No, the Minister of Agriculture and the Provincial Secretary got together in a back room with the press boys.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I would....

MR. McGEER: Then when we tried to bring it up in the House it was out of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I would ask the Hon. Member to try to confine his remarks to the Minister of Consumer Services.

MR. McGEER: I'm trying to make what I hope is a compelling case to that Minister as to exactly how she can bring discipline to the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. Stupich) and the Premier so she won't have to get up and attempt the sort of weak defences that the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr., Cocke) has attempted in this House. He's at his worse when he is trying to defend the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, and he's at his best when he's defending his own particular field. The Minister has an opportunity to do a service to the consumer. I know the Provincial Secretary (Hon. Mr. Hall) wants us to get on with all of this, but what we want to see is some justice for the consumer in British Columbia.

Why do we set up a department with a \$39,000 Deputy, somebody with very high credentials coming all the way out here from Osgoode Hall, unless we are

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going to tackle some of these great big problems in British Columbia? If you ignore the big fellows — and I am talking about the Premier and his fellow cabinet Ministers, who are the most powerful men in British Columbia today — if you ignore the corporations they set up and if you ignore the marketing boards that were established by previous governments that had been manipulated by those Ministers, then you are not giving the consumer a fair shake.

If the Minister wants to get into cement, that might be fine too, but she's got things that are really her direct responsibility that she can look after first. If she wants to take on the cement industry and their price-gouging, she is certainly going to get support from me, because I believe that these little fellows like dance studios, encyclopedia salesmen and the vacuum cleaner people that give you prizes and so on are the little fish. We want to go after the great whales like Autoplan and marketing boards.

Mr. Chairman, this long list of order-in-council appointments that the Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) read off took him most of the afternoon to do it, and it was so long that there were a couple of Socreds and a couple of Liberals actually mixed in with that list. Many of those people were following through on a principle that the NDP had repeatedly brought up in this House, namely the necessity of having consumer representation on everything — consumer representatives on hospital boards, medical boards and so on — feeling that the consumer representative would have a function in exerting discipline. I like that thinking. I think that was a very sound approach. Though some of us may ask a few questions about the political backgrounds of the people who are appointed, nevertheless I agree with the principle.

Now that those little opposition fellows have become great big Ministers and now that they have got through the short list of appointments to these boards, they've kind of forgotten that principle. ICBC and the marketing boards are only part of the story. How about the Energy Commission? Now, here's a case where a commission has been set up....

HON. MS. YOUNG: Point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Hon. Minister state her point of order?

HON. MS. YOUNG: The point of order, Mr. Chairman, is (1) this Member is talking about something that has been thoroughly canvassed in this House on numerous occasions, and (2) it has no bearing whatsoever on my department. It comes under the estimates of other Ministers and I wish you would keep that in mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The point of order is well taken in the respect that certainly matters are being discussed in detail which have previously been discussed. I would also rule that I think the point has been well made and any further discussion on it would tend to be repetitious.

MR. McGEER: What point is that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The point that the Hon. Minister should give consideration to having more consumer representation on boards and such. I think that point has now been thoroughly canvassed. I would ask him not to be too repetitive.

MR. McGEER: Mr. Chairman, what you've got to do is to detail some of these areas that are lacking in consumer representation. You can talk all you like about dance studios, but the increase in the cost of natural gas to the consumer in British Columbia, at something like 16.5 per cent, bore no relation at all to the cost of production and distribution. Yet out of every consumer's pocket in British Columbia who uses natural gas, there's a pretty large percentage of them, there is a huge bit out of purchasing power. Very few people go to Arthur Murray studios, and they don't call up everybody saying they just won a prize of a \$50 vacuum cleaner. But everybody has to have a heated home in the wintertime. That's what I mean about taking on the big fellows.

I know that the cabinet is unhappy over the suggestion, and I know the Minister wishes the whole problem would go away. You've got to look at the things that take money out of the pockets of people of modest income. These boards happen to be doing it. The fact that they are government-sponsored boards doesn't matter a whit to the person who has to put up money that he otherwise would not have to put up. I am talking about the kind of rules that would be established if there were proper consumer representations on some of these government committees.

Interjection.

MR. McGEER: Sure. Doctor bills.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. I would also point out to the Hon. Member that the Minister of Consumer Services has no power to appoint anyone to these boards. Therefore I would suggest....

MR. McGEER: This is where she is going to have to fight her battles, because if she is really to blaze a trail in consumer affairs and not just deal with the kind of trivia that Consumer Services deals with in most provinces in Canada, this is the sort of thing she's going to have to tackle.

Mr. Chairman, I want to hear from the Minister

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and get some idea of the breadth of her vision in this broader aspect of consumer problems in British Columbia.

HON. MS. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member may think that health spas and dance studios are trivial, but allow me to tell you that 700 women in Kamloops do not think so, to the tune of \$186,000. They are very

concerned about it. It's quite a nick out of their pockets. The people that have received bad homes or poor roofing jobs don't consider it a trivial matter.

In dealing with other departments, we will act on behalf of people, but we feel that we can refer these matters and the departments will respond, and they have. We have no problem that way. I would remind the House that if you look at other jurisdictions, this is the way it is done also, so I don't see any area there.

Other than that, in the matter of marketing boards, I, have spoken to this issue about six times in this debate. I see no reason for saying it again and again and again. I have made my position and the department's position perfectly clear. I see no further use in talking about it.

MR. H.W. SCHROEDER (Chilliwack); Of major concern to the consumers of British Columbia is the cost of dental work. I have no other Minister to bring this to but to you, Madam Minister, because there is no legislation that places this directly under the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke). We have no dental programme in this province. As a result, I have to bring it to your attention.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I believe the regulation of dentists does come under the jurisdiction of the Hon. Minister of Health. It would be more appropriate to bring it up at that time.

MR. SCHROEDER: That's fine, as far as the actual dental work is concerned. Now, in my opinion, there is a rip-off here that I would like the Minister of Consumer Services to look into.

This is what happens. Dental work in itself is expensive. I'm not here to decide and I don't think the Minister can decide whether or not it's extravagant, but the work that accompanies the dental work is, in my opinion, unnecessary many times, yet it always finds its way to the bill for that dental work.

I will give you an example. You go to a dentist and the first thing that happens is that you have to have a checkup. Now, that's reasonable enough but before you can have the checkup you must have your teeth cleaned. It doesn't make any difference that you have only been to the dentist a few weeks or months before and that you have had all of whatever gathers in your teeth scraped off.

You have a cleaning job first of all; and this cleaning job has a certain fee: \$5, \$8, \$10, \$14. It varies from place to place. The fact that it varies tells me that if it could be done for \$5 by dentist A, why could it not be done for \$5 by dentist B?

A little research, I think, and a little pressure from your department, perhaps, could bring these charges more in line.

Now if cleaning were the only thing, and if after cleaning the dentist could do his job, it would be great. But along comes the next thing. "We cannot do any work on your teeth until we have an X-ray." It doesn't make any difference what the date of your previous X-ray was; you must have one now. As a result, before a tool is placed in your mouth to do any dental repair work at all, you walk away with a bill of anywhere from \$20 to \$35.

It seems to me, although you cannot expect the dentist to work or do his duties for nothing, that there should be some continuity, some sameness in the price levels, as you go from one dentist to the next.

[Mr. Liden in the chair.]

I would like the Minister of Consumer Services to take a look at this area. Then, secondly, I'd like to support the Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) in an approach that he made to your department. This is in the field of education.

I am so glad that you are planning to take a major portion of your time and a major portion of your budget and involve it in consumer education. One of the areas that you need to consider in education is the consumption of toxic substances — and it doesn't make any difference whether you call this tobacco, whether you call this alcohol,

or whether it is a toxic substance that might be in a plastic toy, because several toys have been recalled from the market strictly because when they are placed in the mouth of a child, a baby, some toxic substance is exuded from the material. As a result they have been called off the market.

This was of major concern several years back. Some of these toys find their way back to the market, and they are of major concern. I know that the Minister would be actively engaged in recalling this kind of an article from the market.

But I have to support the Member for South Peace River when he suggests that just as toxic and just as much in need of education is the consumption of alcohol or the use of tobacco. I don't believe it is the duty or the responsibility of the Minister to try to curb the use of tobacco or the use of alcoholic beverages. I don't believe this is right. But I do believe that the Minister has a responsibility to teach and to train and to educate the people who are now in our

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pre-schools, who are now in our primary schools, secondary schools — yea, even in our universities — to teach them what the result is of the abuse.

I can't support strongly enough what the Member for South Peace River has said, and would urge very, very much that the Minister take this into grave consideration when she lays out her own budget for her own department for the coming year.

MR. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister of Consumer Services: she is being very, very evasive on this matter of education of products which are harmful. I feel that she is not living up to her responsibilities, Mr. Chairman, unless she advises this House before she gets her vote that she realizes that this is a problem. If indeed she is going to be the Minister of Consumer Services and is going to live up to her obligations to the people of this province who are paying her salary and voting \$1,169,000 to her department, indeed, she has a responsibility in this area; and any side-stepping of the issue is not going to satisfy me.

She mentioned a moment ago that she was going to teach in our educational system that apples were more nutritious than potato chips.

Mr. Chairman, is the Minister of Consumer Services against the potato growers in Idaho? Is she against the potato growers in British Columbia? Is she against the manufacture of potato chips? This is the very thing that I have warned against time and time again in this Legislature. I have warned against this, Mr. Chairman — the very thing that I warned against that would happen in this department — that you would be educating one product against the other.

Is the Minister of Consumer Services going to advise the people of this province that cocoa is better for them than coffee? Well, it's the same thing. If apples are better than potato chips, cocoa is better for you than coffee. Milk is better for you than tea. The non-use of tobacco is better for you than the use of tobacco. Oatmeal is better for you than cornflakes. But neither oatmeal or cornflakes are harmful to the human body. Neither apples or potato chips are harmful to the human body.

But there are products on the market...tobacco, which has no nutritional value whatsoever; it is indeed harmful to the body. And here is the Minister of Consumer Services telling me that no, she's not going to educate against the use of this harmful product. And she wants me to say yea to a vote of \$1,169,000.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Consumer Services looks like a crusader; why doesn't she act like one? There is an opportunity for her to go out and do the people of this great province a real service.

I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, when I was young and foolish I became addicted to tobacco. We didn't have a Department of Consumer Services back in New Brunswick in those days. We didn't know that tobacco would bring on lung cancer. We didn't know that it was harmful to the heart. We didn't have any of the scientific research that is

available today.

Young people are taking up this habit every day. The young people of this province are being bled millions and millions of dollars by the tobacco companies, while our Minister of Consumer Services is going to sit idly by and let this practice continue.

Mr. Chairman, if you buy a toaster that is going to give you a momentary shock, she's going to go on the airwaves and in the papers and in the educational system and she's going to say, "Don't buy that toaster; it's defective. It'll give you a shock." But by the same token, Mr. Chairman, you can go buy a package of cigars or cigarettes or pipe tobacco or chewing tobacco or snuff, or what have you, which won't just give you a momentary shock, but which will harm your health for the rest of your life.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Consumer Services is going to sit idly by. We had a case here just a short time ago where there were some chocolates imported from one of the provinces into the Province of British Columbia. And, my gracious sakes, these chocolates were a bit defective and it was on the airwaves and it was in the newspapers that you shouldn't buy these chocolates, and they were being recalled. If you had eaten one of these chocolates you might have been temporarily ill. But smoke tobacco, chew snuff, drink alcohol, and the effects are with you for the rest of your life.

Yet the Department of Consumer Services is not going to take any action in this regard. It would appear to me, Mr. Chairman, that all they want to do is the easy and the obvious. Something that has a real challenge, that might be tremendously, politically unpopular, is going to be kicked under the table. "No, we can't touch that; it's the Department of Health." Mr. Chairman, it doesn't seem to me that the Minister of Consumer Services is doing her job, that she's conscientious.

I feel very sincerely about this subject. Because not only is the Department of Consumer Services costing the taxpayers over \$1 million. But the cost of bad health for the taxpayers of this province Mr. Chairman are hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars — many of it caused by the abuses of alcohol and tobacco. I think this Minister has a responsibility to the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Chairman, to accept this as their obligation and to include this as part of her educational system.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the lady Minister just once more if she will even consider this.

HON. MS. YOUNG: I reiterate, Mr. Chairman, that this is distinctly under the Department of Health. The Health department has initiated some programmes in this regard, Action B.C. being one of

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them, and there's been quite a few others. The Drug and Alcohol Commission is coming up with some suggestions, the Department of Education has some programmes going. So I think this would be repetitious, it would be duplication of efforts.

When the Hon. Member says that I want to do the easy and obvious things, I'd like to point out to him that the easy and the obvious have never been done in this province to date. They've been done in every other province in Canada, but not in this one, and this is the new one.

MR. PHILLIPS: Just to follow up on this: it's awfully easy for this department to sort of shuffle the responsibilities from one department to the other. We're talking about consumer products and it comes directly under the Department of Consumer Services.

Mr. Chairman, I want to touch just briefly on another subject that I would like the Minister's remarks on.

Yesterday afternoon I purchased a tin of crab meat. This tin of crab meat was processed in Canada. I'm not going to name the brand, but it was processed in Canada. And this tin of crab meat cost me \$2.35.

Today Mr. Chairman, I purchased a tin of crab meat and this tin of crab meat was processed in Taiwan. Now, is this the responsibility of the Department of Consumer Services to advise the people of British Columbia that they are, would you call it, being ripped-off by this Canadian processor? The Taiwan can cost me \$1.35 — same size can. The Canadian manufacturer: \$2.35.

Now, crab meat is crab meat, they've both supposedly been tested for human consumption, there should be no difference. Are the crabs any different in Taiwan than they are in British Columbia? Now that is the question, maybe that is the leading question.

What I want to know — and this is a very important subject — I made the Minister aware of this today here on the floor of the Legislature. Is she going to go out and educate the people of British Columbia so that they should buy crab from Taiwan?

This is part of her service. Well, last week I purchased a tin of lobster — \$4.35. Is the lobster any better? Same size tin — is the lobster any better for me than crab? Is she going to advise the people that they can buy crab, but you can buy shrimp for less money than that. These are all part of what we are talking about when the Minister's going to go out and educate the people of British Columbia.

A couple of summers ago I drove down Georgia Street in Vancouver. Here's a huge sign, Mr. Chairman, a huge sign: "New Zealand Spring Lamb". I want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, I think those are huge lambs that they grow in New Zealand. Because if you get a lamb chop it's about the size of a good size beef steak.

So there is another import. New Zealand lamb is less expensive to purchase than is our own lamb grown on Saltspring, Cortes or in the Peace River area.

Is the Department of Consumer Services going to educate the people of British Columbia about the best buys in the meat department? Is there going to be discrimination against imports in fruits, meats — which are less expensive to buy — vegetables; lettuce from California, during our own season when it's available? Is she going to protect the agricultural industry in British Columbia? It all has to do with prices, it all has to do with consumerism.

Will you put out a book weekly or monthly or semi-annually which will outline to the consumers of British Columbia the best buys? The best buys in the fruit and vegetable industry, best buys in meat, best buys in fish products, all to my estimation comes under consumer services, Mr. Chairman.

It would be a service to the consumers of British Columbia and indeed if it were being done, what attitude would our Minister of Consumer Affairs (Hon. Ms. Young) take when it comes to promoting British Columbia agricultural products over those imported from other provinces and from other nations?

I feel I've brought up two situations here that presently exist. I would like to hear the Minister's reaction.

MRS. P.J. JORDAN (North Okanagan): The Minister appears to be getting on her feet....

Interjection.

MRS. JORDAN: Oh, what a surprise.

MR. PHILLIPS: He's telling the Minister what to say.

MRS. JORDAN: She may be the only person that's voting for this vote.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order!

MRS. JORDAN: Yesterday, Mr. Chairman, I asked the Minister of Consumer Services on two occasions, both in the afternoon and the evening and I believe the night before, whether in fact she was going to canvass the costs of foods around this province. There have been charges and counter charges, re-charges, and over-charges, so people say in this area.

I asked if she would investigate this matter once and for all. I quoted some prices to her of B.C. products from four sections of this province, and I don't intend to repeat them today, which pointed out that there appeared to be no rhyme nor reason for the variance in price in the Kootenays. Some foods

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were more expensive than they were in Fort St. John, and in Abbotsford. In one instance it was more expensive than it was in Victoria. And yet it's a product grown near Abbotsford.

I'd like to know without repeating the debate if the Minister intends to follow up on my suggestion. Just what is she going to do and is she going to act in this area?

I also asked the Minister — and there was no answer on this — if in light of the fact that she is going into the schools, and she is going into public meetings to advise consumers on what she considers to be acceptable products, and advise them to stay away from what she considers non-acceptable products, that in the event of an error on her part what recourse is there going to be for a company, or the producer of a product that she has damned?

Will there be, Madam Minister, an official type of procedure where a wronged products producer or a wronged company can take recourse? Or for that matter anyone who might be offended by the Minister in line of her work, and her speeches or anyone in her department — will there be recourse for them without going to court?

If in fact the Minister or her staff are proven wrong, will there be a proper means of re-establishing that company or that product's name in the light of the public?

So often we see mis-statements, and false accusations get headlines and then when the truth prevails it's a small retraction on the back page or in fact it doesn't reach the public at all. Some very innocent people have suffered because of this type of mis-information.

The Minister herself is aware that she fell into the trap when she most wrongly attacked a responsible company in British Columbia last year, and eventually apologized. As I mentioned before I certainly give her credit for apologizing.

But the wrong was done. It takes years and years of conscientious management and effort and awareness for a company or a product to gain a legitimately good reputation. That reputation and those years of work and years and years of dollar input can be dashed to the ground within a matter of minutes by an irresponsible statement or perhaps a false statement. Again I would ask the Minister: what effective procedure are you going to establish to protect the innocent from — not intentional, I'm sure — unintentional or accidental errors on her part in promoting certain products or damning other products, or those who are affected by the words of her officials.

HON. MS. YOUNG: In the matter of regional differences in the cost of food, I think we will be looking into this sort of thing this summer to some degree. You're right, there are some discrepancies and there needs to be an overview taken to find out the whys.

As far as naming products, we would not name them unless we were taking action against them, unless they became a matter of public record. Therefore it would be before the courts, so either we win or lose or whatever.

The Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) wanted to know if I would tell people whether they should buy imported or domestic products, or what to do. I'd advise consumers to check the product, the price, the place of origin and to make their own choice. Some people happen to like little ears of corn that come from Taiwan. I don't know why they do, but I'm certainly not going to tell them not to buy little ears of corn from Taiwan because maybe we have good trading relationships with Taiwan.

The Member for Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) referred to dental charges. I concur with him; they are interesting and we may be taking a look sometime at just how they arrive at their fee schedules. I won't give you a time or anything of that matter because, as I say, we're still getting it all together.

In the matter of toxic substances, of course the federal authorities are alerted to this. But we have now with our department an additional communications branch for them to advertise, and also a facility to recall some of the products on their behalf. In other words, they won't be the only ones who will have to disseminate the information. Perhaps we can assist them in this, get the information out and also set up recall centres. Say it is chocolates. The local communities will be able to get them faster on behalf of the federal authorities.

MRS. JORDAN: I have a question I would like to ask the Minister. A number of years ago, in fact about four years ago, there was a book printed in British Columbia called "Women and the Law in British Columbia." This was a serious attempt to take the more common Acts, the more common legislation in British Columbia, translate it into an understandable form of English and language so that the average family could utilize this as a guide to what their rights were and where they might go or follow up for more information in an area where they felt they had been offended. It was clearly stated that this was not a legal guide and was in no way to be interpreted as such. In spite of the fact that there was great concern that the legal fraternity would be distressed by this type of publication, it was a huge success and 20,000 booklets were distributed without any advertising in less than two months.

The book was in the process of revision at the change of administration. The information is housed in the Attorney-General's department and in the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labour. While it now to a certain extent will be out of date, I would

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urgently request that the Minister undertake the republishing of "Women and the Law in British Columbia," that this be revised and that it be put out in a form which has holes in it in order that it can be used as a loose-leaf manual so that amendments can be put in.

It's merely a matter of about \$10,000 for around 40,000 copies. I have seven packing crates in my office at home of requests for this book. I have no objection if it comes out under your name; that's not important. It was a very useful function to the public. It did compile a lot of information in which more detail can be obtained by reference to which department.

The Minister might be interested to know that I found it was used as a simplified guide by many barristers in this province. They used to sit there very professorily and say: "Yes, yes, let me think now." They'd open their bottom drawer and thumb through "Women and the Law in British Columbia." I'd urge the Minister to do this.

There's just one other point I want to make. It's with regret because I believe this Minister is most sincere in trying to carry out her responsibilities. She has been absolutely hamstrung on any of the major issues by the policies of her own government. We appreciate her concern and her efforts. When they're genuine, we will support them. We can't let this salary go through without commenting on the fact that the Minister has been prepared to tackle many issues, but because of the control imposed by the Premier of this province or her colleagues, whenever she comes up against something that's really tough, that is major and requires a tough decision in light of public opinion and coming down on the side of right, she has to back off. She has to back off so quickly, Mr. Chairman, you'd almost think she needs backup lights.

The area has been canvassed; I won't go over it. Again, "Jonathan Livingston" came in on it today: this whole matter of ICBC and the business practices of ICBC in relation to its overcharging in premiums, gaining interest on those premiums, changing the premiums and not making any effort to notify the public, and not paying interest on the overcharging of the premiums. I'm led to believe, in fact, they are even making a service charge.

It appears, in spite of her own efforts, this Minister is being charged with using the big stick on the private sector and the love pat on the government sector. There is no question that the policy of the government is to let this Minister operate in the areas of consumer interests on a selected basis. She is not going to be able to carry out her responsibility of applying the same demands in terms of proper business practice and proper business intent in the government sphere as she is in the private sector.

It is with regret that I have to say this epitomizes the attitude of this government. It's a holier-than-thou

attitude that implies it has two standards: one for the public and one for the business sector, which go together, and one for itself. It implies that Big Brother government can do no wrong, Big Brother government knows best and Big Brother government will use the big stick on the consumer and the private sector. It will let ICBC in its business practices rip-off the public and it will only allow a very dedicated Minister to stand by and smile.

MR. PHILLIPS: The Minister of Consumer Affairs would have done well in vaudeville because of her soft-shoe, sidestepping effect. I wasn't talking about little corncobs from Taiwan; I was talking about a product that is manufactured in Canada and one that is manufactured in Taiwan. I would like an answer as to what your attitude is going to be.

HON. MS. YOUNG: I gave you my answer.

MR. PHILLIPS: No, that's not your attitude at all. We don't grow little corncobs in British Columbia; they are only grown in Taiwan.

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, typical; no more answers, no satisfaction.

Vote 37 approved.

On vote 38: general administration, \$1,089,244.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's in your estimates book. It's \$1,089,244.

HON. MR. BARRETT: Don't seagulls wear glasses?

MR. PHILLIPS: Would the Minister explain to me, not in great detail, the Trade Practices Branch. What exactly is going to be the function of this particular branch?

HON. MS. YOUNG: The Trade Practices Branch will be responsible for carrying out the department's regulatory licensing, complaint actions, investigative activities, and developing enforcement programmes for a number of consumer protection statutes and to operate the storefront consumer services offices.

MRS. JORDAN: I think you asked what the duties of the public information officer too will be. If in fact he is to compile legal aspects into relatively simplified English, then I suggest that he's grossly underpaid, I would suggest he's grossly overpaid. I'd like the Minister's comments on what his duties will

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be and whether in fact he's going to be just a public relations officer like the Minister of Education has with these big ads — "Go to college, Hon. Dilly Dally Dailly" — this sort of thing, or whether there's going to be something more challenging for him.

The Minister under this vote in her estimates estimated that there would be four storefront offices in British Columbia. I would respectfully suggest and ask her to comment on the fact that there's a need to have a consumer access area not just in the lower mainland or the metropolitan area or even in the Kamloops area or the Kelowna area. There's a need to have access to someone for guidance as to where to go for information or more detailed services in nearly every community in this province.

I would suggest, Madam Minister, that you utilize the present government buildings all around the province. It doesn't need to be a big office. It doesn't even have to be staffed full-time. You might even start by using someone who's within the system now, such as a court reporter or someone affiliated with the court who actually utilizes half their time in the court and the rest of their time doing clerical work, when in fact they'd be better qualified to meet the demands of your department and the consumer department and the consumer. You might establish these people all around the province as information officers. If the demand grows, utilize resource people within the community

who would not be in the office all the time, but would be available — people who are semi-retired business people and men and women who have been in business.

I mentioned dietary functions. I didn't mean you to hire dietitians, I meant you to utilize the service of a retired dietitian or retired home economics teacher of an active dietitian or home economics teacher on a consultative basis. If you find that there are four or five people in a community who need this service in conjunction with consolidation of debt actions as well as your own office, then it would be sufficient to have them come in on a basis of teaching a programme, not necessarily being hired all the time. It wouldn't necessarily have to go through the Minister of Health.

I was anxious to know within your educational programme if you have made provision to utilize community resources people, but bring them to Victoria or take them to a central point for a short training course, bringing them up to date on information relating to the consumer that they wouldn't have otherwise, giving them a programme on how to go about budget counseling and perhaps how to go about dietary counseling.

HON. MS. YOUNG: I just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that I think the Hon. Member's suggestions are excellent. As far as the public information officer is concerned, it will be a public information officer.

In other words, it will be issuing newsletters, et cetera. If you claim it's grossly underpaid, I tend to agree with you.

MRS. JORDAN: It depends on what he does.

Vote 38 approved.

ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

On vote 39: Minister's office, \$77,408.

HON. E.E. DAILLY (Minister of Education): Mr. Chairman, when I accepted this portfolio 18 months ago, two of my major concerns — there were many, of course — were to provide first of all additional resources for our whole public education system, which has suffered from very serious neglect over the previous years under the policies of the former government.

Interjection.

HON. MRS. DAILLY: I would have to spend almost an hour, Mr. Member — special education services, class sizes, capital construction, the very areas I'm going to mention now which we put money and resources into.

One of my major concerns, of course, was not only to ensure that we would put back into the system the very necessary resources for a good learning environment, but I also had a concern that we would be able to create a climate throughout the whole province for good, frank, open discussion on educational issues.

Unfortunately, I think, under the former government, the main concerns of the school board and generally the public were entirely based on the financial problems, because they superseded at that time almost every other problem. Therefore when it came down to basic discussions of what was going on in the school system, we didn't find there was too much opportunity for those discussions. Boards and parents, et cetera, were entirely caught up in a climate of school freezes and financial cutbacks.

So I believe that our government has achieved, 18 months later, two of these basic objectives. We have put far more resources into the school system and we have certainly created, I believe, a climate for public discussion on educational issues.

As a matter of fact, when it comes to resources, the Member was just asking me to name some. We've certainly put much more money into special educational services. There have been approximately 1,500 new

teachers added to the public school systems since we came into office. This is before we even attempted to start on the concentrated three-year drop in the pupil-teacher ratio.

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We have allotted far more moneys into capital expenditures for public schools and colleges. During the budget debate, I elaborated on many of these areas in which our government has moved to create what we consider to be a far better system for our children and adults in the province in education. So I don't intend to repeat that at this particular time.

Speaking of the climate for change, approximately 2,500 letters a month are received in our office. We average at least 2,500. These letters are primarily letters, as I said earlier in the House, from concerned citizens, parents, students, and teachers about all aspects of education, from kindergarten right through to post-secondary.

We have taken note of all these letters. We have attempted to answer the majority of them. We have filed away the ones that we considered had very concrete, positive suggestions for change. We have established during the last 18 months, as you're aware, a university task force which has been engaged in a review of the university governance and the relationship of government and universities. Their final report will be brought down very shortly, and it's hopeful that we will be ready to produce complete legislation in the fall.

The task force on community colleges, as you know, has just completed its first interim report. The members of that task force will be starting a tour of the province to get the reaction to that report within the next two months. Of course, there's also been the special royal commission report on the Kootenays and the post-secondary needs there. There has been a major conference on the whole area of teacher training, which will be followed by in-depth studies of the needs and perhaps the new things one should be looking at in the whole area of teacher training.

We have found that the school boards have been most co-operative in holding public discussions in their schools on educational issues. Many of the school boards had been doing this before on their own initiative. Our attempt was to ensure that all citizens in all our schools had an opportunity to talk about educational issues. A great number of answered questionnaires have been sent into the research department for study on the reaction from those discussions.

From certain areas there's been considerable pressure on the Minister of Education and the department to bring in very specific legislation to reform the whole system. I know everyone is waiting and saying: "Why don't you bring in and completely change that whole system?" However, it appears to me that it's wrong to try and use legislation alone to accomplish educational reform. Certainly it's needed, but not alone.

This is true for two reasons. First, we want reform of our system that will truly meet the needs of the students out there. Reform must result from a very planned action and approach which considers all parts of the school system, not just isolated parts.

Implementation of reform must always have the co-operative effort of a major number of people in the community and in school system.

Public school reform must not only be desirable, but we want it to work for the best of the students in the province. We must implement change, but we must also always keep in mind that there are practices and programmes existing right now in the schools of our province which are excellent. We don't intend to throw them all out.

Educational reform must provide for our differences as well as for our common objectives. Instead of producing far-reaching legislation this session which may or may not have been possible to implement — because you must have the co-operation of the people out there — I have taken what I consider to be a more realistic view and that is to give the House first and then the public some basic issues for consideration.

You know, the Member for Point Grey considers that we should have it ready now. I'm sure he, above all,

who has had a number of children go through the system, would be rather disturbed, I think, if I tried to turn the whole system completely around in one piece of legislation. That is not our intent.

We waited many, many years for a change. We don't intend to rush into it under pressure and then find out we haven't been able to implement some of the very high hopes and expectations out there.

Instead of that, at this time, as you know, we have produced a bill — which I can't talk about, and which we will discuss later when it comes up — that has to do with some direction of change in education. But I've also put on your desks today a very small paper, but one which I want to assure you has taken a considerable amount of thought and discussion to produce.

This paper basically outlines what we in the department have found to be the major issues which have come before us during the last 18 months, and the directions and the areas which we think must be looked at very seriously. It does not mean that this is going to delay needed reform. It simply means that when we talk about reform we want to talk about the whole structure of the system and know exactly in what direction we should be going. We want the public to be involved in that change.

Very briefly, I just want to outline for you what the issues are. One of the first is the whole area of authority and responsibility. I'd like to read to you at this time what I consider a pertinent part of this particular issue. That is where we state in the paper that the structure of the system should be redesigned in such a way that authority and responsibility are distributed more appropriately, keeping in mind the principle that the primary relationship in education is

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between the teacher, the pupil and the parent, and that other parts of the system must be in support of that relationship.

I think that will be a section which should be widely discussed. I'm sure that the teachers and the trustees will be most interested in this and will assist us in finding out if that system out there is truly supportive of the child. This will mean that we will be examining the present administrative structures within the school system and their relationship to the teacher, the student and the parent.

Then, of course, the other vital area is programming what actually goes on in the school. What should the young people in our system be learning? We stress in the paper that one of the most important functions of any school system.... You know, one could spend hours trying to make a philosophical statement on the direction of education.

We did take the key that we want young people coming through our system to be effective people, and we consider effective people are those who take social responsibility, who participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives, and can constantly improve the quality of their contribution to society.

But we say that if you want to be an effective person, you must be functionally literate. That is, every person must be able to read, to write, to compute, to hear, to understand and to judge. There does seem to be a tendency that we are trying to destroy those basic skills. We realize that if you are going to be a truly educated person, a person who can contribute to society, you must certainly start with functional literacy. In order to do this the school system must be equitable in the provision of its educational opportunity responsive to the needs of the individual in the community.

Then we move on to talk about programme content and we stress the fact that the programme should be as meaningful as it can be, so that students can learn in an environment today that's meaningful to them, and so they don't say, "What has school for me? There's no relevancy to it." With that assumption, we do not claim that every teacher can make every moment of their teaching completely meaningful. But we do feel that we can help them create a structure of subject material programming which will make it meaningful.

Again this ties in with the decentralization of school curricula so that the school boards have an opportunity now to develop the courses which fit in with their local needs.

We do say in the paper that there are certain subjects, of course, which the Department of Education must make sure are being taught to the students of the province. Those are the ones which provide the basic skills and functional literacy.

Aside from that we also suggest that the whole area of family life education must be improved and the teaching of that — consumer education, Canadian studies. I spoke recently to a group of young students in a high school and I was quite pleased to have them say to me, "Why don't we get more Canadian history? And why can't we have it made more interesting?" I couldn't help thinking recently when I was watching Pierre Berton's "The National Dream" that that sort of programme put in our schools would certainly bring Canadian history alive to our young people.

Economics: very poorly taught — hardly taught at all in our high schools. When I say poorly taught, I mean the courses available are poor. Law, labour education — that's an area that is never touched on to speak of in our school system — alternative languages, culture and heritage of British Columbia, art and music appreciation and physical fitness: we are suggesting that these are the programmes today which many of our young people I think would find, if they had an opportunity to be given them in their schools, more interesting.

Also we hope to move into the area — we want reaction to this — of work experience. We have some of the school boards doing this now where they take some of the young people and they let them out in the community, put them out there to give them an opportunity to work. This means we must have the co-operation of industry to help us find work for young people.

The work experience does not mean that they are finished school. We want them to keep in close liaison with the school system so that they always have an option to come back in. In fact we'd like the school boards to try and develop the work experience not only in the city but in the rural areas.

These are our ideas, and the ideas which we hope will be discussed by the public, teachers and the trustees.

We also stress the point of the right of education. We make the point that the opportunity for suitable education should be provided to all children. It is rather tragic, as we say in the beginning of the paper, that there are a number of children between the ages of 7 and 15 who are non-attenders, who are not going to our public school system for various reasons.

Many of these reasons come to me and I find them quite tragic in many cases — where school boards find that they are just unable to cope with the child's particular disability. Yet the parents say, "We are paying our taxes; what are we to do with our children?"

I feel the government has a responsibility to see that every child can be educated. This does not mean that the school can provide the education for all children, but it does mean that we have a responsibility to see that some form of education is given, perhaps through the other agencies of

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government also.

Then another area we feel that really should be looked at is the whole area of organization and administration of our school districts. At present we have over 74 school districts in the province. We are simply saying that each of these districts has its own administrative arrangements and each, for the most part, is involved in purchasing, maintenance, transportation, et cetera, and handling of salary negotiations and many other administrative matters.

It may not — and I want to re-emphasize — I am simply saying it may not be appropriate to have 74 duplicate sets of arrangements in these areas. Further, the present administrative structure may not — recognize the

supportive role of administration to classroom activities.

Some administrative decisions will be most appropriately made at the provincial level, some at the regional and some at the local. Suggestions for revisions in the system of teacher salary bargaining and the recognition of learning and working-condition contracts should be examined in this whole context. This will be an area that will get a very in-depth study starting as soon as we possibly can.

The whole finance aspect: I announced before that we're ready to move on a complete financial study of the present educational formula, the main objective being to create an equitable education finance system, in light of the fact also that the government is considering a number of changes in the methods by which revenue for education is raised and the methods for the disbursements of the revenue of the school districts.

Basically, in summary, I want to say that I'm hoping for the co-operation of Members of the House, public, teachers, students — anyone out there who's interested in helping us examine these particular areas so that together we can create, hopefully, legislation and some reform in our system, always keeping in mind that the only purpose for this whole exercise is to create a better system for the students.

MR. SCHROEDER: Of all of the departments that existed when this new administration took office, the Department of Education has been the most directionless, the most motionless, the most actionless and the most leaderless of them all. That's just not an empty statement because in the next few minutes at my disposal I would like to prove just exactly that statement.

And listen; all of this is in the face of the fact that repeatedly the Minister states that great changes are necessary in order to make our "archaic" — that's her word — system relevant to our times. I don't have to remind you that nearly two years have elapsed since this Minister took over this department, half the period of the mandate given to her over which she can be assured she will be the Minister of this Department, and she still has taken no action. Must I remind her that her return to power is extremely doubtful? Unless she makes some move in some direction soon, there is no guarantee that she will have any opportunity to make any move at all.

The Minister has repeatedly aroused excitement and hope in the educational community, but to date they are no wiser than they were two years ago. They cannot be certain of their own moves; they hesitate even in their own planning. You, Madam Minister, have done more to add to their frustration than to quell their fears.

Education has moved in retrograde, and all because of what? This Minister is not sure which way to go. She has moved twice, and both times it has ended in chaos. One had to do with discipline and the other had to do with the appointment of a tsar. In both instances she had her fingers burned. She hasn't made a move since.

[Mr. Liden in the chair.]

Let, me try to go through a list for you. We have had two years of commissions and committees and tsars and task forces and hearings and plebiscites — is that slow enough? — and White Papers and working papers and Policy papers and in-depth studies. I listened carefully today for some definitive statement, some glimpse of a ray of hope that would tell us which direction we are going to move in the educational field and I have heard none.

There has been no definitive statement: there has been no direction in education; there has been no leadership. I read in the little White Paper tabled earlier today that the Minister plans to offer some leadership, but it said the Minister of Education will provide the leadership again for more public discussion in the issues outlined in the paper. We have had no leadership and, what's more, we have had a fading confidence not only in the Minister herself but in the department as a whole.

And how came all of this? It's strictly because the Minister is not sure which way she wants to go with the department. As a result, we have had failure in any directive or any move at all. We have no leadership.

Can I just relive for you what she said a few moments ago? She talked about two concerns: additional resources and that she wanted to create a proper climate. What for? For direction or for decision? No. For more

man, we have had two years of discussion.

Not only that, but the Hon. Minister has been a Member of this House I believe, if I am correct, since 1966. She sat on this side of the House and told the government exactly which direction they should be moving. She had her head made up on a couple of things, particularly the strap; she made no hesitation in moving in that regard. But now since she has had the weight of office, she has been talking consistently and continuously only in terms of discussion of which way we shall go. I have to tell you the truth: this lady does not know which way she wants to go.

She says the former concerns were strictly of financial cutbacks and no discussions. I'm not here to defend the position that the education department was in on the day she took over. I understand that in education you will never reach Utopia. Regardless of what my insistence is today in regard to reaching Utopia, even I do not expect that Madam Minister shall reach this in her term of office. She says, in answer to the question of why we haven't gone further that we have that, "we have put money into that area" and, Mr. Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) she says, "we have hired the people." This seems to be a concept that the socialists have which we have had running out of our ears in these past two years. If you want to get the job done, all you have to do, Mr. Attorney-General, is just hire some bodies. Slow down? Hire some bodies and put some money into a budget and the thing will sort of resolve by itself.

This is a philosophy that is peculiar — by the word peculiar I mean the Biblical term "peculiar" — peculiar to the socialist segment of our society. They believe that all you do is hire the bodies and put the money into their pockets and nobody is going to have to make a decision.

But, Madam Minister, some day soon, and the time is fleeting, somebody, and I hope it is you, will have to have the fortitude to stand up and say, after all of the discussion, after all of the facts, after all of the commissions, after we have fired who knows how many more tsars, and after all the task forces and the hearings, "this is the way that we are going to go." I ask you, Madam Minister, what is that direction? Where are we going? When do we get a statement? We haven't had any today.

Let me tell you a few more things that I just heard you say. "We are going to do a little research into university governance, we're going to take — another look, we are going to hear some more input, and then we're hopefully going to have some legislation in the fall. We want to give opportunity to talk about education."

Madam, we have talked about education until we are blue in the face. I want to know when we are going to get going. When are we going to get going?

She says what we have done is we have sent out some more questionnaires. You like that? You are going to send out some more questionnaires. What for? We are going to ask the same questions all over again. We're going to get the same answers all over again that we have just fired Mr. Bremer for. And after we've given the people an opportunity to give us more suggestions, we'll consider them.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's progress.

MR. SCHROEDER: Progress in a pig's ear. We haven't gone in one direction yet. She says, "Reform must be made workable, not just desirable." My question is, when? When can it be made workable? I suggest to you that you don't know if it's going to be workable until you put it to the test. Don't be afraid to make a mistake, sweetie. You've made two mistakes already. Two times you've burned your fingers, but that's what the game is all about.

Let's make a decision. If it's wrong, all you've got to do is stand up in this House and say it was wrong. Don't try and hide the facts; don't try and make it look like it was a beautiful thing; don't try and give it a grey funeral instead of a black one. Just stand up and let it all hang out. Tell us it was ugly and say you made a mistake and that you're going to change direction. What's wrong with that?

Interjection.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yeah, that's right.

They say, "We want to give issues for consideration." The Attorney-General at this point banged on his desk, he thought this was fantastic. Mr. Attorney-General, through you Mr. Chairman, I had thought you had passed this. I've seen you make some decisions, and I'm glad to see it. You as a socialist finally got past the place where you said we're going to have to reach the perfect decision before we make any, decision at all; and I've seen you make some, God bless you.

HON. A.B. MACDONALD (Attorney-General): I haven't made a perfect one yet.

AN HON. MEMBER: Great line!

MR. SCHROEDER: I'm waiting, Mr. Chairman, because I know I'm out of order.

But with all respect, someone has suggested that the work should be ready by now. Two years we have been waiting for a decision, but all I've heard you say today is that there are areas still to be looked at seriously. My question is: do we not know by now which direction we're going to take? Is it true what I said at the beginning of my statement that the Minister really does not know which way to go and

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that we really have no leadership in this department? She said, "We want to look at the whole system." Now just a minute. This sounds futuristic to me. She still plans for the rest of the 18 months or the two years that she has left in office, to look at the whole system and be sure exactly which way to go.

Madam Minister, take it from me, you will never be sure; there is no way you can be sure. Why don't you take the direction you believe to be the right direction, put it into the form of legislation and let the public look at it for a length of time — six months or a year? They'll tell you whether it will work or not work. Why don't you let them have the input after the fact instead of before the fact? Let them tell you whether or not it will work and you can make the directional changes before you proclaim the legislation, and that way they'll make you look good, and they'll love you for it. But for heaven's sake let's get going.

She said: "Every child shall be educated, but perhaps not in school." Beautiful, and I have a few remarks in this regard a little later on.

She said: "Should we have 74 districts, and should we have 74 different bargaining units?" It seems to me that the first concern of whether or not we should consider having 74 districts should not be whether there are 74 bargaining units. It seems to me that the first concern would be: should we have 74 districts to better the educational structure and the educational opportunities so that every student in British Columbia, whether he be in Pouce Coupe or whether he be down on the floodplains, or whether he be in Burnaby, have the same opportunity? But she says: "We will get an in-depth study." After all of that, we will get an in-depth study.

She says that she wants to give more autonomy to the local school boards and that she wants to give more respect to the basic teaching unit which, in this little booklet, is described as, "the primary relationship in education is between the teacher, the pupil and the parent." I couldn't agree more. Right on!

But somewhere the Minister of Education, who must needs make some decisions, must know how those decisions are going to effect that relationship of the teacher, the pupil and the parent. I would say that the moves that our Minister of Education has made, Mr. Chairman, are not helping her to understand this relationship but are insulating her from it.

What she has done is place between her and the fact a Deputy Minister, an executive assistant and several associate Deputy Ministers, and then she has cut herself off, Mr. Member, from the last shred of hope that used to be

a direct line to her — the district superintendent. Instead of making the district superintendent directly responsible to the Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, she has now made that district superintendent responsible to the boards — the district boards, the school boards. As a result there is a further isolation and a further insulation.

I would suggest to you, Madam Minister, that in order for you to understand the teacher-student-parent relationship, you should seek to get closer to the fact and not further away from the fact.

Some people have said, and indeed the Minister herself today has intimated in the House, that the schools are not doing the job. That's a rather nebulous statement. I think we ought to describe what the job of the school is, and it is right here in this paper, so that tells me that the Minister is aware of it. The function of the school system in a democratic society is to provide the type of education for every citizen that will make him an effective person. Beautiful. That's the purpose of education.

If we say education has not been doing the job then we say that we have had at least some margin of failure in this goal. The question is: why do we have that measure of failure? Why do students not succeed? Again she gives us the answer. She says: "Why do many students not succeed? It is often said the student is not intelligent enough to succeed, or has no drive, or no ambition. Or he's rebellious, or doesn't want to learn. Or his parents don't care, or he's culturally deprived, or his homework is terrible, or maybe she wants to be married or he thinks the courses are irrelevant. And she has other interests, and he is immature." Right. These are all reasons for failure. These are all reasons why we do not have a greater measure of success. But is not the answer to being more successful in taking a look at those things that cause the shortcomings and making the adjustments in these areas?

We don't have to have a whole lot of research. We don't have to have a whole lot of commissions, tsars, task forces, working papers, White Papers, studies and in-depth studies. There's the answer right there. You wrote it yourself. It's page 1.

Now if the schools are not doing the job, at least there is agreement in the land about that. Regardless of whether you talk to someone who is in the industrial world or whether you talk to someone who is at the head of a faculty at the university or whether he's involved in the Department of Education at the University of British Columbia, they agree that the schools are not doing the job. When you ask them what do they believe the schools should be doing, they come back to the basics. And they say: "What we need to do is return to the good old three Rs and the good old fashioned values of the classroom where the teacher is the boss." This is what they say.

Now, Madam Minister, why don't you use this as input into your direction? But no, you don't want to take that as a good and advisable suggestion. What you do is you negate it, and you say: "This is not

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what I want. I have made up my headbone and I'm going in a different direction and we are not going to allow the teacher to be the boss in the classroom." That's the direction that you've taken.

Now, if you were headstrong enough to make that decision, why in the ever-loving blue-eyed world can't you make some decisions in these other areas? Why not let's get moving? The time will soon be gone. It won't be too long and you'll be seated on this side of the House, and you'll be able to yell again: "Why aren't you doing something?"

Interjection.

MR. SCHROEDER: I just heard that your rooster's awfully tired. You'd better go check him out.

What I like about this, Madam Minister, is that the teachers are giving long and loud applause to the basics, and whenever anyone stands up to state the case for the basics, there is long and loud applause. I've stood up time after time after time and said what I want to say again right now. In the case of schools not doing the job, I still believe that if the teacher is given the prerogative and the authority, that teacher will do a fine job in that classroom. But as soon as she's hampered, as soon as her own attitude is disturbed, as soon as she's frustrated in her own

approach to that classroom, you'd better believe that the teaching process will not take place.

I saw an article in the paper, I think just yesterday, where it says you cannot teach a frustrated or a rebellious child. It's impossible. The learning process breaks down. I suggest to you that the same thing is true in the case of a teacher. A teacher walks into that classroom, and if she has any frustrations, whether that be in regard to salary or whether that be in regard to the strap, or whether that be in regard to curriculum, or whether that be in regard to her own home life, if she walks into that classroom frustrated the teaching process will not take place.

I say to you, Madam Minister, that if schools are not doing the job it is because we have not given the teacher enough authority to do the job. I still believe that the triangle that you drew for us in this issue is still the basic learning capsule. It is the teacher, the pupil and the parent. As soon as we have a lot of interference from the top, we will disturb that learning until, and I think one of the reasons why the schools are not doing the job is particularly for this reason, and that is that we are interfering too much from the top.

Now, here is a statement that the Minister has given regarding education policy to be announced. You had a beautiful opportunity, Madam. You had all the people together, and you called them into committee. You were just about to come to some positive conclusions and to make some recommendations. You had all the bodies there that were helping you and that would have held up your hands and said: "This is right." And what happens? Before conclusions could be come to, your department cut off these talks.

Something apparently was more important — perhaps a previous engagement. But whatever it was, just before you had the opportunity to tell the whole world which way you were going to go, you decided to call the talks off.

Madam, when are we going to get clear distinct words? Why is the Minister so afraid to make a statement? When can we expect that education will go forward in this province? How long must we wait until the teachers themselves can say: "Aha, we've been excited now for two years. We've had promises, we've got hope running out of our ears, but we still don't know which way to go"? When are we going to have an answer, Madam?

The teachers get excited. They believe in reform. They all believe that reform is necessary. There isn't a one of them who will call you ugly when you stand up and say, "Let's do a better job." Everyone will say "Hoorah, let's do it," But the next question is: when do we get started?

HON. G.R. LEA (Minister of Highways): Are you calling for reform school?

MR. SCHROEDER: I'm calling for reforms in school. And there's room for you.

Interjection.

MR. SCHROEDER: I understand there's a make-up course, if you haven't graduated high school.
(Laughter.)

Mr. Bremer, I really believe, was fired not because of his lack of doing things. I believe that Mr. Bremer was fired because he believed in coming to some conclusion and saying, "Okay, Madam Minister, let's go: we're going to go in this direction." But the Madam wasn't ready. She wasn't ready, hadn't made up her mind, didn't really know which way to go.

That's the statement I made at the beginning of my talk. I'm trying to prove it, not just to this House, Mr. Chairman, but to the Madam herself, and I want to encourage her. I'm not trying to drag her down. I'm not trying to destroy her in this House. What I'd love to do is help her. Let's go.

Mr. Bremer was fired not for having too few ideas, but for having too many. Mr. Bremer was fired not because he didn't have enough intelligence. He was the fella who was going to take the limelight away from the Minister herself, and was going to lead British Columbia into reforms, but the Minister was afraid.

AN HON. MEMBER: She was afraid?

MR. SCHROEDER: She was afraid, yes. Here is Mr. Bremer's conclusion. He said: "I'm ready for reform. I'm ready to bring innovation to the province, but I don't think the province is ready." The province is not ready for a change. There has to be a whole series of meetings across the province to reach a consensus about where we want to go.

Interjection.

MR. SCHROEDER: I'm afraid it may go back to change by confrontation, and if change is imposed it can be no good. Mr. Bremer said he "doesn't favour the return to the little red schoolhouse, but he definitely believes that enrolment in any school of higher than 300 is not advisable." Now here are some decisions. Here are some conclusions, and the minute the man makes these conclusions what happens? They give him the axe.

Interjections.

MR. SCHROEDER: They gave him the axe, and I don't believe the Minister did it. No way. I have more respect for the Madam than that, but this was what happened:

While she was in Montreal, and unbeknownst to the Minister, the First Minister of British Columbia took the axe, not even directly to the man to be disposed of, but in front of God and everybody, on the television.

He gave the man the axe, and when the press called the Minister away out in Montreal she said in defence: "It's news to me. Wait until I come back and I'll do a little talking with the Premier and with Mr. Bremer, because all I know about it is the report of the telecast." That's what she said.

Let me ask you: was Mr. Bremer let go for just cause? We haven't heard. I heard the question today in the House, "Was there just cause for the release of Mr. Bremer?" No answer; it's funny. It's funny, Mr. Leader, how so many questions in this House go unanswered, and the longer I live here the more I come to believe that the answers are few and far between over there, and that the reason we have no direction in the motion of this government is because they don't come to any conclusion, just like the Minister of Education.

You can't move in any direction until you know for sure you're right, and since you never know for sure you're right, you don't make any motion at all. Mr. Bremer was let go. Was he let go because he was hated in the community? Was he let go because he was derided out in the floodplains? I guess not. Let me tell you what the people on the floodplains said. By the way, we've got some smart ones out there.

HON. MR. LEA: Before or after?

MR. SCHROEDER: Horrifying!

HON. MR. LEA: Before or after?

Interjections.

MR. SCHROEDER: Order, Mr. Chairman.

" 'Horrified' is the way Dr. Norman Crabtree described his reaction to the manner in which provincial education commissioner John Bremer was dismissed from his job. Dr. Crabtree, chairman of School District 33 Board of Trustees, told this paper, 'I am appalled that a man of Mr. Bremer's intelligence has been treated this way. The Premier cut the man's legs off on a hotline programme.'

Interjection.

MR. SCHROEDER:

"As a member for the Fraser Valley School Trustees, Valley College Steering Committee, Dr. Crabtree has met with Mr. Bremer on a number of occasions and he described him as a brilliant, hard-working, courteous man. If there had been problems to which the education Minister has now alluded, I would have thought that it would have been proper for Mrs. Dailly and the Premier and Mr. Bremer to get together, and I'm sure things could have been worked out,

"It seems entirely unfair that the Premier should describe him, that is Mr. Bremer, as a bit of a flop before a television audience, and then later proceed to work out the details for his dismissal."

I find it rather odd myself.

"Dr. Crabtree said: 'I don't think we ever really fully understood what they wanted Mr. Bremer to do. We had thought that he was charged with suggesting changes on an ongoing basis, and then we had heard that he was to be provocative and sound out new concepts. I've not agreed with everything that I've heard reported about what he has said in private conversation, but he has told me this that he has been the victim of a lot of bad reporting.' Now I shouldn't have read that because I don't believe that the press would do that.

"The school board chairman summed up: 'I don't know what's behind all this, but I understand from an announcement today that the Education Minister has described the schools Act as archaic and says that there are going to be a lot of changes. We've

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heard that for two years. That seems to me to be quite a strong statement on her part.' "

That's Dr. Crabtree speaking.

We have an editor of our paper out there on the floodplains. What did he have to say on the same date?

"If you attended the December 17th public meeting dealing with the Valley College task force, there is at least a reasonable chance that you might have been impressed with the manner in which John Bremer, the then Education Commissioner, conducted the event. Certainly we were pleased. During the meeting, Mr. Bremer demonstrated a remarkable wit, a great deal of common-sense and quite generally gave the impression that he was the calibre of man who really did deserve a handsome salary and a responsible government position.

"The decision to dismiss him from his post, first hinted at by Premier Dave Barrett, and then finalized by Education Minister, Hon. Eileen Dailly, certainly comes as a surprise to a great many people. It is all the more surprising that Mrs. Dailly believes that he talked too much. Certainly if that criticism could be leveled at Mr. Bremer, it would be just as applicable to Mrs. Dailly.

"That was just a few weeks ago. It was just a few weeks ago that the Hon. Minister lashed out at school boards for irresponsible spending, when it was all too obvious that their increased budgets merely reflected her stated intention to upgrade education in the province.

"Perhaps some of Mr. Bremer's ideas are a little far-out, and maybe we are not yet ready for them. But wasn't he hired to stimulate dialogue on educational topics and to provide a needed new look at old problems? Mr. Bremer may not be perfect, but neither is our Education Minister. In the long run it wouldn't prove too surprising at all if the wrong person was replaced."

That's a pretty strong editorial. I have to tell you that Mr. Bremer had friends. In the short nine months that he operated in this province he impressed many people as being a man who perhaps could lead us into innovation in this province, and he was sacked. What for? — because they said he talked too much and he listened too little. Do you think he needed the right friend?

I'm going to skip some of this, because my time is going faster than I figured.

Another area that is of major concern in the province and an area that has created more discussion — which I believe is what the Minister wants — and more briefs and more letters, retorts, than perhaps any other thing that the

Minister has said, was the thing about discipline. I'm talking about the strap; I'm talking about class discipline.

Mr. McFarlan of the BCTF (British Columbia Teachers' Federation) says class discipline is related to class size. If we had smaller class sizes — that is, if we had a smaller student-teacher ratios — the class discipline thing would disappear.

But I have to tell you, Madam Minister, that class discipline is related to certain students in that class, not necessarily to all of them, and certainly not necessarily to a certain kind or type of teacher. Class discipline is usually the result of two or three or sometimes five dissidents in a class. To decrease the class size, all that does is redistribute the dissidents. Instead of having five in a class you would now perhaps have three or four. But the problem still exists. It may not exist as often in one room, but the problem still exists. I have to repudiate the statement by Mr. McFarlan that would say: "Class discipline would improve with smaller class sizes."

A teacher from Hope wrote to me and said it would make no difference. The learning atmosphere in a classroom happens to have certain levels. One level is at 16, as I remember; another level is at 25. The patterns a teacher chooses in teaching is dictated by those two numbers, strangely enough. As soon as her class is below 17, she has a more personal approach to the student. The minute the class is larger than 17, she adopts new teaching practices. Those practices are identical, regardless of whether that class number is 25 or 17. At 25, we reach a new threshold. When the teacher reaches class size 25, she adopts yet another method of teaching. So a class size is not going to vary the teaching approach or the learning atmosphere that much unless it happens to be just around those two figures.

The class sizes, as we have them listed for us now in the Province of British Columbia, are 21.5, give or take a few. This is not the actual class size; this is just the all student-all teacher ratio. I would like to suggest, Madam Minister, that as early as possible you stop relating class size or student-teacher ratio to the all teacher-all student ratio, and take the actual number of students in the classroom.

I looked at a breakdown and I was appalled at how many classes have 36 or more students in them. I was appalled at how many classes had 30 to 35 in them. In some school districts, the greatest percentage of the classes were greater than 30 students in the class. To say that our student-teacher ratio is 21.5 to 1 is meaningless when class sizes are actually at that level. Why don't we tell it like it really is and divide the number of students by the number of classes? Then we have the proper student — teacher ratio. Does that make any sense to you, Mr. Chairman? That would seem to me to be the logical way to do it. Then let's strive to get the class ratio to 25 or lower. Then we would be doing something to develop the proper

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atmosphere in which the learning process can take place.

In this business of discipline, the Minister has made the statement that she believes the best kind of discipline is self-imposed discipline. I couldn't agree more; it's a fantastic statement. The most effective kind of discipline is the self-imposed discipline. But I have one question for you, Mr. Chairman. How do you know how to impose self-discipline if you wouldn't recognize discipline if you saw it? Somebody somewhere has to superimpose discipline first. After it's superimposed and learned, then it can be self-imposed.

I think that here we're getting to the nitty-gritty of the whole educational process. One of the responsibilities not only of the home but of the school is to continue the process of teaching self-discipline. This self-discipline needs to be superimposed. When it is superimposed, it is learned on that basis. As soon as the behaviour pattern is learned, then the superimposition can be retracted and self-discipline can take place. There is no way, if you understand that nature of mankind, that discipline will be imposed by your own volition. You're going to go as far as you can go against any restraint, until somewhere discipline is learned.

Self-discipline is the best kind of discipline. But if it is, and if self-discipline works in all instances without any guidance or restriction from the outside, then why do we need a Department of Consumer Services? We just finished her estimates. Good heavens, let the people impose their own controls and their own disciplines. We don't

need somebody called Consumer Services to tell them, "Oh, oh! This is too far. Watch this. These are the prices. Hang on here." Self-discipline is beautiful but it needs to be learned.

Controlling students' behaviour is a beautiful concept. If control cannot be established in the home, which is, by the way, an ever-increasing problem, and if control is not established in the schools, then let's not be surprised when it is impossible to establish control in the community and in the society. Is it any wonder that the Attorney-General's department is overloaded and that he has had to increase the number of bodies in his department just in the policing and the control and the law-and-order aspect?

The only way I can communicate it to you is if I use an illustration. Nearly every bridge built in British Columbia has a guard rail. The guard rails are seldom used. Not too many cars run up against the guard rail to see if it will hold. Not too many lives are spared because the guard rails are there. But the guard rails are there. They make you feel pretty secure when you have to cross a bridge or when you have to go across a gully that may be 200 feet to the bottom. It feels secure to have the guard rails there, Madam Minister. You can see it coming, can't you?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! I want to remind the Member that the proper way to address the Minister is the Hon. Minister or the Hon. Member.

MR. SCHROEDER: All right. Has that been established in this House, sir? That's just practice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I just draw that to your attention.

MR. SCHROEDER: I can't call her sweetheart or anything like that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may proceed.

MR. SCHROEDER: I'm going to have to start the illustration all over again now. The guard rails are there to lend an air of security.

Now I want to relate this to control or discipline in a classroom. I would like to equate the strap with a guard rail on a bridge. Although the strap, like the guard rail, is seldom used — perhaps never used — nonetheless the strap lends the same security to the classroom and the teaching situation that the guard rail lends to that bridge.

When the student goes through that classroom, knowing that the control is there, the security that he needs is exactly what he gets from that knowledge. I want you to know that if we can communicate this security in the classroom to these individuals as they go through, whether they be with us for 9 years or 12 years or 16 years, as was my case, nonetheless, when they are finished with a secure learning atmosphere such as they would have in an instance such as I've just related to you, I think we would have a decrease in the problems experienced by the Attorney-General's department.

It took us two hours to debate drug problems. It took us 25 minutes to debate rape. It took us three hours to debate alcoholism. All of those things are strictly this: they are human nature out of control. There are individuals who have never learned the art of self-control. As a result, they find themselves in these problems. I think that we in the educational sphere have failed these people unless we, in their learning experience, have transmitted to them the greatest of all control — self-control.

Hon. Minister, I'd like to communicate that to you today. I couldn't agree more that self-control must be established. But I have to suggest that I believe we have a responsibility as a Department of Education to superimpose that self-control upon those students as long as they are in our charge.

The wisest of all said this: "Train up a child in the way he should go." It doesn't say cajole him, it doesn't say exhort him, it doesn't say encourage him, but it says train up a child in the way he shall go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Therefore if

we took at those who are what we call old and they have departed from that self-discipline that I've just spent 15 minutes talking about, we must conclude that they were not trained properly. If they had been trained properly they would not have departed from that training.

I believe that the discipline problems that we have in our schools are not going to grow less, but they are going to increase until we provide for the teacher some support — not only we who are involved in laying down the legislation for them but the parents as well.

I was so delighted to see a release in which the people of Surrey — Mr. Member, that's not far from where you live — went to an evening meeting. Undoubtedly they could have been someplace else, but they decided they were going to back up a principal called Arnold Selzer. They said to him: "Sir, what we want you to be is a benevolent dictator. Lay down the rules and make sure that they are obeyed." More and more, students, teachers, parents, educators and business people are coming to the same conclusion — they want control restored to the classroom.

I want to talk a little about finance. Just before I do I must relate what I have just said to the statement that the Minister has said. She says: "Research shows that there is little or no need for corporal punishment in schools which allow for individual differences in ability and behaviour and require self discipline from students."

In the face of research that shows there could be need for corporal punishment, she has acted in one of the two times that she made a move, and she acted wrongly, in my opinion. She acted twice and was wrong both times. I can't understand it.

Could it be that this Minister is not sure which way to go? Could it be that the statement that I made at the very outset of this little talk could be right, that the Minister is really not offering to us the leadership that we require in this province and that she really doesn't know which way she wants to move? It certainly looks like it when you look in the finance field. It sure looks like it.

"Mr. Barrett invited school boards to make their case individually to the Minister of Education to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio. Just a few months ago when school boards placed extra money in their preliminary budgets to reduce that ratio they were called irresponsible. Now the government has set up a fund for just that purpose, above and beyond the budget established by school boards."

It sounds to me, Mr. Premier, through you Mr. Chairman, that precisely the statement that I made in the beginning is looking more and more like the truth all the time. She's just not sure which way to go. If the Minister was sure which way to go why couldn't she have delineated clearly for all to see how many bucks were available for every area and every school district? Why couldn't she have laid it out in black and white? She wasn't sure.

Interjection.

MR. SCHROEDER: I'd compare notes. How much have you lost? I've been doing pretty good.

"I think it is totally inappropriate to finance our local schools from Victoria when school boards already have budgeting power in their own districts." This comes from one of the board members. He said: "I fear that the financing of education is going out of the hands of the boards into the hands of the Department of Education." I say that's bad news, because the Department of Education is not sure where they want to spend the money. They want the boards to come cap in hand and say: "Hey, we're going to build a case for you and if we can prove to you that we need the money, we understand that you're going to give us the money." This is what Mr. Premier had said.

If the guy that comes to build the case happens to be eloquent and builds a good case he can say, "Hey, look at what we've got here. We've got plans and we've got teacher ratios" and such and such, build such a good case, and he'll go away with a capful. Along comes another man just as sincere, representing students and needing education just as badly as the man I have just referred to, but he's not as eloquent so he goes home sad sack. Why? Just because the Minister didn't know which way to go. We have no leadership in this department.

I'd like to suggest, Madam Minister, that in working out your finance formula you have what you call a basic instructional unit allotment. If you can be reasonably sure that that basic allotment is on target, then the way to find out how much expenditures should be allotted would be to add the inflation index to that basic instructional allotment, whatever it may be. In that way, at least, you would have a status quo situation all throughout the province. Then in addition to that you could add the special allotments that you may wish to have for educational programmes not now existing.

In that way you could have a certain approach to budgeting, you could say to every group of board members, every board of directors from these various school districts: "This is what it looks like for this year, this is what you have, this is what you can spend." Don't say that it is 108 per cent of what it was last year, but just add the cost of living increase index to the basic instructional unit and make your special allotments in addition to that and away you go. You can be just as certain as can be, you wouldn't have a whole lot of questionnaires to send out, you wouldn't have a whole lot of boards of trustees coming traipsing into your office.

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You're going to have to make 74 decisions that could have been made all in one. Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, if she is having as much difficulty making a decision as I have just related to you, how in the ever-lovin' blue-eyed world does she plan to make the 74 that still are before her? I would say just in keeping with her own philosophy it would have been far better to make the decisions at the beginning.

University leaders tell me that their financing formula just doesn't make any sense. There's a 10 per cent increased allotment. Some of their funds come from private sources, so that by the time they add all their dollars together really, the increase they have is only 8.6 per cent. On an 8.6 per cent increase they can't even afford to pay the professors. Many of these professors are now earning less than high school teachers. This year again they're asked to take a further cut.

It seems to me that the Minister just didn't take a good enough, long enough look at the whole financing formula. It seems to me that what I said at the beginning is true: she's not sure which way to go. I have some more areas that I would like to talk about. I want to talk about classroom size. As a matter of fact, I have got a lot of things that I want to talk about. Maybe what I should do, since the hour is approaching six, is move the committee rise and report progress and ask leave to sit again.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Speaker, the committee reports progress and asks leave to sit again.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Barrett moves adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

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