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HANSARD

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

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**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1974**

Afternoon Sitting

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The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers.

**Mr. Speaker:** I've just asked your permission, and obtained it, to increase the light in the chamber for 15 minutes for an experiment. The television technical committee is working on it, if that is agreed to by the Hon.

Members.

I may also point out that much concern about the lighting is going on at the moment. We apparently are violating the Workmen's Compensation Act and the regulations by having less than the required amount for conference and interviewing rooms or desk areas with no office work involved. I've had complaints that the lights are too bright, but I'm afraid that the Workmen's Compensation Board may be arresting me at any moment. So I hope you will bear with us.

**Introduction of bills.**

**Oral questions.**

## DAM CONSTRUCTION ON COLUMBIA RIVER

**Mr. J.R. Chabot (Columbia River):** Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs as director of B.C. Hydro: I was wondering if the Minister could tell me if a decision has been made to construct a dam on the Columbia River below the present Mica Dam.

**Hon. J.G. Lorimer (Minister of Municipal Affairs):** No, there's been no agreement on that at all — no decision at the present time.

**Mr. Chabot:** No decision. Then I have a supplementary question. Apparently a decision has been made, and an announcement has been made by one Cass-Beggs in which he informed the city council of Revelstoke that speculations have now ended and the dam will be built here to supplement other B.C. Hydro power projects already established on the Columbia.

"A formal announcement of the Revelstoke dam is expected to be made in Victoria during the current session of the Legislature. Cass-Beggs informally leaked the news of the local dam project after city council requested Hydro intentions regarding the possibility of the Revelstoke project."

Now that Cass-Beggs has announced that there's going to be a Revelstoke dam and that construction will be finished prior to 1980, I was wondering if the Minister would like to change his answer.

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** No, I won't change my answer. There hasn't been a decision made by the board and there's been no formal announcement.

**Mr. Chabot:** Well, a supplementary question. There's been a very formal announcement made by one general manager of B.C. Hydro. Is there a conflict of opinions relative to the construction of dams in British Columbia between the directors of Hydro and their general managers? If there is, is this going to be rectified by disciplinary action?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think the question is rhetorical for one thing, and it's also argumentative.

**Mr. Chabot:** Is the Premier going to fire him on television?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Second Member for Victoria. Is this on the same subject, Hon. Member?

**Mr. D.A. Anderson (Victoria):** No, it's on another subject.

**Mr. Speaker:** There's another supplementary here from the Hon. Member for South Peace River.

**Mr. D.M. Phillips (South Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, it would appear that there is some thought about building this dam. I would like to ask the Minister if a study is being conducted as to the effects this storage of water will have on the environment of that particular area.

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** Yes, there have been studies done on it. There have been environmental studies. The

studies were commenced some years ago and have been going on. But as I mentioned earlier, there's been no decision made by the board of yet.

**Mr. Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question: Are the studies complete at the present time, and are copies available of the results of that study? Who was the study conducted by and how much did it cost?

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** I can't answer those questions as to who did the study and so on, but I'll take it as notice.

**Mr. Phillips:** Well, is the study complete? Are copies available? I'd like to have a copy.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. One question at a time, please — that is a rule.

**Mr. Phillips:** Well, is the study complete?

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**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** I'll take that as notice.

**Mr. Phillips:** You don't know whether it's complete or not, then. Yes or no.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** Taking it as notice doesn't say whether I know or whether I don't know. (Laughter.)

**Mr. Phillips:** Surely to goodness, Mr. Speaker, the Minister can answer yes or no!

**Mr. Speaker:** I think that it's time for something else, surely.

## REGULATIONS RE PAYMENT OF AUTOPLAN PREMIUMS

**Mr. D.A. Anderson (Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Transport and Communications: In view of the fact that people who have premiums with ICBC at \$116 and lower are unable to take advantage of the Royal Bank financing plan, and as many of my constituents who are sober, law-abiding drivers are in this relatively low rate, may I ask him whether or not he has considered the possibility of these people who don't have the money between now and the end of the month putting in post-dated cheques?

**Hon. R.M. Strachan (Minister of Transport and Communications):** Yes, we have considered that. It is my understanding that some of the agents are now doing this, but there's no way that we can think of by which the corporation can accommodate that particular situation. Some of the agents are doing it, I understand.

**Mr. D.A. Anderson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, if the agents are capable of doing this, may I ask whether or not the information on these post-dated cheques is going down to the computer in Atlanta, Georgia? If so, what situation do these agents have if some of these cheques don't turn out to be good ones?

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** I'd say there were two questions there. Does information go to Atlanta, Georgia? My information is no. It's also my information that agents are simply going to do this up until the 15th of the month, which is a two-week period before they're due.

The next question: the cheques are made out to the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, they're not made out to the agents. The problem of cheques of any kind is the possibility of NSF cheques, which could be considerable.

**Mr. D.A. Anderson:** I understand that while the agents are apparently holding these cheques for ICBC, ICBC itself can't hold the cheques until the date. It's a very curious situation.

May I ask the Minister then as a further supplementary whether he's made any contingency plans to provide automobile insurance for B.C. drivers in the event that the Autoplan does not meet its February 28 deadline? Has he made any contingency plans with the private companies, or has he had discussions with the private companies on the possibility of failure to meet the February 28 deadline?

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** The private insurance companies are suing us right now. You may not be aware that there's a court case.

No, February 28 is the due date. We've urged people to go in early. There are 1,000-odd offices that are available to the people of this province. The people in many cases are doing exactly the same thing as they have always done with regard to their licence renewals — they wait until the last day.

**Mr. Phillips:** Because of the money involved.

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** Well, all right, but money or no money, I have been in Victoria on the last day of February every year for more than 20 years. I have seen the line-ups over here every year that last two or three days, and there are only 80 motor vehicle offices. Now there are 1,000 offices where they can obtain the service. I was talking to a very big agent from Nanaimo who used to be a Member of this House, and he says he'll have no problems at all.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please! I don't think it's a debate. Just a simple answer is required to a simple question.

**Mr. G.B. Gardom (Vancouver–Point Grey):** Supplementary on the same: I'd like to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, how the ICBC or any administrative group the size of the ICBC could handle roughly a million cheques in the last two or three days of the month to successfully launch an insurance plan.

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** Well, first of all, it won't be a million cheques in the last two or three days of the month. The latest figures I have indicate that there are at least 400,000 in already.

**Mr. Gardom:** You said only 150,000.

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** Well, that is what a spokesman for the agent said a week ago. In that

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week a great many more have come in, and there's still three weeks to go. If the people go in the regular way there's no problem. I wish you people would stop being so pessimistic.

**Mr. P.L. McGeer (Vancouver–Point Grey):** To the same Minister: will the people who are entitled to rebate be receiving interest on those rebates?

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** There was a full release, I think, made yesterday on the whole matter — that's my information. There was a release made yesterday which outlined all of the procedures with regard to rebate — who was entitled to it and the conditions under which it will be given.

**Mr. Gardom:** Yes or no — interest on rebates.

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** My recollection is no.

**Mr. Gardom:** Is the government receiving interest on the money on those prepaid premiums which have been in excess of the amounts they should have paid?

**Mr. Speaker:** The First Member for Victoria.

**Mr. Gardom:** I did ask the Minister a question.

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** I told you there was no interest going to be paid. That's my understanding.

**Mr. Gardom:** I asked you, Mr. Minister, whether or not the government is receiving interest on those premiums now. Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** I'll check on it and find out.

### SAFETY STICKERS ON GOVERNMENT CARS

**Mr. N.R. Morrison (Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question also to the Minister of Transport. Recently I noticed that there was a Vega parked on the Causeway Esso service station, licence number VAB950, owned by the British Columbia government, and that particular car has no safety sticker on it and no dealer temporary sticker. My question is: do we have a new policy exempting government vehicles from safety stickers?

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** Could I have the number again?

**Mr. Morrison:** VAB950. It's a Vega and it's normally parked at the Causeway Esso service station, replacing the Chevrolet you used to keep there.

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** Are you inferring that that is my car?

**Mr. Morrison:** No, sir, I am not inferring it is your car (Laughter).

### MILL RATE REDUCTIONS ON REAL PROPERTY

**Mr. H.A. Curtis (Saanich and the Islands):** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: with reference to his letter of January 29 on real property assessment, 1974 — a letter sent to all mayors and councils in the Province of British Columbia indicating that an increase in mill rates should be held to a minimum, in view of higher assessment revenues — would the Minister indicate whether, in view of a statutory 10-mill limit in unorganized areas, similar action will be taken with respect to real property in unorganized areas? In other words, will the mill rate be reduced in the unorganized areas not covered by municipalities?

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** (mike not on) ...my jurisdiction and I would suggest that maybe you should speak to the Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Barrett) or the Minister of Lands (Hon. R.A. Williams) in regard to that.

**Mr. Curtis:** Mr. Speaker, may I direct the question correctly, then, to the Minister of Finance?

**Hon. D. Barrett (Minister of Finance):** I'll take that as notice.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Minister has some other matter he wishes to raise, I understand.

### LIFTING OF DELTA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT RESERVE

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** Yes, I have. I wish to make mention of an answer that I gave yesterday to the question of the Hon. Member for North Okanagan (Mrs. Jordan). I quote what I stated: "My understanding is that the Wildlife people" — and this is in connection with the wildlife reserve at Roberts Bank — "were in consultation, were in agreement with the change. I personally didn't discuss it with the Wildlife people, but I understand that it was done."

On reviewing this, I found that it was not done and so I wanted to bring this to the attention of the House so I would not have misled them. However, this has been under review and there will be an announcement made within the next few days regarding this.

**Mrs. P.J. Jordan (North Okanagan):** I'll thank

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the Minister for clarification of his statement because I too was aware that it was in error.

I do think there is another matter that may still be in error, and that is that his response indicated that the provincial Fish and Wildlife Branch had been consulted. I believe there is still some question there, if he would clarify that.

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** That's what I'm referring to here.

**Mrs. Jordan:** But I think what is important here, Mr. Minister....

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mrs. Jordan:** I wanted to ask you: will you please check with these people? Will there be a waiting period until the environmental studies have been done, as has been requested until the wildlife management programmes have been studied, and will there be public hearings that the people, the environmental council, and the council of Delta...

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please! Which question does the Hon. Member wish the Minister to answer?

**Mrs. Jordan:** ...have asked for? Will this be carried out before there is any development taking place on that land or it is used for any other purpose?

**Mr. Speaker:** Which question does the Hon. Member wish the Minister to answer? I don't want any mistakes coming in the future because of three questions asked at once.

**Mrs. Jordan:** I didn't ask three questions, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Lorimer:** As I mentioned earlier, the matter is under study by the people in the Wildlife and the Minister in charge of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, in which jurisdiction this actually comes. As I've mentioned earlier, there will be further announcements with regard to the whole picture before very many days have gone by.

**Mrs. Jordan:** Supplementary, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** Should it not, perhaps, be directed to the appropriate Minister?

**Mrs. Jordan:** If Mr. Speaker could arrange to have him attend the House to answer questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is something that each Minister must do on his own.

## GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION OF PERSONAL CARE HOME

**Mr. McClelland (Langley):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Would the Minister advise me whether or not the department is in the process of taking over or otherwise acquiring the personal care home which is under construction in Langley?

**Hon. D.G. Cocke (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take that as notice. I know nothing of the situation. Is it an intermediate care, personal care, or what?

**Mr. McClelland:** A personal care home, being constructed by the Langley Personal Care Society.

**Hon. Mr. Cocke:** It would be most unlikely, Mr. Speaker. We do go to level in some pilot situations where we're working with intermediate care, but not below that level. Personal care is really boarding homes. I would imagine that what has happened is that the provincial government has financed it, but it would be in the hands of the society, nothing to do with us.

**Mr. McClelland:** Well, Mr. Speaker, if I could, I'd just like to ask the Minister to go back to his original suggestion and take it as notice, because I think there is more involved than that. If he would please take it as notice, I'd appreciate that.

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

## **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

*(continued debate)*

**Mr. G.B. Gardom (Vancouver–Point Grey):** Mr. Speaker, I've a prize that I'm prepared to give to anyone in this House, and that prize is the collection of *The Wit and The Rhetoric of Robert Stanfield*, Volume 1, printed on the head of a pin. (Laughter.) I'm prepared to give that to anyone who can establish that yesterday's activities in this House really enhanced the vocation, avocation, or the profession — call it what you will — of a contemporary politician, because I don't think it did.

It's just one very good example why the general public have become exceptionally skeptical and have developed in so many cases a very negative attitude to the whole political process. But be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, it's still the job of the public to reject those who have not fulfilled their objectives and support those who will. I think perhaps it's more than the job of the public, it's definitely their solemn responsibility, and if they're not prepared to back and to vote for the most plausible option open to them, or perhaps create options that are more

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favourable to them than the ones that exist at the present time, then they may as well save their breath to cool their porridge.

I think it would be the message of every single Member of this House to all of those people in North Vancouver–Capilano today that they exercise their franchise and vote for who they will, but indeed vote.

I'd like to congratulate the New Democratic Party very much for winning their first — and their last — election in the Province of British Columbia. I'm referring to the unanimous victory of the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Dent) and I think that was quite an accomplishment on his part.

The non-confidence motion yesterday was essentially a political stratagem. It was somewhat unimaginative, and I'd have to say that it's by perhaps luck over design that it's got any meat in it at all. They seem to get the ball on the one-yard line, and then solidly advance to the rear for the rest of the game. But those who have been in the House for a little while are somewhat accustomed to this kind of gear-fog and well recognize its source.

I think perhaps yesterday he might have been known as "Confident Dan, the Non-Confidence Man," whereas today he's known as "Non-Confident Dan, the Confidence Man." (Laughter.)

But, you know, as the strings were pulled the performance followed. As the strings were pulled the performance followed.

But the meat of the motion, Mr. Speaker, which so far has been very skilfully concealed by Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, is this — and it talks about greater centralization controls: Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition has now decided to enunciate very clearly and loudly throughout the Province of British Columbia that they do not like the socialist direction in this regard, forgetting, perhaps that their centrality of control was by choking off both the money supply and the modern concepts of social service.

Your centrality of control is by choking off individual enterprise and substituting government enterprise — substituting for free competitive enterprise, non-free, non-competing, non-enterprising government action. And to me, to us — indeed, I say to anyone of liberal (small-l liberal) philosophy — neither is right.

This is why, I have to say, the majority of people in the Province of British Columbia are parting company with the socialists. Your attitude is to put it all into the facility. The attitude of the majority of the people in B.C. is to keep as much out of the facility as possible. Let the private sector do the job wherever it can. Have government set the guidelines and set the standards and supervise, but please do not let it administer everything.

I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, that the New Democratic Party, and particularly the elected Members of that party, are very falsely interpreting the minority mandate when they conclude that it has given them an almost rajah-like right to control and designate and regulate the economic activities of everyone in the province. Regulating how people almost can earn; regulating their vocational options, and their rate of return. Regulating how they can save — or perhaps a better phrase is how they cannot save — which is becoming an extremely difficult thing in this day and age in this province. The fiscal policies, their land policies, their succession and estate tax policies have contributed to the demise of savings...and regulating how people should spend. Controlling utility and commodity prices.

So it's going to end up, Mr. Speaker, without any question of a doubt, that the only game in town is going to be the government game — just like insurance. Force all the people to play your way, or just lower the boom with fines. There's one word that the NDP has forgotten, and it's a very, very important word, and a democratically-sacred word: that's the word "freedom" and "freedom of choice".

What better examples of the abuse of control than in the field of insurance, which is creating so much crisis and havoc in the province today. There we found a lawful, tax-paying, non-polluting vocation and they close the doors. They expropriated them without compensation, without appeal and, for all practical purposes, as the Attorney-General (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) well knows, without proper access to the courts. And I think it has been a complete denial of natural justice not only to the industry, but to the people of this province, because you have denied the people freedom of choice. And that's truly just banana-republic stuff.

**Hon. A.B. Macdonald (Attorney-General):** The Allstate American Company is now suing us.

**Mr. Gardom:** Oh, never mind the suit. Why should they have to sue you to be engaged in a lawful vocation in the Province of British Columbia in this century? Why? Why should they have to do that?

And you know there are people, Mr. Speaker, through you to the Attorney-General, who say: "Remove the socialists at any price." Remove them at any price. I'd say that "any-price" deals are no good — be it removing socialists or be it removing free enterprisers. Any price is certainly not only wrong, but too high a price. We only have to look at the height of price, the degree of price, that was paid in Germany and, on the other side, in Russia.

Specifically, in the motion proposed by the opposition, they deal with education and they deal with health — two things. I say without qualification that this present government has made far better progress than the former one did in these two fields. The socialists made their progress by recognizing the dollar default, and you came through by making the

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system work, as it will — and as it will work under the continuing system. All you have to do is properly nourish it. The system is fine and dandy, Mr. Speaker.

True, the priority emphasis of the former administration was woeful, and the socialists have worked to improve that. But now we find, flushed with excess and success — neither the money, which they didn't create themselves, and to a great extent inherited — flushed with the success of a system which was not of their own making. You want to change the whole thing and regulate and control and change the system. And in the result a fantastic increase in administration, and a great increase in personality.



But controls and regulations, Mr. Speaker, mean more administration; more administration means more bureaucracy; more bureaucracy means more political expense and less personal freedom and far less personal involvement. And the socialists call that progress.

Take brother Bremer. You thought he'd be a prophet; we didn't. His premises and his policies were tried and they were tested. They were not accepted in other regions over the past 10 years. He would probably have been a saint in the days of the height of student unrest. But I find that when you were thinking that his ideas and open-school concept were new and innovative and necessary for B.C., you were approaching that really more from the viewpoint of an open mouth than an open mind and, I say, with complete disregard to the evidentiary experience from other areas.

So the judgment error all through here was not that of Mr. Bremer; it was that of this government. Even worse, you destroyed, by firing him and probably by libeling him too, that which he was doing and doing most effectively. He was at least making people think, and no end of them. They were offering their attitude to his premises and making contributions — in opposition, if nothing else — to his point and volunteering their suggestions to the betterment of our educational programmes in British Columbia.

So what do you do? You put brother Bremer and the bathwater all down the plughole at one time. You know, it's much worse, say, than firing a football coach. That man should have worked out his year. He should have kept sharp his needle, and I'd say that British Columbia would have reaped quite a bit of public benefit and a great deal of public input instead of just going ahead and paying him two years for one because you were facing nothing more than a losing lawsuit.

Policy changes in the field of education the amendment talks about. There are lots. Let's continue to see that we make it more relevant. Let's return, as I said earlier in my remarks, to the personality as opposed to the impersonality of education.

For example, it's utter rubbish today that a high school student cannot take a course which was planned and agreed to and calendared, just because a computer made a mistake — where we find a situation, a great criticism, in my view, of the semester system, where students can finish all their high school course in one subject by grade 11; maybe even under; maybe even 10 and then they can't write for a scholarship until a year or so later when they graduate.

Indeed, the reduction of class size — and I appreciate the problems with that and the economic consequences, but it is a need. It's a need that's been expressed in this House ever since I've been a Member, and certainly it's been a need that's been very truly recognized and campaigned upon by the New Democratic Party. But not very much progress there.

Once again, your overall policy is one of control. You know, I can forecast under this administration that in the Department of Education we'll find the same thing that happened to the Minister of Human Resources (Hon. Mr. Levi) and the independent agencies: that it won't be long until the function of the school trustees has been extinguished. One roof, one place, one policy, and that's the brute in the centre of bureaucratic B.C.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you used to say "Follow the birds to Victoria." Now that's changed to "Follow the bureaucrats to Victoria."

The second and final aspects of the motion talks about health. The Foulkes Report has given a lot of people the whim-whams and I'm certainly glad that the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke) is not regarding it as gospel, and has so informed the people in B.C. I think its scariest feature, once again, is government-committed inflexibility and direction towards over-control.

Why do that? The doctors are performing, the nurses are performing. Hospital facilities and training facilities are a more situation and will continue to be a more situation. That's not going to stop. The population is growing; the techniques are expanding. You've got to provide the facilities and there's got to be more and more of those. But as the Member for Victoria (Mr. D.A. Anderson) said yesterday, we don't need mountains of structures or unwieldy

control to build comfortable quarters for the aged and provide proper remedial care. Nor, indeed, is there any need for any more of these long-range, two-volume plans to tell us about that aspect of it. Just get on with the job, as he said.

I think there's no end for you to do in the areas which I've been talking about without restructuring, centralizing, and controlling all of society. You've got to remember that you have not been given that mandate. You have got a 38 per cent mandate in the

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Province of British Columbia, which is slipping all the time. You're unfortunately bringing programmes in to the contrary — as though you had the complete mandate to bring in these regulations to change the structure of society along the lines which you consider to be correct. This is where, of course, we part company with you philosophically. But taking the steps you have taken with the mandate that you have is not right.

**Mr. G.S. Wallace (Oak Bay):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak briefly to the amendment.

Yesterday some mention was made that I really wasn't a Conservative, that I was really a socialist. We tried to make the point that in social reform there are many policies and actions of the government which have received the support of this party and will continue to receive that support.

At the same time we must make it very plain, and I think the Second Member for Vancouver–Point Grey (Mr. Gardom) has echoed many of our sentiments, that where we differ very widely from the socialists is in the restrictive and centralizing methods that the socialist uses to try and bring about well-meaning and well-intentioned social goals. It seems to me that the fields of education and health exemplify this very well.

**An Hon. Member:** Decentralization?

**Mr. Wallace:** Freedom of choice, which was mentioned, is also another very fundamental difference that this party has, compared to socialists. The idea that the government can do a better job, not only do a better job but it seems only to be able to tackle these jobs if it is given a monopoly control, as is the case with automobile insurance. I would like to say a little more about that in the main debate on the motion.

Interjection.

**Mr. Wallace:** But we certainly don't like the difference between what you call us, my friend, and what you're delivering, and that's the whole theme of this debate. Let's look at promises and let's look at performance. I think on that point, Mr. Member, let's just go on to education.

We had a very strong defence of the government position by the Premier last night on behalf of the Minister of Education. He quoted figures, but he didn't refer to the actual document that I happen to have in my hand right now, which is the BCTF brief, which quotes a survey from early November 1973, which is pretty up to date. I'm talking about the number of pupils in a class. No matter how much we argue about specific figures, let it be made very plain that in the sense of this amendment, the government is not meeting its election commitment to do for education what it promised to do. I propose in a moment just to refute some of the figures the Premier mentioned last night. I thought it was really pretty pathetic that he had to go back to 1916 to draw comparisons.

The fact is, I have a copy of the maiden speech which the Minister of Education made in 1967, January 30, and I'd just like to quote a sentence or two from the Minister's maiden speech:

"Large classes and lack of special services such as remedial teachers and counsellors are certainly not creating a good learning environment in our schools today. School boards are well aware of these needs in their district, but are, of course, reluctant to initiate these vital services because of the financial impact on the local taxpayer."

This is really the relevant part.

"It is to be hoped that this session of the Legislature will see a considerable change announced in the school entitlement figures in both secondary and elementary grades."

The Minister is clearly on record in the years I've been in this House, when she spoke as education critic, that she indeed recognized that the quality of education must inevitably depend, and does depend, on the number of pupils, and that if a teacher has an unreasonably high number of pupils, then the learning environment is indeed unfair. I don't think anybody's debating that.

Of course, this is an element which is mentioned in the BCTF brief, November, 1973, page 3: "The long-standing inadequacy of B.C. class sizes has now become a crisis."

The lady candidate for North Vancouver–Capilano confirmed in public the other night that indeed this remains priority number one in the educational platform in the NDP, as indeed it should. I would certainly go on record right now as saying it would also be the number one goal of our educational programme.

But the point is, Mr. Speaker, that when you look at promise and performance, the performance which the Premier claimed last night is hardly borne out by the figures quoted in the top of page 3 in this brief. It states that the average number per class is only 0.7 lower than the 30.1 standard in effect six years ago, in 1967.

Now, let's not repeat a negative debate such as I am sorry I took part in last night when all we did was slam the errors and omissions of the past. Let's see where we're at today and where we think we should go in the future and try and be positive about this.

The fact is, just to put the record straight, regardless of the figures which the Premier quoted last night, these figures were accumulated from a survey completed by elementary school principals and 1,080 out of the 1,168 elementary schools where

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the average size of the classes was 29.4 in September 1973. They finish the paragraph by saying that, incredibly in 1973, 21 districts in British Columbia actually increased the average size of their elementary classes over 1972. So the fact, in our view, Mr. Speaker, is that if the NDP government is committed to this as a number one priority, it is certainly falling far short in implementing it in a practical way.

Now what are the practicalities? I think again we can quote the Minister of Education from as recently as December 15, as reported in *The Vancouver Sun*...I'm sorry, that's not the date, I've got the wrong quotation.

I would like to quote a newscast which was inaccurate, and I want to put on the record my personal apology to the Minister for my acting on this news report and asking for her resignation. I had a very difficult job, I might say...and I'm not very happy about the media. I had a most difficult job getting a transcript of this news report because the transcript is inaccurate. But I want to put the record straight.

I'll read the transcript which I finally obtained. I might say I was prepared to sue the radio station if I had to to get a copy of this transcript. The responsibility of the media is a very responsible and serious one, and since politicians are very much dependent...

Interjection.

**Mr. Wallace:** Yes, I'll name names — CKDA and CJOR.

**Mr. H.W. Schroeder (Chilliwack):** Not CFAX?

**Mr. Wallace:** No. You asked me to name names; I'm naming names. I'll name them outside this chamber.

But the fact is that the media in society today, perhaps more than ever because of the instantaneous nature of reporting news, have a very serious responsibility. And too, politicians in particular depend so intimately on the

media to be aware of what's going on in this province. I'm sorry this incident happened, Mr. Minister.

The transcript read:

"Education Minister, Eileen Dailly, says B.C. teachers can forget about reduced class sizes. She told a group of parents and teachers it would cost an estimated \$8 million to reduce each class in the province by one pupil.

"Mrs. Dailly said it's not a question of classes being too big; the teachers are incapable. She said they needed retraining, and placed the blame largely on the university training programme. Mrs. Dailly said her department would be taking a hard look at this area very soon."

That was an inaccurate report and, had it been accurate, I think I would have been justified in my reaction in the light of your strong commitment as a No. 1 priority to reduce class size. But the information was inaccurate and I apologize that I acted on the basis of inaccurate information.

To be objective and fair to the Minister, when I was able to pursue the matter further and find out more precisely what she did say, the Minister sounded very much to me as though she was hedging because of the projected substantial cost of reducing class size. She made the statement that, while she might still believe in this, she was just one Member of cabinet and she had to take the matter to cabinet and from there to Treasury Board. The whole thrust of the comments, as I understood them, was that we might not look forward in the near future to very much in the way of a realistic reduction in the number of pupils per teacher.

I'm willing to wait for the budget, but I'll certainly say this, Mr. Speaker: on the evidence we now have, this amendment which criticizes an inadequate attention to health and education is justified. For that reason I support the amendment. But I am prepared to expect that the budget speech will give us something definitive in terms of more money to the Department of Education and the commitment to the employment of more teachers.

On that same theme, I think the Minister has disappointed many people, myself included, because I've always felt that the Minister of Education, not only being a lady, was also objective and fair-minded. When she criticized from this side of the House, her criticism was always at least fair, based on fact and was not emotional. But I must say that, in this newspaper quotation of December 15, 1973, where she went through the roof because the provisional budgets were up by \$82 million, it was just, I thought, very disappointing on the part of the Minister. The quotation in the newspapers states: "Mrs. Dailly suggested the school trustees had failed to exercise proper fiscal responsibility."

Now, Mr. Speaker, all that I'm prepared to conclude is that politicians can't have it both ways. If a politician believes that certain improvements are to be made in a certain social field, that politician knows very well that it costs money — taxpayers' money. I think that if anybody is being irresponsible then it is any one of us in this chamber, any one of us in the government or opposition who comes forward with well-intentioned, socially-desirable proposals without a price tag.

If I could go back for a moment to the Minister's maiden speech in 1967, where in this she is absolutely right: "Kindergartens which have been accepted as part of the regular school system by

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many other countries and provinces of Canada for years are today in this province not yet part of our basic school programme." The Minister, again from this side of the House, for the few years that I've been here, has repeated that on many occasions. She has quite rightly encouraged educators and trustees to think in progressive terms. One of the progressive ways to handle education is certainly to bring the child into a learning environment at an earlier age, namely in the kindergarten.

I would say that another very excellent idea that the Minister has promoted is the idea of teacher aides in the schools so that you can actually assist the teacher in achieving full potential of his or her training.

This doesn't just relate to education or health; it relates to every single department of government. It is not

right to suggest, however good the proposal, a certain programme and then, when the bill is too high, complain or be a little unjust and rude to the very persons, namely the school trustees, who are motivated to bring forward programmes which they have been led to believe the Minister favours. It just seems to me to be very unfortunate.

From there on there have been other problems, other unfortunate episodes in the department which have further reduced the image with which the Minister was once held in this province. This somewhat tarnished the whole department, unfortunately.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Not at all.

**Mr. Wallace:** Well, the Attorney-General says, "Not at all," but I'm trying to be objective.

Now, maybe in the light of day, when we analyse this \$82 million and we see how it was compiled, we might be more sympathetic to the Minister's response. But, first of all, it was a preliminary budget which, we all know, is usually to be pared anyway whether it's a budget at home or a budget in the office or a budget in a municipality. The word "preliminary" means that you're just taking a look at what the biggest possible bill might be, in effect. The Minister responded in that way and, furthermore, did not give us as politicians or the public any kind of reasonable breakdown of the \$82 million so that perhaps we could assess for ourselves whether or not school trustees were being irresponsible.

I just happen to have a great deal of confidence and faith in school trustees — certainly the ones I know. It just bothers me a little bit that people who take on that role with the very best of intentions in the hope of improving their community and improving their educational system should feel that, when they do their job, this is the kind of public castigation they are liable to receive — with very minimal justification for that particular outburst.

The question of Mr. Bremer has been raised and I don't want to go into great detail. But, Mr. Speaker, if one tries to be a constructive critic I think it is only right to consider the terms of the order-in-council under which Mr. Bremer was set up. "Set up" was not intended to be used in any other way than the literal way.

Mr. Speaker, the order-in-council states: "that a detailed study and evaluation of all aspects of education and training presently being provided in the several public institutions in the province be conducted, and that such recommendations for changes and improvement as are necessary and desirable be submitted to the Minister for consideration." With respect, I would say that I don't think any single man exists on this earth who could really fulfil that kind of enormously wide project. To be given such broad terms of reference makes it a mammoth task which makes one wonder whether any person could really fulfil it.

Because of the very terms of reference, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that, unavoidably, the person filling this role would have to be partly academic and partly political. Almost by virtue of the way these terms are spelled out: "a detailed study and evaluation...and to make...recommendations for changes and improvements as are considered necessary and desirable (to) be submitted to the Minister...." These terms of reference inevitably landed Mr. Bremer — or anybody else who was appointed as a commissioner — to be partly political whether he or she wanted to be so. The terms of reference make it very clear that Mr. Bremer was to come back with ideas and recommendations which would inevitably influence policy changes in the educational system. When you have any kind of relationship to policy changes, whether or not you like it, you are politically involved. I think it is very difficult and probably impossible for any individual to complete the commission work in the terms under which it was initiated.

I think that the Premier of this province, in my opinion, made a simple human mistake on television. I think he slipped out a few sentences which were not intentional and which in retrospect he knows he should not have done and would not have done. But the whole point, Mr. Speaker, is that you can't take these words back. They were said; the damage was done, and I believe that the Premier himself very much regrets what he said.

I don't mean that he didn't have maybe the ultimate intention of dismissing Mr. Bremer, and that is certainly the right and the privilege of the Premier if he finds that the commission was not working out. But I think, Mr. Speaker, that it must be made very clear to the public of British Columbia that a highly able and experienced educator has been very seriously slighted in the full view of the public by the Premier

of this province and by the Minister.

Regardless of the rights or wrongs of his work, I really do think that the Premier of this province owes it to Mr. Bremer and to himself as a man of integrity to publicly recognize that he made a human mistake like we all do. He should apologize to Mr. Bremer and he should also make some kind of public statement as to the exact area of Mr. Bremer's work in which Mr. Bremer failed.

It isn't fair to any man given the very responsible task of being a single commissioner under these terms of reference to be sort of branded with a very broad brush as a failure, a bit of a flop. Mr. Bremer, like the rest of us, if he makes mistakes, has to try and get a job somewhere else. I think that we all know very well that when you go looking for a job the first thing you're asked is: "Where was your last job, and can you produce a reference?"

I appeal, I don't ask. I'm appealing to the good common sense which the Premier of this province so often exhibits in human affairs, that he would only be a greater man if he states in public that he regrets his mistake, and to give Mr. Bremer at least a fair appraisal. I'm not even saying he should give him a recommendation. But if Mr. Bremer has in some way fallen short, at least it should be known in what particular respect, so that his whole future as a highly talented and professional educator is not irreparably damaged.

I just think that for a Premier and a government which talks about a code of human rights and human dignity, fair play and justice for the individual, that is the very least, I think, that Mr. Bremer deserves in this province.

To just make a final comment on the Bremer affair, I personally feel that the intent of the commission was very good. What we were trying to spark in this province was dialogue between people closely involved with the educational system: the Minister, the people in the department and the teachers and trustees, with parents and ordinary members of the public who have children, or other relatives or friends intimately involved in education.

It would seem to me that perhaps if Mr. Bremer was at fault — and I'm not saying he was — but if he was, in the view of the government, it was because he was doing the job too well. He was sparking all kinds of reaction. People were coming out to public meetings and he was getting great response. Now whether the response was the kind of response that the government wanted is something else again. But let's face it, Mr. Speaker, government shouldn't set up commissions in good faith if they're going to be upset by some of the responses. That's the risk you take. If you want to be so politically careful, I suppose you wouldn't set up the commission in the first place.

But having shown a sense of adventure and innovation in setting up this commission, my impression in reading news reports and in listening to the kind of public response which Mr. Bremer was getting, I'll also say in passing, is that I wasn't satisfied with all of the things he said because I didn't agree with them. But, there again, surely we're not just looking for agreement; we're looking for new ideas, public response and the potential to build a better educational system. Maybe he didn't do it the way the government wanted, or maybe he talked too much; but we all talk too much.

**Mr. J.H. Gorst (Esquimalt):** That's right.

**Mr. Wallace:** The fact is that not only was this an exciting concept, probably set up under difficult circumstances, that in retrospect could be improved, but I do feel that he was serving a very useful purpose. I would just hope and ask that the Minister, somewhere in the debate, Mr. Speaker, would at least assure us that there won't be just a whole big pail of whitewash thrown on the work that has been done.

Whether Mr. Bremer is still here or gone or dismissed, or whatever happens to Mr. Bremer, useful work has been done. I've spoken to some of the people who have been involved in various committees and in advisory capacities and it's certainly their apprehension that because the commission has not been a success there will be every political effort just to tone the whole thing down and try and let it quietly fade away into the background and hope that the public will just quickly forget the whole unfortunate episode.



Again I say, in fairness to other individuals and to the public, let that not happen. I would appeal to the Minister to give the House a pretty definitive statement as to just where we're at in relation to the committees that were set up, what work they're doing and how she proposes to bring the.... I know she's mentioned that there will be a White Paper, and I hope that that will encompass the work that has been done and will not be used purely for some kind of political rearguard action to cover up the unfortunate political price that's been paid in dismissing Mr. Bremer.

There was a general advisory board and a special advisory board and I hope that not only will we hear of their work, but that they will be allowed to continue to function.

As I said earlier, I'm sorry, but the Minister's image has been somewhat tarnished. At a further stage in time, a committee was set up composed of the BCFT and the trustees' association together with department officials. Again, I learned from various people involved in that committee that things seemed to be going very well and they were trying to co-operate with the Minister's department, and all of a sudden this particular committee was then terminated.

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The Minister may correct me if I'm wrong, but I haven't read of any stated reason by the Minister or anybody else as to why this committee was suddenly terminated. There may be some good reason, but there again, the Minister has unfortunately created the impression in the province not only that things are not all well in the Department of Education, but that the very administrative ability of the department is under judgment, and that abrupt and inexplicable decisions are taken which seem to contradict so much of the initial policy which she enunciated and the press releases that she has diligently given to explain why she was setting up these committees in the first place.

We seem to have gathered a fair amount of information as to what the commission was supposed to do, what the committees were supposed to do, but within a very short time the commission has disappeared and the committees' status and their function and their activity are uncertain. Here's one committee that was only set up a few weeks ago and suddenly it's been terminated.

The great delay in appointing the Deputy Minister could do nothing but add to difficulties of administration within the department. Initially it was stated that there would be two Associate Deputies, or two Deputies rather than the customary process of one Deputy directly under the Minister. Apparently, there again, policy reverted 180 degrees and we did finally learn of the fact that there would be one Deputy Minister, Mr. Fleming. All this kind of ebb and flow and changing of decisions and what were really policy changes midstream, one might say, have certainly caused — not just in my view, but in the view of many people I speak to around the province — a loss of confidence in the department and in the Minister. I'm sad that this is the point that's been reached.

One last point in speaking to this amendment about education is the proposal to involve to a much greater degree the Department of Labour and the whole area of vocational school training and planning of curriculum. The press release on this subject was written in jargon or some other similar rather complicated language.

It was a little difficult to be exactly sure where the responsibility of the respective departments would be applied, whether this was a substantial transfer of authority from the Department of Education to the Department of Labour or whether it was a truly co-operative plan. Probably the way in which the release was written is indicative of the fact that I don't think the two departments are yet quite certain exactly what the degree of co-operation and overlapping of responsibility would be.

All I would say in this regard is it has caused a great deal of concern among the teaching staff at the vocational schools and on the part of people like the students, who are one-year practical nursing students. I hope that here again we haven't gone ahead with some kind of loosely-thought-out and inadequately-researched programme, and maybe next week we'll wake up and find an announcement that the whole idea has been scrapped.

Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, on the aspect of health in the amendment to the motion: I commented briefly last

night on the Foulkes Report and I intend to be brief again today because it is a massive document and contains a great deal that is good. But again this difference between the socialist and the non-socialist comes through in the Foulkes Report.

The overall emphasis in this report is on organization and structure and administration and committees and regional boards and so on. Now I'm the first person to admit that the complexity of delivering medical services these days certainly demands and deserves good organization of personnel and facilities. But in terms of this amendment seeking to point out that the government's promise and their performance are really not easily identifiable, each with the other...

Again, I've sat in this House several sessions and listened to the Premier and others point out the tragic need of certain facilities in this province. I needn't reiterate all of them, but the most serious gap is in this area of intermediate care.

As I say, a lot of the information has been known for years — years! Before I came to this province in 1961 it was a problem. Certainly in the years I've been in politics it's been a big problem which really nobody has tackled in adequate measure. Now the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke) made what was a perfectly fair and valid statement last night about some of the improvements that have been made. But the nub of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that not nearly enough is being done in the time that this government has been in power.

As I said last night — and I think it is so terribly important that it be made plain — if we lived in a perfect world and we had time to implement all the recommendations in these massive documents and set up the administrative structure and provide all the bureaucracy which this report implies, well, that would be just fine. But I don't know whether that would take 10 years, or 20 years, or probably forever.

I have a horrible feeling that these same elderly citizens who are having to live in substandard conditions at great financial expense and physical and mental suffering might still be there 20 years from now while we're still busy trying to build the structure. It just seems to me that this government has the money, it has the knowledge, it has the heart; it certainly did when it was in opposition. But what has it not got?

It's so busy in its preoccupation with centralized control and bureaucracy that until we've got this

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structure set up we can't provide the service. Or in fairness, I would say that with possibly some of the structure they might finish up providing a somewhat better level of service. But what happens to the patients in the meantime while we're waiting for all these bodies and boards and, goodness knows, all that to be set up? That's my simple question.

So if we have the money and if we have the knowledge and if we have the heart, why spend more and more time and money on a study of this nature? The saddest part of the study, which has many feasible features, is that it says the recommendation of the report in the widest sense is that the government must make a total commitment to the total programme.

They say there's nothing that can be done piecemeal, that this thing has got to be adopted and implemented — period. The whole works, or it can't be done. Maybe the person who wrote this is a bit of an academic or maybe he's an administrator at heart, I don't know. I just say that anybody reading this document certainly gets that impression. I just have a terribly uneasy feeling that the poor patient who's desperately needing the service and the facilities and a little bit of a better diet and a better roof over his or her head is still going to be around 10 or 20 years from now, while we're still debating whether we can provide all the facilities and the people and the money to implement this on a widespread scale.

I think also, and it's only in passing, that the writer of this document has been very hard on many very dedicated, hard-working, professional people in this province. Okay, so our mental health system had many gaps, and could be improved and so on; but the terms in which the system is attacked in this report.... I think it should be recorded that I take great exception to that since it in very little way pays any kind of tribute or takes recognition of



some of the tremendous work that's been done by many medical or paramedical personnel in very difficult circumstances.

I'm sure, in fact, that the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke) would recognize that and admit that. In fact, he put a letter of his own in with the report saying that he could not associate himself with the views that were expressed in the chapter on mental health.

So, Mr. Speaker, the government must, in my view, regard the planning of health facilities as an immediate goal and a longer-term goal. As I say, if we had the time and people weren't suffering in various institutions for lack of care and lack of facilities, if another year or two or three didn't really matter, I might be willing to wait a little longer and try to implement this rather grandiose, all-comprehensive programme. But that is not so. We must act and act in the immediate future to create the facilities and the coverage to help that tremendous bulk of citizens who need intermediate care.

There's just no question that if this province has one social need that inexplicably is being talk-talk-talked about, but not solved or even tackled, it's intermediate care. Ask the lady Member for Vancouver-Burrard (Ms. Brown) who went around this province last summer. Every place we went we got the same story: if you're acute care, it's just great; if you're extended care, you can go at \$1 a day; but if you're on intermediate care.... Not only is there tremendous lack of facilities, but when you finally find a facility, you probably have to travel 20 or 30 miles. When you're elderly, you're leaving your friends and your friends can't travel. And so they suffer.

We've had a lot of lip service paid in this House about the loneliness of the aged. That's for sure. I've heard it from all sides of the House. Part of that loneliness and desolation and separation from friends is something that we just could tackle in a very realistic way if right now we got on to creating these facilities.

I've talked many times in this House about the Alberta nursing home programme, and that's got nothing to do with the Conservatives, because it was brought in by a Social Credit government in Alberta. I give them full credit for that. It's a programme which is praised and recognized as being very successful by many other provinces. In fact, most other provinces have sent a staff to Alberta to look at the programme. It's working extremely well. It could be implemented in a tenth of the time that this great big, thick, voluminous programme could be implemented.

The Minister commented last night that they had made improvements in the field of extended care. And that's correct. The government has taken over two private hospitals in Victoria. But look at the consequence of that, Mr. Speaker. These hospitals are for extended-care patients.

I'd like the Minister to tell me what is happening to the patients in these hospitals who do not qualify for extended care but certainly do need some kind of facility. I made inquiries, and I can tell the Minister if he can't tell me. "They're being phased out" is the phrase I got.

In other words, some of these elderly persons who do not qualify for extended care have to be relocated in some other private facility without hospital coverage, without any maintenance — not necessarily, but probably — of standards such as are enforced or maintained in the other extended-care facilities. So while, indeed, the Minister is helping to find more extended care beds, once again it's at the expense of another group in society — the group in the middle.

It's always that group in the middle. If you've got a broken leg or a broken neck or a heart attack, you're all right. If you're hopelessly and seriously

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disabled, then you're extended care — that's fine. But believe me, Mr. Speaker, if you're anything in the middle you're just out of luck in this society — you just don't get the care or the facilities.

All of us stand and speak in this chamber about what should be done, and I'm really disappointed in this government on that one particular score — it was such a central part of their policy all the years they've been around

this province, speech after speech after speech. And still, because of their ideology, their attitudes, bureaucracy, organization and structure, they forget about the individual who needs the help. We get this great big document that will take years to implement, perhaps at an expense that isn't necessary. Let's get down to simple, basic, obvious....

The Minister of Mines (Hon. Mr. Nimsick) knows all about this — he's heard this argument for years and years from his own side of the House. He used to make the argument himself, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** He's Acting Minister of Health.

**Mr. Wallace:** So when you wonder why I'm getting all upset about this amendment, it is most applicable, and most apt, because unquestionably if there's one part of the social programme, Mr. Speaker, of that government over there where they're falling far short between promise and performance, it just has to be in this sad, serious area of intermediate care.

If there's only one favour I would ask of this government.... I shouldn't use the word "favour"; it isn't any kind of "favour" — it's an obligation that government over there has to put aside the longer term, idealistic, bureaucratic recommendations of this report. I plead with the lady Member from Burrard (Ms. Brown) — she knows, and I'm sure she'll give this the fullest support in caucus. Please meet one of the most human needs that we have in our society today, and that's that large segment of mainly elderly people — not all elderly, but mainly elderly — who see us living in our affluent society. They're not only lonely, but they're neglected, and are not getting a fair share of the social financing in this province.

Just because we quite correctly attacked the former administration last night for that particular shortcoming, I'm very disappointed and I never thought I would see the day that we would have to stand here and criticize this government for exactly the same shortcoming.

**Hon. E.E. Dailly (Minister of Education):** First of all I'd like to say that it's always a pleasure to respond to comments made by the Liberal and the Conservative Members. I find that it's constructive comments which they make, and that's the climate in which I like to work. Needless to say, that is why I am not going to even attempt to respond to the comments by the Social Credit Members last evening.

I would like to just comment on a few of the points which have been raised today. I know we're all going to have an opportunity in this session to speak several times in more detail, particularly the Ministers in their own departments, but I would like to respond to some of the comments which were made earlier.

I know that the Liberal spokesman was concerned about the great centralization of this government with reference to school boards. He expressed a fear that perhaps we were on the road to the elimination of school boards. I'd like to make it quite clear right here that we have no intention of eliminating school boards in this province. I for one, as you know, was a former school trustee and very aware of the great need to have local representation in education. And after all, the school boards are elected to represent the community. Once we eliminate the local school board we've lost a very vital voice in the community.

**An Hon. Member:** Will they have their autonomy?

**Hon. Mrs. Dailly:** If we're going to believe in following our party platform, which means, basically, decentralization of decision-making, certainly the school boards must maintain their autonomy for deciding on the major issues in education in their own area. I know, myself, as a school trustee that if I were not able to make educational decisions I would wonder also what would be the point.

However, I know that following this some of you will say, "Well, then, why have you been making statements and making outbursts?" as the Conservative leader said I did to the school boards. Well, I frankly didn't consider it an outburst when I sent out the press release on the matter of the rather large increase in school board budgets. I felt that as Minister of Education I did have a responsibility to pass on to the school boards my concern. Even though I'm quite aware of the problems we all face with inflation today, I was concerned that the provisional increase had reached the figure of \$82 million. I simply said to the school boards, "Would you please exercise fiscal control

before you send in your final budget?" At no time did I attempt to suggest to the school boards that you must eliminate the programmes which I myself had initiated as Minister.

I think following any of the speeches I have made that anyone would be quite aware that I consider that a primary objective of our system is to provide services to children; and I've always reiterated to school boards that surely your budgets must focus entirely on what is giving service to children. So at no time would I suggest the elimination of or cutting back on kindergarten services, which are basic services

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to children. We believe that and I know other Members do. Nor did I make an attempt at any time to suggest that we should be increasing class sizes or cutting down teachers.

I do think that you'd all agree that no matter what business you're running, there perhaps can be created areas of fat. All I was asking the school boards to do was simply look at their budgets; perhaps there are some areas of fat that can be trimmed.

Interjection.

**Hon. Mrs. Dailly:** That, of course, is up to the school boards, and I do not spell it out to them. But I do think, as Minister, that I do have a responsibility to say to them, "Would you go over your budgets very carefully?" Of course the alternative, which was certainly the philosophy of the former government, was to impose ceilings. That is complete centralization of control and the removal of autonomy, and we are not intending to do that. I still, however, have a responsibility when I do see large increases to ask school boards to co-operate with me in attempting to keep them down as well as they can.

I certainly want to at all times endorse the fact that as Minister of Education I will always attempt to ensure that we have an education budget which will provide services to children. But I want to point out to the House, as I think you all know, that there are areas in some school board budgets which I really think we have to question as to whether they are really benefiting the child in the classroom.

**Mr. Gardom:** What are they?

**Hon. Mrs. Dailly:** Those are the areas, and I will be discussing those areas with you when I speak later in the estimates.

**Mr. Wallace:** You're keeping us in suspense.

**Hon. Mrs. Dailly:** I've talked to school boards at different times about this, and I think we can all think of our own boards. I'm not accusing boards of this province of all having areas of fat, but I do say that there are areas in which they have put some funding which is not servicing children, and I'll elaborate on that later in the session.

I'm not saying it's that great an amount of money. I have never suggested that at any time. But I do think this board has to sit back and always assess it from that point: what are the priorities and the services for children?

I don't feel I would be a responsible Minister if I simply sat back and made no comment on this at any time.

The matter of the concern over the work that has already been started under the Bremer commission: I want to assure particularly the Conservative House Leader (Mr. Wallace) that all the work will be continuing. I'd like to just tell you basically what this encompasses. Mr. Bremer was chairman of the University Task Force. Its work is almost completed now; they've finished their public hearings and we will be hoping for a final report from them I would think in a matter of two to three months. So that work is going nicely.

The College Task Force, which was not chaired by Mr. Bremer and has been moving around the province in the last two months, is doing an excellent job, and is continuing. It is evaluating the whole area of college legislation, and where we are going in the development of college facilities in the province. I would like to elaborate that

certainly the east Kootenay area is one area that is to be considered.

The matter of the general advisory commission: I've informed those people that I would like to meet with them. I realize they're interested people from all walks of life. I'm not quite sure what they were doing before, but I'm quite interested to meet with them and see if together we can find out what area of interest they have in helping me in directions in education.

The whole concern seems to be — and I realize it — that all public discussion on education will now cease. This, of course, is not the case. Ever since I came into office, I have received, on the average, 1,000 letters a month, all on education. I have files and files of briefs and letters from interested citizens across the province. The material is there. The people's names are there. We have a lot of people out there who are still very anxious and will always be anxious to talk about education. I can assure you that we intend to make sure that the public will be able to continue talking about education in this province. The machinery for that I'll be elaborating on later.

As a matter of fact, we feel that the Department of Education should move out more and not just sit in Victoria. I'm hoping to send more of the people from the department out to meet with the public. That is basically the core, the machinery, we'll be establishing.

There's one area I'd like to clear up and that's the whole matter of this trustee-teacher committee which seems to have been grossly misinterpreted. The terms of reference as listed in the press I didn't recognize at all from the initial report which I gave on the reasons for this trustee committee. This trustee-teacher committee was set up by me mainly to talk about collective bargaining procedures and possible changes in that area and the whole area of teacher-trustee relationships.

We sat down. They were very concentrated meetings. I'll be quite frank with you. I was hopeful that if the two groups could get together on some of

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these issues that have been hanging around this province for 20 years, and were never really come to grips with by the former administration.... I was perhaps a little too hopeful that in a short time the two groups could come together on some rather sensitive issues.

It was quite obvious to me after over six meetings that there was not any appearance of any complete agreement on the major subjects under discussion. Each party, the teachers and the trustees, both presented briefs, complete briefs, concluding briefs, on their stands on the issues being discussed. I realized that as there was going to be no meeting of the minds between the two groups at this time and as each group had presented their brief, that the best possible step was for me to take the briefs, and they will be attached to the White Paper I'll be presenting to the House shortly, which will, I hope, dispense with some of the confusion about the direction in which the Department of Education is intending to go.

I want to assure you, again to the Conservative House Leader, that this is not just a political White Paper. This will be made up of the feedback that I've received personally, and other members of my department, ever since we came into office. There's no one political party that can say, "This is the only way we can go in education."

I find that everyone today is somewhat confused about the direction one should go. We have many people, of course, who say, "Let's go back to the traditional system of education," and others who say, "Please move on with the progressive." I want to assure the House here and now that I have no intention as Minister to impose one system or the other. I find that the best way to go is to provide opportunities for both types to exist in our province. I think the Victoria School Board with its Sentinel and Sundance schools has shown a good example there — where the parents can send their child to the traditional or the progressive school.

If you want to know my own personal feelings, I, of course, lean to the progressive. But this does not mean to say I intend to impose this; I have no right to do this. The basic difference between the progressive and the traditional is, I think, quite simple. The traditional system is mainly the type of system that you and I were taught as

a group in a fairly rigid structure, where you have a basic competitive, graded type of competition atmosphere.

Now many parents feel that that's the only way their children will succeed. They want them in a structured situation; they want them taught in a mass group, and they believe that the child will be motivated and stimulated if there is grading and competition. Now other parents, including myself as a parent, would prefer to have my child in what I call a progressive system where they are treated more as an individual, where there is very little mass teaching, where the child competes against himself or herself and not against the other child in the classroom.

As I've said, some of you become doctors and lawyers and yet, in school, we expect each child, some who will never become a doctor or a lawyer, to be graded against the child who will have that potential. I could speak on this for a considerable length of time, but I don't think this is the time or place. I'm simply trying to inform the House that I have no intention of imposing my own personal ideas on anyone in this province.

**Mr. D.M. Phillips (South Peace River):** You already have.

**Hon. Mrs. Dailly:** I think it's my responsibility to create a system which will give the alternative. I think that is basically the areas of concern which have been expressed across the floor and I would conclude my remarks with that.

**Mrs. P.J. Jordan (North Okanagan):** I listened with great interest to the comments of the Minister of Education, and I'll say more about that later.

I was pleased to hear that the Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) had changed his mind today about the role he took in the rather shameful preoccupation with the past that took place last night. For a man so sincere in his ideas, whether one agrees with him or not, it was quite a shock to see his performance.

I must admit, as a representative of some people in this province, of one constituency, that it was interesting to me when I read the Speech from the Throne, a short eight-minute document, that the Premier is laughing about and saying it's just nothing and it's there to tease the opposition, when in fact it should be a document outlining for the public of British Columbia what the government's policies are for the future. Not just to tease.

It's even more essential that this government have a strong throne speech and a throne speech that indicates very much the concerns that we've indicated in this amendment, because those are specific areas where the public are concerned. Those are specific areas where the Ministers involved have, by way of intent or by way of lack of ability, created confusion, unrest and concern in the Province of British Columbia.

We, in moving this amendment, Mr. Speaker, are trying to assume a responsible role for those people that we represent in British Columbia, and we are trying as sincerely and as hard as we can to bring to the attention of this government the concerns of the people of British Columbia.

It's surprising to me that the government itself proved unwilling to listen and was more intent on political agreement with one of the rump groups of

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the opposition, and that in fact that rump group, which gets smaller and smaller, was so concerned with politics rather than the genuine concern of the people that they represent.

But speaking to education, Mr. Speaker, as it's outlined in this amendment, I find myself in a position that is not a happy position. I have sat across the floor of this House from this Minister for nearly eight years now and I have listened to her in opposition and I have listened to her since becoming a Minister.

I'd like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in opposition I felt that she was indeed very sincere in what she believed should be done for education. I felt indeed, Mr. Speaker, that she must be very knowledgeable in what should be done for education in British Columbia because she spoke so articulately and with such conviction. But, Mr.

Speaker, it's very sad to see that this Minister, in fact, was not as knowledgeable as she was articulate and she was not as convinced as she was articulate.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that no Minister in any government in Canada assumed her responsibility with more support and more good wishes than did this Minister of Education. I'm sure no one would correct me if I said that every Member in this House who is extremely sensitive to the complexity and the sensitivities of education, regardless of party, wished her well. If I recall correctly....

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald (Attorney-General):** They should; she's doing very well.

[Mr. Dent in the Chair.]

**Mrs. Jordan:** Indeed, Mr. Attorney-General, we do wish her well, but the problem is that the Minister herself, while she's doing her best, is unable to live up to that commitment that she made.

Mr. Speaker, if you'll check *Hansard* I'm sure we all recall that Member after Member in this House, regardless of party, stood on the day of her appointment — or their time in the Speech from the Throne and estimates, and the budget debate — and offered support, offered constructive criticism if she should seek it and should we feel it was necessary. And in general, as I say, Mr. Speaker, no Minister ever assumed a portfolio with more good wishes, more blessings and more help than did this Minister.

Mr. Speaker, we wonder what has happened today in the interim. We see today a Minister who is under serious charges from the public, from teachers, from school boards and from this Legislature — not because of her basic commissions, but because of her errors of omission. Not because we don't believe that she's sincere, but because there is strong evidence to suggest that she's fallen into a series of pitfalls which are going to be very costly to the young people and to the educational system of this province.

Mr. Speaker, in 18 short months the queen bee of education has buzzed down to the bottom of the ladder. We suggest that the reason for this is that the Minister has proved unable, as she again repeated over and over again this afternoon, to separate her personal ideological convictions from her responsibilities as a Minister of this province — that she has proven incapable of standing up under the pressure and making clear, logical and responsible decisions.

She has indulged — in spite of the serious concern that has been expressed that she shouldn't — in emotional decisions in education. I speak specifically to this whole issue of so-called corporal punishment judiciously used in the school. At the time the Minister spoke about this and removed this — strap, if you'd like to call it — from the schools...

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** Bring back the birch.

**Mrs. Jordan:** ...the Minister said that she had polled teachers of this province and the pupils of this province, and we find that that was not true. She gave us to indicate that she had the support of the majority of the principals in this province, and that was not true. And she indicated to this House that she indeed had the support of the B.C. Teachers' Federation, and that, Mr. Speaker, is not true.

Volume 12, No. 4, December, 1972, of the newsletter of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation said:

"On corporal punishment BCFTA executive pointed out that they had formed a committee to explore and evaluate alternatives to corporal punishment, and that they anticipated positive recommendations that the committee in the near future would bring in. They requested changes in the existing regulations be delayed until after the conclusion of recommendations of the committee were available." And quoting them: "Their answer from the Minister was that the removing of corporal punishment was a matter of deep personal concern, and her mind was fixed on the issue."

At the time she brought it in the principals asked and we asked that she wait for this report, or that she bring it in on a trial basis for all the reasons stated then. And the Minister did what I personally cautioned her not to do — made an emotional decision. It has left the school system in British Columbia with a severe strain in this area, and it is working to the detriment of many young people, particularly in the secondary areas, who are having to be expelled



from school — whereas, in fact, in the odd times judicious use of corporal punishment would keep them in school and be a great help.

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**An Hon. Member:** Come on, get real!

**Mrs. Jordan:** Another area where the Minister has made an emotional decision was in the area of kindergartens — not, indeed, in bringing them in; they all were part of the school system, as were the cost-sharing programmes at the option of the local school districts, who knew their area well.

Interjection.

**Mrs. Jordan:** Yes, at the option. Yes, quite. And the Minister said — which is her right — on an emotional basis, "They will be compulsory by September, 1973." We cautioned her that this was impossible for any school district, or certainly the majority of school districts, to provide the accommodation which she insisted be in the school, to provide the busing which she insisted was possible, and to get this programme off the ground.

She made an emotional decision and then, to her credit, although I don't approve of emotional decisions, she reversed that decision some months later after September in 1973 when the school boards advised her that what she had commanded could not be possible.

What we suggest in that area, Madam Minister, is that had the Minister truly been concerned about the development of kindergartens, and sound kindergartens, in our schools in all school districts, then she would have advised the school district as such. She would have allowed those who didn't have the physical plants to utilize the services of existing kindergarten facilities, and may well even have expanded on those. And she would have indeed provided extra money for busing, which she has not done.

We cautioned her at the time that busing for kindergartens is more expensive than for regular school students because the students must come in and out twice a day and can't spend full time in the schools. They have a half day.

The Minister has failed: (1) to exercise a reasonable decision in the area of kindergartens; (2) to provide extra money to build the facilities; (3) to provide the extra money needed for the extra busing service that is needed.

Today we know that in many areas schools are crowded. Much has been said about the reduction of classroom sizes. The Minister has given every excuse of why she couldn't complete this platform — a political platform. But if the Minister had used reason she would have known that by not forcing the kindergartens in immediately, in putting their local funds into construction of kindergarten rooms when they could have utilized already available facilities, that money could have gone to provide more teachers to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio, particularly in the elementary area.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite shows a great capacity for developing chaos. This has been mentioned in the area of health, in housing and it is very evident in the field of education.

**Hon. D.G. Cocke (Minister of Health):** Where?

**Mrs. Jordan:** Although the inch-by-inch firing of the so-called educational commissioner in British Columbia is perhaps the most spectacular evidence of chaos, even that sorry incident, Mr. Speaker, should be viewed in the broader concept of how this government treats people — people in British Columbia.

In the incident of the firing of John Bremer this government displayed the callous way in public that it has handled most of the senior personnel problems with which it has had to deal.

The recorded list of this government's disregard for the feelings of human beings is growing longer and longer every day. From a group that spoke so often in this House and outside this House about individual rights, they have demonstrated when in power, and when it suits their purpose, that the individual is just somebody to be cast

aside — and cast aside when they themselves get into trouble. Or when they want to favour a friend, they displace an individual...or when they want a scapegoat for their own creative administrative chaos...and when some party pressure is brought by the NDP. In the Bremer firing we see public evidence of these characteristics.

From our point of view, and from our side, as we said, John Bremer was not needed in the first place. At the time of his appointment I sent word to the Minister through her pipeline that I had personally contacted a number of areas where he had been employed. The reports that one got back were hardly ones, if they read them, to instil confidence in the Minister's original decision. I think Mr. Bremer has suffered enough under this government, regardless of his attributes or failings.

The Minister's preoccupation with the idea of change for change's sake may well have been the only reason for bringing him here.

This Minister thought by appearing to offer innovations she would be able to cover up the real root problems connected with the educational scene in British Columbia.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that the Bremer firing was just part of a long list. Mr. Speaker, to refresh your memory, I would like to review the instances that can be cited where this government has given people shabby treatment.

The dismissal of a Minister of the Crown on quite flimsy reasons and no revelation of the real reason or the full story.

The horizontal promotion of distinguished civil

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servants and the callous disregard for their professional pride and reputation, and the unbelievable idea that by paying them more they would salve their professional pride. Why, Mr. Speaker, was honest treatment not afforded these civil servants where they could have been honestly retired on full pension as is done in many union and management agreements? Why was it not done by a labour government in its own civil service?

Long before Mr. Bremer got the inch-by-inch firing over four days, this government was in trouble. I won't go into the details because they have been quoted.

The significant bowing to pressure of one NDP member in the Revelstoke area. Mr. Speaker, the facts are that this Minister was in trouble with her own elected party. I'm sure the Member for Revelstoke-Slocan (Hon. Mr. King) was one to have her ear.

The firing of Mr. Bremer has raised a lot of questions in the public mind. What they want to know is what kind of an educational system are we going to have in British Columbia. They want to know if education is really going to change in this province and who is going to change it. They want to know if education in British Columbia was as bad as this Minister and her party painted it in opposition, or if, in fact, those were not misinformed or political statements and that, in fact, the Minister herself and her party and the Premier of this government have found that the educational system in British Columbia was basically a very sound one, that we have the highest standard of teachers in Canada and that, while the educational system didn't have everything, it had many innovative ideas that were not only developed here but copied in other jurisdictions.

We believe this is what the Minister found out. We believe that it is one of the reasons she has backtracked on political statements and campaign promises. Unfortunately, this would appear to be one of the reasons why there is tension and unrest in the educational system in British Columbia today.

There is concern, Mr. Speaker, on the part of the public about who is going to change the system in British Columbia. There have been statements by people who have proven to be very influential with this Minister — I would cite one, Mr. Robinson, for example — that the educational system in British Columbia should be designed on a doctrinal basis and it should equip young people to live in a socialist democratic society that the government is



creating.

With the firing of Mr. Bremer there is considerable concern that all the committees that have been set up, which are so obviously filled with appointments of party members, party hacks, party followers and those who share the same ideology as the Minister...

**Hon. Mr. Cocke:** That's a bunch of garbage and you know it.

**Mrs. Jordan:** ...are going to be the people who will formulate the policy of this province. There is a very serious concern with Mr. Bremer's firing and with the thought that some people on these commissions who have tried to keep an open mind and who have tried to be flexible and who have tried to listen have found themselves eased out if not in fact dismissed from the commissions. With this evidence there is serious concern that all these task forces and commissions and advisory appointments are such that if you don't toe the party line then you don't speak and you won't have any influence.

The public are very, very concerned. They are concerned that we are going to have, under the direction of this Minister who has shown a tendency to emotional decisions, who has repeatedly stated how her own ideology and her experience in the classroom from two years influences her own decisions, a political education system in British Columbia.

I say to you, Madam Minister, as kindly as I can, that the people don't want it, parents don't want it, the teachers don't want it and the students don't want it. What they do want, what we want, Mr. Speaker, is an Education Minister with an open mind, an Education Minister who can make decisions on the basis of reason and educational knowledge, an Education Minister who is flexible, and an Education Minister who will not dwell on her own ideological concerns. This is what the teachers want, this is what the parents want, this is what the students want and this is what we want.

I cite an example of how this should be done. One good suggestion that came out of Mr. Bremer's report was the idea of a students' association in British Columbia. A very good idea, Mr. Speaker, in my view and in the view of this party — but an idea that was dashed to the rocks because of the Education Minister's own ideology. They believe in compulsory membership; they believe in compulsion; they believe in compulsive control. The Minister, and the government which supports her, killed a good idea by suggesting that it be compulsory. I think that a student association in British Columbia on a voluntary basis would have a great deal to contribute to education in this province.

Mr. Speaker, one point that the people of British Columbia are concerned about when this Minister talks of being progressive in her views on education — and many of us, I think, tend to a progressive approach — is that the Minister and the department, the commission, the teachers, and the public must never lose sight of the fact of the purpose of an educational system, which is to educate people of all ages.

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In education, whether we like to admit it nor not, there are some basic fundamentals — such as English, literature, grammar, spelling, writing — that we all must have if we are going to make a greater contribution and develop as a society. We must remember while we want an innovative and a flexible, progressive educational system, our students must be educated whether they are senior citizens, or mid-age people, or young students, in order that they can compete with other educational institutions in Canada, North America, and other parts of the world. We want to see this in British Columbia, and we ask the Minister to settle down and bring this about.

I'd like to speak for a moment, Mr. Speaker, about the removal of school taxes from personal property. In our position in the last campaign this was an immediate priority of this government, but it is now just another one of those promises that litter the beautiful countryside of British Columbia.

One year, one full year after the confident way this Minister and the Premier spoke of how this could be done, the Premier, in his own constituency of Coquitlam, said: "We are now looking at five years." We are now

looking at five years. The vacancy of this NDP pledge is no more evident than it is in this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker. But at that time the Premier said: "The school tax revenue will be, as it evolves over the five years, replaced by corporate tax money aided by a \$5.7 million profit from the Columbia Cellulose Company" — the government-controlled pulp mill in British Columbia — "and revenues from the newsprint mill at Ocean Falls" — an obsolete mill that was written off by another company.

For the Premier of this province, supported by the Minister of Education, to suggest that these sources of revenue are a suitable sinking fund for educational funds in British Columbia can be nothing short of a complete lack of financial knowledge, or a complete sense of responsibility. Shortly after that statement by the Premier, Ocean Falls called for a further \$1 million for assistance from the taxpayers of British Columbia. We know that this source of revenue that the Premier counts on to assist in the removal of school taxations from property is fraught with management problems and is fraught with problems of unrest within their staff.

I would quote Mr. Rudy Epick, president of the Pulp and Sulphite local of the UPIU, who said: "Management is so hopeless in this mill, I don't know what we can do but blame the government." Another president at Ocean Falls, Mr. Gil Johnson, president of the Paper Makers' Local of the UPIU stated: "The union members are extremely angry at the company." An obsolete mill fraught with problems of management and unrest is to be the basis of the tax revenues to pay for schools in this province.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education when she comes back into the House what she has done about the occupational hazard of music teachers and people in the workshops. I would like to call upon her to use some of the surpluses in education that she has accumulated to set up a research team — and I'm glad the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke) is listening — to do a study into what are in fact the occupational problems that have not yet been recognized, but are developing in teachers who are teaching band music, or any type of percussion music, and that may well be developing in teachers who are teaching in workshops.

With the advent of soundproof rooms and suitable small areas for band practice, the acoustics are greatly enhanced, and I believe that the Minister will find that there is sound reason to suspect that this is, in fact, an occupational hazard for these teachers and should be recognized as such.

Mr. Speaker, the tragedy in this debate is that a Minister of such promise, with such conviction, has so woefully and pitifully unfulfilled her commitment in office. While she hammers the school boards for fiscal mismanagement, she herself is guilty of underspending her department's estimates in vocational school grants, in grants to school districts in capital expenditures by \$9.2 million.

We know that those moneys should have been spent for regional colleges, a vocational school in Chilliwack and in the Kootenays. So not only has she underspent, not only are these people without their college, but considerable money has been spent, as my colleague from Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) said, in listening, re-listening and re-re-listening.

Her whole department is underspent in the area of libraries and taxes by \$12 million. Mr. Speaker, the broken pledges of this Minister, the faulty emotional decisions of this Minister and the broken political promises and entanglements of this Minister and this government are glaring and long.

I won't continue, because others will, but I would say that what we want to see is a responsible Minister. We want to see the department free of the political influence that is slowly strangling it through the Minister's appointments. We want to see non-political, representative cross-sections on any advisory board, commissions or task force. We want to see these boards free to bring in their positions, whether the government agrees or not, because that is the joy and the responsibility of a government setting up these commissions.

We want to see extra financing to help with the chaos in the kindergarten situation, extra money for busing, extra money for facilities. We want to see, in fact, this Minister not only meet her commitments that she pledged, but to exceed them, and help us in British Columbia to repair these two years of unrest and concern and confusion, and bring British Columbia into a better, more flexible, more

progressive and stable educational picture from '74 onwards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. A.V. Fraser (Cariboo):** This amendment we're dealing with, Mr. Speaker, deals with the problems of health and education in British Columbia in the year 1974. Last evening I was quite interested in the debate that took place, with reference to the comparisons that the Premier of the province made with 1916 and, I believe, 1964, and so on and so forth, as well as...not only the Premier, but the Liberals and Conservatives. All they wanted to talk about and dwell on was the past.

Well, I don't think that's what the people of British Columbia want to hear about today. I think they want to hear about the present and the future.

Interjection.

**Mr. Fraser:** You be quiet! I've got something to say about you in a few minutes.

Also, it was quite interesting in the debate that outside of a couple of MLAs here, all we heard from were MLAs from the urban area. I realize that they don't know where the rest of British Columbia is north of Hope. I'm going to try to tell them in this amendment, Mr. Speaker, with regard to education and health. I get a little tired of coming down to the large area and always getting the versions of the ones that live across the street here and don't know anything that's going on in the interior and northern part of British Columbia.

What I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, with reference to this amendment, is that we are dealing with 1974 problems. This new government, as it's been called, has been elected since 1972. My concern is that they made a lot of promises in the 1972 election campaign as to how they were going to change everything. I agree that they certainly have changed a lot, but I don't think they have changed enough in education as one item. In fact, education has more or less stood still.

Then we have after almost 18 months of a new government, Mr. Speaker, the new Minister deciding to attack the school trustees. I resent this very much because basically I think that our locally-elected people are the foundation of the society we live in. I cannot understand why a Minister would, when she actually went out and asked the trustees to go ahead and spend money — and I'm referring to the election campaign in 1972 — "Those crude Social Credit days are over; you go ahead, the lid is off and you can spend what you want."

Twelve months later the very same Minister was calling them irresponsible because they're \$80 million and some odd over what she thought they should be. I think this Minister, for that action alone, has lost a lot of confidence in the Province of British Columbia.

The people of this province have lost confidence in her and the least she can do is apologize to these locally-elected people.

They are very dedicated; they serve continuously long hours at very small remuneration — certainly a lot smaller remuneration than the Minister gets, and to have this slap in the face from someone that they have looked forward to really open the floodgates of money, is a real setback. So for this reason all classes of citizens, including the students, are losing faith in the Minister of Education.

I don't think again, Mr. Speaker, that the lower mainland realized the feelings of certain parts of the interior of this province, after I heard the harangue from the Liberals and the Conservatives and the Premier last night, as to what really is going on in this province. As a matter of fact, I have reason to believe, I think, that some of them have never been north of Hope in the Province of British Columbia and I think it's time they got around to finding out.

I'm now going to quote, Mr. Speaker, from an editorial that's been circulated in practically all the weekly papers in the interior of British Columbia, talking about the Minister of Education. I'll read this excerpt from the *Cariboo Observer* at Quesnel, which happens to be my home town. But this editorial was not made from them, it

came from *The Similkameen Spotlight* and got a wide circulation in the dailies. It goes on to say:

"We believe Eileen Dailly, Minister of Education, should resign her cabinet post at once. Her decision to take corporal punishment out of our schools has resulted in near chaos.

"In the past three months teachers have been beaten up in Merritt, Princeton, Keremeos."

I'm surprised that the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Hartley) isn't on his feet about this, for two of these towns happen to be in his riding of Yale-Lillooet, and I refer to Merritt and Princeton.

I would assume from this, Mr. Speaker, as well, that probably these very teachers that got beaten up by the students probably campaigned for that MLA in 1972.

"Recently a Grade 7 teacher was involved in an altercation by two youths with the result that there was almost a mass resignation by all of the teachers. There followed from Mrs. Dailly's decision as a result the lowest morale of the teachers that can ever be remembered.

"Critics could jump up and say that teachers got what they asked for, but that isn't going to solve the problem, Mr. Speaker. Not when a teacher has to try and carry on in a normal manner and at the same time put up with youngsters who have got diarrhoea of the mouth.

"One teacher told us recently that he is sick

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and tired of being sworn at. He also said that the big difficulty is that the youngsters causing the problem are upsetting the entire learning process.

"Mrs. Dailly's pet argument, we understand, is that violence begets violence. What she apparently didn't understand or even know was that in her book it is all right for the student to be violent, but not the teacher. Her guide of so-called modern thinking would be all right, provided every home was well disciplined, Mr. Speaker, and that children were taught respect in the home before they left for school.

"But when her government is making it so easy for the parents to neglect the children, then who is going to bell the cat? The parents? The teachers? Or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police? Right now we're laying all our money on the RCMP.

"Premier Barrett, you are fast losing the support of the teachers. We aren't sure whether that could be good or bad, but there's really something rotten in our schools. Can you really afford the luxury of a Mrs. Dailly?"

That is the end of a quote originally written by the *Similkameen Spotlight*, so I would imagine the Minister of Public Works, who I see has disappeared already, knows all about that.

**Hon. Mr. Cocke:** Who set up the system?

**Mr. Fraser:** I've got plenty to say to you, through you, Mr. Speaker, plenty to say to you in about five minutes. You just hang on to your shirt, Mr. Minister of Health.

I would just like to read a few notes from a concerned teacher about education, and this concerned teacher is at present teaching in a rural school in the Cariboo. A few short notes from someone who is very concerned at the drift that is going on in the education system.

"We do not have a democratic choice of the method type of education we desire our children to have. The Province of British Columbia has no set basic standard of education throughout each grade or level, therefore quality of education differs from area to area."

**Hon. Mr. Cocke:** And from teacher to teacher.

**Mr. Fraser:** "General education is too long. Too highly specialized teachers. The discipline in our schools is

poor. Too many schools are being used for experimental purposes. Physical education, a compulsory course, has become game oriented for a few students rather than the physical development of each and every student in British Columbia. Communication of what schools are doing in British Columbia is very poor. Teacher training is not practical."

That's from a teacher who is presently teaching.

Now one other thing I'd say about education, Mr. Speaker, and I see no move here for the government to do anything about it, is the problem of children going to primary school up to Grade 7 in the rural areas, and then they have to leave their homes and come and live in a boarding home in a larger centre.

It is my opinion, and it is the opinion of parents in the rural areas of this province, that these children are too young and school should be in the rural area up to say at least Grade 9 so these pupils will be more mature before they have to move into the tougher world.

**Hon. Mr. Cocke:** Who set up the system?

**Mr. Fraser:** I don't care who set it up, they have the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, these people have the responsibility of governing. You promised to do all these things and you've done zilch. Now get on with the job!

Now we'll get to the Department of Health. My friend over here, the Minister of Health, seems to be all excited so I'll give him something.

He hasn't done anything either but he has made the odd ruling and got himself in trouble when he did. But this is what I'm going to tell him now.

Mr. Speaker, dealing with health under this amendment, again the NDP said everything was haywire on our health delivery system in the province and I don't see very many fast moves since 1972 to correct that. About all that's been accomplished since 1972 in accommodation for our sick people are programmes completed that were set in motion long before these people captured office with 39 per cent of the popular vote in 1972. However, that's fine.

I would just like to say to the Minister of Health before I get on to the main subject under health which is really a local issue to a degree, but I think it's going to be provincial, it's what are you going to do with the Foulkes Report?

You gave us a song and dance that it cost \$760,000 and what we would like to know on this side is when you are going to do anything about it because whether you are or not, it has cost the taxpayers of this province a lot of money and we should be hearing some policy out of you pretty soon. As a matter of fact, even some legislation if everything was so bad from the bad days from '72 and prior to that. You should be rushing right in with legislation right now. You haven't got anything ready. Nothing at all.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, the doctors of the province want to know how soon it is they have to go on salary. I don't think you should keep them in

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suspense so long if you're not going to use the Foulkes report; well tell us. But don't keep all these hard-working innocent people in suspense all the time as you love to do.

I now would like to leave that section for a minute and go into what concerns me the most in this amendment. It's the fact, Mr. Speaker, that I think that our public health services are the finest. I've always thought so and I still think so, and I refer to the public health services that are given to the citizens of British Columbia.

But we have had a sad experience that I'm afraid is going to jeopardize this. In the Cariboo in the last couple of months, and only recently brought to my attention, I refer to the dismissal of a public health nurse from 100 Mile House by the name of Mrs. Vaness. Mrs. Vaness was dismissed, I'm not sure when, but I believe November, and all

the citizens of the Cariboo are up in arms over this dismissal, and they have done something about this. They have communicated with government people, including the Minister, and he has said that the decision is correct.

I just want to tell this House, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister, that there's something wrong here when the total community gets up in arms over one public health nurse. I think the wrong is in the public health service of the Department of Health.

Now, this lady was apparently dismissed for the use of a government car. I don't know why. As I say, this public health nurse had 12 years of experience and this is the reason given — really she was not dismissed, she was forced into signing a resignation letter. Pressure was applied by senior people in the Department of Health and I think this is pretty shabby when this lady has been really the doctor for this rural area. I'm glad to see the Premier come in, Mr. Speaker, because...

**Mr. Phillips:** He was out all afternoon.

**Mr. Fraser:** ...I remember when he took up the case of an unfortunate lady two or three years ago and I imagine he'll be interested in this one now that he's the Premier of the province. I also understand that he got correspondence about this as well.

But the facts are, in this case, that Mrs. Vaness is the only breadwinner in the family. As I say, as far as I can ascertain, has been a public health nurse for 12 years, four years located at 100 Mile House in the Cariboo.

To anybody from the rural country, you will realize that these public health nurses are looked on with the highest respect all over the province, because they go into remote areas that even the good doctors won't go in to bring health delivery care to its citizens. I would like to ask the Minister of Health to take another look at this case because I think somebody has made a real bad judgment.

I might say, on the use of government cars which this lady was apparently dismissed for, is that it's my understanding that the public servants in British Columbia even go shopping at three o'clock in the afternoon with government cars and I resent the fact that a dedicated public servant in the case of this lady who has to use her car after hours on the job, should be used as a scapegoat by somebody that is playing pretty nasty games.

I'm not suggesting that the Minister is playing nasty games, but somebody is, and this lady has had very unfair treatment from the Department of Health and more specifically the Assistant Deputy Minister of Public Health Services who flew up to Williams Lake, called the lady in and said: "You will be dismissed unless you sign this resignation letter or write us a letter of resignation." This is actually what happened.

The lady said she was too upset with the news and she was not going to write a letter of resignation. She was advised that the letter would be typed for her. It was signed, and the great doctor flew back to Victoria very satisfied with his mission.

I'm not going to read all the letters I've had on this case, and it just blew up since January, since the beginning of this year as far as I'm concerned. But I would like to read from what the United Church minister of 100 Mile House has written to me about this case:

"RE: Mrs. Freda Vaness, R.N., former public health nurse at 100 Mile House.

"I am writing you to say how very upset I am over the circumstances under which Mrs. Freda Vaness was forced to resign her post and to urge you as our concerned Member for Cariboo to take whatever action you can in seeing that our case can be given the closest scrutiny.

"Could it be that Freda Vaness is being made a scapegoat by the government workers in B.C. who use government vehicles for private purposes, but who never are reported.

"To date no investigation has been made at the local level in this matter, despite Mr. Cocke's claim that our case has been investigated to his satisfaction.

"Please apply some pressure where you can and thank you for your concern."

That's signed, "J.H. Lindquist, United Church minister, 100 Mile House."

I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that's correct and the reason I brought it up on the floor of the House is the simple reason that the Hon. Minister has already declined any further and I urge him in view of this that he now take another look at this case.

I don't know what I would recommend, but have an investigation or inquiry. There is something not

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right in this whole procedure. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is not getting a full story and justice has not been meted out properly here.

That's about all I have to say on this amendment, Mr. Speaker, just to say when I sit down that I will be supporting the amendment when the time comes to move. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Cocke:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not going to speak for any length of time on this amendment. I think the amendment is a disgrace to this House.

**Mr. Chabot:** So are you.

**Hon. Mr. Cocke:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Member, coming from you, that's very nice.

Anyway, I do think, however, that this House is going to have to get out of a habit that developed since that group has been in our position, and I think it's a downright bad habit, and that is criticizing the civil service on the floor of the House. There is no warrant for that. The Member could have come to my office and discussed this. The woman has now been embarrassed publicly and incidentally she's working at the hospital.

I've looked into this case because of the fact that it was brought to my attention, but not by that Member. Why didn't he come to my office, and then if there's a conflict, bring it to the floor of the House?

But, Mr. Speaker, it's a very, very bad tendency for this House to start.... You know, they're talking about hacks and backs and all sorts. The Assistant Deputy Minister has been that for some years, and is a very responsible individual, incidentally. I find it disgraceful that we have these kind of discussions on the floor of the House where we embarrass all sorts of people needlessly and if that's what politics is to you Mr. Member, it certainly isn't that to me, and you're a disgrace over there, you too.

**Mr. D.E. Smith (North Peace River):** It seems like almost the first time I've had the pleasure of addressing you in this particular session, although we had a brief discussion I believe yesterday.

I would like to say, and I'm not going to reflect upon any vote that was taken in the House, that we proposed an amendment which has nothing to do with 1952-1962 or even up to the end of 1972.

It would seem that the party presently in the seat of government have a hard time distinguishing between their duties now as leaders and government of this province and their positions and duties as Members of opposition.

Because we have heard the type of debate take place in this House and this amendment and the subamendment that was proposed which did nothing to enhance the position of the government or even suggest to the people who must have been listening and watching, that they have any right to call themselves government. Because the fact of the matter is this: you do have to take responsibility now. You are elected as government. Right.

It's unfortunate that the Members of the cabinet have not really found out that concept themselves. Because with the elective office goes the responsibility. With the office that we now occupy goes the responsibility of bringing to the attention of the government the things that people are saying to us when we meet with them in the



street.

That was the reason for this amendment, Mr. Speaker, on the floor of the House yesterday and that is the reason that we spoke to it yesterday and again this afternoon. It is obvious that in less than two years the people who used to sit in opposition and tell us many of the things that they thought they knew better than the government of that day did have lost sight, those people, of the little people in the street. The people that are concerned about education.

It was a legitimate amendment, offered in a spirit of concern, because we know people are concerned about education in the Province of British Columbia. There have been too many off-the-cuff remarks and statements made by the Minister without fully thinking out the ramifications of those statements, to allow the people of this province to rest easy with respect to the education of their children in the province today.

Even the Member for Oak Bay, the hon. leader of the Conservative Party (Mr. Wallace), said this afternoon that this amendment was most timely and most apt.

I've got to say that that is something when it comes from that particular Member who has no luck with the Social Credit Party. But he had to admit that it was timely and it was apt.

If we have done nothing else in this debate than to bring to the attention of the government the fact that we hope in the debate we are representing, and conveying to you, the thoughts of the people that we represent as well as you, then we feel that we have done our job as opposition.

The Premier was very, very pleased with himself when he said that the throne speech only took eight minutes to deliver. So it was obvious that what was left out was more important than what was said.

The Minister of Education — and I'm not going to repeat all the things that we have heard both yesterday and this afternoon — but it was the Minister of Education who, by remarks and innuendo, labelled the school trustees of the province as irresponsible people. That, in my opinion, was the most irresponsible remark that a Minister of the

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Crown can make. Because it was the very same Minister less than 18 months ago, as a matter of fact less than 12 months ago, who encouraged school teachers to lobby for smaller classes. And if that's desirable, then she should stick by that point of view.

It was this Minister who encouraged teachers to ask for more teacher aides and higher salaries.

It was this Minister who instructed school trustees to establish kindergarten classes for all children in the province, irrespective of the problems that it might create with respect to transportation and all the rest that goes with it — establish kindergartens by the fall of 1973.

It was this Minister that encouraged the B.C. School Trustees Association to meet with her Deputy Minister during the month of January, and to her credit, discussions did take place with the B.C. School Trustees Association about all aspects of education.

As I understand it, talks proceeded on the basis of two days a week for a short period of time. It covered such topics as collective bargaining on a province-wide basis for all the members of the teaching profession, the introduction of a teachers' professional Act, and many other areas of mutual concern.

But for some reason known mainly to the Minister herself, those talks were summarily terminated and the Minister announced, not to the trustees but through the press, that a commission would be appointed to review all aspects of education. No wonder, Madam Minister, that the president of the B.C. School Trustees Association announced, in frustration more than anything else, that he had lost all confidence in the Minister of Education.

We must ask the Minister why the complete and abrupt about face? We must ask for what purpose were these talks terminated? Is it because you truly believe that you require more input, as you have suggested this afternoon,



and that you will be publishing a White Paper on education? I don't think so because already you have enough White Papers on your desk since you have been appointed Minister to give you some idea of what people and organizations are saying about education in the Province of British Columbia.

You have a report, Madam Minister, on curriculum development given to you by the B.C. Teachers' Federation, dated September, 1973. You have a report on problems in education warranting government action, dated August, 1973. You have a report on behalf of the British Columbia Home and School Federation, given to the Minister and dated January 15, 1974. You have a report from the B.C. Teachers' Federation, dated November, 1973 on class size and pupil-teacher ratio. You have a report dated November, 1973, again from the B.C. Teachers' Federation, on education finance. You have reports from the B.C. Teacher-Parents Association. As a matter of fact, you have more reports than you really need. What we want is policy decisions and policy announcements.

It is said that our student-teacher ratio is too high in the Province of British Columbia. Well, if it is, then I suggest to the Madam Minister that she should go to other provinces in Canada who have a lower student-teacher ratio and find out how they accomplish that when they spend 20 to 30 per cent less of their total budget for education than we spend in the Province of British Columbia. Obviously, they have learned something about education that we presently do not know in the Province of British Columbia. Obviously they know something that we do not know because we find out that other provinces, which you like to point at for the lower student-teacher ratio, spent in the year 1972 as low as 27 per cent of their entire budget for education, and that was the province of Quebec. And in no province in Canada for that year did a provincial government spend more on education than we did in the Province of British Columbia. That's a fact.

So obviously there are things that we can learn from these provinces if we want to listen and get submissions from them. Incidentally, Madam Minister, you even have a submission that was turned in not long ago on educational change, written by one John Bremer. I don't intend to prolong the debate, but I do say this, and make no mistake about it, as Members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the amendment we proposed was proposed in all sincerity, bringing to the attention of the Minister and, we hope, her Cabinet colleagues, the thoughts, the hopes and the aspirations of just ordinary people in the Province of British Columbia. That, after all, whether this Cabinet likes to admit it or not, is the job of the official opposition and we intend to assume our responsibility in this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there any further debate on the amendment? The question's been called. The question is the amendment before the House which is: that the motion in reply to the opening speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be amended by adding the words, "That this House regrets that the speech of His Honour gave further indications that the government intends to place greater centralized controls on the people of British Columbia, while neglecting any mention of specific proposals for policy changes in the social service fields of education and health at a time when there is growing public alarm with government policy in these fields". That is the question before the House.

Amendment negatived on the following division:

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YEAS — 16

Chabot	Phillips	Anderson, D.A.
Bennett	Richter	Williams, L.A.
Smith	McClelland	Gardom
Jordan	Morrison	Wallace
Fraser	Schroeder	Curtis
McGeer		

NAYS — 35

Hall	D'Arcy	Lauk
Macdonald	Cummings	Nicolson
Barrett	Dent	Skelly
Dailly	Levi	Lockstead
Strachan	Lorimer	Gorst
Nimsick	Williams, R.A.	Rolston
Stupich	Cocke	Anderson, G.H.
Hartley	King	Barnes
Calder	Lea	Steves
Nunweiler	Young	Kelly
Brown	Radford	Webster
Sanford	Lewis	

**An Hon. Member:** They've got nothing to say.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think the Hon. Member must be advised that we are now on the main motion before the House that was moved last Friday. This is the time to take their place in the debate on the main motion on the reply to the speech of His Honour.

**Mr. D.A. Anderson:** On a point of order, rather than speaking to the motion, I am quite willing to take my regular position in the debate, to be recognized by you as you wish later in the debate. My wish is not to speak at this time but to speak later in the debate. And in this respect, while I appreciate and thank the government for giving me the offer, an opportunity of speaking at this time if I so wish, I prefer to take the same position as every other backbench Member of the House and simply rely on your indulgence later in the debate to catch your eye. I believe my hon. friend from Oak Bay is in the same position.

**Mr. Speaker:** I was not aware that behind the Chair some arrangements had broken down. Does anyone wish to speak on the main motion before the House?

**Mr. Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, am I to understand that if we don't speak now as the leaders of the two parties, we will be denied the chance to speak later in the debate?

**Mr. Speaker:** Not a bit. I understand that behind the Chair, as it were, the Whips come to some agreement on a list. I try to honour that unofficial agreement that is reached by calling upon the persons that I had been advised wish to speak on each day. I had the names of both the Hon. Second Member for Victoria, (Mr. D.A. Anderson) and the Hon. Member for Oak Bay, (Mr. Wallace) to be speaking following the ones that spoke yesterday on the main motion. If you do not wish to speak at this time you are not disqualified, but I point out that the question can be put at this time if no one wishes to catch the Speaker's eye.

**Hon. Mr. Barrett:** Bring the budget down tomorrow!

**Mr. Wallace:** Mr. Speaker, frankly we're both intending to be in North Vancouver–Capilano this evening and we're trying to catch a plane. There was no other reason than that that we would have chosen not to speak at this time.

**An Hon. Member:** Both going to a victory party?

**Mr. Wallace:** One of us is going to a victory party — I don't know which one. (Laughter.)

**Mr. R.T. Cummings (Vancouver–Little Mountain):** Can't be you, Scotty.

**Mr. Wallace:** If I may make a comment, Mr. Speaker, about the campaign, it's been very interesting to take

part in a by-election campaign, and I might say the geography of North Vancouver–Capilano makes door-knocking quite a physical challenge to the eager politician; and I think also that the weather they have is liable to have the canvasser over there finish up with webbed feet.

But there has been a good campaign fought by all the candidates and I would like to think that a person taking his place in this House in the next week or two will be a worthy representative of the residents in North Vancouver.

I would have to put on record, though, that I did take offence at one episode that happened. We have a newspaper — I really seem to be picking on the media this afternoon — but we have a newspaper in North Vancouver which really could not be described as being impartial. And I think it went beyond the bounds of decency when it talked about the "impotent" Conservatives. (Laughter.)

Now as a clinician I find that's a very serious charge, that I should be considered "impotent." Now I can't speak for my colleague from Saanich and the Islands (Mr. Curtis)....

**Mr. D.A. Anderson:** Don't exclude him too much! (Laughter.)

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**Mr. Wallace:** I just want it on record that I haven't been receiving any complaints at home. And even allowing for the heat of the campaign — if you'll pardon the word — I think the editor was hitting below the belt. (Laughter.)

Campaigns are campaigns but there are limits to the kind of accusations which should be traded back and forth. I was speaking to Senator Ed Lawson. He said he had some free time available from his busy court schedule if I wanted to sue the editor. I haven't decided on my course of action but as you can detect, Mr. Speaker, the editor did get a rise out of me. (Laughter.)

To return to the main motion. We've attempted to take a constructive position in debating the amendment to the motion; and I would just like to try as quickly as possible to cover the areas of the throne speech itself which deserve comment.

First of all I must mention that there's a great deal omitted from the throne speech. The biggest omission is any mention whatever of the very unsatisfactory state of the automobile insurance programme. Somewhat similar to the points we've already raised in the amendment debate on health and education, one of the major planks of the NDP election platform was the promise of an automobile insurance programme which would, above all other things, provide a programme of insurance at reduced costs on the average of 20 per cent to the car driver.

Let there be no mistake, Mr. Speaker, as to the tremendous importance which the NDP placed on this particular plank of their platform — and I have a copy of a newspaper ad put out by the NDP — I'm sure the Members across the way are looking very interested at this ad and I'm sure they remember it well.

It says "They" — meaning the government of the day — and I think that was the Socred government — "insure their vehicles with government insurance for less than \$25 a year. Compare that with your rate. Tell them enough is enough. B.C. needs a new deal for people. Vote NDP August 30th."

And, of course, they did; at least enough people voted to elect the government. And that's fair enough, that's what this democratic business is all about. And I accept that and respect the fact you're government, and we're opposition.

But the point is that one of the very important reasons why the people elected you was the kind of promise you made that you would bring in an automobile insurance programme run by the government, which would reduce premiums.

Now let's not lose sight of the fact that it would reduce premiums. The promise was not to keep premiums the same. No question of saying that they won't go up. And it just so happens I've got another clipping from a newspaper, Mr. Speaker. This is *The Province* newspaper — a report by Pat Richalery — I'm sorry, I can't get the name right, it's an unusual name. It's a report from Terrace during the election campaign. The quote is: "B.C. Drivers Would Save 20% — Barrett." The heading is "Government Car Insurance."

Interjection.

**Mr. Wallace:** Oh, here we're going to have the old bogeyman of inflation. Ah, you didn't talk about inflation when you sought the vote. You said you would reduce premiums by 20 per cent. Here it is:

"Government-owned car insurance would save B.C. drivers about 20% in premiums, NDP leader Dave Barrett said on Monday."

**Mr. Gardom:** A little more than that, actually.

**Mr. Wallace:** What that didn't say was that it might save *some* people 20 per cent; it just says it would save drivers 20 per cent. I don't want to belabour it save to certainly put clearly on record the fact that the programme promised certain specific things, and above all it promised a reduction of premiums.

As we all know, by the government's own admission, in fact, about developing a rebate programme, it is an obvious admission by the government that in fact they are in no way meeting the commitment they made to reduce everyone's premiums by 20 per cent. Now that's just a fact.

Many automobile drivers find that the premium has gone up, and I don't think anybody in this House can deny that. You read the letters to the newspaper and the Members of this House are all receiving letters, and we certainly have automobile users in this province in such categories as two-car families, or fleets of vehicles, or taxi drivers. I had a letter from a person in Vernon or somewhere in the North Okanagan area who operates a fleet of taxis where the increase in the rate is close to 100 per cent in premiums.

Now, this was not part of your general programme of promises regarding automobile insurance back in August, 1972, when you were elected. As recently as last week, 469 drivers were asked as to their experience with the premium presented by the government. A substantial percentage stated that their premium will be higher.

Of course, we have the Minister's statement that there will be rebates and that he really has no idea what sum of money will be involved in providing that rebate total to all those who legitimately can seek a rebate. I think that the fact that there has to be a rebate programme at all is quite clear evidence of the fact that the programme has fallen very far short of the promise that was made and the promise on which I'm sure many people based their vote for the NDP in

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the last election.

There's another element of the programme which the Minister assured us would not be the case. Either in the fall or spring session, I can't recall which, he was asked whether the younger driver was to be subsidized by the car driver over 25. There's only one thing that's really clear about this government auto insurance programme, and that is that certainly the younger driver will be paying less, but a very substantial percentage of people over 25 will be paying more. I think this refutes the Minister's statement earlier that the older driver would not be subsidizing the younger driver. I'm sure the Minister will be taking part in the debate, and I would hope that this point above all would be touched upon and clarified as to what extent the driver over 25 is subsidizing the driver under 25.

I think also it's not a principled attitude of the government to present one blanket promise about automobile insurance in order to help their election chances and then, once they become the government, to fall so far short by having very clear categories of automobile and vehicle users in the province who in fact will be paying higher

premiums.

Even although this rebate programme is promised, I understand that Mr. Bortnick made a statement that this rebate programme is for one year. In other words, if somebody paid \$100 last year and they were expected to pay \$150 this year, they will get a rebate of \$50, but next year they'll pay \$150 or whatever the rearranged rate is by that time.

The basic concept on which this whole programme was presented to the public of British Columbia was that a government-sponsored plan would provide a reduction of premiums. Now, that is not happening.

The Attorney-General needn't look so hurt. There are a whole lot of people in this province paying higher premiums. The Minister said the rebate programme might mean as much as \$5 million to be paid back to drivers. He also, in fairness I must say, couldn't assess the sum of money that would be involved. But it certainly is a fact that by no stretch of the imagination is this programme providing reduced premiums for all vehicle users in the province.

The study we did of approximately 500 people at random on the highway showed that there were about 21 per cent who had reduced premiums, but there's a very substantial number who are paying more. Those who are paying more are paying an average of 18 per cent more, according to the survey we did, and those who are paying less are paying something in the order of 12 per cent less.

The Member of the Liberal Party talked earlier on today about freedom of choice. If there is any clear difference between the philosophy of that side of the House and this party, it is that we really sincerely believe in freedom of choice.

We said in the debate which set up ICBC that if the government was so sure that they could carry out this programme and meet the promises they had made, then why should they be afraid of competition? And I just ask the same question today: if it's such a perfect programme and it's the very best that man can devise, why are you afraid to let competition take place by the private companies? That is the principle involved.

Beyond the principle and the failure to meet the promise because your philosophy is wrong in the first place, in our opinion, on top of that we find that the organizing of the programme is an absolute disaster and a shambles. There are tremendous expenditures of money, somewhere around \$20 million already, for claim centres, and there is an attempt being made to build some of them on land which is zoned for agricultural purposes, which cannot be used for claim centres. Furthermore, even where they can be built, there is no way they will be available by March 1.

I think many people have tremendous reservations from what they read as to the capacity for the programme to be functioning at all by March 1. We've heard a great deal about encouraging people to apply quickly and so on, and this makes a lot of sense, but the information I have is that the permanent computer system that was to be set up just could not possibly be put into use by the deadline, and that some interim temporary computer programme has also had to be employed.

I hope the Minister's listening to all this, because I'll be very eager, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister to answer some of the questions which I'm raising, because I have some information which suggests that it is just not physically and humanly possible to implement this programme by March 1, and that numerous, serious administrative problems exist. Because they exist, I want a clear answer to the problem of the person who applies, who may or may not get the application processed by March 1, and who has an accident on March 2. If the computer programme cannot cope, and if we have an interim or temporary computer programme, can he tell us whether this will meet the needs of the programme by March 1?

I understand that numerous extra personnel have been brought in who are consultants from the IBM company and from the management company of Woods Gordon. I understand that this is an additional effort to try and get the programme functioning by March 1.

Here's one of the questions I'm sure the Minister will be quite happy to answer, and I'm sure he knows the answer. The suggestion has been made that the expense of all the extra personnel and facilities and interim computer

programme and machinery and equipment approximates \$250,000 a month. Now, that seems to me a very substantial figure, and if it's

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wrong I'm sure the Minister will stand up in his place and correct it.

**Hon. R.M. Strachan (Minister of Transport and Communications):** I'll say it right now. I'm sure the statement you made is quite wrong.

**Mr. Wallace:** Well, if that statement's wrong, I hope the Minister in his turn will give the right statement, and that we won't get some kind of waffling around saying that my figure is wrong without being told what the right figure is. I've tried to be fair in stating that the figures I've given I cannot substantiate by documentation, but only by the statement of another person. If my opinions are wrong, and the explanation of that figure is wrong, I think the Minister should tell us what the right figure is.

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** Who gave you the figures?

**Mr. Wallace:** The figures were not given by one of your employees, I can assure you of that. I don't think I wish to reveal the name of the person, but I assure you, Mr. Minister, he is not one of your employees.

**Hon. G.V. Lauk (Minister of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce):** Are you satisfied they are wrong?

**Mr. Wallace:** No, I never said that they were authentic. I am saying that there is information available that extra help has had to be brought in, and that the permanent programme cannot begin by March 1. I am saying that the figures approximate the cost I have mentioned, and if they are wrong, I expect the Minister to give us the right figures. There has been this deadline which perhaps was set by the government in all good faith. But again, I understand that in operations of this magnitude, and the involvement of computers and programming, that this was a mistaken judgment from an administrative point of view, and that the programme cannot start effectively, and will, in fact, start amidst an atmosphere of tremendous confusion and inefficiency.

I think it is a very curious matter indeed, particularly, as I say, if a person has an accident close to or soon after March 1, and has problems getting his claim processed.

I also feel that there has been maladministration, and we have been unable to have the Minister answer a question on the order paper about the fate of Robert Adams, whose contract, we understand, was bought out.

Here again, similar to the Bremer situation, we have an administrative decision where an employee, or a person engaged as a consultant by the government, is paid off at some considerable expense. I should not use the words "paid off." He had his contract bought out by the government with the taxpayers' money. We seem to be having some real difficulty finding out why this public servant had his contract terminated, and what the settlement figure was. Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very fair question, and it is part of the responsibility of opposition in any democratic House to find out....

**Hon. Mr. Strachan:** It's a fair question.

**Mr. Wallace:** I'll say no more. The Minister agrees that it is a fair question, and I'm sure he will answer it.

The whole programme, however, Mr. Minister, is of great attention. There are many people in the province who are very concerned about how the programme will get off the ground, and whether or not, in fact, centres will be available on March 1, and possibly the many, many hundreds of thousands of applications — whether they are filed in time or not. It is a question of whether they will be processed in time or not by the system by March 1. That is another question that I hope the Minister will answer.

One of the things that really amazed me was that if there was one.... And the Minister of Mines (Hon. Mr.

Nimsick) again is looking very pensive, and looking right at me, and that is good. Too bad the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Hartley) isn't here, because he was another Member of the party who talked at very great length from this side of the House as to the wicked habits of the private companies in investing premiums.

They invested premiums and they made money on the premiums, but it didn't go back to the policy holder in the form of reduced premiums. It went to the stockholders in the private companies. It was very interesting.

I have a letter here from a gentleman who wrote to the Minister with the experience of having gone in to buy his insurance early, like a good citizen was asked to do, and he just says:

"Yesterday we received our brochure, in which we were strongly advised to contact our local agent as soon as possible. This was a trap! Acting in accordance with instructions we gathered up all the data necessary and my wife took it, together with a post-dated cheque for the full amount, to our local agent on Pandora Street in Victoria."

I won't read the whole letter. The fact of the matter is that he walked into their office early in January with a cheque for \$300 to buy coverage which wasn't going to start until March 1. Then he finds that the cheque, which he dated February 28, is

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not acceptable; so he finishes his letter:

"Surely the government is not so naive as to believe that the public is prepared to lose money at one end, as in the case in point where the premium is paid nearly two months in advance, and lose again at the other end in lost interest on refunds of overpayment."

This is a copy of the letter which he sent to the Minister.

"We would appreciate your comments concerning this situation, with particular reference to our own experience because, as I am sure you will agree, it hurts to be ripped off."

I remember sitting here during fierce debates on government automobile insurance, Mr. Speaker, and hearing these Members making very vehement protests about the practice of the private companies who made money and invested premiums. Here it seems that now we have the government setting up this programme and they just seem to be doing exactly the same thing. It seems to me that if we have hundreds of thousands of people paying hundreds of dollars for two months to the government, the government is certainly having a good time with the money at the taxpayers' expense.

So this matter of promise and performance is getting to be a little monotonous. We have talked about the promise and performance in health, and the promise and performance in education. Now it is the promise as compared to the performance with automobile insurance.

Talking just briefly for a moment on health, I am glad that the Minister is in his place, because I started off by saying that the throne speech is very notable for its omissions. I am most disappointed that there is no mention whatever of the problems of the Indian people of this province in the throne speech.

I know the Indian people have no wish to be considered any differently from any other Canadian citizens. I think that is right. But they certainly have some particularly serious problems in the social and health fields.

I don't have the quotation from the Foulkes Report right available, but there certainly is one quotation making it very plain that in their view the situation of the Indian people in regard to their health needs and their various statistical figures for neo-natal mortality and the incidence of most diseases and the expectation of life and all the indicators of health, is really a shocking disgrace to our province.

It is unfortunate that the Premier is not here, because I would like to hear from the Premier the point at which the study of Indian affairs is at. I have no wish to get into the argument as to whether or not he should have



dismissed, or asked for the resignation of, the Minister without Portfolio. That is an issue which I don't propose to debate.

What I do want to know is what point the study had reached on Indian affairs with particular reference to health and human resources. Is the study being continued? I would say with the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Human Resources (Hon. Mr. Levi), that he has more than enough on his plate without having to try and shoulder the particular burden of dealing with the needs of native peoples, in this very large and very intensive challenge that faces the Minister with that job.

But I would like to know if we are to have any report from the government as to the work that was done prior to the Minister without Portfolio resigning. I would like to know if the study is continuing under the Minister of Human Resources. And I would like to know to what degree the government would be prepared to give again this urgent need today recognition and action rather than waiting for the whole broad acceptance and implementation of the Foulkes Report.

I think the whole question of the needs of the Indian people deserves a top priority simply because of the unquestioned need that exists. Their needs far surpass. Bad as the services are needed in other areas for all Canadians in this province, they have a particular amount of catching up to do even to come close to the figures which pertain for the ordinary non-Indian citizen in this province.

I don't have time to go into any great detail on the other problem regarding the adoption of Indian children by non-Indian families. I would say this, Mr. Speaker, that I have had letters. I did wish to read one or two of them, but I don't have the time on this occasion, but we might get back to it later in estimates.

But this is causing real concern, Mr. Speaker. The potential adopting parents have these children whom they wish to adopt, and who will become healthy and happy within this environment in a home, perhaps for months — and some of them I've had letters from — extending into years. They wish very much to adopt these children and yet there has been this moratorium, you might say, on the whole process of adoption.

I would like to hope that the Minister would give us some definitive statement because these prospective parents feel that they are doing what they wish to do in providing a home for these children. They wish to adopt them, but they have no "today, tomorrow." The superintendent of Child Welfare is in the legal position of taking the children away from the prospective parents. There's this uncertainty which the parents know, plus the fact that if for any reason the children are taken away, it's another disruption; it's another breakdown in the environment to which they've become accustomed.

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It's a very serious human problem.

I'm aware of the legal background and the Tyrwhitt-Drake decision, and the debate we had last fall, and so on, but I just hope that this won't be allowed to drift. We have these two specific problems: we need better health service and programmes for the Indian people generally and we need specific attention to be focused on this question of adoption of Indian children by non-Indian parents.

There seems to me a little bit of a contradiction that the Indian people in our community want to be regarded as any other Canadian does, as any other British Columbian does, and that colour has nothing to do with social problems, yet I understand that the Indian people themselves are somewhat reluctant to see their children adopted by non-Indian parents. To me there seems some contradiction there, which I think is self-obvious.

I'd just like to finish by talking a little bit about the most serious problem at the moment. This is the confusion and trouble which has arisen because of the amendments which we passed to the *Assessment Equalization Act*. The amendments were made, and as has been pointed out by some Members of the opposition, this party supported the amendments in the House and I make no apology for that. We studied the matter with the information available to us and the decision to support the amendment was qualified, and the *Hansard* record shows this very



well. Both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party gave the amendments modified support because they were well aware that a much more detailed study of the *Assessment Equalization Act* was needed.

I don't think the Social Credit Party can take any credit for its part in that particular debate because the record shows that only one brief comment was made and they gave no reasons for opposing the bill. I don't think anyone in this House should fail to make their position clear on debate of this kind of important legislation which affects so many people whether they own or rent a home or property.

**An Hon. Member:** We voted against it.

**Mr. Wallace:** You voted against it, that's right. And if you've been listening, Mr. Member, I'm pointing out that you all voted against it and you never said a word giving a reason, an explanation or any kind of evidence that you'd even thought about it. You just voted against it. Blind opposition. This is the point. I'm very glad that you interjected your comment, Mr. Member, because I thought for a moment the whole bench down there was asleep. The fact is, we voted for it and the reason we voted for it was that in good faith we felt it was a well-intended move by the government to bring about equality in assessment.

It's obvious that the attempt was not well implemented. The ramifications and the consequences have been very serious, as we all know, with some tremendously large and sudden increases in assessment. I think, Mr. Speaker, and we should make it very plain, that the trouble with the assessment Act didn't start with the amendments which this government introduced last spring. It started on the first occasion that an artificial ceiling was introduced against one particular segment of property owners. Because the whole principle of assessment is that it is a formula on which taxation is calculated.

For this formula to be realistic and valid, it has to apply uniformly across the province, fairly and equally in every municipality. But I repeat: it is a formula. And if the consequence of the formula is a certain amount of taxation for the property owner and if this government or any other government wishes to alter the taxation paid then there must be measures directed against the tax, not against the assessment.

The assessment principle has been tinkered with in various ways. Again, the government of the day was well intended to protect the homeowner from being taxed out of his or her home, and that is a worthy aim — to prevent that happening. But the very important thing about assessment is that it has to fulfil its basic purpose as a formula, and all property should be assessed according to its market value, no matter what type of property it is. If the resulting taxation is considered to be too high for one or other category of property owner, then certainly whatever measure of government relief is brought in it should be against the taxes, not against the assessment. The assessment is so basic to making the system work and so basic to carrying out the aim of equalized assessment of all properties that any relief must be directed against the tax.

In trying to be positive and constructive, I would suggest that there's one of two methods that the government should consider in putting this whole matter straight. We could, for example, apply the income tax principle whereby a certain basic exemption could be allowed against the assessment value. I understand this already pertains, for example, in assessment on farm buildings. Alternatively, that the assessment is calculated and decided upon, again based accurately on market value, and you come up with a certain figure. If you go from that assessment and calculate tax which you think is too high, then perhaps different mill rates should be applied against different types of property.

But whichever way we do it; and I think all sides of the House agree and the throne speech agrees, this has to be studied in depth. I hope fundamental point number one is, whatever is done, that we try to get back to the sound, valid approach that you do assess property in relation to its market value — whether

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you want to say 50 per cent, or 40, or 60, or 100 per cent, that isn't the point.

The point is: you have a formula and from the formula you calculate taxation. If you're not happy with the

taxation figures, you try to deal with them as tax figures. You don't go back and start messing around with the assessment principle. That's where the whole piece of legislation got confused and muddled some time ago when the government, the former administration, started introducing certain ceiling figures directed only against certain segments of property owner. It was really sort of a Band-aid treatment at that time. Now, as somebody aptly put it, we're putting another Band-aid on top of a Band-aid and we're just creating an increasing amount of confusion on the whole matter of assessments.

It is certainly unfortunate that even with the amendment we passed last spring, there has been such failure on the part of the assessment department in the provincial government to give clarification to assessors as to exactly what was meant by the phrase "for residential use" — as we all know from the letter which was circulated by the assessment commissioner on January 22 when he realized that there were varying attitudes displayed by different assessors across the province in regard to acreage on which a residential home was situated.

I won't again go into all the details, but the fact is, Mr. Speaker, it should be clearly realized and should be put on the record that the letter from the assessment commissioner starts off: "For your guidance..." These are guidelines; this is not a directive.

The amendments to the legislation contain no specific regulations to spell out exactly what was intended. As a result, assessors in different municipalities have taken a different attitude, let us say, towards a residence situated on five acres of land. In some municipalities they've assessed the residence on the basis of the smallest legal minimum parcel size, which may be 100 feet by 60, and the other four acres plus has been assessed as undeveloped land. In other municipalities, the five acres has been looked upon as the amount that could be allowed to be considered part of the residential lot.

It is quite clear that there's a tremendous variation in the way in which assessors have interpreted the amendments which we passed last spring. Although I know the Premier meant well in trying to correct some of these complications and consequences, with the greatest of respect, I suggest that it has not really clarified the situation because now we have courts of revision. It is not at all clear, certainly from this letter from Mr. Wright, as to what uniform guidelines should be used at each and every court of revision. I believe some of the courts of revision have already met, some are in the process of holding hearings, some are yet to hold the hearings.

But as early as this morning, Mr. Speaker, I had a phone call which told me about what happened at the court of revision at Langley yesterday — this whole matter of how many acres in association with a residential parcel should be considered part of that residential lot. I understand that the decision in Langley was that on any acreage...in other words if there was a home and 20 acres, that would all be regarded as being covered by 10 per cent ceiling under section 37(e). Yet, in Burnaby, prior to Mr. Wright's letter of January 22, they were allowing only the minimum legal parcel size as the residential lot, and any other acreage was to be assessed as undeveloped land. These are sort of the two extremes.

I hear, unofficially, that at Maple Ridge the thinking will be 20 acres is a reasonable amount. Anything over 20 acres with a home will be residentially assessed under the 10 per cent ceiling.

In other words, the word equalization couldn't be more phony. And the implementation of this Act at the present time is nothing less equal, from the experiences that have been brought to my attention.

The statement has been made as recently as today, in today's *Province*, where Mr. Wright points out that the courts of revision are not only responsible for hearing appeals but they're responsible for the entire property rolls and they can send back assessments to the assessors to look at the situation in view of comments which have been made by the Premier and the circular letter by Mr. Wright.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is a tremendous administrative task. The assessors in this province have been working on the rolls since last summer; here in February of this year you can't suddenly expect all the assessors to get down to work and re-assess all the property. If that's the intent of the government and if this is what the Premier is suggesting, and it certainly appeared that way from press reports, I would suggest that the Premier surely must provide the added personnel and the facilities to enable assessors and their staffs to undertake such a large

administrative job as to re-assess all the properties. It's a tremendous load of work.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, if there is not some concrete way in which uniformity of the decisions of the courts of revision can be reached...and this is why yesterday I considered this such an urgent matter. If we can't get some uniformity of decisions and criteria upon which the courts of revision function, we can just imagine the flood of appeals which will go on to the assessment appeal board. There will be absolute chaos, I would imagine, if many people are unsatisfied by the decisions of the revision court, as well they may. And they will be quite entitled and actually could be expected to take their appeal the next step of the way to the assessment appeal board.

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The whole matter of assessment — and this is one of the very creditable suggestions in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker — is that the matter go to a special committee. I would have preferred that the matter went to the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs since I would expect that the members of that committee are more generally experienced in the field of municipal affairs. At least this party is very pleased that a committee will study the matter.

But I would suggest at this point in time that we cannot wait until this committee brings forth recommendations to make the Act more realistic and more valid. We need some clear-cut, specific direction now.

I know the Premier spoke yesterday, in answer to a question, to the effect that neither has he directed the assessment commission nor in his opinion should he direct the commissioner. That is a matter of policy, and a matter of his decision. But I would appeal, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the many, many citizens in this province who are totally confused and unhappy and feel that they are not being treated fairly because of this existing confused interpretation on these amendments, that some specific direction be given to the courts of revision now so that whatever interpretation of the phrase "for residential use", whatever interpretation is intended by the government should at least be utilized and applied uniformly in every municipality in this province. That way, and that way only, can we assure that the basic goal of equalization comes close to fulfilment.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise the question of the propriety of a letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Hon. Mr. Lorimer) which went to all mayors and councils, dated January 29. On January 29, the Minister of Municipal Affairs stated in this letter that:

"Annual budgets adopted by council, and the resulting mill rate for general purposes, will no doubt reflect the increased cost in various sections of the economy.

"However, I would point out that it is important to recognize that the mill rate levied for general municipal purposes in the current year should be lower than it would otherwise be as a consequence of the increase in the areas of assessment mentioned. This should be made known to the taxpayers in your municipality."

Mr. Speaker, I think this smacks dangerously of "big brother." We have this government repeatedly telling the municipalities that they have their autonomy; they set their own budgets and they decide what the municipality can or cannot afford. There is in this letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs a very clear threat, the sign of coercion that because assessment rolls are increased, municipalities will find disfavour with this Minister if, in fact, their mill rate is not accordingly reduced.

Now, I think that's a blanket kind of statement which he's made to all the mayors and municipalities, and which suggests a clear attempt to threaten the municipalities and to let it be known that in the view of this government there should be automatic reduction of mill rates because the assessment roll has increased. I'm sure that while that might be again a well intentioned goal of the Minister, there must be some municipalities in this province where that will not be possible. The mill rate, at the best, will stay the same.

I think that this letter from the Minister of January 29 is a measure of interference to the autonomy of municipalities; and furthermore perhaps a threat that they may not be too well treated by this government, if indeed we have the same or an increase in the mill rate.

I'm sorry Mr. Speaker, I've belaboured this assessment thing so long, but it is really of extreme importance.

There are many other aspects too which will be covered by the special committee, I'm sure. But I'll just finish with the plea to the Premier that he and I are on one vein; we don't like government directing people. But there's real confusion....

Interjections.

**Mr. Wallace:** Well, he stated yesterday that he has not directed the commission. And we could have a long debate on whether he should or he shouldn't or whether it's policy or not policy. That's a whole debate in itself. All I'm saying is that courts of revision are all confused. They're all coming to different conclusions; they're all applying different criteria to individuals whose property position is the same.

If we're going to have equalization, the courts of revision all have to be acting according to the same terms of reference. Whether we like it or not, they're thoroughly confused and I'm appealing to the government now to work out some mechanism which at least will give all courts of revision the same basic criteria on which they've got to look at this whole business of assessment.

Hon. Mr. Radford adjourns the debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. Mr. Barrett moves adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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