

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, March 20, 1992**

10:00 a.m.

Date: 92/03/20

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head:

Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Father, on this day of a new beginning, we ask for Your guidance in the responsibility we have undertaken and Your help in fulfilling our duties.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly may we faithfully serve all Albertans and, in serving them, serve You.

Amen.

Would members continue to stand, please. As is our custom, we pay tribute on our first day to former members of this Assembly who have died since we last met. As I read the honour list, if you will, of those who have passed on, I would also point out that some family members of some of the deceased are present in my gallery, and we welcome them on this occasion.

Glen Forrest Johnston, who died July 19, 1991. He represented the constituency of Ponoka for the Social Credit Party. He was first elected in the 1952 general election, re-elected in 1955, 1959, 1963, and served until 1967.

Charles William Stewart, who died October 3, 1991. Charlie represented the constituency of Wainwright for the Progressive Conservative Party. He was first elected in the 1975 general election, re-elected in 1979, and served until 1982.

John Harold McLaughlin, who died December 8, 1991, represented the constituency of Stony Plain and also the Liberal Party. He was first elected in the 1955 general election and served until 1959.

Alfred John Hooke passed away February 17, 1992. Alf represented the constituencies of Red Deer and Rocky Mountain House for the Social Credit Party. He was first elected in the 1935 general election, re-elected in 1940, 1944, 1948, 1952, 1955, 1959, 1963, 1967, and served until 1971.

Yesterday Alberta's fifth Sergeant-at-Arms died: James A. Reed. He served the Legislative Assembly of Alberta with distinction from 1955 until 1976.

Then our colleague Sheldon Chumir, who died January 26, 1992, represented the constituency of Calgary-Buffalo for the Liberal Party. He was first elected May 8, 1986, re-elected in the 1989 general election, and served until the time of his death.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms proceeded to Mr. Chumir's desk, which was draped with the Alberta flag]

We remember all of these persons. In a moment of silent prayer I ask you to offer unto God your respective thoughts and, in particular, to remember these persons as you have known them.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Amen.

You may be seated. Hon. members and members of the general public, I wonder if you might come to order, please. Thankfully it's very rare that we must pay tribute to a member who has died in office, but I'd ask that you observe the proper decorum.

The Chair recognizes the leader of the Liberal Party.

head: **Sheldon M. Chumir, Member for Calgary-Buffalo**
December 3, 1940, to January 26, 1992

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity of saying a few things about the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, Sheldon Chumir. Our party has had to weather some pretty difficult storms in the last few months with the leader of the party having to face his second bout with cancer and to see one of our own colleagues die of cancer within two months. It was on November 15 that Sheldon came to me in Red Deer and said that he wasn't feeling well, that he thought he had a cold, and that he wanted permission to leave and go home and rest. Two months later, with really quite a hard and difficult death, Sheldon died of cancer.

I would like to first acknowledge the tributes to Sheldon from the members of this Assembly to our caucus, to me. The kindness that you have shown, the kindness that you have transcribed in your notes and in your communications has been truly wonderful, and it's many other Albertans who have done the same thing because Sheldon had a very, very big following.

When I attended Sheldon's funeral in Calgary, along with a number of MLAs – and thank you for taking time to do that – I noted that Sheldon had no immediate family. He had no brothers, no sisters, no father, no mother. He had in fact a very small family. But almost 2,000 people found their way to the synagogue in Calgary to pay their respects. I think almost every high court judge and provincial court judge from the Calgary region was there. I think almost every leading lawyer from the Calgary legal fraternity was there. I watched and saw senior police officers come in to pay their respects, but I also watched ordinary constables come in in their dress uniforms to pay the same kind of respect. I saw elected officials: mayors and aldermen, reeves, councillors, along with federal Members of Parliament, and of course our own MLAs. I watched as human rights activists came in to pay their respects, tax specialists, civil libertarians. I watched and saw people from the visual and performing arts come in to pay their respects, and many, many more.

10:10

When the ceremony was finished, I was waiting to catch a ride downtown. A complete stranger came to me with his wife, and he said: "Mr. Decore, my name is so-and-so; this is my wife. Could I catch a ride with you? I suspect you're going downtown." During the course of that ride, I asked the individual what it was that brought him and Sheldon together. He told me that he wanted to know something about the Jewish religion, and he couldn't think of anybody or anywhere to go except Sheldon Chumir. So he telephoned Sheldon and said, "Where can I get some information on the Jewish religion?" In due course books started to arrive at this gentleman's house, papers, all sorts of information on the Jewish faith, and he and his wife became very close friends of Sheldon Chumir. That's Sheldon. That's what he was all about. Everybody was his friend.

I first met Sheldon on my first day at university in 1958 and his first day at university in 1958. Sheldon's course was always clear. Sheldon knew he wanted to be a lawyer, and he knew he wanted to be a good lawyer. Sheldon had a great love of sports. He played for the Golden Bears. He played hockey and involved himself in student government as the students' sports representative. He got his colours at this university for the work that he did for students. Sheldon was clear not only in the path that he wanted to get on in adult life, but he was clear in his philosophy

even in those early years. He was the president of the University of Alberta Liberal club. He was active in debating. He was active in model parliament. He was active in things that brought him into contact with other students.

Members of this Assembly, Sheldon was a great asset to our caucus. All of you, I know, realize that. Sheldon would always say, when we discussed an issue and boiled it down to a position that we thought we would take: "Is this right? Is what we are about to embark upon right?" That was his creed.

Last Wednesday I came back and chaired my first meeting of our caucus since my own illness, and I had to shed a tear when I looked across the way and didn't see Sheldon. Sheldon leaves a great legacy to our province, to our country, to our party, to our caucus, to many of us. Much of Sheldon's involvement in Calgary will be talked about, I understand, by the hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn and I'm sure by the hon. Minister of the Environment, but I think these are the things that Sheldon does leave as his legacy to us: he had integrity, he had consistency, he had humility, he had compassion, and he had intelligent ideas to deal with all of the problems that he got himself immersed into.

Sheldon leaves one other legacy, and you could almost have predicted this. Sheldon Chumir's estate has established a foundation, a foundation for ethics in leadership. That's Sheldon. That says it all.

Thank you.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, it has been said that great trees are best measured when they are down. It is left to us today to take the measure of Sheldon Chumir and to honour his memory. We've lost a colleague. The people of Calgary-Buffalo have lost an effective, honest representative. The law has lost one of its most brilliant practitioners. Sheldon's many acquaintances have lost a beloved friend, and I have lost a close friend of over 30 years. Through our friendship and over some long discussions in Chinatown I came to know of his love for Chinese food, and some very strange dishes indeed, his passion for old-fashioned rock and roll, his love of travel to all parts of the world, and I came to know of his athletic ability as far back as when he was a halfback for the Calgary Broncs and I was the water boy.

Mr. Speaker, it's all Albertans who are poorer today because his untimely death has left us with a sense of unfinished business. For it is not what Sheldon has done, and his accomplishments were remarkable, but what he had left to do that we mourn. Sheldon Chumir had a vision for what this Alberta and this Canada could be. His vision did not necessarily mean having a perfect road map for the future. His vision simply meant giving voice to important issues and galvanizing people to debate those issues. Oftentimes his vision didn't mean giving all the right answers but rather asking the right questions. We always knew that so long as Sheldon was among us he would always remind us that the poor must be helped, that the defenceless must be defended, that civil liberties must be fiercely protected, that the law must be respected, that public service is an honourable calling, that citizenship is the responsibility of us all, and that there are no substitutes for honesty, integrity, and compassion.

The highest honour, the most enduring tribute, and the most lasting legacy that this Assembly could pay to the memory of Sheldon Chumir would be for us to rededicate ourselves to those goals for which he stood.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, others have spoken about Sheldon Chumir's significance as an Albertan and indeed as a Canadian. In my remarks I would like to stress the importance of Sheldon as

a true citizen of Calgary. Members of this Assembly know him as hard working, diligent, and an extremely effective debater. They also know that he took up important causes and championed them relentlessly. Calgarians, though, also know Sheldon for these same qualities. As a youngster he worked in his family's grocery store in the shadows of the old Buffalo baseball stadium in downtown Calgary, and what's important about that is that he never lost sight of his origins. He was always quick to defend common people and the underdog. Just recently I learned that he skated with Vietnamese youth on many a Sunday afternoon. This was part of a program designed to help immigrant young people who were having difficulty in adjusting to Canadian society. By the way, he was a good skater, and as others have mentioned and according to his contemporaries at Central Memorial high school, pouned for pound he was a darned good halfback on the high school football team.

I first met Sheldon during university days and remember getting into a long, impassioned discussion about civil rights movements in the United States and how lessons learned there could be used to defuse prejudice and discrimination in Canada. This was a theme that Sheldon addressed throughout his life. In fact, his first public political involvement in Calgary was to support the principle of public schooling. Rita Dempsey, a past chairman of the Calgary board of education, says that Sheldon believed that children must live and work in an environment that is free of prejudice, and because of their universal accessibility only public schools can meet this condition.

10:20

Sheldon's reputation in Calgary was also based on his commitment to human rights and civil liberties. On one occasion in which I was personally involved he saw it as an absolute necessity that the right to freedom of expression be protected. He was prepared at his own expense, and this wasn't unusual for Sheldon, to take this issue all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention that almost 2,000 people attended his memorial service in Calgary. That indicates just how many people he touched with his integrity, his ability, and his generosity. He'll be missed by all members of our caucus but especially I think by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and myself, who together with Sheldon were the first opposition members to be elected in Calgary since the 1970s.

MR. SPEAKER: Could you all rise, please.

Sergeant-at-Arms, would you march off the colours of Alberta, please.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms removed the Alberta flag from Mr. Chumir's desk]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

head: Introduction of Visitors

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly four members of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization: the director general, Domingo Siazon; Stephen Halloway, representative to the United Nations and director of the New York office; Herbert May, senior director for industrial co-operation from the head office in Vienna; and Raymond Gladu, who is a representative in Canada, who resides in Montreal. Mr. Siazon has been in Vancouver participating in Globe '92 and is here today to meet with the government and private sector to discuss how his organization can assist

Alberta companies in identifying business opportunities in developing countries. I think it is significant, tomorrow being the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, that we should have with us in this Assembly today such significant representatives of the United Nations. I would ask that they rise in the gallery and receive the warm welcome of the members of the Legislature.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSZYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present petitions on behalf of 24 schools from Parkland local 10 of the Alberta Teachers' Association. The petitions are putting forth ATA resolution 226/91 requesting the government to begin meaningful negotiations with teacher representatives to resolve the problems surrounding the Teachers' Retirement Fund.

head: **Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present to you and to members of the Assembly the report of the Alberta Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform entitled *Alberta in a New Canada: Visions of Unity*.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices on the selection of Alberta's first Ethics Commissioner.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

Be it resolved that the report of the Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform, appointed in this Assembly on March 26, 1991, the report being entitled *Alberta in a New Canada: Visions of Unity*, be now received and concurred in.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice of the following motion:

Be it resolved that the report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices be now received and concurred in: that the appointment of Robert Clark as the first Alberta Ethics Commissioner be confirmed by this Assembly.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to give notice that under Standing Order 30 I'll request leave to adjourn the ordinary business of the day to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, that being the recent appointment of the Solicitor General.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice under Standing Order 40 that I will be asking for unanimous consent after question period today for the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly commemorates March 21 as the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and that each member of the Assembly today renews his/her commitment to work to eradicate racism and promote equality in all areas of endeavour in his/her public life.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to propose the following motion to the Assembly under Standing Order 40 after question period:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly reaffirm its support of multiculturalism as a positive characteristic of our society, be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly acknowledge that Albertans benefit because Alberta has welcomed people from all over the world and that the diversity of their backgrounds gives our province strength, and be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly reaffirm its support of the legislation, programs, services, and policies that are in place in this area.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, sir, to table four copies of the annual report of the Alberta Opportunity Company for the year ended March 31, 1991, copies of which have been previously distributed to all members.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the annual report of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities for the year 1990-91.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table today the response to Motion for a Return 408 submitted by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon last session, which incidentally I provided to him last September.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table with the Assembly today the following items: annual reports for the fiscal year ended March 31, '91, for Alberta Hospital Edmonton, which had been previously distributed to all members, and for the Alberta Registered Dietitians Association; the annual report for the Alberta Dental Association for the year ended June 30, '91, for the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses for the year ended September 30, '91, and for the Public Health Advisory and Appeal Board for the year ended July 31, 1990. Copies of the latter four will be distributed to all members.

I am also pleased to table the vital statistics annual review for 1990, copies of which have been previously distributed to all members, and finally, financial statements for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1991, for the Charles Camsell provincial general hospital, Alberta Children's provincial general hospital, the Foothills provincial general hospital, Glenrose rehabilitation hospital, Alberta Hospital Edmonton, Alberta Hospital Ponoka, northern Alberta children's hospital, and the Alberta Cancer Board.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

10:30

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Energy, then Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Alberta Office of Renewable Energy Technology I'm pleased to submit the south-west Alberta renewable energy initiative annual report 1990-91.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table for the information of the members of this Assembly a letter from Edmonton working women requesting a full investigation into the allegations against the Solicitor General.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted this morning to introduce to you 14 eager and keen students from Millarville community school. They're accompanied by their teacher and vice-principal, Mr. Tony Hampshire, and parent Mrs. Karen Raymond. I'd ask them to rise in the gallery and receive the cordial welcome of this House.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly the son-in-law of the hon. Member for Stony Plain, Duane Hrynyk, and his grandsons Robbie and Chad Hrynyk from Campbell River, B.C. I would ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**Speaker's Ruling
Introduction of Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, just a reminder early in session that while we have allowed that today and it's all very nice, in actual fact we try to reserve that privilege of introduction for a broader range of individuals. Having said that, you know that I'll just wink at my mother.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**
(continued)

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure on the first day of the session following the opening yesterday to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly 31 students from St. Joseph elementary school accompanied by nine parents and also a teacher, Mr. Rob Coumont. We're going to have the opportunity of meeting with them later. In the meantime, we would like to extend to them our warm welcome to this Assembly.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly this morning two representatives of the Edmonton Multicultural Society. With us in the public gallery is the first vice-president of the society, Dr. Lila Fahlman, as well as Christine Lassalle. I'd ask them now to stand and receive our very warm welcome.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to members of this Assembly two Canadians who are active in the Ukrainian community in Alberta, Jim Jacuta and Bohdan Barabash. I wonder if they would stand and receive the usual greeting from this House. They are both executive members of the Ukrainian professional and businesspersons' association, and they are active members of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Grande Prairie, followed by the Minister of Education.

DR. ELLIOTT: It is my pleasure this morning to introduce two members of the Grande Prairie Roman Catholic separate school district: the superintendent, Mr. Dennis Grant, and the chairman of the board, Mr. John Croken. I'd ask them to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, in the gallery today is Mrs. Natalie Harasymiw. She is with the Parents for Ukrainian Education and has been a strong pioneer in the preparation of materials for Ukrainian education. I'd ask her to rise and receive the warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

head: **Ministerial Statements**
Solicitor General

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, as Solicitor General of the province of Alberta I have the responsibility to deliver programs that ensure the protection and safekeeping of each and every individual. Because I regard the responsibility of this office of paramount importance to Albertans, I am making this statement.

Recently there has been a great deal written and reported on my character and relative past, which has hurt my family and damaged my reputation. I feel that any attempt to discredit my 20-year veterinary career is totally and unequivocally wrong and false.

Yes, I was married in 1964. We were young. The marriage did not work out and was one of the most difficult times for both of us. The marriage ended 22 years ago, in 1970, by a court decision on accepted grounds. It is over.

There have been many stories and allegations about me. All stories have two sides to them, not a lot of which is known. In the course of events it would be impossible to explain the details of much past and private life. Suffice to say that some of the stories, but not all, are surrounded by some degree of the use of alcohol. As Solicitor General I am sensitive to this area of my life. Today I make a commitment to the Premier, to this Legislative Assembly, and to the people of Alberta that while I am Solicitor General or any other minister of the Crown I will refrain from the use of alcohol. This statement is in respect of the responsibility and trust that Albertans expect of this position. In the office of Solicitor General I will work to the best of my abilities to carry out the programs in force today and strive to develop the necessary changes to make Alberta the safest as well as the best place to live.

I apologize for any concern or doubt as to my sincerity or ability to serve my province. I thank my wife, my family, the Premier, my community and supporters who have given their vote of confidence to me during the last six years.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, let me reply to the Solicitor General and say, first of all, that people in public life can well understand, I think, the pressure and stress that the Solicitor General, the minister, has been under. You seem to indicate in your statement that there are problems with alcohol and that you are going to refrain from the use of alcohol. I would commend you on that. I think it takes courage to stand here and admit that. I commend you for doing that, and I wish you luck in terms of your success in dealing with that matter.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are some other problems. We're dealing with respect for the law. Beyond alcohol, when we're dealing with respect for the law, there's the matter of maintenance payments and there's the matter of vigilante justice: things that are very important in terms of the sensitivity and integrity of the position. I would say to the Solicitor General that it's now the Premier who has to deal with it. It's his judgment now that's in question, and we would like to pursue this in question period.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

**International Day for the Elimination of
Racial Discrimination**

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to draw the Assembly's attention to March 21, tomorrow, which is the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. I do this today, and it's appropriate that we have visitors from the United Nations with us today. Each year this day

serves to refocus the world's attention on a difficult problem that exists in our society and in others, and it makes us more aware of how diligent we must be in ensuring that racial barriers to full participation in our society are removed.

Mr. Speaker, through the efforts of this government through the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission and the Alberta Human Rights Commission, we have made a diligent effort at raising Albertans' awareness of the negative impacts of discrimination of any form in our society, and we actively promote the full participation of all people in Alberta society.

Perhaps rather than a collection of ethnic and racial groups we should look at ourselves as people. We would be better served if that were the case. We all want to benefit from the opportunities that exist in this province like nowhere else, and we should all have every opportunity to participate and contribute to this society.

10:40

We must recognize, however, that we come from diverse backgrounds. As someone once said, "Many came here in different boats, but we're all in the same boat together now." That is today's reality. We are a diverse culture, and everyone who is participating in our society wants to succeed. This government wants to ensure that everyone has those opportunities, that no one is left out or feels they cannot participate in Alberta society for whatever reason. Not only does the government lose, but we all lose if one person cannot participate.

Mr. Speaker, there are pieces of legislation endorsed by this Assembly. There are programs and policies put in place by this government. There have been motions passed by this Assembly, the strongest among them one endorsed and promoted and sponsored by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, who was honoured so eloquently here this morning. As we think about tomorrow and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, let us recommit ourselves one and all to furthering our objectives into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to stand and react positively to the minister's declaration in drawing attention to the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

While there's always bad news, we recently have had some good news, of course, with the referendum in South Africa. A lot of people didn't know how it would go, and we're hopeful for peace and justice and full democracy in the very near future in South Africa.

Mr. Speaker, while there are encouraging signs in Alberta, there are discouraging signs too. Not all is well in Alberta, and I think the minister would agree with me. We've had the Aryan Nations spectacle, and in our major cities we've had gang wars that seem to have some racial connotations to them. We certainly see, as we travel around, enough racial slurs.

We know that in Alberta and in Canada immigration is going to increase, and we're going to have to deal with this problem, Mr. Speaker. If I may say to the government, to the minister, we do need some concrete action to deal with some of these things, not just lip service. We look forward to such Bills as employment equity. We look forward to more being done for English as a Second Language. We look forward to more being done dealing with racial prejudice in the school system. The minister talks about the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission. The very least we could do is have that body elected. What better way to have open government than to do that?

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, certainly we in the Official Opposition participate fully in the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

head:

Statement by the Speaker

House Procedure

MR. SPEAKER: Before we proceed to Oral Question Period, the Chair has a relatively brief statement to make to the House.

The Chair held a meeting with the three House leaders, and a number of issues were briefly discussed. Agreement was reached to meet in the very near future to discuss possible changes to some of our House procedures.

For purposes of this session the operation of question period will continue in the same format as last session. However, as always, brief questions and answers are encouraged because it will allow more hon. members to participate.

In the past few years an equitable system has been developed by both the Chair and the Table to allow the processing of motions other than government motions and private member's Bills. This year a process was set in place to help in the preparation of Bills, which enabled Table officers to better serve all members and allow members to prioritize their Bills. The request for changes in priorities in the last few days has unfortunately impacted the efficiency of this process and created needless extra work for the Table, but hopefully this will be adjusted in the next few days.

Alberta has the largest Order Paper in the country and quite possibly the Commonwealth, and that no doubt reflects the healthy interest of members in things parliamentary. However, a more orderly submission of written questions and motions for returns will need to be developed. Some backlog will occur for the next few days since some members have deluged the Order Paper with as many as 132 matters within a 36-hour period just prior to or immediately upon opening day, including one member who signed two originals of one separate motion for a return on the same day and seemed unaware of his duplication.

A memo has gone out to all members with regard to petitions, and I am certain hon. members who carry responsibility for petitions will ensure that neither Elvis Presley nor Mickey Mouse are signatories to their petitions. Petitions are a serious parliamentary matter.

The Chair is pleased that a select special committee will be established with respect to improving the functioning of this Legislature. The Table officers and the Chair have done extensive research and analysis, especially regarding Standing Orders, and are willing to assist any committee or member in this regard.

The Chair has urged consideration of other issues, such as length of speeches, members' statement period, and hours of sitting, and is given to understand by House leaders that there is every possibility of a motion coming before the House in the near future giving effect to some of these matters.

Karen South has served this Legislature and its members with distinction for 11 years and has taken up her duties with the office of the Ethics Commissioner. We thank her for her work and wish her well.

Louise Kamuchik has ably served the Legislative Assembly for nine years, and we welcome her to her role as Clerk Assistant. I hope you will also welcome our new Parliamentary Counsel, Frank Work.

Finally, two sets of congratulations: first, to 21 members who today celebrate their third anniversary since they were first elected to this Assembly, and slightly belated congratulations to the seven members who refer to themselves as the notorious class of '79, who celebrated on March 14 their 13th anniversary of election.

head: **Oral Question Period**
Solicitor General

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Since the appointment of the newest Solicitor General a month ago all of us have been subjected to a parade of allegations about our new chief lawman. They range from alleged wife abuse to drunk and disorderly conduct to cruelty to animals. I admit and agree that these are allegations, but most importantly, though, we've known for sure that he's had his wages garnisheed for not making maintenance payments and the RCMP has confirmed that last summer they responded in the middle of the night to a complaint that the Member for Vermilion-Viking was destroying property in his neighbour's backyard. He has clearly indicated that he's proud of being involved in vigilante justice, which hardly shows respect for the law. My question to the Premier is simply this: given this pattern of consistent behaviour over 20 years, why would the Premier appoint this man to such a sensitive position as Solicitor General?

MR. GETTY: Selection of cabinet members is obviously one of assessment, judgment, balance. Of course in our system, Mr. Speaker, it must be somebody who is elected by the people of Alberta, different from, for instance, the United States. There is geographical balance, gender balance, assessment of how a member may have handled responsibilities in previous portfolios. All of these matters are considered, and then a decision is made.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier was specifically: knowing all these things that we now know about the Solicitor General, why did he appoint him as Solicitor General when he'd shown that disrespect for the law in the past? That's the question.

10:50

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has referred to allegations and stories. I would say in my responsibilities as Premier and leader of the government that stories may have a big impact with the hon. member and his judgments, but stories are not something upon which you base decisions.

MR. MARTIN: This position has been compromised. The integrity of the Solicitor General has been compromised, and the Premier doesn't understand that. Some of it isn't stories, Mr. Speaker. Some of it's on the record. Because he avoided telling us, I'm not sure if he knew about this or not. Either way he's incompetent in his judgment.

My question to the Premier is simply this: will he now admit he has made a mistake, take the pressure off the Solicitor General, and remove him from his post so that the integrity of this position can be preserved?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Solicitor General has dealt with these matters today.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. We're talking about your judgment, not the Solicitor General's.

Ethics in Government

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, let me go back to the Premier and go from one bad appointment to another. Alberta's reputation has been severely damaged in international circles because of this government's addiction to patronage, the old boys' network. Joe

Dutton, a former executive secretary to Premier Peter Lougheed who was appointed by the current Minister of Energy as Alberta's director of business immigration in Hong Kong, has tarnished the reputation of our province through questionable business dealings with other people's money. This cronyism gone rotten has stained Alberta's reputation in an oriental culture where long-term relationships are based on trust, and this is essential for good business. My question to the Premier is this: will the Premier tell this Assembly whether Mr. Dutton used his government position in Hong Kong to line up business deals for himself?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member would know that 99.9 percent of all selections to the public service of Alberta are made through a wide array of solicitations, advertising, committees, selection committees in order to select the best people possible, training within the public service and the personnel administration office. In some cases we have personal knowledge of people that reflect very directly the policies and thinking of the government, and in certain cases we're able to save the dollars of all the other terms of a selection process. I would say that Mr. Dutton, who has been referred to, to the absolute best of my knowledge on complete checking, did not in any way use his time while he was employed by the government of Alberta to get involved in what he later did as a private citizen.

MR. MARTIN: If you believe in that, Mr. Speaker, you probably believe in the tooth fairy.

More immediately, Mr. Speaker, because this is a serious matter, under the name of Western Canada Properties, Mr. Dutton has lined up another multimillion dollar deal with Asian investors, but this time the investment requires the approval of the provincial government. My question to the Premier is simply this: given that the province must approve this current deal by Joe Dutton, will the Premier put a halt to it until this House can be assured that Alberta's reputation will not be further damaged by this new project?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, those are the responsibilities of the Minister of Career Development and Employment, and I ask him to respond to the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Career Development and Employment.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to clarify a few facts for the hon. member and members of the Assembly. Yes, the Leader of the Opposition is correct in stating that Western Canada Properties is an Alberta fund. I would point out, though, that this fund was offered in 1990, some three years plus since Mr. Dutton had left the employ of the provincial government as an executive assistant to then Premier Lougheed. I would indicate as well, though, that this fund, according to Mr. Dutton's information, because I didn't feel it was proper that I should respond on any fund offering whatsoever because of the level of funding which was subscribed at some \$250,000 versus the \$150,000 offering in Saskatchewan and other provinces, created what would be termed an unequal playing field. Now, there have been no subscriptions taken to that offering at this time, and the fund will expire in May 1992.

MR. MARTIN: I can understand why nobody's taking up the offers, Mr. Speaker, and I might point out to the Premier that already faxed photocopies of a weekend series from the *Calgary Herald* have been plastered across windows of immigration

consultants' offices in Hong Kong, labeled: "Buyer beware. Don't invest in western Canada." So that's the seriousness of this problem.

My question to either the Premier or the Minister is this: given the threat to Alberta's reputation that such rampant cronyism creates, will the Premier now commit to holding open competitions and making such appointments by merit rather than by political connections?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition obviously wasn't listening when I answered his first question.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I should comment with regards to the allegations about the information being posted in various Hong Kong offices. It'll be interesting to note, as a recent offering has just been put out by the province of Alberta, how well that will be taken up in relation to the comparison in the alleged remarks that Alberta's reputation has been damaged.

Solicitor General

(continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the hon. Premier. The Premier has responsibility for the selection of cabinet. We've witnessed, read about, heard about serious allegations involving the Solicitor General in terms of bullying and threats and vigilante activities and in terms of trashing other people's assets. We assume, Mr. Premier, that your offices have done the appropriate investigation of these stories, as you call them, and I would like to ask the Premier whether or not these accusations are true and correct.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like first to express to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry on behalf of myself and my family, members of our government and caucus our pleasure at seeing him here in the Legislature and our best wishes for the future and to caution him from personal experience to not rush in returning to the heavy responsibilities that he has, because the best advice from his family and doctor would be to make sure you have your strength and endurance before pursuing heavy responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I have discussed the matters that the hon. member has been talking about. As I explained to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Solicitor General has dealt with these matters today. He categorized them in two special ways: one as a some 20 or more years old marriage, when he and his wife then were young and had difficult personal times together – many members in this Assembly have gone through similar occasions, I guess – and then the behavioral situation when alcohol is involved, which he has had the strength and courage to stand here and talk about before not just his colleagues in the Legislature but all the people of Alberta and Canada. I believe he has dealt with this matter very effectively.

MR. DECORE: First of all, thank you for the comments about not rushing it, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, I'm surprised that you appear to be dodging the question. I'm not talking about a marriage of 25 years ago. That's important, but I was talking about serious issues of the last year involving vigilante activities, bullying, threats, trashing people's property. Have you looked into these things, these stories, as you call them? If you have, is that other side of these stories – are those correct statements that have been made? Surely you have satisfied yourself on that.

11:00

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry was listening to the Solicitor General today, he heard him refer to both sides of all situations. I certainly am aware of other sides, if you like, and they are things that I would not discuss because they involve other people's personal situations. I would say to the hon. member that the way ministers handle their responsibilities, how they perform, should be the key criteria to any member of this Assembly and certainly the criteria that I put great emphasis on.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, we know that the Premier has not seen it necessary to interview the minister's former wife. I would like to know whether or not the Premier or members of his office have interviewed those people who have spoken out about the bullying, the vigilante activity, and the trashing of assets.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Solicitor General's former wife, when the request came for a meeting, I happened to be ill at the time and in bed, but within less than an hour of being advised of the request, I had the Acting Premier meet with her and, at my insistence, the Minister of Labour, who's responsible for women's issues as well. They had a fairly extensive meeting and reported to me when I returned to work that a further meeting would not be necessary.

The hon. Solicitor General has made a statement today which kind of reflects on certain matters involving the former Mrs. West. If she feels that she still would like an additional meeting with me, it may be that I will have a chance to meet with her in the future, and I would see if there is something more to talk to her about. But let's be clear; the Acting Premier met with her as quickly as possible, the minister responsible for women's issues was there, they reported to me, and there seemed to be no reason for another meeting.

Coal Marketing

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, considerable effort has been made by Alberta and western Canadian coal mining communities – industry and government – to promote the use of western Canadian coal in Ontario. As early as January of this year it appeared that Ontario Hydro would not be renewing their contracts for western Canadian coal. However, recently Luscar Sterco signed a contract with Ontario Hydro. My question to the Minister of Energy: could he advise the Assembly of the impact of this contract on the Alberta economy and the western Canadian coal industry? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Quiet please. Order. [interjections] Order.
The Minister of Energy.

MR. ORMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the concern expressed by the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest. I'd first like to acknowledge his participation in the association of Canadian coal municipalities, which has a very significant impact on coal trade outside of our province.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member points out a significant fact in the contract between Luscar and Ontario Hydro, and that is that we were on the brink of losing that contract as recently as January of this year. Fortunately, through tough negotiations Luscar was able to maintain their market share of Ontario coal, albeit at less than on an overall basis because of a declining demand for coal in Ontario and because of the nature of their economy.

Mr. Speaker, coal is a very important part of our economy, and we will continue to support initiatives such as this and make sure that despite the declining demand we continue to keep the overall mix of Alberta coal in consumption in the rest of Canada.

MR. BRADLEY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. As Alberta is Canada's largest coal mining producer, can the minister advise the Assembly of any other actions or initiatives he or the government is taking to promote the use of western Canadian coal in national and international markets?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, with regard to international markets I had the pleasure to make representations to some of our largest coal consumers in Japan and Korea, our largest export market. They, too, are putting significant price and volume pressures on our coal producers here in the province. The point the hon. member brings out underlines the importance of our action committee on western Canadian coal to Ontario, on which our Premier is a participant with other Premiers from western Canada and the Hon. Don Mazankowski, to try and make sure we overcome hurdles to increasing sales of coal beyond the province of Alberta. One of the biggest hurdles is transportation. The cost of transportation on a mileage basis is much higher than in the United States, and before we can make significant inroads on increasing sales of coal outside of Alberta to eastern Canada, the issue of transportation must be addressed. I'm advised that in April of this year the action committee on behalf of the western Premiers will be meeting the secretariat to deal with issues such as transportation.

Administration of Justice

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General's recent refusal to hold a public inquiry into the Neपोose case smacks of an attempt to sweep under the rug serious concerns with respect to matters concerning the administration of justice such as suppression of evidence, selective presentation of evidence, coercion, and racism. It also raises the issue of miscarriage of justice. My question is for the Attorney General. Given that Justice Cawsey expressed disapproval of having the police investigate their own conduct, why does the Attorney General refuse to hold a public, independent inquiry in this case?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to caution the hon. member, who is a member of the Law Society, that this matter is still before the courts, so in our discussions we must be very careful of the context we put the case in.

This particular instance was reviewed completely, judicially not only through the original trial court but twice at the Court of Appeal and once by a commissioner, Commissioner Sinclair, appointed by the Court of Appeal to in fact go through all of the original evidence and any of the new evidence. His report was given to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal then adjudicated and returned it for a new trial on, really, two things: the evidence had changed because there was the death of one of the key witnesses and a recantation of the testimony of another key witness.

Through the inquiry there was definitely an indication that some of the investigatory procedures were inadequate, and there were some inconsistencies. We analyzed that through the Attorney General's department and concurred, and through dialogue with the RCMP they have committed to undertake an inquiry. We did analyze it also to find out whether there should be a further inquiry that we could have. There is a case in the Supreme Court,

the Putnam case, that clearly spells out that we do not have jurisdiction to investigate RCMP matters on an operational basis. The RCMP have concurred with us through their commissioner that there will be a complete investigation as to the procedures that were used and the inadequacies, of which they admit there are some, and those will be forthcoming.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, a police probe is a poor substitute for a public inquiry.

The Cawsey report states that the perception that police are sometimes prejudiced against aboriginal people is widespread. My question here is for the Solicitor General. It seems to me that it's time the concerns of aboriginal peoples are addressed. Will the Solicitor General petition the Attorney General to hold a public inquiry into this matter so that aboriginal peoples and all Albertans may have an answer to the question as to whether there's been an abuse of police powers or a miscarriage of justice?

11:10

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General has addressed this and has indicated as strongly as he can that this matter still exists before the court. I will say that the investigation into their actions by the RCMP through the federal government will be carried out in a responsible manner.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Family Violence

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Solicitor General has said that he's committed to curbing family violence in Alberta. Will he now tell the House what his position is on treatment programs for men who abuse their spouse?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I fully endorse all of the programs that were brought forward by my predecessor, and I will be looking in the future at programs that will address and hopefully work in the very area that the member has indicated.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just draw to your attention that the minister advertises programs for men who batter. Will he now guarantee also to provide funding for those programs, particularly the Changing Ways program, which is going to go out of business at the end of this month?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, as my department's budgets come forward in the near future, all members will have a chance to discuss them and work at passing them. I trust that the member will join in on those initiatives. I will look at programs then and trust we will have some dollars at that time to look at some new initiatives in this direction and to work with the other departments of Health, social services, Education, and the minister responsible for women's issues. I assure you that my intent is to bring forth a strong endorsement from the Department of the Solicitor General as to the principles that started in 1990, and those are related to enforcement, policing, education, victim support, public awareness, rehabilitation, and co-ordination with agencies out there.

Teachers' Retirement Fund

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, recently the Provincial Treasurer announced a number of very positive initiatives with respect to public service pensions and with respect to the local authorities

pension plan. However, there was no reference made in this announcement to the Teachers' Retirement Fund. Therefore, I would like to ask the Minister of Education: just what is the status of the various issues that are facing this fund in the province at this time?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, this government and all members of this government share a common concern with the teachers and the professionals within the Alberta Teachers' Association to seek an affordable and practical solution to the financial problems facing the Teachers' Retirement Fund. We had a series of discussions this time last year that led to an interim memorandum of understanding. Regrettably that memorandum was not accepted by representatives of the profession across the province. I advised the president of the Alberta Teachers' Association in a letter last week that the government is now prepared to recommence our discussions to find that affordable and practical solution.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question then. Given that there is an initiative under way to revive negotiations, does the minister have any schedule to report to the Assembly as to when these negotiations or discussions might be concluded?

MR. DINNING: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The discussions between the representatives of government and the representatives of the Alberta Teachers' Association will begin by a meeting between the two sides next week, and it certainly is our intention to ensure that legislation is brought forward during this session of the Legislature to amend the Teachers' Retirement Fund Act, again to find that affordable and practical solution.

Solicitor General

(continued)

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, this morning I keep hearing the Solicitor General and the Premier talking about how there are always two sides to a story, but so far all I see is the Premier listening to one side, that being the side of the Solicitor General. My question with respect to the allegations made regarding the Solicitor General during the last month is this: why won't the Premier meet with all those people who have brought forward allegations and get their side of the story so he can make an objective assessment of the situation?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly dealt with the matter already. I talked with the Solicitor General about these matters, and I'm satisfied with the position the Solicitor General has expressed today.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the statement of the minister this morning, the point is that no objective review is being held, and the other people who are prepared to speak can't get the ear of this Premier. My question, then, to the Premier is this: if he is not willing to meet with all of the people who have gone on the record with respect to allegations regarding the Solicitor General, will he establish an independent person or commission to do so so that the air can be cleared?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I referred to one request, which was dealt with within an hour by requesting a meeting. I certainly haven't received any other requests.

I would caution the hon. member that there is another family. There is the family. [interjections] There is the family. I would

ask hon. members to consider the family, a wonderful family that has been in existence for a long time and is a superb family.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

Freedom of Information Legislation

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we heard rhetoric about how this government would repent from their secretive ways and would make information more accessible. Today we hope that there might be action to match yesterday's rhetoric, but not surprisingly we still have the deals with Peter Pocklington, the Gainers financial statements, the master agreement. They're still as secretive as ever. As well, the audited financial statements for failed business ventures that cost taxpayers so much also are still secret. So I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer, who has been the most secretive minister of the most secretive government in Canada: will he now commit to making public the master agreement with Peter Pocklington, audited financial statements of Gainers, and the financial statements of failed business ventures in which taxpayers now have a significant stake?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'll try and sweep them all into one answer. As the member knows, the government of Alberta is pursuing in the Alberta courts at least seven actions against the former owner of Gainers. Consequently, since these matters are now proceeding into discovery and well into trial, it would be inappropriate for the government to produce those records which may in fact bias either our position or the defendant's position.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, there's no repentance here. Unlike most provinces and the House of Commons our public accounts have still not been released despite having been prepared for many months. Ontario, for example, had theirs as early as last October. Also, we still don't have the audited financial statements for NovAtel for 1990 nor the financial results for 1991.

To the Premier: in order to dispel the impression that this so-called priority of his government is nothing more than an empty, insincere gesture, will he now direct his ministers to make those financial statements and documents public?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, what a tortuous line of questioning. After all this time that we have been waiting to get back into the Legislature, the hon. member jumps back into history. Couldn't this member in some way get himself contemporary? I mean, here we are in the Legislature. We've waited to come back to the House. We're wondering if the hon. member might have something refreshing and new to talk about. I really feel kind of sorry for the hon. member. All these things will be dealt with as we proceed through the session.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Impaired Driving

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question to the Solicitor General, who has the responsibility for policing alcohol-related offences, especially with respect to drunk driving. What can the minister say to the House that will convince the House that the government is going to continue the past minister's very good record in this regard?

11:20

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, impaired driving definitely is a crime, and it cannot be tolerated as it endangers the lives of each and every motorist out there. The programs that have been started will be continued with the utmost direction. I'm looking forward in this new budget that's coming out – and I'll hope again, as I mentioned to somebody else, that I will be helped by the members opposite to ensure that I have that budget voted on – to some new recommendations that will see increased enforcement activities to detect incidents of impaired driving, public awareness campaigns to develop and advertise new impaired initiatives, and I'll be looking at prevention and education programs intended to deter people from drinking and driving.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recently the minister and the Minister of the Environment had a meeting in a local business establishment where the minister encountered a recent visitor to Canada and words were exchanged. Could the minister tell the House today who drove home from that party?

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Member for Grande Prairie.

Teachers' Work Stoppage

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. I'd like to make reference to the strike situation at the Grande Prairie public school system, and I would ask the minister if she would give us an indication of the position of the government on this issue.

MS McCOY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, the teachers in Grande Prairie are on strike, locked out by the locally elected public school board. As I understand it, talks are continuing, and we have of course made available a mediator to assist them in it. It is my view that it is the responsibility of the school board and the union to continue those talks and come to an agreement as quickly as possible. It is their responsibility to do so. Of course, we here, as I'm sure people elsewhere, keep firmly in mind the first priority, which is the children and the young people who are attending the school system.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Public Lands Management

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Certain members of the cattle industry have recently proposed that some 25,000 square kilometres of public lands which are presently under some type of agricultural disposition be transferred to the administration of the Department of Agriculture. Albertans who are concerned about our dwindling wildlife population and habitat are fearful that such a policy is perhaps a precursor to another agenda: to sell those lands and to perhaps cultivate them. There is a vague reference in the throne speech to "a new natural resources management policy." I would like the minister to give his assurance today in the Assembly that he will never agree to transfer these lands from the multiple use public lands branch to the single use agricultural ministry.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, there's been a significant amount of discussion over the past few months by a number of groups with respect to public lands in Alberta. One of the areas

that makes it a difficult issue to deal with is that there are so many competing uses. I share with the members that I'm of the view that it isn't so much the transfer that matters. Certain irritants need to be dealt with. One is the whole area of access/trespass. There are areas that we have to deal with, but no decision has been made with respect to any transfer of any lands.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, with that vague response I would like to ask a supplementary to the Premier, if I may. In the throne speech the government discovered after some 20 years that it should be listening to the people of Alberta. I think they mentioned "listening" 11 times in 11 pages. I wonder if the Premier would promise today to give Albertans a chance to be heard on this particular proposal through a public hearing process before he makes any changes which may further compromise the wilderness and the wildlife habitat of Alberta.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we will consistently listen to the people of Alberta. I think the hon. member is correct that the throne speech did mention it. It certainly did mention the very numerous additional times that we've listened and provided opportunities, but we will continue to do it at every possible chance.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

English as a Second Language

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. As the minister knows, there have been many demonstrations and rallies and meetings in Calgary regarding potential cutbacks to ESL funding. This, of course, would mean that a number of students in our province would never have any success. They must be given some assistance. To assure that school boards not only in Calgary but across the province can offer good-quality ESL programs, is the minister prepared to commit today to shifting funds into ESL block funding to increase that funding?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very, very important part of educating our young people and especially new Canadians who come to our country. What the government does, through provincial taxpayers' dollars, is contribute approximately \$750 a year per student for three years to each funded English as a Second Language student. Those dollars are there. They're paid not only with a 3 percent grant rate increase this year, but for every eligible English as a Second Language child in our schools they receive that funding. So the commitment is there, the funding is there, and what I encourage school boards to do is use that funding in the best possible way to achieve the results that we all want for our young people and especially in this case for new Canadian children so that they have an opportunity to learn and become fully literate in the English language.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight, supplementary.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that there are moneys there now for a three-year period, but many experts in the field have told us that three years is not long enough and that in order to prepare a curriculum and so on, they need longer term funding which is actually of a higher amount. Again, would the minister commit to shifting funds? I'm not asking for more expense; I'm asking for reprioritizing and shifting funds to this area. It's crucial.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to "experts in the field." Experts in the field also tell us that the one way to ensure that children learn how to speak and read and learn – they know English – is focus their efforts on doing just that. What we say, rather than asking for more money or additional dollars or reallocated dollars: how well are we spending taxpayers' dollars today to achieve the common objective, which is to make sure that those children know how to read and write and know and can communicate in the English language? So I encourage school boards to focus on achieving clearly stated goals, objectives, results, and put the dollars which are there in place and then account for having achieved those results. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order in the House, please. Thank you.
Vegreville.

Agricultural Policy

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the House last met, thousands of farmers across the province joined together and met in rallies in various communities to express their very deep and legitimate concern about their futures, the futures of their families, and indeed concern about the very survival of the communities that they support. Now the government comes forward with the flimsiest, poorest excuse for a legislative agenda that I've ever seen, that mentions absolutely nothing for agriculture. I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture how he justifies that.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think if the hon. Member for Vegreville had listened to the throne speech yesterday, or maybe would read it, I could show him a number of places in that throne speech that make reference to agriculture, to farmers. I think I should also share with the hon. member that rather than waiting for a throne speech or a new budget, last fall, after meeting with farm leaders from all across the province – a meeting between the Premier and some hundred farm leaders – we came out in mid-November with a pretty significant response to problems in the agricultural community including such things as the re-establishment of: the farm fuel benefits; of full government participation into the NISA program, which was very well received by our grain and oil seed producers; a one-year extension of certain opportunities of financing under the Agricultural Development Corporation; and a few others that I could go on to enumerate but it looks like Mr. Speaker is getting nervous.

11:30

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies to the hon. minister. They do indeed spell the word "agriculture" correctly in the throne speech and refer to farming as part of Alberta in another place, but there's nothing in here that outlines new, innovative programs to deal with the problems that farmers are facing with debt, with prices for their commodities, and nothing that outlines a blueprint for survival for agriculture into the 1990s. What are you going to do?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, again my critic is missing a lot of important things that are going on around the province today. I would suggest that he should bring himself up to date with what is happening on GATT, which is where the significant decisions are going to be made with respect to the future of certain segments of the industry. I would suggest that maybe he get a little more knowledgeable on the transportation talks issues where some other

significant decisions are going to be made, and I would hope that he will be supportive of the changes that are necessary to strengthen our number one industry and take it into the next century.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary North-West.

Administration of Justice

(continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Attorney General. The fact that the RCMP are investigating their behaviour in the Wilson Nepoose case is, I think, clearly evidence of some serious errors that occurred there. My question is this: will the Attorney General commit to an independent review of the Crown prosecutors in his department's involvement in that case?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should talk to his colleague directly in front of him who has already put out a news release in this matter.

The Crown's procedure in the case was fully reviewed by Commissioner Sinclair, as I referred to in my previous answer. The evidence that was developed and brought forward by the RCMP is what is put forward by the Crown prosecutor, and in this case neither the commissioner nor myself have any doubts in the way that the case was conducted by the Crown. There may be, as the RCMP admitted, some problems in their procedures, and that's being investigated.

MR. SPEAKER: Question period has expired. Can we have unanimous consent to complete this series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Cawsey report highlighted a number of concerns with respect to native justice, would the Attorney General please tell the House what his department plans to do to promote and foster some of the recommendations made in that report then?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the Cawsey report was brought forward some time ago, and there's a steering committee of the Attorney General's department, the Solicitor General's department, and all of the native groups that were a part of the study. The report had approximately 333 recommendations, of which over a third were already being carried out and in full implementation when the report came forward. There are approximately another hundred of them that have already been put into place, and the steering committee is working on a mechanism to develop those that they themselves think can be brought forward and should not be too much longer. They will be reporting back, and it will be obvious to everyone the initiatives that are going ahead: very important initiatives, I might agree with the hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members. All members have been circulated with at least three pieces of paper relating to Standing Order 30, Standing Order 40 requests. They will be taken in the order in which they were received. Therefore, the

first one is Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar, then Edmonton-Avonmore.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Whitemud.

Multiculturalism

Mr. Wickman:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly reaffirm its support of multiculturalism as a positive characteristic of our society, be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly acknowledge that Albertans benefit because Alberta has welcomed people from all over the world and that the diversity of their backgrounds gives our province strength, and be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly reaffirm its support of the legislation, programs, services, and policies that are in place in this area.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A copy of the notice of motion has been distributed to each member in the House. It has been read into the record. I wish to speak to it very briefly to point out the very, very important need to support this particular motion that is in front of us.

In recent times, Mr. Speaker, there have been comments made, there has been lack of action that has resulted in members of ethnocultural communities having some doubts as to the government's commitment, our commitment to multiculturalism in this province. I believe we must reaffirm our commitment to those multicultural, ethnocultural groups. We must reaffirm our desire to demonstrate to the people of Alberta that in fact we do want a united province, a united country that recognize that our society is made up of people from all over the world, from different parts of the world. We must reaffirm our recognition that there are differences amongst us when we talk in terms of traditions, when we talk in terms of beliefs, when we talk in terms of values. We must reaffirm our recognition of the great resource that ethnocultural groups and individual members are to our society in terms of tapping international trading markets, and we must be very, very aware of the immense benefits as a result of that great resource that we do have. And we must reaffirm to all members of our society that we recognize that there is a valuable contribution that has been made, that is being made, that will continue to be made by people from all parts of the world, whether they come from Germany, from Finland, from India, from China, from Japan, wherever.

We recognize that Canada is a society that is made up of a very diverse mix of people. We recognize that Canada was built as a result of the talents and skills that those people brought with them to this country: my father, my wife – and I could go on and on and on. In my opinion, we have to reaffirm to those ethnocultural groups that we do stand behind them, that we recognize the values of multiculturalism, and that we are not casting doubt.

I believe that the motion that is in front of us today reaffirms this government's, this body's commitment to multiculturalism throughout the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you hon. member. Take your place. Standing Order 40 is very precise: "A motion may, in case of urgent and pressing necessity previously explained by the mover . . ." Practice in the House will not be varied, and as pointed out there, the case is to be made not speaking to the motion but the matter of urgency. Therefore, the Chair puts the question to the House. All those in favour that the matter proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

Speaker's Ruling Cries of "Shame"

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, order. [interjections] Hon. members, order. Order. The Chair last year . . . Take your place, hon. member. Take your place. Hon. member, you've been in this House a long time. Order hon. members, there's no need for that either. You know the practice of the house. You're not to stand when the Chair is speaking to the House.

Also, hon. members will recall that last year a member was invited to leave the House for crying "Shame." It was pointed out at that time on a similar issue that we will follow the practice of *Erskine May* in that regard. That will not be allowed by the Chair. Other comments about not being in favour of whatever the motion was proposing are inappropriate.

head: **Request for Emergency Debate**

11:40

Solicitor General

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to adjourn the ordinary business to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; that is, the propriety of the appointment recently of the Solicitor General.

We are all in this House legislators. We all make laws, and we all must obey those laws. We all must respect those laws, and we all must be an example and a model to others in how we behave in relationship to those laws. Mr. Speaker, that then calls into question the recent appointment of the Solicitor General. Certainly many people in this House have things in their pasts that they regret or would have changed, but we're talking here about facts and about present activity, and I think that has to be considered.

This office of Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker, must command the complete confidence of the public of Alberta in the members of this Legislature, in all legislators, in all law enforcement agencies, and in all law enforcement agents of this province. The propriety of the appointment indicates to me that we have a double standard: that it's all right for members of this Legislature or for members of the cabinet to be in breach of the legislation, but it's not all right for citizens. The anger and aggression that has been attested to indicates to me uncontrolled and unacceptable behaviour. There has been a court order for maintenance which has been disobeyed; there has been factual evidence regarding disrespect for other people's property and trashing of other people's possessions.

Mr. Speaker, this appointment sends the wrong message. It sends the wrong message to women. It sends a message to women that this government doesn't care about maintenance enforcement. We have a maintenance enforcement department that tries hard to bring some equity to that system, but this appointment sends a different message. I wonder if the Solicitor General himself considers his behaviour here acceptable? What does he think about other people who disobey the maintenance enforcement court orders that are given in this province? What does he think about other people who are given to uncontrollable anger and aggression and trash other people's property?

Mr. Speaker, we are all, every member of this House, aggrieved when any one of us is in breach of the legislation. This office of Solicitor General is the custodian of the enforcement of laws. The appointment sends a very distorted and improper message to law enforcers across the province. We've seen a series of matters in major urban centres where the conduct of law enforcement officers has been called into question. In fact, some have not only been disciplined but have been charged. What kind of message does this send to law enforcement agencies and agents across the province?

The appointment, I submit, Mr. Speaker, illustrates flawed judgment on the part of the Premier. It places the Solicitor General in an impossible position of trying to defend what is indefensible. The matter is being raised in every corner of this province, by people in all walks of life. The integrity of the office of the Solicitor General is in question. It may have been compromised possibly, and it needs our immediate attention.

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking to the matter of urgency, the Chair recognizes the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the Government House Leader.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question of urgency, it seems to me, is of paramount importance here. We have to decide whether or not in the circumstances here there are serious questions about confidence in the appointment of the Solicitor General. It seems to me that Albertans have expressed a great deal of concern about this appointment and that it's time they had some answers, and the way to achieve those answers is through a discussion of the issue in this House.

There are very serious allegations with respect to refusals to obey court orders, with respect to allegations of vandalism and destruction of private property, with respect to escapades involving drinking and firearms. It seems to me that the issue here is that our Solicitor General must be beyond reproach and must display respect for the law and respect for the presumption of innocence and respect for due process. It seems to me that the past, the conduct thus far, does not give Albertans much cause for hope for the future. It's not a question of the past history; it's a question of the future of the Solicitor General.

Speaker's Ruling Clarification

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, for a point of clarification – perhaps did your words overtake yourself? Did the Chair understand that you mentioned something about an allegation with respect to firearms? Is that accurate in terms of you wanting that to be part of your statement?

MR. CHIVERS: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker; I'm not sure that I understand the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The Chair thought he heard a comment about firearms, and I understand that that's a new aspect. Is that something you intended to have in your remarks or not? That's all. It's just clarification.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that there have been those allegations. If I'm incorrect, then I don't want . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, that's all I need. It was a yes or no.

head: **Request for Emergency Debate**

Solicitor General (continued)

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, on the matter of urgency. Today we enter into a debate on the Speech from the Throne, an all-embracing debate covering a wide range of subjects in which all members of this Assembly are entitled to participate to the fullest. There's full opportunity for this matter or any other matter that any member wishes to raise in the normal debate on the Speech from the Throne. Secondly, with respect to the appropriateness of the suggested debate, I would suggest and submit to you that a debate with respect to allegations of questionable public behaviour is not an appropriate type of debate strictly on the basis of allegations, and indeed we just witnessed a full example of that through the uncertainty of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. Thirdly, I would suggest that cabinet appointments are not a matter for this Assembly. They are a matter for the Premier. Fourthly, we have heard a very courageous statement from the Solicitor General today in which he dealt with a number of these matters. They have likewise been attended to in the question period with full opportunity. Indeed, in speaking to the matter of urgency, members opposite have taken the liberty to exceed that and to talk about the entire matter. So I would suggest that this is not an appropriate debate under Standing Order 30.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, first off, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has indeed given appropriate notice to the Chair and to the House fulfilling the requirements of Standing Order 30. The issue, of course, as has been pointed out, was the subject of a ministerial statement earlier today by the minister. Also, opportunity was there for the Leader of the Opposition to make an official response. Then of course, as all members are aware, during question period the matter was raised by at least two members, but we know there were more than two. So, in that regard, there have been enough opportunities in this day for this matter to be aired, and considerable latitude was given by the Chair to some of comments that were made in the course of the day thus far. The need to discuss the matter today on an urgent basis seems almost impossible to justify given that the House's competence in areas of a minister's private life is extremely limited, almost nonexistent, and that's an appropriate manner because it applies to all members of this House.

Standing Order 30(7)(f) prohibits a matter being dealt with under Standing Order 30 where an issue is raised that can only be dealt with through a substantive motion of the House. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has raised an issue of confidence in the minister.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order in the press gallery, please. No movement while Mr. Speaker is standing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The proper way to deal with the matter is through a substantive motion brought before the House for determination, not to debate the matter under Standing Order 30 where no question is even put before the House. Accordingly, with this problem in mind and the other comments I would say that leave is not in order for this matter to proceed under Standing Order 30.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

11:50

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Avonmore. Standing Order 40.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I would speak to the urgency of the motion I have put before the House under Standing Order 30 only inasmuch as tomorrow is a day recognized by the United Nations when we should make public our commitment to end racial discrimination and all the evils that flow from that prejudice and discrimination. In addition, we have recently had two reports that would indicate to us that the issue of racism needs to be and must continually be addressed here in the province of Alberta.

I would argue that this is an urgent matter and that today is the appropriate day to deal with it.

**Point of Order
Clarification**

MR. GOGO: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore refer to Standing Order 30. Was it really Standing Order 40?

MR. SPEAKER: You did say 40?

MS M. LAING: I'm sorry.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Thank you, Deputy Government House Leader.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**
(continued)

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40, a request that the matter proceed. Those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries. Edmonton-Avonmore, speaking to the motion.

**International Day for the Elimination of
Racial Discrimination**

Moved by Ms M. Laing:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly commemorates March 21 as the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and that each member of the Assembly today renews her/his commitment to work to eradicate racism and promote equality in all areas of endeavour in his/her public life.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has its origins in the 1966 Sharpeville massacre of peaceful demonstrators. We applaud today the recent vote in South Africa and wish the people of that nation well in their struggle to end racial discrimination. We stand in solidarity with them. I think it would also be remiss today on this occasion if we failed to note the tireless work done by our colleague Sheldon Chumir on this very issue. It is on occasions like this that his loss is noted with deep sadness.

Mr. Speaker, much of the strife, the pain, and the suffering of humanity throughout the ages has had its origins in racism, prejudice, and intolerance. Canada and indeed Alberta have not been immune to the violence inherent in attitudes and acts of racism. The recent board of inquiry of the Alberta Human Rights Commission into the Aryan Nations rally at Provost has articulated very clearly the nature of and the harm, including the fear,

generated by overt acts of racism. The Cawsey report also dealt with the very serious concerns expressed by aboriginal people that there may be racial overtones in the administration of justice.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

But, Mr. Speaker, overt actions are not the only concerns we have. We have to be concerned about covert action, attitudes, and acts of omission. I would hold as only one example the failure to adequately fund the English as a Second Language program. It means that the needs of people whose origins are from countries other than Canada are not recognized and that these people then are marginalized and denied the opportunity for full participation in Canadian society.

Mr. Speaker, there also have been numerous complaints to the Human Rights Commission about discrimination on the basis of race. The Human Rights Commission as it is presently mandated can only respond; it is only reactive. I believe that because of this the complaints are but a tip of the iceberg, because many people from nations outside of Canada have suffered great harm at the hands of those in authority and are fearful of coming forward. Max Yalden, the head of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, has said that hard times and economic difficulties are times when we must be especially vigilant to the destructive nature and power of racism.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that we need to be proactive in our policies, our laws, and our political will to send a strong message that racism will not be tolerated; that we will create a society in which all people, regardless of race, religion, place of origin, gender, and a whole number of ways, are held to be equal.

I urge endorsement of this motion. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this motion from the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, as it draws again our attention to not an Edmonton problem, not an Alberta problem, not a Canadian problem, but in fact a human problem – a human characteristic, I guess you could best describe it – and that is mistrust and uneasiness with people who are different from ourselves.

I referred earlier in this gathering of the Assembly to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in a ministerial statement, and reaffirmed the government's commitment to continue to work. Mr. Speaker, there are two areas that we could focus our attention on. One is the education area, and that is the area, generally speaking, that the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission devotes its major attention to, drawing people together and giving them each a sense of understanding about each other and how our diverse population can in fact be a great benefit to us as a society as we reach out across the world in trade and tourism, in other factors, and also in just sheer productivity.

Mr. Speaker, we've also got an enforcement agency, the Human Rights Commission, which has been referred to here, that deals with those people who do not accept in a lawful manner the differences that are among us. But there is much work to do, and that is why we have a Multiculturalism Commission appointed by the Premier, and that is why we have an ongoing series of programs aimed at helping people work together.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

But as we look at this motion, Mr. Speaker, and we see that we're urging members of the Assembly to renew their commitments to work together, I think those are commitments that each of us will make personally and individually, not only as members of this Assembly but also as citizens, with the recognition that if we do not work together and if we do not view ourselves as people – as I said earlier today, all in the same boat – then we're going to fail as a society. It's a simple matter of survival. The society that fights with itself, which ignores the potential of each of its individual members, is a society that is doomed to failure, and I know without fear of contradiction that there is nobody in this Assembly who has that view of the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, we endorse this motion and endorse the efforts to eradicate racism and promote a sense of acceptance and fair play that I know all Albertans share.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also am very pleased to rise and support this motion on behalf of the Liberal caucus. Asking all members in this Legislature to recommit themselves to equality for all, regardless of race, is extremely important. We must also commit ourselves to sometimes changing stereotypical thinking, to changing attitudes, to being more sensitive to cultural differences which exist among Albertans.

The Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism is correct when he focuses on two areas, the area of education and the Human Rights Commission area. I think that in the area of education much more has to be done in order to provide intercultural experiences for students. I personally wish that we would use the term "intercultural" more often than we use the term "multicultural," because what we need to do is experience each other's culture in order to understand it, to appreciate it, and to value it.

I also would hope that in the schools this matter of ESL would be attended to. It is a very serious matter, and I know what happened in Calgary recently with proposals to downsize the budget for ESL. This has caused a great deal of anguish among parents, among teachers, and among all people in the multicultural community. What they're looking for is more cultural interpreters so that when students arrive at school from a foreign country, they not only learn English, but someone is there to find out if they were proficient in their own native language. Sometimes they are not, especially if they have lived in a camp for a number of years. These are extremely important programs, and I think we must commit ourselves to funding these programs. Students will experience discrimination if they are not well prepared to speak, to read, and to function in our society. Also in the area of English as a Second Language, I think it's extremely important that there be smaller classes. Teachers can work much more effectively one on one with students who need these programs. I would hope that we would all commit ourselves to supporting a reshifting of priorities into this area of intercultural education and English as a Second Language education.

There is also a problem in recent weeks with the threat of a cut to funding in the area of native education, especially those persons who are between the ages of 18, 19, and 20, again a very, very important area. Native students who are adult according to law and don't fit into the present funding structures indicate that they will not achieve success if they are sent to another type of institution, that their best chance for success is within a school which is committed to understanding their culture, giving them self-awareness, self-appreciation, and that is how they will

succeed. I would hope that we would commit ourselves to that area as well.

12:00

In regard to the Human Rights Commission, I would like to see their mandate re-examined so that they can engage in public education campaigns. I believe that mandate did exist a number of years ago. It no longer exists, and I think it very important that we return to public education campaigns to help Albertans understand the value of our diversity, understand why it is that certain people behave in different ways, that it stems from a cultural formation, not from any disrespect. Also, I think that if we want to achieve a society in Alberta – across the country, as a matter of fact – where peace prevails, where justice prevails, each and every one of us has to look within ourselves and see if we do have attitudes of discrimination, if we are bigoted about certain groups. We must educate ourselves to get rid of that type of thinking, if it exists.

One last point. I would hope that the Human Rights Commission, the Multiculturalism Commission, the Department of Education, and the minister would always consult with those groups affected before programs are put into place. It may be that sometimes we miss the point entirely. I know that immigrant women especially have many, many needs which are not addressed through any of our existing programs. So it is important to consult with groups affected before programs are put into place.

I wish to thank my colleague for bringing this forward today. I think it's extremely important, and I do hope that we will see an improvement in this area of accepting all as equals in our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a call for the question.

Edmonton-Avonmore, any concluding remarks on the motion?

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to thank the members for their support and helpful comments.

MR. SPEAKER: The question before the House is the one as sponsored by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

The motion carries; let the record show unanimously.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Consideration of His Honour
the Lieutenant Governor's Speech**

Moved by Mr. Lund:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable Gordon Towers, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I count it a great honour to rise today to move His Honour's Speech from the Throne on behalf of the people of the constituency of Rocky Mountain House. It seems especially fitting in that three years ago today some 20 other colleagues of mine were first elected to this Assembly.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity of commending the Lieutenant Governor on behalf of my constituents for the admirable job he does representing Her Majesty the Queen. The constituents of the constituency of Rocky Mountain House have great respect for our monarch and her representative, the Lieutenant Governor. Many are also acquainted with His Honour from his previous capacity as the member for the federal riding of Red Deer, which takes in most of the Rocky Mountain House constituency.

Early on in his Speech from the Throne, His Honour reminded us that this is the 125th anniversary of our nation. It struck me that this would be a great, opportune time for the Lieutenant Governor to visit our constituency as we celebrate on July 1 by recreating the launch of the canoe race from Rocky Mountain House to Montreal. The race was originally held to celebrate our centennial back in 1967, and assuredly we would be most pleased to host him and to reacquaint him with our hospitality.

Mr. Speaker, as others before me have commented, I join with them in congratulating you on the exemplary manner in which you carry out the duties in the Chair. I would also like to thank our Premier for extending me this privilege of moving the Speech from the Throne. My constituents and I do recognize the extent of this honour and are grateful for this opportunity. In addition, on behalf of the Assembly I would like to welcome the new Member for Little Bow constituency, and I look forward to his forthcoming presence and participation in this Assembly. I know it will be a compliment to his constituency, his representations made here.

I am proud to be a member of this government, representing the Rocky Mountain House constituency. As the Lieutenant Governor spoke of in his speech, we do face enormous challenges brought about by rapid changes in the world. Life in our communities, province, nation, and even our world is evolving at a staggering pace, but while changes have left some governments reeling and falling, our government remains strong and focused. Amid the constant, rapid change our government has never lost sight of its priorities. We have anticipated, adapted, and met head-on each new reality that we are faced with, and we will continue to do so. Mr. Speaker, the throne speech is a testimony to this fact.

In his Speech from the Throne the Lieutenant Governor outlined five areas of priority for the government in this session; they are the fiscal, economic, environmental, social, and constitutional realities facing our province. Without question, as the Speech from the Throne indicated, economic and fiscal realities must continue to be our primary focus. The fact is, due to the wise stewardship of this government, our province has weathered the economic recession better than practically any other jurisdiction in this country. Nevertheless, the failure of economics in other areas is having an impact on some Albertans, and they are suffering. I've heard this from a number of my constituents, and I'm sure that other members of the Assembly have heard the same thing from theirs.

Mr. Speaker, these people do rely on us for help. As the Lieutenant Governor accurately stated in his address, these events come at a time when our government's agenda is being influenced by factors like a reduction in support from the federal government, an inflated currency, and a specific drop in commodity prices. Our government is left with many, and several difficult, choices to make between stimulating our economy, maintaining fiscal

restraint, and assisting those in need. However, I am confident that we will again provide answers and solutions to these pressing problems. Our government has a strong record in these areas. History has shown that for much of our past Alberta relied primarily on agriculture and the oil and gas sectors for our economic impetus, but over the last number of years under this government we have sought to diversify our economy. In doing so, we have thereby cushioned the province's economic fate from the unpredictable market shifts in these two primary sectors. Our government has worked directly with business to enhance our forestry sector, our exporting and trading sector, and our tourism sector, among many others, and, quite simply, it is working.

Over the last few years Alberta's exports have risen dramatically, from the 1986 level for international trade of \$11.7 billion to \$17.1 billion in 1990. That is an increase of almost 70 percent in just five years. Alberta's food and beverage industry has nearly doubled in size since 1980 and now accounts for 24 percent of Alberta's manufacturing sector. Some 107,000 new jobs have been created in Alberta over the past five years. Virtually all of the growth occurred outside the primary energy and agricultural sectors. Our efforts to develop environmentally sound forest projects have attracted roughly \$3.5 billion in investment to our province.

12:10

Mr. Speaker, we are pursuing the same strategy in the constituency of Rocky Mountain House. We long relied on agriculture and the oil and gas sector, but in light of market realities in these areas we are now pursuing new initiatives in sectors like forestry and tourism so that they will be able to bolster and help maintain our local economy.

I believe that the health of our economy has a direct impact on our provincial services. These services were initially implemented to maintain Alberta's high quality of life. Mr. Speaker, the quality of life we have come to enjoy here in Alberta is among the very best in the world. Our environmental standards, our education system, our social service programs, our health care system, and other services are all world-class, but they are also very costly. My constituents understand that there is a balance between the provision of services and fiscal responsibility, and they will hold us accountable should we inappropriately administer the public purse.

Thus, I believe that the answer to maintaining our programs lies in continuing to explore other dynamics that will spur our own economy even further. As outlined in the throne speech and as I have heard from my constituents, we must work to improve our competitiveness, to expand our markets, to develop added value to Alberta products, to work with business to better train Albertans for increasingly specific jobs, and to further eliminate interprovincial trade barriers. The free trade agreement is proof of the benefits in dismantling these barriers. The Pacific Northwest Economic Region is another fine example of the positive effects of co-operation. Following the success of these agreements, we must pursue the continued breakdown of trade barriers within our own country. On a similar note, the pursuit of a satisfactory GATT is also important. These are all initiatives that will have a very important impact on our traditional industries like agricultural and oil and gas.

Mr. Speaker, a healthy and growing economy is the key to Alberta's world-class status, and with increased employment and investment I am confident that we will more than ably meet and be able to maintain these high standards. Not only should we be concentrating on our current situation, but we also must plan for the future, and I am proud that the Speech from the Throne is

characterized by forward thinking. Our government recognizes the importance of advanced technology and research in the development of new and existing industries. In fact, Alberta invests more than \$66 per capita in research and development, and that's one of the highest commitments in this country.

Furthermore, efforts like the Minister of Education's Vision for the Nineties and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade's Toward 2000 Together are prime examples of our government's foresight and progressive attitude. It is initiatives such as these that will enable us to prepare for tomorrow today. The result will be a better Alberta. The Toward 2000 Together I believe deserves special recognition, as it ranks as one of the government's most extensive efforts to gather the insights and suggestions of Albertans. The results of these initiatives will be an economic strategy designed for Albertans by Albertans that will carry our province into the next century.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to comment further on an integral part of both of these initiatives. That integral part is the public consultation process. Allowing Albertans to directly communicate to us their thoughts and opinions is of tremendous importance and value. As a government we have an impressive record of soliciting the advice of Albertans. For example, in my own constituency in the last approximately eight months we have had two standing committees visit to hear the thoughts and suggestions of the constituents. I'm speaking of the standing committee on constitutional reform and the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

As a side note, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries did an admirable job of reporting the people's position in their report. However, I'm rather dismayed that the commission of nonelected individuals ignored what was heard and reported by the select special committee. Now, after hearing from Albertans themselves, I look forward to their final report, which I trust will better reflect the instructions of Albertans.

I myself have been personally involved in the consultation process which assisted in rewriting the Municipal Government Act, and during our meetings I heard from a countless number of Albertans. I had a similar experience with the involvement of the Water Resources Commission as we held public hearings. Mr. Speaker, they are just a few of the areas where our government has consulted with Albertans. In fact, in June of last year an impromptu tally of areas in which the government was consulting or had just finished consultation with Albertans numbered almost 125. This includes consulting Albertans on the regulations for legislation, which is a landmark initiative. Hearing Albertans' views has always been a priority of this government, and I believe that these few facts alone prove that our government is open, both consulting and listening to Albertans.

This communication process involves not only receiving information but sharing information, so the introduction of the freedom of information legislation this session will formalize that communication process which has been evolving over several years. Under this government Albertans will continue to play the primary role in shaping our province.

Included in Albertans' thoughts and suggestions have been ideas for the reform of our legislative process. This year I am happy to see that we are attempting to implement several of these reforms and will be establishing a special select committee on legislative reform.

Another important area where Albertans are shaping our province is the environment, and I would like to make a few comments about that. The constituents of Rocky Mountain House are very aware of the environment. We pride ourselves in having

the most beautiful countryside, the cleanest air, some of the richest soil, and of course our fresh Rocky Mountain water, so it is not hard to see why the environment is so important to us. We look forward to the proclamation of the new environmental enhancement and protection Act. As we know, it will be a model for many jurisdictions to follow. As such, those Albertans who have contributed to its development deserve our thanks and applause. I would like to commend the Environment Council of Alberta for their invaluable work and especially Dr. Natalia Krawetz for her leadership and effort in this area.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the recent announcement of the participation of this government in the heritage rivers program and the protected areas initiative. Our participation in the latter program brings the total acres of protected land in Alberta to approximately 24 million acres. This translates into about 10 acres of land for every man, woman, and child in our province. This is about 14 percent of Alberta's 164 million acres. Mr. Speaker, are you aware that this is 2 percent higher than the guidelines advocated by the federal endangered spaces campaign?

Two other initiatives that deserve mention are the Round Table on Environment and Economy and the clean air strategy. These initiatives have allowed the most important stakeholders to express their views on policies for the environment, and those stakeholders are Albertans. I believe that with individuals, initiatives, and organizations such as these, Alberta's environment is in very good hands. I also believe that these few examples demonstrate our government's commitment to the environment.

12:20

I would now like to make a few comments on the social realities facing our province. First, I believe that the health care system and the structure of social assistance in Alberta is world-class. They are more than just a safety net for Albertans; they assist in maintaining a reasonable quality of life. Included among these services are the best seniors' programs in the country. As we all know, the percentage of seniors in our society is increasing; thus, this is a very important area.

The maintenance of our current level of social programs is essential, but I do not believe that this level should be maintained by the allocation of more and more dollars. I believe we must endeavour to better co-ordinate and streamline our programs. The co-operation between the Department of Health and the Department of Municipal Affairs, as exemplified by the Sylvan Lake senior citizens' lodge project, is proof of how we can work together to maintain and improve our services. Furthermore, the government achievement of the single point of entry for seniors is a significant accomplishment and has been welcomed by all those that I've talked to on the matter. Through accomplishments like this and our continued commitment to our province's seniors, I know that seniors will be healthier and happier in the future.

With our commitment to seniors in mind, I'm pleased by our efforts to resolve pension problems in this province. As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, agreements with the public service and local authorities pension boards have already been reached. Members of this Assembly will be asked to increase their pension contributions by 33 percent. Legislation will be introduced this session to amend the local authorities, public service, public service management, universities academic, and special forces pension plans. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that we will also be able to resolve the Teachers' Retirement Fund issue this session.

Lastly, I would like to offer a few remarks on the constitutional reality that faces us today. The message from the constituents of the Rocky Mountain House constituency has been very clear: do

not settle for anything less than a triple E Senate, one that is fully elected, effective, and equal. Moreover, the vast majority of my constituents will not support a plan that provides one province with more powers than the other or that will recognize one society as special. They maintain that each province should hold the same powers as the next and any agreement proposed otherwise is unacceptable. My constituents also show overwhelming support for bilingualism, but not legislated bilingualism. The people of the Rocky Mountain House constituency have told me that they want the final say in the constitutional deal. Well, yesterday we got assurance of that, and they will be very thankful for that.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude my remarks, I must again express my satisfaction with the insight and wisdom outlined in the Speech from the Throne. I believe that this government is clearly attuned to the concerns and priorities set out by my constituents and indeed the majority of Albertans. The challenges before us are significant, and if I were faced with these challenges anywhere but in Alberta, I would be depressed. However, in partnership with Albertans I know that we are capable of meeting those challenges and more. Alberta's primary strength has always been her people. Individually we represent a variety of origins and cultures, but corporately we combine to make the strongest province in our country. Under the direction outlined for this government, we can all contribute to building this province. On behalf of the government I would invite all Albertans, including members of both sides of this House, to join together in a positive way to develop a better and better home for each of us.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, it is with much pride and pleasure that I move the Speech from the Throne.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege and an honour for me and for the constituency of Highwood to second the motion of the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House. It was a pleasure for all hon. members to hear such an eloquent and positive speech. I pray, Mr. Speaker, that you will continue to give members of this Assembly your fair and wise guidance in our deliberations in the days and weeks ahead of us.

I must say that as I listened yesterday to His Honour's excellent delivery of the Speech from the Throne, the thought struck me again and again what a positive, forward looking, challenging message it was. His Honour reminded us that this year, 1992, is Canada's 125th year of Confederation, and he tickled our personal memory banks with a reminder of the 1967 centennial year, a year which those over 35 may have fond memories of, of the pride we all felt as Canadians in our country, Canada. As we basked in the admiration of peoples from many countries who came to Canada to participate in Expo 67, many of those people stayed to see more of our country and returned again. Many Canadians traveled to Montreal to attend Expo 67. I was privileged at that time to be a teacher and a principal at Blackie school, a rural school with grades 1 to 12, and together with four other chaperons we took 89 high school students to Montreal, to the Eastern Townships, and to our capital in Ottawa for an unforgettable eight-day adventure in discovery of the heartland of Canada. I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we didn't go, as the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House referred to people going, by canoe. We traveled by more modern means, but it's interesting that he should mention that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that our Premier has honoured the constituents of Highwood by permitting me to second this challenging Speech from the Throne. I wanted to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer and all others who have worked so hard to

find solutions to the longstanding pension problems. I'd also like to commend the Minister of Education for his patient and tireless efforts to solve the issues surrounding the Teachers' Retirement Fund pension plan. I have every confidence that in a spirit of goodwill, co-operation, and compromise a realistic agreement will be reached with the Alberta Teachers' Association that will place the Teachers' Retirement Fund on a sound footing.

Our daily newspapers, radio broadcasts, and the nightly TV news remind us of widespread human suffering, the uncertainty of life and liberty in other places, civil strife, and even war, in such far-flung places as Yugoslavia, Azerbaijan, Sudan, Ethiopia, South Africa, Cambodia, Burma, east Timor, Iraq, Iran, to name but a few. Perhaps a reminder of these places and of the events that are occurring in them might help us to better put in perspective the challenges that we face in Alberta.

Albertans and Canadians enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, and we need a strong economy to support our social safety nets, our quality health care system, and our first-rate education system that covers kindergarten to PhD. Alberta is rich in talented, experienced, and educated people who collectively make our economy vibrant and forward looking, even in recessionary periods. These spirited Albertans have eagerly shared their ideas in the Toward 2000 Together program, which has captured the imagination of positive-thinking Albertans to help ensure Alberta's future economic strength. By listening to investors, exporters, small business owners, developers, workers, farmers, manufacturers, processors, technical service people, people from all walks of life, Alberta will be able to seize the opportunities of the 1990s and meet the economic challenges of the coming 21st century.

12:30

Although the petroleum industry is not enjoying the economic growth and vibrancy that it did a few years ago, many firms and companies have rowed out to meet the ship rather than waiting for it to come in. Look at the marvelous work of Calgary's Safety Boss company. There's a firm that met the challenges of the Kuwait oil fires in such an effective and efficient way that it is now viewed by oil companies and countries all over the globe as being the best in its field. ATCO is an Alberta-based manufacturing company with worldwide customers and a worldwide reputation. I could name many other enterprising companies, like Canadian Fracmaster, Western Geophysical, Bow Valley Industries, Gulf Oil Canada. Mr. Speaker, the list is extensive. This is a government that wishes to support those with vision and the corporate courage to seek new markets for Alberta's products and Alberta's services and Alberta's talent. The Pacific Rim holds tremendous opportunities for Alberta and indeed for Canada, and there are great opportunities in eastern Europe, the Middle East, and in Latin America as well. Alberta's foreign trade missions will be enhanced to the benefit of all Albertans. I'm sure we all welcome these initiatives.

The environment seems to be on everyone's mind. For the past several years, a major consultation process has gone on in Alberta under the Minister of the Environment. We all look forward to legislation that will put the ideas, feelings, and experiences of many Albertans into legislation. These will be solutions that will balance a strong, sustainable economy with a healthy environment. That is paramount. Waste management, recycling, and education programs in Alberta have helped people in our province to be more aware of the part each and every one of us must play to contribute, to protect and enhance our living space. I applaud the report Clean Air Strategy for Alberta. I look forward to the action that will be taken on implementation in this session.

The throne speech refers to the social reality, and I'd like to share with you, Mr. Speaker, some of my experiences as chairman of the Family and Community Support Services Review Panel. We were charged by the Minister of Family and Social Services with the task of exploring strengths; looking at weaknesses; looking at ways of ensuring the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the program; determining the relevance of its mandate; examining funding, financial arrangements, and accountability; and formulating recommendations.

The review panel was given a wide scope to determine the process, which resulted in community consultation strategies, public meetings, focus groups with family and community support services staff. We met with board members and related service people, and special meetings were arranged with elected municipal councils. In addition, the panel chose to interview significant people in the family and community support services fields, including interviewing legislative members for Taber-Warner, Edmonton-Calder, Three Hills, Calgary-Shaw, and Edmonton-Gold Bar. Approximately 200 briefs were received, and hundreds of questionnaires were completed which, together with a review of the literature and an interprovincial comparison of preventative social programs, gave the advisory panel the information to base their recommendations on. The panel traveled from La Crête, Fort Vermilion, and High Level in the north to Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Nanton, Red Deer, and many other places in between. It must be said that with the exception of myself, the panel brought a strong, experience-based background of association with family and community social services to the deliberations. We look forward to the recommendations being acted upon.

I think it's worthy to note the undertaking outlined in His Honour's speech when he said, "My government will . . . implement recommendations from the family and community support services program." In the spirit of this undertaking I'd like to continue to make a few comments on the worthwhileness of the program and not so much on the review.

First and foremost, it's a partnership program between the provincial government and local governments on an opt-in basis, where the local municipality decides whether or not it will join. This partnership sees 80 percent of the funds supplied by the provincial government, with federal government assistance, and 20 percent supplied by the local government on a provincewide formula basis. Local communities are responsible for determining their local needs, and through local boards the activities are locally determined, which is why family and community support services, usually known as FCSS, activities vary from community to community: because it's a community-based program. Community-based solutions are a fundamental pillar of the family and community support services program. The program is preventive in nature; it is not a second welfare system. The underlying premise is to develop and support individuals, families, and communities in making decisions that will improve the quality of family and individual life within the community, truly helping people to help themselves. Running through this program is the utilization and involvement of volunteers. Indeed, volunteerism is at the heart of the FCSS program.

The four cornerstones, then, of family and community support services are prevention, local autonomy, volunteerism, partnership with the province. These strengthen people's sense of self-worth and self-esteem and their ability to take responsibility for personal decisions and thereby lessen the need for social intervention.

Mr. Speaker, His Honour reaffirmed the importance that our first-rate health care system be built on accessibility, on universality. I am concerned when a respected leader of a minor party states that instead of building hospitals in every rinky-dink town,

we start saying no. Well, this may sound fine to a fund-raising audience in Edmonton, but it isn't well received in rural Alberta, I can tell you. We who represent rural Alberta constituencies resent our towns being called rinky-dink. More important, people in rural Alberta are also deserving of access to hospital care. As you are aware, there are approximately 130 active care hospitals in our province. It's interesting to note that the 20 largest city-based acute care hospitals currently take over 80 percent of the acute care budget. If we followed the advice of the minor party leader and cut out, let's say, 40 of the smallest acute care rural hospitals, there would be a theoretical saving of 3 percent of the acute care budget. I say theoretical saving because the closure of 40 such hospitals would not take into account the high transportation costs and, of course, the human costs. Accessibility to health care is an important dimension in the quality of life, and this government supports that.

When His Honour referred to the implementation of new economic development initiatives, I welcomed this continuing commitment to economic diversification. Mr. Speaker, I wish to share a small success story with you and with members of the Assembly. The Alberta Country Vacations Association offers 21 quality guest ranches and guest farms. From Whitecourt in the north to Cardston in the south, for Albertans and for visitors to Alberta they offer family vacations. For the benefit of members I'd like to table copies of this brochure, and in doing so I'd like to mention two of them in here. One is the Highlandview ranch west of Cayley and High River, operated by the McLean family, and the other one, west of the town of Nanton, is the Squire Ranch, run by the Squire family. There are many other ranches and farms in Highwood who are offering farm and ranch vacations, and indeed all across this province it's a growing industry. Each one of these helps in a small but important way to diversify the local economy. That's the kind of thing that this government supports.

12:40

The Speech from the Throne referred to items like environment, health care, education, social services, economic development, energy efficiency, traffic safety, and many, many other things. Mr. Speaker, you may well ask: how can these things be brought into being? The answer is teamwork. It's the governmental reality. We in Alberta have one of the most experienced governments in Canada, which enjoys one of the largest majorities in its legislative Chamber, and its leader is the senior Canadian Premier, who ably leads our governing party and gives us the kind of leadership we need in the constitutional talks ahead.

I want to go on record as an enthusiastic supporter of the challenges and proposals contained in the Speech from the Throne and, therefore, endorse its positive message by seconding the motion of my colleague, the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.
Government House Leader.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that we now call it 1 o'clock.

**Point of Order
Clarification**

MR. SPEAKER: The House has a motion before us, hon. member. Are you rising on a point of order?

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, I was just writing a message to you to ask an opportunity to clarify my earlier remarks and set the record straight.

MR. SPEAKER: Unanimous consent of the House to proceed with this matter?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, on reflection, in speaking with my colleagues, it may be that my remarks bore implications that they

were not intended to mean. I had in mind a specific comment that had been made in an article published by the *Edmonton Sun* with respect to the Solicitor General, and I was not intending to introduce any new matters or any new allegations with respect to this matter. Consequently, if my comments were taken otherwise, you have my apologies, and I'd be quite prepared to share the article with the Solicitor General, the matters that I was thinking about. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. There's no question before the House.

Thank you for your comments, hon. member. It points out one of the attributes of *Beauchesne* as well as *Erskine May*. The matter of referring to articles which may appear in media sources is a very difficult one, and it can indeed get us into our own personal difficulties in the House as well as difficulties for the House as a whole. But thank you for the clarification.

[At 12:45 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]