

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, March 23, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/03/23

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We, Thine unworthy servants here gathered together in Thy name, do humbly beseech Thee to send down Thy heavenly wisdom from above to direct and guide us in all our considerations.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to my trip to China in December wherein Alberta signed a memorandum of understanding to supply special waste technology to the province of Liaoning, I am pleased to introduce today some very special visitors. This group of senior officials from the People's Republic of China will be touring Alberta's integrated waste management facility at Swan Hills and the Alberta Environmental Centre at Vegreville and meeting with Alberta business leaders. I would ask our visitors to rise as I call their names but for members to hold their greeting until all have been introduced.

Leading the mission is the administrator of the National Environmental Protection Agency for the People's Republic and the equivalent of our national minister; I would like to introduce Mr. Qu Ge Ping. With him are Mr. Wang Zhi Jia from the Foreign Affairs Office of the agency; Mr. Li Guo Ye from the Jiangsu Environmental Project Office; Mr. Liu Wei Bang, the deputy director of the Liaoning Provincial Environmental Protection Bureau; Mr. Gao Shun Xiang, deputy director of the Shenyang Municipal Urban Construction Management Bureau; and Mr. Gan Hai Zhang, director of the Office of Environmental Protection for the Guangzhou municipal government. I would ask all members of the House to give these gentlemen our traditional warm welcome.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by 167 school teachers from 11 different schools within the constituency of Edmonton-Jasper Place urging the Legislative Assembly to accord favourable consideration to a certain resolution passed at an emergent representative assembly of the Alberta Teachers' Association, September 28, 1991.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to file with the Legislature a petition signed by a number of teachers from St. Anne school in the constituency of Edmonton-Glengarry. The petition deals with the request that the government solve the teachers' pension problem.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition to the Assembly from the Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. This petition respectfully requests the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to protect lesbians and gays from discrimination by others who are ignorant of the

fact that homosexual orientation is not a disease or a threat to society or any individual.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition signed by 199 teachers from various schools in Edmonton-Calder in support of resolution 226/91.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce a petition signed by 26 teachers in the Vegreville constituency urging the Legislature to give favourable consideration to resolution 226/91.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to present a petition signed by 105 teachers in six schools in the riding of Edmonton-Highlands requesting fair treatment for their pensions as sponsored in the Alberta Teachers' Association motion 226/91.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Norwood, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition with 30 names from Norwood and Parkdale schools in the constituency of Edmonton-Norwood calling for a resolution of the teachers' pension problem.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to file a petition signed by 44 Albertans who teach at Stanley Jones and St. Alphonsus schools in the Calgary-Mountain View constituency seeking action on the Teachers' Retirement Fund.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition signed by 156 teachers from five different schools in the constituency of Calgary-Forest Lawn in support of Alberta Teachers' Association resolution 226/91.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The petition that I have to table today is signed by 202 teachers from eight schools in the constituency of Edmonton-Belmont, and they ask that the Legislative Assembly deal with the matter of teacher pensions as outlined in resolution 226/91.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file a petition signed by 204 teachers representing the schools in Edmonton-Beverly constituency. These teachers are requesting a favourable consideration following the resolution regarding the teachers' pension.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by 230 teachers from 10 schools in the constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore, a petition in which they ask that the government deal with the teachers' pension difficulties in accord with resolution 226/91.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present to the Assembly a petition from 70 teachers in two schools in Edmonton-Strathcona dealing with the same matter.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present petitions from 230 teachers in schools in the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods asking for support of the Alberta Teachers' Association resolution 226/91 regarding the Teachers' Retirement Fund. These petitions come from Daly Grove school, Ekota school, Crawford

Plains school, Ellerslie junior high, Greenview school, Satoo School, St. Richard school, Mary Hanley school, St. Clement, and John Paul I.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition from 99 teachers from seven schools in my riding. It is in regard to the Teachers' Retirement Fund. The teachers are asking that it be settled along the lines of resolution 226/91, passed at the teachers' convention on September 28, 1991.

MR. SPEAKER: West-Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a petition from 170 teachers from nine schools in the riding of West Yellowhead to deal with resolution 226/91. These teachers reside in the constituency of West Yellowhead and in the Whitecourt riding.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to the Assembly a petition signed by 220 teachers from six schools in Edmonton-Centre urging the government to take action on the Teachers' Retirement Fund.

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

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52 I hereby would like to present photocopies of the 1991-92 report of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act. Copies are presently being printed and will be available to members shortly.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, it's my intention to move an amendment to Motion 2 today in the Assembly. This motion deals with interim supply. My amendment will call for interim supply to be available to the Committee of Supply until March 31, 1992. The purpose of this motion is basically to prevent the closure motion that is embodied in Government Motion 3. I'll distribute copies.

2:40

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Order 40 to give notice that at the end of question period I will seek unanimous consent of the House and concurrence of this Assembly to congratulate the Edmonton Chimos women's hockey team for winning their third national championship in 11 years. I have copies.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give notice to the House that after question period I would like to ask the House to give unanimous consent to recognize the Canadian mixed curling champions from Alberta, who won the championship this past Saturday.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

MR. SPEAKER: We're dealing with Bills. I'll start with the government first, and then when we move to the other Bills that are there, we'll go in sequential order. Thank you.

Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Bill 4

Public Contributions Amendment Act, 1992

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 4, the Public Contributions Amendment Act, 1992.

The purpose of this Bill will be to clarify that cities over 50,000 in population are required to designate a person or body as an approving authority for the purposes of the Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 4 read a first time]

Bill 5

Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, 1992

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I further request leave to introduce Bill 5, the Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, 1992.

The purpose of this Bill is similar to the previous one, to clarify that councils of cities with a population exceeding 50,000 are to establish by bylaw landlord and tenant advisory boards to carry out functions under the Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 5 read a first time]

Bill 2

Historical Resources Amendment Act, 1992

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 2, being the Historical Resources Amendment Act, 1992.

This Bill provides for the consolidation of the operations of the Historic Sites Board into the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation. It's a move to increase efficiency and reduce expenses.

[Leave granted; Bill 2 read a first time]

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 2, Historical Resources Amendment Act, 1992, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Bill 201

Freedom of Information and Personal Privacy Act

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 201, a real Freedom of Information and Personal Privacy Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill was first introduced by Grant Notley in 1975 and since then has been updated and reintroduced on numerous occasions by the Official Opposition. It calls upon the government to provide Albertans with access to information under control of the government and to protect the privacy of Albertans with respect to private information held by the government.

[Leave granted; Bill 201 read a first time]

Bill 202

**Freedom of Information and
Protection of Personal Privacy Act**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 202, the Bill entitled Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act. It might be entitled Play It Again, Sam.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill is intended to provide for information from government and all agencies of government right down the line and to ensure that where there are withholdings, a procedure

be put into place to resolve if that withholding of information should persist.

[Leave granted; Bill 202 read a first time]

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I have three more.

MR. SPEAKER: No. Sorry, hon. member. We had said we would introduce the Bills in order of their number system. Thank you, hon. member.

MR. DECORE: Would it be possible, Mr. Speaker, to introduce three at once?

MR. SPEAKER: No.
Edmonton-Meadowlark, please.

Bill 203
Environmental Ombudsman Act

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 203, entitled the Environmental Ombudsman Act.

This Bill will widen the powers of the Ombudsman to enable him to investigate the effectiveness of environmental planning carried out by public authorities and the impact that actions by other bodies have on the environment.

[Leave granted; Bill 203 read a first time]

Bill 204
Dangerous Dogs Amendment Act

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 204, the Dangerous Dogs Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would provide additional protection for the public from dangerous dogs.

[Leave granted; Bill 204 read a first time]

Bill 205
**An Act to Require Full Disclosure and
Maintenance of Government-Backed Pension Plans**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 205, An Act to Require Full Disclosure and Maintenance of Government-Backed Pension Plans.

This Act would require the government to take full responsibility for the unfunded pension liability of all plans, including the Teachers' Retirement Fund, and would also require full disclosure of any and all actuarial studies performed that relate to these pension funds.

[Leave granted; Bill 205 read a first time]

Bill 206
Children's Rights Bill

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 206, the Children's Rights Bill.

This legislation would ensure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is encompassed in our provincial statutes.

[Leave granted; Bill 206 read a first time]

2:50

Bill 207
Tobacco Control Act

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Drumheller I request leave to introduce Bill 207, the Tobacco Control Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is designed to ensure that tobacco products will not be sold to individuals under 18 years of age, and it is designed to increase the penalty for those found guilty of selling tobacco products under such circumstances.

[Leave granted; Bill 207 read a first time]

Bill 208
Aboriginal Justice Act

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce the Aboriginal Justice Act, Bill 208.

This Bill will establish a native justice system for Indian and Metis peoples which will operate parallel to the traditional justice system for minor offences by setting up a native justice division of the government to which native justice cases can be referred, providing for the recruitment and training of aboriginal people to work in the justice system, and improving facilities available to released offenders.

[Leave granted; Bill 208 read a first time]

Bill 209
Hospitals Amendment Act

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 209, the Hospitals Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill proposes expanding the number of public members that may be appointed to boards of hospital foundations.

[Leave granted; Bill 209 read a first time]

Bill 210
**An Act to Create a Commission to Examine
Legal Reform in Alberta's Justice System**

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 210, An Act to Create a Commission to Examine Legal Reform in Alberta's Justice System, which many citizens require today, so it avails itself properly to all of our citizens for justice.

[Leave granted; Bill 210 read a first time]

Bill 211
Alberta Farm Security Act

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present Bill 211, the Alberta Farm Security Act.

This Bill will establish the farm land security board with power to review farm debt and make recommendations about restructuring debt or, if the farmer is foreclosed, to provide for a leaseback with an option to purchase.

[Leave granted; Bill 211 read a first time]

Bill 212
Endangered Species and Endangered Spaces Act

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 212, the Endangered Species and Endangered Spaces Act.

This Bill provides a framework for co-operation among government agencies, private developers, and landowners for the protection of endangered species and the spaces they occupy in Alberta. The Bill recognizes the crazy quilt of parks and zoning and various land use designations as inadequate. The mandate is an effective process objectively triggered by population numbers rather than politics, but you'll be happy to know that the Tories are not on the list yet.

[Leave granted; Bill 212 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

Bill 213
Labour Relations Code Amendment Act

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 213.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, when passed, would prevent an employer from using the 25-hour lockout to then unilaterally change the terms of a collective agreement between himself and the employees in a bargaining unit.

[Leave granted; Bill 213 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

Bill 215
Ombudsman Amendment Act

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 215, the Ombudsman Amendment Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to protect whistle blowers from any offences under the Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 215 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Bill 214
Municipal Taxation Amendment Act

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 214, the Municipal Taxation Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will ensure that a person who has contaminated his or her property in some way cannot obtain a reduction in his or her tax assessment on that land because of the fall in value of that property which these actions have caused.

[Leave granted; Bill 214 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

Bill 216
Children's Access Rights Enforcement Act

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 216, the Children's Access Rights Enforcement Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to ensure that a noncustodial parent who has been granted access to his or her children by court order can approach the courts to request enforcement of that court order in a timely manner if such access rights are denied by the custodial parent.

[Leave granted; Bill 216 read a first time]

Bill 217
Annual Election of the Speaker Act

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 217, an Act entitled the Annual Election of the Speaker Act.

The Bill would provide for yearly voting on the Speaker.

[Leave granted; Bill 217 read a first time]

3:00
Bill 218
Vulnerable Persons' Protection Act

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 218, which is the Vulnerable Persons' Protection Act.

The purpose of this Bill would be to provide clear protection from any type of retaliation to every person who reports in good faith and without malicious intent the abuse or neglect of a vulnerable person receiving care or services from an agency or organization in the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. I wondered if this Bill's title related to the previous Bill.

[Leave granted; Bill 218 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Bill 220
Native Peoples Representation Act

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present Bill 220, Native Peoples Representation Act.

This Bill would establish seats in the Legislature for three MLAs, one for each of the three treaty areas in the province, treaties 6, 7 and 8. Aboriginal people would have the option of voting for their treaty MLA or the MLA representing the area in which they reside.

[Leave granted; Bill 220 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Northwest.

Bill 221
Government Open Contract Act

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 221, that being the Government Open Contract Act.

This Bill requires that all government contracts valued at more than \$50,000 must be filled through a tendering process and all qualifying bids received from the tender must be published, and it further requires that the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services publish the guidelines for the tendering of all contracts with the Crown.

[Leave granted; Bill 221 read a first time]

Bill 222
Ecological Reserves - Heritage Rivers Act

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Bill 222, the Ecological Reserves - Heritage Rivers Act.

This Bill would set aside and provide full protection to keep at least 12 percent of this province in its natural state and require the province to join the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

[Leave granted; Bill 222 read a first time]

Bill 223
Children's Rights Act

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 223, the Children's Rights Act.

This Bill has been introduced by the Official Opposition for many years and makes a strong commitment to children throughout this province and provides principles for advocacy as well as policy and program development on behalf of children and their families to ensure all Albertans a healthy future.

[Leave granted; Bill 223 read a first time]

Bill 224
Non-Smokers Health Act

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 224, the Non-Smokers Health Act.

This Bill provides for smoke-free workplaces and the provision for designated separately ventilated smoking areas.

[Leave granted; Bill 224 read a first time]

Bill 225
Waste Reduction and Recycling Act

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 225, a Bill entitled Waste Reduction and Recycling Act.

The Bill will introduce measures to reduce the waste created in this province by setting up provincewide blue box schemes for the collection of recyclable materials, encourage the establishment of recycling industries, and develop a government procurement policy for goods made from recycled material.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 225 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

Bill 226
Ethanol Act

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 226, the Ethanol Act.

This Act, if passed, would require all retailers of gasoline to make available gasoline blended at least 10 percent with domestically produced ethanol and would further require all gasoline-powered vehicles owned and/or operated by the provincial government or agencies or departments of the provincial government to burn that gasoline blended at least 10 percent with domestically produced ethanol.

[Leave granted; Bill 226 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

Bill 228
Individual's Rights Protection Amendment Act

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 228, Individual's Rights Protection Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would expand prohibitive grounds of discrimination to include sexual orientation, source and level of income, marital status, and political belief and would allow the assessment of penalties for certain violations of the Act. The Bill also makes the Human Rights Commission responsible to a

committee of the Legislative Assembly and allows the commission to initiate investigations.

[Leave granted; Bill 228 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre.

Bill 231
Energy Efficiency Act

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for first reading Bill 231, the Energy Efficiency Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides for the control of the sale and lease as well as the labeling, testing, and inspection of certain appliances and products to ensure that they meet high standards of energy efficiency and environmental safety.

[Leave granted; Bill 231 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Bill 232
Community Forests Act

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 232, the Community Forests Act.

This is a comprehensive rewrite of Alberta's forestry legislation. It contains principles of sound forest management and the principle of democratic control over forest allocation through community boards. It responds to Albertans' concerns expressed in the Dancik report hearings in 1989 and over 50 meetings involving the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place and interested Albertans.

[Leave granted; Bill 232 read a first time]

3:10 **Bill 233**
Daylight Saving Time Amendment Act

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 233, Daylight Saving Time Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Act would make daylight saving time year-round instead of changing back and forth as at present.

[Leave granted; Bill 233 read a first time]

Bill 234
Legal Profession Amendment Act

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 234, the Legal Profession Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would ensure that the courts allow paralegals, under certain circumstances, to represent persons charged with various offences. Presently some courts allow only members of the bar to represent charged citizens, and it's time to reform these courts to ensure justice for all our citizens in these courts.

[Leave granted; Bill 234 read a first time]

Bill 236
Quality Child Day Care Training and Standards Act

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 236, Quality Child Day Care Training and Standards Act.

This Bill would ensure a high quality of care for children utilizing day care in Alberta by requiring training standards that

go beyond that of this government. As well, it establishes a provincial directive to provide information to parents on licensed day care centres.

[Leave granted; Bill 236 read a first time]

**Bill 237
Community Health Centre Act**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce to the Assembly Bill 237, Community Health Centre Act.

If adopted, this Bill would enable community health centres to offer a variety of frontline health care services by paid staff from a variety of occupations and would save the taxpayers a lot of money and also promote community health and preventive health. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing I'd like better than to see this appear tomorrow under Government Bills and Orders.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 237 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Drumheller, is it your wish to proceed with Bill 240 today?

**Bill 240
Marketing of Agricultural Products
Amendment Act**

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce Bill 240, the Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act.

This Bill would amend the Act in relation to the check-off of moneys of the products sold.

[Leave granted; Bill 240 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members, for your patience.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today, sir, to file some 23 reports with the Legislative Assembly, and I begin with the first one, being the Alberta LPG Business Environment. This report presents an analysis of the propane, butane, and condensate availability in Alberta.

The second report is Ethane Business Environment. This report presents an analysis of ethane availability in Alberta.

The third is Benzene Availability Study. This study provides an assessment of the potential supply of benzene from the refining industry in Alberta.

The fourth is the Composite Board Mill Economic Feasibility Study. The fifth is A Survey of Alberta Resources and Capabilities for the Preparation of Computer-based Education and Training Materials, which is a study of the Alberta course-ware production industry and its capabilities.

The sixth is ready-to-assemble, or RTA, furniture manufactured in the U.S, a study which identifies RTA opportunities for forest products produced in Alberta. The seventh is The Use of Wood Products in Residential Repair and Remodeling Projects. This study indicates trends in the provincial residential repair and remodeling industries.

The eighth is the City of St. Albert Business Incubator Feasibility Study. These studies conducted on a cost-shared basis between the community and our incubator support program analyze the feasibility of business incubators. The ninth is the Red Deer Small

Business Incubator Feasibility Study, which is similar to the one dealing with St. Albert. The 10th is the Business Plan for Business Ideas and Development Centre at Olds College. The 11th is a feasibility study for an incubator project amongst various communities similar to the one for the St. Albert and Red Deer communities.

The 12th, Mr. Speaker, is A Study of Barriers Faced by Albertan Women in Business, which fully researches the real and perceived barriers facing women in business relative to those of men in business in Alberta and identifies any significant barriers which are unique to women.

The 13th is the Forest Industry Supplier Development Study. The study identifies opportunities for manufacturers and sales and service firms to supply the operating forest industry.

The 14th is Europe 1992: Opportunities and Strategies for Alberta Business, which provides an assessment of the implications of Europe 1992 on Alberta businesses focusing on key sectors in the development of marketing strategies for Alberta business in response to Europe 1992.

The 15th, Mr. Speaker, is a review of the status and competitiveness of the Alberta motor carrier industry. This study provides details of the financial health of the industry and its ability to respond to the present and future needs of Alberta shippers.

The 16th is a report on tanker safety and marine spills. The 17th is Alberta international trade review, which gives a review of the import and export statistics for the province of Alberta.

The 18th is an industry and resources study which provides a comprehensive study of Alberta and its people with an emphasis on our economic base. The 19th is an Alberta profile which is an overview of the province. The 20th is Profile and Performance of the Alberta Manufacturing Sector. The 21st is a business services study which highlights the role and the importance of the Alberta business community in the Alberta economy. The 22nd is Bow corridor rock industry study which highlights the outstanding contribution this industry makes to the Alberta economy. The 23rd, Mr. Speaker, is the Alberta Business Outlook, which highlights the input that we have received from major financial institutions which underscores the strength of Alberta economy.

It's a delight to table these 23 reports, Mr. Speaker, which illustrate again the openness in which this government conducts its business.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table with the Assembly the report of proceedings of the 82nd annual general meeting of the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the response to Motion 341, which is outstanding from the Third Session of the 22nd Legislature.

As well, I'm filing four copies of the document Partners in Health, our response as a government to the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans, a copy of which had been previously distributed to all members.

3:20

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I table with the Assembly the 14th annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer as submitted to the Speaker under the provisions of the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act.

Further, I table with the Assembly under section 19(5) of the Legislative Assembly Act orders of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services.

head: **Oral Question Period**

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

Nuclear Energy

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my first question to the Minister of Energy. In the Speech from the Throne this government talked a lot about freedom of information. This weekend we find out that secret talks have been held between the Minister of Energy at least and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited over the possibility of building a Candu nuclear reactor here in the province of Alberta, but more importantly feasibility studies are under way by AOSTRA about using nuclear power to aid in bitumen extraction: all this without the previous knowledge of Albertans. My question to the Minister of Energy is simply this: will the Minister of Energy update us, come clean and tell the people of Alberta the status of these secret negotiations?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is being silly. I had a call from a Senator of the government of Canada asking for a half-hour meeting to bring forward a concept on atomic energy in Canada and the possibility of locating in Alberta. I pointed out to him that my priority as the Minister of Energy in this province was to the coal industry, which has 200 years of supply; natural gas, we have 50 years of supply. We have hundreds of years of oil sands development in this province, and we have tremendous hydroelectric capacity. I told him that those were my priorities, and if he wanted to make his case to Albertans, he was free to do that. We're not the mind police here.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, when the minister gets a little upset, I notice that he must be taking speech lessons from the Premier when he gets into "silly."

The minister can say all he wants. Maybe that's the case. I don't know how many other people they've talked to. The reality is, as I mentioned, that AOSTRA, largely funded by public money, has been having feasibility studies on this whole matter. That's the reality whether the minister wants to talk about being silly or not. My question to the Minister of Energy then: will the Minister of Energy now make public all studies and correspondence relating to developing a nuclear energy industry in Alberta?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to. There are none.

Mr. Speaker, let me speak to the point that he raised about AOSTRA. AOSTRA's responsibility is to deliver ideas and concepts as to how we can extract oil at the lowest possible price from oil sands. One of the concepts is low-pressure steam. Low-pressure steam comes from nuclear energy. One of the parameters that was brought forward says that the lowest cost delivery of extracting bitumen from oil sands is a nuclear option. It is not being explored. It is a particular concept that delivers a low cost. There were no secret meetings. If I had known the hon. member was interested, I'd have invited him to the meeting. Now that I know, the next meeting I have I undertake to bring him along.

MR. MARTIN: We asked about the studies, and the minister didn't say that he would table them in the House. That's what I asked him, Mr. Speaker, to table them in the House.

We'll go to the Premier, because of the controversy and because we're had experience with this government before where they had secret meetings with certain companies about chlorine bleached kraft pulp and all of a sudden later on it was government policy. My question is simply this: given that Albertans have reason to be suspicious of a government that has conducted secret negotia-

tions in the past, will the Premier now assure Albertans that his government will not proceed now or in the future with the development of a nuclear energy industry in this province?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there's no controversy at all, and I'm surprised the hon. Leader of the Opposition has taken that point of view. I just heard the Minister of Energy invite him to meetings and tell him all the facts about the whole matter.

MR. MARTIN: I guess, Mr. Speaker, by the nonanswer we know what they're looking and have a chance to do it.

Multiculturalism

MR. MARTIN: My second set of questions is also to the Premier. He's having a little trouble with his cabinet lately, Mr. Speaker. We now have the spectacle of members of the Crown in Alberta issuing threats to groups that do not adhere to the government line. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress has said publicly that the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism is losing all trust and support from the multicultural community. I want to table in the House a copy of the news release that was issued by the congress showing that the minister of culture has absolutely no credibility with this group. As a result of this press release, the members of the congress were subject to bully-boy tactics from this minister, where the minister of culture threatened to cut funds for Ukrainian centennial celebrations. My question to the Premier is simply this. The Premier says that he judges his ministers by performance. How does he judge this performance by this minister of culture?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism is right here in the House. Let's have him perform.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to set the matter straight. What the Leader of the Opposition has just described is in fact a fantasy of the greatest proportions. I at no time threatened to withdraw any funds from any group anywhere in the province, period, full stop, underlined, underscored, bold.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, isn't that interesting? There were five witnesses that sat around and heard the minister do it.

I ask the Premier, who is responsible for these people, simply this. When the minister does something like this and there are witnesses there to indicate it, isn't the message that you're sending out: you have to follow the government line or we'll cut off funding? What kind of a message is that?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the minister just dealt with the matter. Surely the Leader of the Opposition is listening to the answer.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, additional information.

MR. SPEAKER: I think not.
Supplementary. Let's go.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. I think his problem is that he's got too many cabinet ministers. There are a lot of MLAs in the cabinet that shouldn't be there. I want to help the Premier out, because he needs it. My question to the Premier is simply this: would the Premier now be prepared to cut his cabinet by eight members and in the process get rid of the Solicitor General, get rid of the minister of culture, and bring some respect back to his government?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there's quite a significant difference between myself and the Leader of the Opposition: I have cabinet ministers.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I've ruled you out on the first one. That one isn't going to relate to this supplementary.

Edmonton-Glengarry, leader of the Liberal Party, please.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to give him the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has said that multiculturalism should not be imposed on Canadians by law. I'd like to ask the Premier what section or sections of the Constitution he uses to point or show or prove that Canadians are having multiculturalism forced or imposed on them.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, without referring to the Constitution, there are occasions when we do have multiculturalism imposed by law, and I find that 80 percent of Albertans agree with me.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I know of no law that imposes multiculturalism on anybody. All I'm asking the Premier to do is to tell us which sections, which laws, what part of the Constitution. Give us some specifics.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm probably not within the rules of the Legislature, but I'd ask the hon. member to put his request on the Order Paper.

3:30

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, probably because of the Premier's negativity towards multiculturalism, last Friday the minister of multiculturalism threatened, and I think that's clear now from three individuals - three individuals have indicated that the minister threatened members of the Ukrainian community. Mr. Minister, I'd like to know from you why you're now saying that these five are inventing the truth. Why is it that you're saying that?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that I didn't threaten anybody with the cutting off of funds, because I didn't. I'm not making up anything now, wasn't making up anything in the past. I issued no threat about any funding.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, now that I'm on my feet, I would like to, with the indulgence of yourself and the members of the House, just read out the amount of money that is going to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Alberta provincial council, out of the Multiculturalism Commission. There is a hundred thousand dollars in partnership projects. There is \$57,500 going on . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. [interjection] Thank you. Take your place.

Calgary-Glenmore.

Economic Development Strategy

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall the Premier, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and the Minister of Energy launched Toward 2000 Together, an economic discussion paper. In the last few months a number of people throughout the municipalities and throughout the province have

made presentations on this discussion paper. My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. These people want to know exactly what is happening with these presentations and when the government will come to some strategy. What will develop as a result of these presentations?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore has indicated, last August the Premier launched this major economic initiative whereby we are seeking broad public input as it relates to the future directions of the province. I leave the hon. member with the assurance that all of the material that we do receive is going to have a very strong impact on the direction that the province takes in the future. As the hon. member is aware, there are five input streams into our development of this new economic thrust with it coming together at a conference which the Premier is chairing the latter part of May in Calgary. Then we in turn will put together the draft strategy, which we hope to release prior to the fall of this year so that we can have one more opportunity for public input to ensure that we do come forward with a comprehensive overall policy as it relates to the future economic directions of this province so that we can continue as we have done in the past in creating jobs and having one of the strongest economies in all of North America.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Since the growth of jobs and our economic strategy is so important, will the Premier have an opportunity this week at the first ministers' meeting to bring what our constituents are saying to that table?

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is a fact that the Prime Minister has called a First Ministers' Conference on the Economy. It starts tomorrow evening and then will run the full day on Wednesday and perhaps longer. I'm uncertain about the full duration, but we certainly consider that starting tomorrow evening and all of Wednesday.

I have been talking to other first ministers about our initiatives in terms of Toward 2000 Together. They're very interested in it. I will continue to keep them up to date on the matter.

I'm looking forward to that first ministers' meeting not only to discuss Toward 2000 but to see if we can continue the thrusts which Alberta led at the previous first ministers' meetings on the economy. If the members recall, Mr. Speaker, we were able to urge all first ministers to develop a new sense of economic co-operation. We all know that if you have 11 governments going in the same direction, we'll have far more impact rather than going in different directions.

We urged the federal government, and they have certainly assisted in the area of lowering interest rates, in the area of maintaining a better balance of the Canadian dollar in relation to the U.S. dollar. We've urged other first ministers to make sure that the tax benefits that the federal government had in their budget will be allowed to flow through to all Canadians and not have the various provinces move into the space that the federal government has provided. All in all, Mr. Speaker, I think . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Premier. I'm sure we'll get a report back from the conference. Thank you.

Edmonton-Avonmore.

Solicitor General

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Much attention has been focused in recent weeks on accounts of questionable conduct by Alberta's new Solicitor

General. The Premier stated in the Assembly last Friday that "stories are not something upon which you base decisions." These allegations are a matter of record with the RCMP and the courts. My question: given the sensitive nature of the portfolio of the Solicitor General insofar as it relates to the administration of justice in Alberta, would the Premier tell the Assembly if he was aware of the allegations against the Solicitor General prior to appointing him?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we dealt with these matters on Friday.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could take another tack. Sound business practice dictates that before hiring a person for a position, relevant qualifications and past performance are evaluated as a way of ensuring success in the new position. Given that the government, and the Premier in particular, conducts business on behalf of the people of Alberta, how does the Premier justify ignoring sound business practice in making this appointment? Does he not believe that Albertans have a right to know why he believes that the allegations before him should not be of concern to him and them inasmuch as they speak to past performance?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from the hon. member, but I just point out to her that we did deal with those matters. I went some time. I don't imagine you'd want me to repeat each day the things we've said already in the House with regards to how we select cabinet ministers, qualifications and so on, so I just ask the hon. member to refer to the Friday *Hansard*.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Nuclear Energy (continued)

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposal to develop the Candu-3 nuclear reactor in Alberta raises some serious questions. Could the Minister of the Environment tell us whether or not he supports nuclear energy development in Alberta without knowing exactly how nuclear waste by-products can be rendered harmless?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I only know about this particular project from what I've read in the newspapers. As the hon. Minister of Energy pointed out, he's had a half-hour discussion. This hardly constitutes a proposal. If indeed a proposal comes before this government, then I would suspect it would be the subject of a full and very intensive environmental impact assessment including public consultation and public hearings.

MR. MITCHELL: My supplemental is to the Minister of the Environment as well, Mr. Speaker. What is the Minister of the Environment doing to convince his colleagues that a priority must be placed upon developing renewable energy technologies and energy conservation techniques to the fullest extent possible before even contemplating nuclear energy development and its inherent risks?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member assumes that something is being contemplated. Nothing is being contemplated at this particular time. What we have before us is a half-hour discussion between the hon. Minister of Energy and someone from the atomic energy commission, as I understand it.

With respect to the hon. member's question relative to the use of alternate forms of energy, this is now and always will be an ongoing discussion and a matter that will be under consideration. As new methods of providing alternative energy are found, they will be instituted. In fact, as the hon. Minister of Energy will point out, we're proceeding quite well with wind to energy research in southern Alberta and various small water projects.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you hon. minister.
The Member for Smoky River.

3:40 Farm Income

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring is rapidly approaching, and farmers all over Alberta are being asked to make some key management decisions. Though most farmers participated in the GRIP program this past year, for the benefit of those that did participate and for the benefit of those who may be considering participating in the program this year, I'd like to ask the Associate Minister of Agriculture: when will the index moving average price be set?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, first, I thank the hon. member for the question and his interest on behalf of the Alberta producers. I'm sure that the gross revenue insurance program is not far from any member's mind, but I would remind members that this is a national agreement involving the federal government and some nine provinces. Alberta is very comfortable that we have submitted the necessary information to the federal government that is required from Alberta's perspective to deal with this matter. However, I would add that we don't have an indication from our federal counterparts that this information will be available until later this week. I certainly understand the producers' interest in this, and I can assure the hon. member and all producers in Alberta that we are communicating with our federal counterparts on a daily basis urging them to get the necessary information to the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation, which administers this program, and to Alberta producers.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the associate minister. Spring, of course, is the time when the major cash flow in agriculture takes place, and the need of money is there. The initial GRIP payment was made shortly after the harvest, and that was very much appreciated by the producers of Alberta. With spring rapidly advancing, when will the second payment be made?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, commitment to a second or interim statement and payment has been made, to have that flow in time for spring planting. My latest communication with the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation is that they will be initiating those cheques and that they should be starting to flow to producers by the end of March at the latest, as we had earlier indicated.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Nuclear Energy (continued)

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Minister of Energy and all Albertans would like to know why Atomic Energy of Canada was thrown out of Saskatchewan on this Candu-

3 program. I'm quoting from a Peat Marwick report for the atomic energy commission, October 21, 1991.

If the Saskatchewan public is prepared to accept a Candu-3 in the Province's electrical generation mix, this means, at a minimum, that used fuel would be stored at the reactor site. It could then be argued that developing a waste repository to ultimately dispose of used fuel generated in Saskatchewan is the responsible course of action.

That's the agenda, and that's why they were tossed out. I'd like the minister to state today – if he's saying, as I heard him earlier, that the only reason we're into this is because AOSTRA has a mandate to pursue the nuclear option – that he is prepared to take the nuclear option away from AOSTRA and do it this session.

MR. ORMAN: I don't know where the NDP are coming from. I see you shaking your head too, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing under consideration with regard to nuclear reactors. I spent 30 minutes with a Senator from Regina, a Senator for the province of Saskatchewan, who asked the courtesy of a meeting. Unlike the opposition I extended that courtesy, gave him every opportunity to present his views. That does not mean to say that we are considering anything that relates to nuclear energy. I was very clear with the gentleman in my office that we have priorities in this province with the energy sector we have now. It's a tough time for the energy sector in this province. We have to work hard to allow for efficiencies, we have to work hard to be able to preserve the infrastructure, and we have to work hard to expand into new markets for our natural gas sector. That's our government's priority first, second, and third. The issue of a nuclear reactor or Candu-3 has nothing but passing interest as it moves across the country looking for a home.

MR. McINNIS: The last time I saw backpedaling like that was at the Shrine circus: the guy on the unicycle, you know, but he was better than the minister was.

Okay, we've got mixed messages. When the devil comes to dinner, you don't say no by asking him to check with the other members of the family. The question is: why did you send him out to Bonnyville and the university and AOSTRA and the rest of them instead of saying no?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is embarrassing himself in front of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

Belmont Correctional Centre

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The robbery of the Treasury Branch at Lamont last week by three inmates from the Belmont Correctional Centre reminds Albertans that little has changed in the parole system since the escape of Daniel Gingras, who, of course, murdered two innocent citizens of this province. Although I realize new legislation is forthcoming on this particular issue, it is plain that the Solicitor General's department has not been doing an effective job to minimize the risks imposed by dangerous offenders on parole or on day passes. My question is to the Solicitor General. Is it a general practice to allow convicted murderers and robbers out on day passes in gangs, and if not, why was it permitted in this case?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the federal government at the present time is reviewing the Young Offenders Act and is looking at changes coming forward. We in this province will continue, along with our police commissions, municipalities, and police forces, to review with the Attorney General's department the criminal justice

system as it relates to this province and assure the people of Alberta that we'll be doing the most responsible job in that direction.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, this recent case is particularly disturbing, Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the Belmont institute is located in the heart of a residential area in Edmonton-Beverly, and convicted dangerous offenders simply should not be housed in that facility. These criminals are on day pass. They pose a potential hazard, I think, to the people and to children living in the area, particularly kids going to school. Will the Solicitor General commit in this Assembly today to relocate the dangerous offenders in the Belmont Correctional Centre to other facilities that are better equipped to deal with them?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I can assure this Assembly that we are very concerned with the events that take place such as the hon. member has brought forward, and we will continue on an ongoing basis to look at our system to ensure the safety of the public out there to the best of our ability.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Breast Implants

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to have a response from Alberta health care insurance that they will in fact cover the cost of removing silicone breast implants if medically required. This follows, of course, Dow Corning's announcement and offer of compensation to American women. To the Minister of Health: what action is being taken to recover the costs from Dow Corning?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, given the different reality of the Canadian versus the U.S. health system, I think it's a question that is a very valid one. I have asked the staff at Alberta health care, along with help from the Attorney General's department, to look at what legal recourse may be available to us to recover any of these costs from the manufacturer.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, will the minister assure us that she'll go after the whole cost, the actual cost of the procedure and not just the \$1,200 that's being offered?

MS BETKOWSKI: Just to repeat, we will cover the full cost of all removals that are medically required. If we have an ability to go after further costs with the manufacturer, that's exactly what I'm seeking the legal route through to. I will give her assurance that I will report to her on the results of that.

3:50

Electric Power Generation

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed at the Minister of Energy. I have been approached by representatives from Fording Coal with respect to them putting a thermogeneration unit at Kitsim in Alberta, which is in Bow Valley constituency. Could the minister tell the House today if Fording Coal has all the necessary approvals from the department to go ahead with this project?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, to build an electrical power generation facility in this province, Fording Coal must follow the procedures that all other electrical power generation facilities must follow, and that is that they must first make an application to the Energy Resources Conservation Board. The Energy Resources

Conservation Board will then determine the extent to which electrical power will be needed, forecasting into the future. Thereafter if the decision is made that there is a necessity for new generation capacity in the province, they then must make that recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Then following that procedure the Public Utilities Board will determine whether or not the costs of the plant will go into the rate base and be shared by all Albertans.

That's the long answer. The short answer, Mr. Speaker, is that they have a long way to go. I'm not sure there will be electrical power growth to accommodate the new facility that is being contemplated in the member's constituency, but they can go through the process. They're welcome to do that.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, although as far as economic development is concerned this would be great for Bow Valley constituency, Fording Coal tells me that their forecast is that in the year 1996 this type of additional generation capacity will be necessary. What is the department's forecast on that?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the forecast that we rely on for electrical demand in the future comes from the Energy Resources Conservation Board. They are presently considering the possibility of bringing on stream the second Genesee unit that is located west of Edmonton. In the event that the board deems the necessity for this electricity in the future for the province, then they will make that recommendation to the government.

Mr. Speaker, one thing we don't want to happen is what happened with the first Genesee plant, and that is that it was constructed for job-creation purposes by the city of Edmonton without getting the approvals. I wouldn't want to go through that process again. There is a process, and we should all respect the rules.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

Food Banks

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The failing Alberta economy is having a drastic effect on many families in Alberta. In February use of the Edmonton food bank increased 35 percent over last year. We know that almost half of all the food bank assistance in Alberta goes to feed hungry children, many from families who depend on social assistance for their income. My question is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Given that social assistance rates do not meet the true cost of living and that people are now being denied emergency food vouchers from the Department of Family and Social Services, will the minister agree to immediately instruct his department to issue emergency food vouchers to families and children who are hungry and in need of emergency food?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, first of all, as I've said on many occasions in this Assembly, we take no pride in seeing the need for food banks either here in Alberta or across Canada for that matter.

I would point out a couple of things to the member opposite. First is that usage actually isn't as high as it was in 1988; that is to say, although the numbers are up somewhat over last year, they're still not nearly as high as they were in 1988. I would also point out to the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that here in the city of Edmonton over 95 percent of our SFI recipients function without the use of food banks. In the city of Calgary it's 98 percent. I would also remind the member opposite that there were

substantive increases to the food rates last year. In fact, for children it went up by as much as 19 percent. Given all of that, I can tell the member opposite that, no, there is no intention to increase the food rates any further at this time.

MS MJOLSNESS: Well, we have hungry children lined up at food banks, and this minister is proud because there are less children lining up than in 1988. I would argue with his figures, Mr. Speaker.

This minister has been busy clarifying the policy when it comes to emergency food vouchers, and my question again is: will this minister make a commitment to hungry children in this province and their families that if they are in need of emergency food, this minister will allow them to have that emergency food?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. There are emergency food provisions there. They're available here in the city of Edmonton as they are in other parts. Further to that, if individuals are not satisfied with the response they get, they have the right to an individual appeal.

To suggest that this minister is proud is utter nonsense. If she wants to talk about children lined up, all she needs to do is go to Ontario, where the usage of food banks has increased by over 300 percent. That's the kind of job they're doing down there. We're not going to allow that to happen here though.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

Ethics in Government

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Government House Leader. The Joe Dutton affair, I think, clearly illustrates that patronage appointments are not the best method of selecting an individual for senior government positions. My question is: since the throne speech indicates a new openness and access to information legislation, will the government today commit to this idea of openness by submitting all order in council appointments for senior government positions to be reviewed by an all-party committee of this Legislature?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, that's obviously not a matter that comes under the purview of the Government House Leader, but I will refer it to the Acting Premier.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the question of appointments of senior officials in part was described by the Premier last Friday when this whole question was first raised and by the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Those members who are on the OC list, in fact, are normally approved through a competitive process.

MR. BRUSEKER: Normally but not always: that's what I'm getting at, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Acting Premier then commit to new legislation this session that, first of all, lengthens the cooling-off period for ministers from six months to one year and further extends that same cooling-off period for senior government officials like Joe Dutton and others?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that question of policy I'm sure the Premier would like to answer when he returns to the House. I'll advise him of that question.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, if I may supplement.

MR. SPEAKER: Fine.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to supplement because the hon. member has left the impression that Mr. Dutton was a senior member of this government. He was not, and he had left the employ some three and a half years prior in that position. Thank you.

Speaker's Ruling Oral Question Period Practices

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would also point out with respect to the main question – I'm sorting through those hundred-and-some-odd issues that we had the other day. I'm a little concerned that maybe we're lifting questions and motions for returns off the Order Paper and bringing them into question period, and that's not allowed.

The Chair recognizes Stony Plain.

School Lighting

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In February of 1992 Alberta Education released a report titled A Study into the Effects of Light on Children of Elementary School Age: A Case of Daylight Robbery. The study stated that children exposed to high-pressure sodium vapour lighting in Alberta classrooms grew on an average of two centimetres less over a two-year period, achieved lower on test scores, and missed more school than students exposed to proper ultraviolet lighting. This clearly shows that exposure to these lights is a health hazard to children. My question to the Minister of Education is: in view of this irrefutable evidence provided by his department, will he order and assist school boards with high-pressure sodium vapour lighting to immediately implement a program to change the lights and replace them with healthy ultraviolet-emitting lights?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, school boards, in their decisions to modernize and upgrade their facilities, will be able to use this research that's now available to them. We're making sure that is in their hands so they can make those kinds of decisions, that are best made at the local level.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the health of children is at risk here. I would ask the minister if he is prepared, then, to go one step further: other than just mailing the report out, show some honest, true leadership, help these children at risk, and aid the boards in modernizing their schools and eliminating – and I stress “eliminating” – the lights that are in fact a health hazard and let new buildings take their course.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, this province has an unprecedented commitment to the capital construction of new facilities and modernization of existing facilities. This government supports a building program in the order of about \$140 million a year, a \$700 million commitment over five years. Those dollars are there. They are available for those school boards to make the best decisions in light of the needs of the children of their school districts. So for the Minister of Education, of course, to be in Edmonton and simply say “thou shalt” from under the dome: well, that may be an approach that the New Democratic Party might want to take, but it's not the policy of this provincial government. Those dollars are there; we encourage their best possible use. They will be able to make those decisions about lighting and other matters that are in the best interests of their children.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

4:00 Pork Processing Industry

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, who over the last couple of years has repeatedly said that the government was willing to sell Gainers provided the hog board sold Fletcher's; in other words, he'd get out of subsidizing Gainers, get the government out of the hog business. Now that the hog board has said they are selling Fletcher's, when can we expect the government to sell Gainers?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, to set the record straight, I believe the Minister of Agriculture stated that the government was having a difficult time selling Gainers as long as there was a perception of conflict of interest between the board that is in charge of selling all hogs in this province and the fact that it has the ownership of one of the plants. That was a reaction we were getting from possible buyers interested in Gainers. I'm very pleased that the Pork Producers' Development Corporation has decided to go in the direction they're going, in separating the ownership of Fletcher's from the Pork Producers' Development Corporation and turning shares over to the so-called extra levy producers, the ones that actually paid for the bulk of Fletcher's in the first place. I'm sure that as that process unfolds and becomes a reality, we'll have some fruitful discussions with potential purchasers of Gainers.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, glaciers move faster than the minister, it would appear.

Would you go a step further then, Mr. Minister? Seeing that the hog board is allowing the hog growers of Alberta to buy Fletcher's, would the minister then consider allowing the hog farmers of Alberta to have the first option of buying Gainers?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, we're certainly interested in assessing and discussing any proposals that come forward for the privatization of Gainers. If the hon. member has a group of producers who feel they want to get into the packing business, he should co-ordinate them and tee up a meeting with us.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

Unemployment

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Career Development and Employment. I'm sure that all members of the Assembly have been watching the unemployment rates and now acknowledge that they're unacceptably high. Unlike the last time we were in a recession where the ranks of the unemployed were concentrated in but not exclusively confined to large urban centres, the rate of unemployment is spread throughout our province, especially the smaller communities. I'm wondering what specific measures the minister or his department has to assist smaller communities with some meaningful and necessary employment programs.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, it's a very fair and reasonable question. I wouldn't want to appear flippant or arrogant in my response, but I would ask the hon. member for his indulgence and to be patient. As the hon. Premier indicated in the outline remarks in response to the Speech from the Throne, and as other members as well indicated, the priorities of our government are to create jobs. I think he will find that if he will wait, that response will come forward as it unfolds, specifically in the minister's response to the budget speech.

I would indicate and add, though, Mr. Speaker, to some of the allegations or insinuations that the figures have grown alarmingly high, that Alberta has maintained its level and, of course, was up two-tenths last month, but it's still well below other provincial averages at 9.6, and the city of Edmonton did remain constant.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, patience may be a virtue of this government, but for the unemployed it's darn difficult trying to put food on the table and still be patient when you haven't a job to go to.

I would like the minister to respond specifically, then, to the provision of services for the unemployed. I'm wondering if the Department of Career Development and Employment has any protocols with, for example, the Department of Family and Social Services and the Department of Health, to deal with the needs of those people that find themselves now unemployed in this recession.

MR. WEISS: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I do accept the criticism from the hon. member as it relates to those without a job. It's very tough; it is, and that's fair comment. But I would also encourage the hon. member to make sure that his constituents as well as others are well aware of the services that are being provided today through the specific agencies as it relates to social services and through Career Development and Employment. There are some 32 career centres that we have, career agencies operated through privately funded and contracted services to work with those people who are in need, the social assistance recipients, and those that require help. We continue to work with them, but as far as specific other programs that are being initiated, they'll have to wait for the response through the budget speech.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: We have two Standing Order 40 requests. We'll deal with them in the order in which notification was given to the Speaker's office. First, then, is Smoky River.

Under Standing Order 40, the member has made a case for urgency. Those willing to allow the matter to proceed, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously.

Curling Championship

Moved Mr. Paszkowski:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta express its congratulations to the 1992 Canadian mixed curling champions, who hail from Alberta. The rink was comprised of Joanne Morrison, at lead; Rod Kramer, at second; Marcy Balderston, at third; and Kurt Balderston, skip.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you wish to speak to your motion, hon. member? [interjection]

All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motions carries, let the record show, unanimously.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder, a Standing Order 40 request, urgency.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to request unanimous consent for the acceptance of the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the cogent arguments in favour of urgency, those in favour of letting the matter proceed, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Motion carried.

Hockey Championship

Moved by Ms Mjolsness:

Be it resolved that this Assembly congratulates the Edmonton Chimos hockey team on their Canadian championship victory March 22, 1992, which is their third Canadian title in 11 years, and be it further resolved that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly convey to the Edmonton Chimos this congratulatory motion in his usual manner.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion, please signify.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Let the record show the motion carried unanimously, and appropriate action will be taken.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Minister of Transportation and Utilities on a special request basis.

4:10

MR. ADAIR: I beg your indulgence to allow me to express my thanks, Mr. Speaker, to you, to Mr. Premier and all my colleagues in cabinet and caucus, and to all the colleagues in this Legislative Assembly. I do that for your strong support during my surgery a year ago. This is the first opportunity I've really had to say thanks to everybody for that.

To be part of this very special group working on behalf of all and for all the people of Alberta really and truly is a very special privilege.

Mr. Speaker, my thanks begin with you, sir. Your very caring way and your many phone calls on behalf of the members of this Assembly were very much appreciated.

In addition, I would like to publicly express my thanks to the following: Dr. Elliott Gelfan and his excellent team that performed the operation, Dr. Telatibi and the staff of the Edmonton Cardiac and Fitness Institute for their care and their understanding both before and after my operation, plus my sincere thanks to the super staff of the cardiac units at both the University of Alberta and the Royal Alexandra hospitals, and also to the many friends from all over Alberta and across Canada that sent over 800 get well wishes and another 40-plus who forwarded bouquets of flowers.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, to all my constituents I say thanks for their support and understanding. Finally, two very special groups: Brian, Barb, Colleen, Christine, and Helene in my office; along with Harvey Alton and his staff and all the members of the Department of Transportation and Utilities along with Rick Sloan, Bob Elliott, the Northern Alberta Development Council and the northern development branch.

Mr. Speaker, there's one other person very special to me that I'd like to thank, and that's a three-year-old who lives next door to me in Peace River. Her name is Ashley Olsen. She walked with me every day, rain or shine, from the very first walk of only one block through to the 25 blocks that I was walking. To you, Ashley: thank you.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, a very special thanks to my wife, Joyce, and all my family for the loving care, patience, and understanding, without which I'm sure I would not be making the recovery that I am today.

Thank you.

head: **Orders of the Day**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have received certain messages from His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I now transmit to you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

MR. SPEAKER: The Lieutenant Governor transmits schedules of certain sums required in the interim for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1993, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. Signed, Gordon Towers at Edmonton, March 23.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits schedules of certain sums required in the interim for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1993, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. Also signed by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Please be seated.

head: **Government Motions**

- Moved by Mr. Johnston:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve itself into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider the 1992-93 interim supply to be granted to Her Majesty for the General Revenue Fund, the Capital Fund, and the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, capital projects division.

[Motion carried]

head: **1992-93 Interim Supply Estimates**

- Moved by Mr. Johnston:
Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the schedules detailing the amounts required for 1992-93 interim supply, and all matters connected therewith, be referred to the Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: Discussion? Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I do support this motion, and I offer a friendly amendment, which I believe has been circulated to all members of the Assembly. The amendment would add after the words "Committee of Supply": ", which shall report to the Assembly no later than 11:45 p.m., Tuesday, March 31, 1992."

The purpose of this amendment is basically to avoid the government proceeding to Government Motion 3 which would limit discussion in the Committee of Supply to two days. The reason I sponsored this amendment, Mr. Speaker, is because what the government would propose to do in that Motion 3 is invoke closure. I think there's no necessity for this. Every year the

Official Opposition has debated the way the government has spent money through special warrants. We've also debated how they plan to spend some of this money prior to us getting the budget, but we have always pledged that the interim supply legislation would come into force before the money runs out; in other words, they would get their interim supply through. We've always promised that.

Now the government wants to talk out of both sides of its face, Mr. Speaker. They want to give you a throne speech in which they make like they're full of ears. Suddenly after 21 years in government they grew ears: they're listening. They want to be fair; they want to be open. They're considering reforms. Well, I'm asking the government that if they don't want to support my amendment, to do what we do every year and not embody in a closure motion the time limitation for the consideration of the interim supply estimates. The government has our absolute assurance – and I believe the caucus beside us would probably go along – that you will get your money Bill through on time before your money runs out so that the government and hospitals and schools continue to operate. You have our assurance we would never do anything to prevent that from happening, but in the meantime I ask the government that if they're not going to support my amendment, to please not proceed with Government Motion 3. There's no need for it, and it will only mean that you're starting a session off on the wrong foot.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the point that's been made here by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands is that we're quite prepared to co-operate and work with the government provided they're prepared to work and co-operate with the opposition. There's a quid pro quo there in that we don't want to be placed in a situation where extensive and important decisions are relegated to a matter of a few hours over a couple of days' debate. That doesn't provide the kind of review that we believe is justified or required in this case. As I understand it, the full investments for the capital projects division, not just the interim supply, would be a part of that two-day review period, whereas in years past that alone has taken sometimes in the order of four or five days. So it's not simply the interim supply requirements for the main estimates and for the Capital Fund but for the capital projects division as well.

We're just simply saying, Mr. Speaker, that should the Assembly be prepared to allow this matter to go longer than the two-day period, we're quite happy to work with the government to ensure that the interim supply Bills are in place and adopted by the Assembly before the end of the month, but we also want to register our strongest objection to the notion that these matters can be simply dismissed in a matter of a few hours' or minutes' debate spread over a two-day period. We can't accept that that's a new and open accountable way of doing the province's business. We don't accept it, and by moving this amendment we're suggesting to the government that they should go back and be a little more consultative with the opposition before they make these decisions and take into account some of our concerns and objections in arranging the work of this House.

I support the amendment in front of us, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

On the amendment, the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's great to hear the opposition start off with the spirit of co-operation and commitment to ensure that the interim supply is passed before March 31, 1992, and to that end, of course, we have agreement. Where you find the difficulty is in two parts.

First let me say that the response by the Government House Leader and the government to ensure that two days are provided to discuss the estimates is in fact a major step in response to the opposition's request last year where they said that they needed the two days and we responded by providing, out of accommodation to them, an opportunity to discuss in a general way the interim supply amounts. We think that's a major accommodation.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, let me point out very clearly that the member from – I always forget where the member's from. [interjection] That's right, and her constituents forget too. She's from Highwood. [interjection] Edmonton-Highlands; that's right. She has trapped herself as well, because, of course, if she looked very carefully at what she's suggested, that in fact if she said she wants to have the opportunity to hold debate on interim to 11:45 on March 31, '92, it should be well understood that the rules of the House make it very impossible for us to get the appropriation, interim supply, Bill through because we would have to first introduce the Bill subsequent to the debate in Committee of Supply, and secondly, the normal procedures of our Assembly are such that even if one member out of an absence of attention said no when unanimous consent is required to move it through two or three steps on the same day, we would in fact be blocked. We would have to, therefore, suspend payments to the civil service, not meet the kinds of commitments which we are obliged to do on April 1, the new fiscal year of this government, and that would not be sound or prudent, would not square with the commitment of the opposition on this point. Therefore, the government will not accept or support this amendment.

4:20

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I support this amendment. I think it's a good amendment.

Interestingly, the Provincial Treasurer speaks to the new spirit of co-operation, but we don't see much action or demonstration of it. I believe he can certainly find a way around the so-called impediment that he has just spoken to if he has any desire to do so. There are immense expenditures here, and we need to have sufficient time without threat of so-called closure and cutoff. The budget process, in my view, is far too compressed. We need the required time for a proper examination. This will not in any way impede the passage of the supply Bills, and I think it's a proper amendment.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, things are not going so well already today. There's going to be a change in the way this Assembly handles money, and if it doesn't happen today or in the next week or the next few months, it's going to happen in years to come. It's going to happen despite the wishes of this government or, for that matter, any current member sitting in this Assembly. If we don't start to take our responsibility for the handling of funds a lot more seriously than we have in the past, there are lots of people out there who are going to make darn good and sure that we do.

I think the government should think long and hard about how much it wants to take away from the role of individual members of this Assembly in scrutiny of government spending. It may seem like a very small thing to say that, well, we're going to limit your chances to two days on this occasion and 25 sitting days on that occasion and one speech in the Assembly. I even heard that there's a proposal in government – can you believe this, Mr.

Speaker? – to limit opposition critics to one 20-minute speech on budget estimates: one 20-minute speech. It's unbelievable that somebody on that side of the House would have a mind that would work that way. Here we have today the thin edge of the wedge, and I tell you that if we don't resolve this issue today, it's coming back in the balance of this session, it's coming back in the next session, it's coming back in the next Legislature, and it's coming back until it's fixed.

I support the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I jump into the debate mainly because of some of the words that I heard the hon. Provincial Treasurer offer just a short while ago when he said that we have to have interim supply passed by such and such a time, I think March 31; they have to be guaranteed that that Bill would be passed at that point otherwise there would be payments owed on April 1 that you wouldn't be able to cover. Well, I would think that those that are employed in the public service are normally paid for the work that they give so that they are paid at the end of the month. Now, we should have enough money, I'm sure, in our budget on March 31 to pay all of the dollars that are owed all of the provincial employees in the 12th month of this fiscal year, or is this Provincial Treasurer so bad off in his budget and in his debt that he has to go into the first month of the new fiscal year to pay the 12th month of the old fiscal year?

Well, you know, I don't want to give him any more ideas than that, but I am amazed that he feels that he's got to go into the first day of the new fiscal year in order to pay out the 365th or the 366th day – I'm sorry; I forgot it was leap year – to pay provincial employees. "A major accommodation," he said: two days to look at hundreds of millions of dollars, two days to look at incredible amounts of money. That's all that's being offered, and it's being done unilaterally by decision, by dictum from the other side of the Assembly. Well, it's just not good enough. When we heard His Honour the Lieutenant Governor deliver the Speech from the Throne, I thought time and time again throughout the document that was being read that we said "listening" and "consulting"; not dictate and absolute, but listening and consulting. After the third sitting day of the Legislature, has that already gone by the wayside?

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition House Leader has guaranteed unanimous consent only so that we can get more time to have some consultation, more time to debate some very important estimates of the province. And what's happening? It's already being shut down. Maybe the change in challenge is just that: the government hasn't changed at all, and it's just going to be more of a challenge for the rest of us to put up with it.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I'm amazed that the House leader on the other side didn't decide to get up and defend his motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, we still have quite a ways to go in the debate.

MR. McEACHERN: Perhaps he will. Are you perhaps slow in getting up so that he would have a chance to rise if he chose to enter the debate? But obviously he can't defend the indefensible. I guess that's his problem.

Mr. Speaker, this government has used every possible opportunity to insinuate closure into the procedures of this House in as many ways as possible. Section 58(1) of our Standing Orders of

the Assembly says that we can only have 25 days for 25 departments to debate budget; 58(6) is the one that the minister is using to push this motion through, and now with only two days' debate sounds innocent enough when you start to read it. It says:

In respect of the supplementary estimates and interim supply estimates, a minister of the Crown may, with at least one day's notice, make a motion to determine

- (a) the number of days that the Committee of Supply and its subcommittees may be called, and
- (b) the dates and the number of departments' estimates that may be designated by the Leader of the Opposition for consideration by the Committee,

and the question shall be decided without debate or amendment.

You don't want to give anybody a chance to even debate the rule as to whether it's a good one or not. Every chance they get, they close down the chance for debate. They want to limit the debate in estimates, as my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place said.

In Motions for Returns, if the motion is turned down, the motion to turn it down is no longer debatable. We debated it for a number of years in this Assembly, and then suddenly somebody discovered in the Standing Orders that we weren't supposed to do that and that somehow it's unfair to be able to debate a motion for dismissing important motions for returns for information on the part of this House. Then the Premier has the gall to stand up the second day of the Assembly – he's already started it – saying: put it on the Order Paper. You put it on the Order Paper, and you still don't get the information.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is unfair and undemocratic. We're talking here about the authorization of expenditure by this Assembly of some \$4 billion. The traditional interim supply Bill is something in the neighbourhood of a third of the budget; expenditures for this government will be in the neighbourhood of \$13 billion. We're going to see an interim supply Bill of somewhere around \$4 billion, and this government thinks it's okay to talk about that for two days. And two days isn't 48 hours. Two days is an hour and a half one day and maybe two and a half hours another day, if we're lucky; probably not that long. There are 25 different departments. There's a lot of money involved, and this government thinks it's okay to say: "Well, we can push the committee stage of the Bill in with either the second reading or with third reading. It really doesn't matter. Let's just get it over with and say that that's reasonable scrutiny of the expenditures of taxpayers' dollars."

Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer is worried about whether he can meet the bills or not. He should be. He borrowed money last year. He brought in a borrowing Bill, increased his borrowing power from \$11 and a half billion to \$13 and a half billion and said he didn't really need it all. In this fiscal year we're just finishing he borrowed \$3 billion one way or another, and yet he's still concerned that he can't meet the payroll for March, I guess. Certainly we've got seven days left in the Assembly. If there isn't time to get this all through before March 31, if you have to crunch it into two days, then it's your own fault. You could have called the Assembly a couple of weeks sooner. We were all here and waiting. Just because this government thinks we have too much government and puts off calling the Assembly doesn't mean that you should then be able to short-circuit the democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, I move to support this amendment and, therefore, render Motion 3 unnecessary. Certainly it's an attack on the democratic processes in this House.

4:30

MR. SPEAKER: Now the Leader of the Opposition. I know the previous speaker was indeed looking towards Standing Order 20(b).

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, just a point to the obvious, two points. We have to do a better job in terms of scrutinizing the money that we're spending in this Legislative Assembly. We're not doing the job; that is a reality. When we deal with budget estimates, we hear a number of speeches, and that's it. We don't go into committees. We don't look at it in a proper way. It's 25 days; it's not done this way. The minister can sit there and say that's the way it's going to be done. If it's not done by them, there will be eight other speeches. That's hardly a way to look after a budget. That's a reality. We spend over \$12 billion here, and we don't do the job. We should be looking at changes in doing the job a proper way. Whether the minister likes it or not, that's the reality of it.

The point was just made by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway: now they're in a panic. They've got to get this through, Mr. Speaker, because it's an interim supply Bill, and I understand that. Why wasn't the Legislature called back in February then? We didn't have to have it this late. Now for them to come and say, "Well, let's just have two days and quickly pass this through," billions of dollars – my God, I hope the Treasurer doesn't look after his own finances the way we do here in the Assembly. That's the point. We could have been back here a lot earlier – other provinces do it – and you wouldn't be caught in this catch-22 situation. There is no need to spend two days, with closure. We could at least spend the time to March 31. I'm sure you'd get the word from the Liberal caucus and all of us. We don't want to hold up that supply Bill, but we have to – and you can't continue to ignore it – we have to do a better job looking after the people's finances in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't wish to prolong debate on this important amendment, but I do wish to make a couple of very salient points that deal directly with the rights and responsibilities of elected members in this Assembly.

We have very serious responsibilities: to scrutinize the proposals, to collect and spend money put forward by the government. We're given very few tools to do that. I just want to say that I think we should adopt this amendment because it would give us as much freedom as possible within the confines of the legislative calendar to examine these budget proposals and remind the Provincial Treasurer of the other half of this formula. When he comes forward with Bills 6, 7, and 8 embodied in the form of Bills to present before the Legislature, our rules require that one of them be read during a session and the vote on all three be held later that same evening. So in fact what we end up with is maybe . . . [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. FOX: There are rules, and I'm not criticizing them. I'm merely explaining them to the Provincial Treasurer so he understands the import of this proposed amendment.

In actual practice we could have second reading on Bill 6 moved five minutes before the normal hour of adjournment and vote on all three five minutes later; the same process for committee and third reading. We've seen it happen time and time again: virtually no opportunity. If one of them is read a second time, the vote on all three is held at the same time, and it just allows no time. [interjection] Well, I understand that. I'm just explaining why we need to have some reasonable opportunity to debate the issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, please.

Provincial Treasurer, you had your chance for a kick at the cat. Please don't interrupt.

Carry on.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We don't have much time, when these estimates are embodied in the form of Bills, to give them any legitimate sort of scrutiny in debate, and what we're trying to make the case for is that we have a reasonable opportunity to do that during Committee of Supply. Two days is not very much time, and I'd just like to explain, for people who might at some point in the distant future read this debate, that a day in terms of our legislative calendar is seldom more than two hours but may in fact be much less than two hours of debate. So what we might be stuck with, if we don't accept this amendment as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands and then go on to pass the third motion proposed by the hon. Government House Leader, is five minutes' debate on the interim supply Bills, and that is just unacceptable.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: I'd like to make a few comments with respect to this amendment we have before us that imposes a deadline of 11:45 p.m. on Tuesday, March 31, 1992. I certainly appreciate the intent of the mover of this amendment to attempt to broaden debate. That's certainly something that the Liberal Party has stood for for a long time, suggesting that we do need to change the system and change the way it works. Unfortunately, the amendment doesn't go far enough in its proposal, and for that reason I will not be able to support that particular amendment.

With respect to the points that the Treasurer has made, I think there are some valid points, but we need to open up the debate. We need to ensure that questions are given valid answers. Having a deadline, as Motion 3 says, of two days or, as this amendment says, of several days down the road or imposing any kind of deadline I believe is inappropriate. Therefore, I find it difficult to support.

Secondly, the mover of the amendment presumes that because the Official Opposition decides this is a good idea, the Liberal Party will naturally fall into lockstep and provide unanimous consent. Certainly that is not necessarily the case. I would not support the amendment as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. SPEAKER: Further discussion? Call for the question on the amendment? [interjections] No right of reply on the amendment. Thank you.

All those in favour of the amendment, please signify by crying aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, by saying no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails.

The matter before the House is an amendment by Edmonton-Highlands, and it's an amendment to Motion 2 as proposed by the Provincial Treasurer. For purposes of clarity - I think you have that before you in your various bits of paper - the amendment

reads: " , which shall report to the Assembly no later than 11:45 p.m., Tuesday, March 31, 1992."

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

4:40

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Martin	Pashak
Doyle	McEachern	Roberts
Fox	McInnis	Sigurdson
Gibeault	Mjolsness	Woloshyn
Hewes		

Against the motion:

Adair	Elzinga	Nelson
Ady	Evans	Oldring
Anderson	Gesell	Orman
Betkowski	Getty	Paszkowski
Bradley	Hyland	Schumacher
Brassard	Johnston	Severtson
Bruseker	Jonson	Sparrow
Cardinal	Laing, B.	Stewart
Cherry	Lund	Tannas
Clegg	McClellan	Trynchy
Day	Mirosh	Weiss
Dinning	Moore	West
Drobot	Musgrove	Zarusky
Elliott		

Totals: For - 13 Against - 40

[Motion on amendment lost]

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

[Motion carried]

Speaker's Ruling Division

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to point out one minor thing, in many respects, that occurred. One member, West Yellowhead, voted and then when the rest of the House rose, he got up and walked out. So technically he was standing, and I could have thought that he was changing his mind on the vote. On a division we're all supposed to stay in the House until the vote is finished. That's just what had occurred there.

Thank you.

Days for Consideration of Interim Supply Estimates

- Moved by Mr. Stewart:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 58(6) the number of days that the Committee of Supply will be called to consider the 1992-93 interim supply requirements for the main estimates, Capital Fund, and the 1992-93 proposed investments of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, capital projects division, shall be two days.

[Motion carried]

4:50 Alberta Ethics Commissioner

5. Moved by Mr. Stewart:

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

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, just very briefly to the motion, I think that all of us in this House regard this as a very significant motion, a step forward from the standpoint of our legislative process. In so making the motion, I would like to congratulate the members of the Legislative Offices Committee. They established a very important process, carried that process through, and have come forward with the recommendation to this Assembly for the appointment of Robert Clark. With respect to Mr. Clark, I think all of us would agree that the choice was one that certainly looked to his integrity, his character, and his experience, and it would be my hope that all members of the Assembly would vote in favour of this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: A call for the question? All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried, let the record show, unanimously.

head: **Consideration of His Honour**
head: **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.

[Adjourned debate March 20: Mr. Martin]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, you will be spared today a long Speech from the Throne by the time frame, but I think what we had to do was important enough in terms of accountability that we had to do it. To be honest, these are very worrisome times, both for the country and of course also for our province of Alberta. I had not intended to spend a long time on the Constitution; frankly, I think far too much time has been spent on the Constitution right across the country. If I may say so, I think people are 'constituted' out. The reality is that if we go back in history, this wasn't something that Albertans or people across Canada were clamouring for; you know, let's have a new Constitution. It was brought in and debated by politicians. It's a politician's issue rather than a people's issue. As I've traveled the province from one corner to the other, I'll tell you there are a lot more things on people's minds than the Constitution. In fact, I've been told in no uncertain terms a number of times that we should be getting our priorities straight and start concentrating on what really counts, and I'll come to that.

I do want to say just very briefly to Bill 1, dealing with the referendum, dealing with the Constitution, that I certainly have no great objections to going to the people, whether it be by referen-

dum or a constituent assembly or whatever. We'll probably have this debate later on, but my one concern is that I notice that it will be brought forward to the Legislature, and that sounds very good, but we also went through a closure debate here just a little while ago. It will come from the Lieutenant Governor in Council, from the cabinet. Now, all of us know, Mr. Speaker, that with a referendum or a poll or any other matter, what sort of answers you're going to get depends on who's asking the questions. I would hope – and I see the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs there – that this is going to be done carefully and it will not be just sort of a referendum or poll, if you like, that the government wants to have that will get certain answers. How they're going to go about doing that – I would hope it wouldn't come from the cabinet but that there would be some discussion about a head, even some professionals brought in. Because if you're really going to have a referendum and you really want to hear from Albertans on this matter, it's important that this referendum not be with political influence, because we're dealing, literally, with the future of our country and where it goes. I think that's an important point I wanted to bring forward to the government at this particular point, and I understand we'll have more time on that, for the referendum.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that it's time now, if we may, as much as possible to forget about the Constitution and get on with the important priorities. As I travel around the province, I have to tell you that these are worrisome times for Albertans. It doesn't matter if you're in rural Alberta or in urban Alberta; what I'm hearing from people is, again, not the Constitution. They're worried about their jobs. They're worried about their security. In rural Alberta they're worried about their farms. They're worried about the local economies, the small villages and that. For example, I had the mayor of a village in northeastern Alberta – I won't embarrass him by saying which village – say to me, "If things continue the way they're going, I think we're going to be a ghost town 15 years down the way." That's the issue that people are talking about at this particular time. The more we can get our heads around that, the better off we're all going to be. I think, if I may say so, that for the future of the country, if we start to deal with economic and social matters, we'll have a much better chance.

Now, if I may say so, Mr. Speaker, finally the government seems to recognize that we do have a bit of a problem in Alberta. I remember even in the last session that we had the best economy in the world, there were basically no problems in Alberta, and things were wonderful. Even the Premier at the start of the Rotary speech – I won't go into bilingualism and multiculturalism – indicated that people were just being negative, that basically things were pretty good here in Alberta. Well, I'm thankful now that that emphasis has changed a lot since he came back, and I do hear a little more rhetoric from the government that things are difficult for people, that they are difficult for people in urban Alberta. We have very high unemployment rates, and I'll come to that and what that's doing.

Also, as I said, in rural Alberta the problems are severe, and that's from talking to a number of farmers. They're looking for direction, if I may say so. Now, to the government, and in particular the Minister of Agriculture, there are a great deal of farmers out there saying they don't know where this person's coming from. It seems that he's talking about a different Alberta than they're experiencing. I want to say to the associate minister, who's here – let's direct it to that minister – that I've talked to farmers. I've talked to them in southern Albertan, in the Peace, in northeastern Alberta, you name it, and in almost every case they are not satisfied with the response from the Minister of Agricul-

ture. Things are severe. Even in southern Alberta, in the Taber area, I'm told by farmers, very successful farmers, that a third of them are in severe difficulty and could lose their farms very quickly. When I see that happening in Taber – we know what's happening with the drought in northeastern Alberta; we know that there are farms that are smaller in Peace River. We have severe problems. All of us here recognize that rural Alberta depends on farm income. If the farm income goes, as that mayor pointed out, then the villages and the towns are going to be in difficulty.

5:00

If I may say so, Mr. Speaker, all of us, regardless of political stripe, give lip service to the family farm, but the realities and the policies have to flow that will protect that family farm. It can't be the triumph of ideology over common sense. If we're going to take the position that there is a marketplace worldwide, which there isn't, and we're saying that there's nothing we can do, that it's all up to GATT – forget it. We are going to lose a lot of our farmers. We are going to lose a lot of our villages. We are going to lose a lot of our small towns throughout the province. It's inevitable if we don't start to do things.

Even something to deal with the debt similar to what they've done in Saskatchewan: for the time being, get the financial institutions together and give us some breathing space so we can work out some long-term financing. They've already done that in Saskatchewan, a three-month moratorium while they've got a committee working on it to see what they can do to keep farmers farming. The government there basically said to the financial institutions, government and private: "We both have a problem. We want to keep farmers farming; you want to get your money back. Are we going to be able to work it out?" Now, we don't know what will eventually occur, Mr. Speaker, because it's down the way, a month yet, but at least that's a step in the right direction. I do not see that sort of initiative coming from the government. Instead, you have a minister that basically says that there's really no problem: "What, me worry?"

Mr. Speaker, I notice in the government Speech from the Throne here – and I have to admit I did say it was vague and thin, but to be fair, I've learned from watching speeches from the throne in the past that that's generally the way they are. They're not meant to fill in all the dotted i's and the crossed t's. I would say that this one perhaps has a little more rhetoric than usual, but we can wait and see what's going to happen with the access to information law. I thought it rather unusual, to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, that we debated a Bill, the Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act, and they put in as a highlight that they're going to proclaim it. I would have thought they could have proclaimed it long before putting it in the Speech from the Throne, but so be it. If they're a little short of ideas and want to bring it back again, that's all right too.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all will wait. We're told by the government, even as recently as question period today, to just hang in there; the budget's coming. Well, I can assure you, we're certainly looking forward to this government's budget. I don't hear them talking about balanced budget anymore. The reality is that that's when we'll have to make our response and see where this government really is going in this session.

Mr. Speaker, the point I wanted to bring home to the government is that I don't care if we're better off than Prince Edward Island. I don't care about that. The reality in this province, this wealthy province, is that we have double-digit unemployment in our two major cities, probably higher than the official rate because of the hidden unemployed, and in terms of the city of Calgary probably much higher because some of those people laid off by

the Essos and the Petro-Cans of the world have severance packages. They don't even register yet. So the reality is that rather than comparing to Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, or any other province, it is tough out there in urban Alberta. As I've already pointed out, it's tough in rural Alberta also.

When it comes to more on unemployment, if I may – I may have to cut down on some of the things I'm going to say. Mr. Speaker, we were glad to finally see a freedom of information Act. As I pointed out earlier today, in 1975 my predecessor, Grant Notley, brought in a freedom of information Act. To be fair to the Tories, often it was modeled on what Ged Baldwin was doing federally, but inevitably it got turned down and not voted on. We were told that this is such a free and open government that we don't need these things in Alberta, even though most of the rest of the modern world has gone in this direction. I think today we see precisely why we need freedom of information. But I'm glad to see it's there in the Speech from the Throne, very glad to see. Now, the proof will be in the pudding. I really want to look and see if they're serious with the Bill that they bring in, if it really does the job or if it's going to have so many loopholes that it will be business as usual. I'm sure all of us will watch that very closely.

They then talk about other government initiatives. Well, they're recognizing that some people think the legislative process is not openly democratic, that there are problems, Mr. Speaker. What do we do though? Instead of doing something about it, let's have a committee. The government just had a committee; now we're going to have another legislative committee. We do not need a committee if we want to change the legislative process. Almost all of us know the things that should be done here, and if I may say so, we tried over the years to bring some of these up. We put out restoring open and fair government last spring. All of us should be able to agree to a number of these things. It's time for a change in the way the Legislature acts. Forget about a committee. We could set up a toll-free hot line so Albertans can quickly make their views known on legislation. We could relax the rules of nonconfidence to allow more free votes in the Legislature, something I talked about in 1986 in the election campaign. We could give Albertans the right, through petitions, to ensure debate on issues they believe should be brought before the Legislature, something, again, that I campaigned on in 1986 in the election.

We could set regularly scheduled sittings of the Legislature so that the spring and fall sessions are a matter of routine, not political convenience. Then we wouldn't have run into this problem we had today, Mr. Speaker, where we have two days to debate billions of dollars on an interim supply Bill. We could televise all legislative activities so Albertans know what's going on. We could allow a guaranteed number of private members' Bills to come to a vote each session. We could expand the role of legislative committees to reduce the government's ability to run roughshod over MLAs and to increase the opportunity for public involvement in lawmaking and spending. We could pass legislation requiring election of the Speaker of the Assembly by secret ballot of all MLAs after each election. We could encourage broad access to the Assembly and its grounds. We could guarantee public consultation and proposed constitutional amendments before they receive ratification in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I go on. These are things we don't need a committee to decide. We could do it right in this spring session. We could ensure that a budget update is always presented in the fall session of the Legislature. We could legislate a ceiling on spending by special warrant. We could enact laws and ensure that Albertans have a right to know the sources of all government revenue and the recipients of all government spending. We could

account for tax expenditures so that Albertans know who's benefiting from tax loopholes. We could increase the powers of the Auditor General through the right to investigate all Crown-controlled companies and value-for-money audits. We could increase the powers of the legislative Public Accounts Committee so it can inquire into any aspect of government receipt and expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, I go on. We could require the Provincial Treasurer to provide an annual investment plan for the heritage trust fund. We could require Heritage Savings Trust Fund investments to be approved by the Legislature. We could appoint an independent trustee to oversee the heritage fund. We could commit the funds needed to first cap and then restore the unfunded liability in government pension plans. We could bring all Lottery Fund expenditures before the Legislature for a vote and report them in the same way other government spending must be reported. We could stop the use of lottery dollars as a political slush fund for the governing party.

5:10

Mr. Speaker, we've made the case before that we should be enacting a freedom of information and personal privacy Act. We could hold, as there are in other places, open competitions for government appointments and hiring on merit from among the applicants rather than the Joe Duttons of the world, if you like, as the most recent example. We could move to the election of postsecondary institution board members. We could set up independent bodies to screen applicants for positions on boards and commissions. We could pass a whistle blowers' protection Bill. We could put government contracts to open tender and make information in that process freely available. We could enact a cooling-off period for senior public servants and MLAs who want to go into business and get contracts from their former associates in government.

Mr. Speaker, all of these things we could do. Maybe there are some other ones that members may have. The last thing we need is another committee looking into it, and I suggest to you that that's just stalling. The government now understands that the people are upset about the political process, and what are they going to do? Set up a committee to look into it to get them through to the next election. Well, it's not going to wash. The people are well aware of it. If they're serious about it, let's get on with some of these measures.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to, if I may, just come back, as I started, to talking about the economy and specifically the high rate of unemployment in this province. As I mentioned, officially the stats are 10.8 percent in the city of Calgary, 10.9 percent in the city of Edmonton, and 9.4 percent in the rest of Alberta. Again, the 9.4 percent is misleading, as I pointed out, because of the number of farmers that are in distress that don't register in these statistics. That's the reality of what we're facing. As I've pointed out, with the hidden unemployed it's much higher. What we must always remember as politicians, all of us regardless of political stripe, is that these statistics are people. They're real, breathing people. The impact that unemployment has on them and their families is staggering. I would hope that all of us have known somebody that's been unemployed and know the devastation that that has on them.

There are a number of studies, if we're not aware, Mr. Speaker, and I'd just like to quote a few statistics, because I think it's important that we understand what's happening when we have high unemployment. A recent police study in Toronto in 1980 showed that of 100 wife beaters, 80 percent were unemployed. Now, not to say that they don't have other problems so that they

would do this, but the reality is that when the unemployment is there, it brings out the worst in them. In the U.S. a study showed unemployed people had a divorce rate seven times higher than their employed counterparts. In Windsor when unemployment soared to 20 percent, there was an increase in the caseload of local service agencies of from 25 percent to 377 percent. According to the chairperson of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the single best indicator of child abuse is having an unemployed father at home.

A further study concluded, Mr. Speaker, that in the case of crimes of violence we can demonstrate a fairly strong relationship between these offences and deteriorating economic conditions, mainly reflected by high unemployment. A different study concluded that the majority of men who rape women are unemployed. Now, again, those personality disorders are there, but the unemployment brings it out. The Canadian Council for Social Development has summarized U.S. research which shows that for every 1 percent rise in unemployment, the following things happen: 4.3 percent more men and 2.3 percent more women are admitted to state mental hospitals for the first time; 4.1 percent more people commit suicide; 4 percent more people are put in prison; 5.7 percent more people are murdered; and 1.9 percent more people die from stress-related ailments over a six-year period.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all understand this instinctively, but that's the reality of it. That's why I'm saying to the government that they're going to have to get their priorities straight in dealing with these issues in the next period of time. That's why I am looking forward to the budget, to see what we're going to do. As an aside, what else happens – and you see it more and more as an MLA for an inner-city riding – is that the problems were always there, but they're worse now. I may talk specifically about prostitution in the inner city, a very serious problem. I have to tell you that some of these people are kids, some of them 10, 11, and 12 years old, out being hookers. Now, there are implications for dealing with this, with the social services and all the other areas. We have to come to grips with these problems. We can't ignore them; they're there. That's the reality with a lot of these people.

Now, I understand that the government has a mess in terms of the unfunded liability and the deficit. But if I may say so, Mr. Speaker, they've been in power; they've created the mess. I'm not going to get into the budget speech, but our accumulated deficit I expect will be close to the limit of \$13.5 billion that we passed in the Bill. We do know this for sure: even the government recognizes, after spending taxpayers' money, that we don't have a balanced budget, so that deficit is going to go higher. Now, I'm not going to go back in history and say where I think the mistakes were made, but we do have that problem.

So you have the problems, if you like, of high unemployment. You have the problems of some social breakdowns, and you have the problems of a high deficit: things we would not have expected, Mr. Speaker, even 10 or 15 years ago, when things were pretty good in this province. But that's the reality.

You know, when we get to budget making, because it has implications for everything we're doing here in the Speech from the Throne, there are two questions that have to be asked. Number one, all governments regardless of political stripe are going to collect money from people – taxes, lottery funds, whatever – but they still are collecting money from the people of the province. The question that we must first ask – and I'll have more to say about this later, I'm sure you can expect – is simply: are we collecting those taxes equitably and fairly from all segments of the population? In other words, are we collecting the money we should? My answer to that – and it's well documented

– is definitely not. The wealthy and in some cases, not in all, the corporate sector are not paying their fair share, and we're losing millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. I say to people, as I said to the chamber of commerce, that if we're in a deficit, all segments of the population have to participate; they have to be involved.

The second question that I want to spend just a little more time on is simply this. After that money is collected, Mr. Speaker, then all governments spend that money. The question that one must then ask is: are they spending it on the things that people need and want and are necessary? In other words, do they have their priorities together? Are they spending it on the right things? Again my answer in many cases with this government is: absolutely not. We could go into all sorts of things. I'm sure we'll have this debate again about the millions, over a billion, that we've lost to business handouts, to friends, things that we should not have been involved in, especially from a so-called free enterprise government. We're going to pay the price for that down the way. We already are.

5:20

I look at agents general. We're told what a wonderful job they're doing. Well, whenever we find out what our foreign offices are doing, usually it's a disaster, as we found out with the Joe Dutton case, Mr. Speaker. Now, is it really necessary to have these lordships over there? Because I call it our Senate. Is it really necessary, and if it is necessary, then why aren't we hiring the best people rather than whether you carry a card or not? I'm convinced there are absolute millions we could save there, and I above all know that the province would still be around if we didn't spend over \$15 million on Buffalo Lake. I pointed out today that we have the biggest cabinet. We have the biggest cabinet of provincial governments in the country outside of Quebec, which has three times our population. Now, if you really want to send a message to people and improve your delivery of services, you would cut that cabinet to a more manageable level. You won't run into the same problems and you'd send a very important message to the people of Alberta that you understand that times are tough. It's not just the ministers' salaries per se, but it seems in this government that the more people you can hire around you, the more important you think you are. There are millions that could be saved there, and probably a better delivery system, too, at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, those are the types of priorities that we have to look at, you know, and it's not going to be easy with the deficit we have. But as I have tried to mention, it comes down to two things when we look at this next budget that's coming up, and we'll see where the government's priorities are. One, yes, very clearly we have to worry about the financial deficit that's been created by this government over a period of years, because you can't keep spending more than you take in year after year after year, because eventually that will affect the programs and you'll be carrying on just paying for your debt.

In any given year you have to also worry about what I call the human deficit. The question that we have to ask, only if we're dealing with the economy, is: does it make economic sense to put people back to work to where they're paying taxes rather than having them on welfare? I think the answer to that is yes. Does it make sense to have a well-educated population, Mr. Speaker? The answer to that question clearly has to be yes; it's well documented. Does it make sense to have a healthy population? The answer to that economically is yes. Does it make sense to help the poor to help themselves so that they can become taxpayers? I say to you that the answer to that is yes.

Now, that's not to say that within those delivery systems, whether it be health care or some of the other ones, there aren't ways that we can save money. I'm convinced there are: community clinics and some of the other things. I see the minister nodding with me. We've got to move much faster there in terms of the delivery system even within those areas, Mr. Speaker. But the reality is that we're not doing it. We're not doing it. The deficit's growing bigger, the economy is worse, and unemployment is higher. We have the worst of all worlds at this particular time. What it comes down to in this budget year and any budget year in the future is balancing off the two deficits, I stress again: the human deficit with, if you like, our financial deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I've tried to talk fast so I can get more in in the last five minutes. But let me just conclude by saying that we in the Official Opposition look forward to this session. I guess every session is crucial, but this probably is more crucial than most because we're into the third year of a mandate from the government. I explained why I also think it's crucial, because even the Premier now agrees that maybe times are a little tough for some people, which is a totally different approach than we were getting in the last session. As I say, we will be looking very closely to their Bills and to their budget. I can assure you the good things – if there are some good things there, it would be a nice treat – we will certainly support, but if they're found wanting, we look forward to this session to have those sorts of debates.

I also want to say that as we've always tried to do, going back in the tradition of a colleague and a friend of yours that sat here, Grant Notley, we will try to present alternatives. All of us in this House know that the media – I don't see any of them here – follow question period. There's not a lot else that's covered, unless it's totally controversial, within the House, but it's also important that all of us present the alternatives. I say to the government members that if you like some of the private members' Bills that are coming forward from the Official Opposition at least, please take them, even if you want to take the credit, as has happened in the past, and put them in a government Bill. Democracy is that give-and-take. The important thing is simply the results of it, what we're passing on to the people of Alberta, and that's what we must always keep in mind. We may have different philosophies, but people would not realize that sometimes, a lot of times, there is agreement in the House on certain Bills.

Mr. Speaker, I say, in conclusion, I think I got through a fair amount of information fairly quickly. The minister didn't think we could do it in that short a period of time, but even Mr. Day agrees that sometimes brevity is better than a long speech.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that when the members assemble this evening, they do so in Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Having heard the motion, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:27 p.m.]

