

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, April 30, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/04/30

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving both our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table in the House today the response to Motion for a Return 248.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two tablings today: one is the response to Motion for a Return 331, and the second tabling is the report of the Contaminated Sites Liability Issues Task Force.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I table for the information of members four copies of correspondence received by the Speaker from the Ethics Commissioner at 2 o'clock this afternoon.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a group of grade 9 students from Consort school, which is in Chinook constituency. They are accompanied today by their teachers Mr. Rick Robichaud and Mr. René Vandervlis and parent helpers Jane Barberree and Bobbie MacDonald. I would ask them to stand – they're in the members' gallery – and receive the very warm welcome of this Assembly.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly 46 students from Lee Ridge elementary school, which is in the constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore. They are accompanied by teachers Mr. Barry French and Miss Freda Sinn. I would ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DAY: M. le président, j'ai le plus grand plaisir aujourd'hui de vous introduire 51 étudiants de l'école Oriole Park de Red Deer. Aussi, nous avons le directeur, Mr. Don Falk; le directeur-adjoint, Mr. Larry Pimm; et aussi le professeur Mrs. Sharon Edlund. I would ask the students and the teachers from this French immersion school to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

Highway Cleanup Program

MR. ADAIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to announce that Alberta Transportation and Utilities is sponsoring the 16th annual highway cleanup campaign scheduled for this coming

Saturday, May 2, 1992, weather permitting. The hours of cleanup are from 7 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon. Approximately 8,000 children and 4,600 adult supervisors are expected to take part in the cleanup. Participants will represent 4-H clubs, Junior Forest Wardens, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, schools, church groups, athletic clubs, cadets, and cultural groups.

Safety of participants is our most important concern. To address this issue, Alberta Transportation and Utilities has developed a safety awareness training program which includes a safety video, training manual, and safety checklist. This training package is made available to all participating groups. In addition, Alberta Transportation and Utilities supplies orange safety vests and orange litter bags, which are there to increase visibility of campaign participants. A press release has been issued to inform the traveling public of our plans and to remind motorists of the need for caution. Radio announcements throughout the day of the campaign will remind motorists to drive safely, and I might add here, Mr. Speaker, that any support from the press in the gallery would be welcome on top of the paid ads we have in the various papers locally and on the radio stations.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have been notified of our plans and will be paying particular attention to the activities of motorists in the vicinity of the cleanup. I would ask everyone to be careful and watch out for our young people as they travel the highways on Saturday, May 2, 1992.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I know that in the past this has been a very good and successful program, and I certainly join with the minister in complimenting people. We talked about volunteerism a while ago. I think this is a program that works very well with the volunteer sector. When you look at the 4-H clubs, Junior Forest Wardens, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, this is what Alberta volunteerism is all about.

I'd also join with the minister – it can be very dangerous – and ask all motorists to be extra careful because we certainly don't need an accident to mar this excellent program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Oral Question Period**
Provincial Tax Regime

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, as I travel this province when we get out of the Legislature, the threat of a provincial sales tax weighs heavily on Albertans' minds. People are well aware that we have a huge deficit because of this government's mismanagement of the economy, and they believe that the government may attempt to balance the deficit on their backs through a sales tax. We certainly have the Liberal leader and his party practically endorsing a sales tax. However, we do have powerful and wealthy businessmen advocating and I believe advising the government behind closed doors to deal and bring in a sales tax. We have influential academics, friends of the government and the Liberal Party, advocating such a tax, and this would be on the backs of Albertans already reeling from the GST. My question to the Premier is a simple, straightforward one: will the Premier assure this House that this government will never, and I repeat never, now or in the future, introduce a sales tax?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member and other members that the government is not in any way considering introducing a sales tax.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if I may say so, the Premier said before the last election that we would have no new taxes, and after that, we had 16 new taxes. We had new health taxes. We had fuel taxes, tobacco taxes. You name it; we found new ways to tax people. So I wanted a bigger assurance than that that they weren't considering it now.

I ask the Premier simply this: given this Premier's record of saying one thing before an election and then doing another thing after an election, how can the Premier expect any Albertan to believe him when he says at this point that there'll be no sales tax?

2:40

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition doesn't really mean to mislead the House or the people of Alberta with what the Premier said before the last election. What I said was, and we have certainly proven true on this, that there would be no new personal income taxes, and in fact the only way that personal income taxes are going to go is down.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are debating a budget these days in the Legislature, and what do we have? We have here a kind of timely day to talk about it. It's the last day for filing your income tax. We know that Albertans have the lowest taxes in Canada, no sales tax, which I've been pleased to confirm again, no consideration of one, and the last movement of our income taxes, as we said, is down.

MR. MARTIN: The Premier has a short memory. He didn't say no personal income tax. If you look at the figures since the Premier came to power, we have collected over \$5.4 billion in taxes from ordinary Albertans. Now, they may call them premiums. They may call them something else, but they still come out of people's pockets. That's the record we have from this Premier, Mr. Speaker.

To the Treasurer: will the Provincial Treasurer tell this House about the studies his department is conducting into the introduction, implementation, and administration of an Alberta sales tax?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have no studies under way to look at a sales tax for the province of Alberta nor do we contemplate any sales tax studies. I must, however, go on record as confirming that the Deputy Provincial Treasurer, while a student at the master's level at the University of Alberta some 34 years ago, under the Social Credit government did in fact do a master's thesis on the potential for a sales tax for Alberta. I think that position has been eroded somewhat by good judgment on behalf of the government, and I think he has seen the light himself.

What I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that the studies we have done are the following. Studies that we do in Alberta look at the progressivity of the income tax system in Alberta, and despite, in fact, some increases in other sorts of taxes – user taxes, fees such as gasoline tax – the income tax system in Alberta is the most progressive tax, second only to Manitoba, in Canada. That means that we eliminate more low-income individuals from the tax system than any other province, and in fact, as you know, we have implemented surtaxes to ensure that higher income individuals who have the ability to pay pay a touch more.

Nonetheless, the Treasurer of Ontario right now, Mr. Speaker, is delivering his own budget, and I'm sure tomorrow morning there may be some interesting discussion about comparing the fiscal position of the ND Party here, as represented by the Ontario government, and the clear, strong position of this government in Alberta.

Supports for Independence Program

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go from one crisis of confidence to another. We find out today from the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues that the government's supports for independence program is a complete and utter failure. The report says that the government's program does little to help women become self-sufficient. It gives women little incentive to work and does little to meet the needs of the labour force, leaving many women to a life of poverty. My question to the minister of social services is simply this: recognizing that this program is a total and absolute failure, what is the government now going to do to help women on welfare break the cycle of poverty?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes the plight of poverty in our province and in our nation today. As a result of that, we have undertaken a number of initiatives in recent months and in recent years. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I will continue to work very closely with my colleagues, who care about the issue of poverty, who want to see not only women but all the individuals that are on our caseload helped and back into the mainstream again. We have gone through a revamping of our social allowance programs here in this province. Some changes have been implemented, and some are still being implemented.

I know that the Minister of Career Development and Employment is, as well, very committed to doing all that he can within his ministry to be able to support those individuals, as is the Minister of Advanced Education and all of my colleagues on this side of the House.

MR. MARTIN: Talk is cheap. Here's the reality of what's happening with these programs, Mr. Speaker, and the minister didn't allude to that. This particular program, supports for independence, is a failure, an absolute failure, and I'd like to get into it specifically. The real savings for delivery of service is getting women off welfare. This government has ignored the recession so long that the growing number of people on welfare has frankly caused a severe shortage of workers so that the program has broken down. One of the recommendations that they made to the minister is simply this: will the minister now agree to make this program more effective by hiring sufficient employment and client support workers, as recommended by the advisory council?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition certainly proves that talk is cheap. But we're not interested just in talk on this side of the House; we're interested in action. We're interested in taking initiatives, and that's why, as I mentioned earlier, we're going through some of the changes that we are. He asks about ECSS workers. Will we increase them? Well, as a result of the changes that got introduced in the last year, in November of 1990, we recognized that that was a problem. There were only 30 to 40 of those workers right across the province to provide those services. Today there are 135. That's action, not talk – action.

MR. MARTIN: Meanwhile, because of the government's economic policies thousands more are on welfare, Mr. Speaker. That's the reality, and he's avoided the question. [interjection] You'll get your chance, Little Boy Blue, just relax.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at another part of it, then. If this program was working, the government wouldn't know it because they don't check on the clients after – another complaint. My

question to the minister is simply this: would the minister now put in place a process to find out what happens to these women who participate in the program once they leave?

MR. OLDRING: Again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition raised a number of issues that I'd like to take the time to respond to. He talks about the failure of this government's economic policies. I would remind the member opposite that we have created in excess of a hundred thousand jobs in this province in the last five years, and not just jobs, good jobs, because the highest average weekly earnings in Canada are here in Alberta.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you want to contrast that to Ontario and what's happening there, where they've lost 275,000 jobs in the last two years alone, quite a contrast. If he wants to talk about caseload and what we are doing about it, I'm happy to say that we are reducing, that we are seeing as a result of our programs 10,000 cases closed each and every month. We are helping more people off social assistance today than we ever have in the history of this province in spite of the difficult times that we're in. That compares to a caseload that has quadrupled in York in Toronto.

We know the kinds of policies the NDPs bring in. We know the kinds of results they get. We're not going to do this.

Family and Social Services

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm starting to feel sorry for the Minister of Family and Social Services. Last year we saw the minister stop women from getting management upgrading in his department. Last year we saw the minister's action, no action, omission, commission in not getting a proper day care system going, and all kinds of leaks. Now we have a report that completely condemns the minister's program on supports for independence. I'd like to know when the minister is going to admit that he can't handle it and that his management can't handle the operation or delivery of programs or anything else in his department.

2:50

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I perhaps was a little unfair to the Leader of the Official Opposition because all the woes that are occurring in Ontario aren't totally the NDP's fault. We know what kind of a mess the Liberals left them in.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, again I would want to talk about the successes that we've had in this ministry, the progressive changes that we've made. The member raised day care. In the last couple of years we've introduced new training standards. We've introduced more support for lower income families. We are in the process of finalizing new day care regulations. We have increased the inspections of day cares across this province. We have worked with parents in doing that.

As it relates to our supports for independence program, other provinces are now coming to us to have a look at the reforms that we've introduced here. They recognize that they're very progressive. I've talked about the results: 10,000 cases being helped off the system each and every month right now. A caseload that's growing; absolutely it's growing. We're not happy about that, but it's growing at a lot lesser rate than is the case in British Columbia or Ontario or Quebec or other provinces in this country.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the minister tries to tell us of the great successes of himself and his ministry. In a leaked document written by Mr. Saddlemyer entitled *Towards a New Management Structure*, an assessment is done of the ministry, and it says that there's lack of clarity, communication is ineffective, staff isn't

given clear direction, the structure itself is deficient. Mr. Minister, admit that this ministry is a mess and that something has to be done to clean it up.

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party isn't paying attention to his own tick, tick, ticks. That report was done last year again because I recognized that there needed to be changes in this department, that we are now in the '90s and things had to be done differently. I commissioned Mr. Saddlemyer to work with me to evaluate what changes should occur, and I'm happy to report that as a result of the initiative I've taken, we have now restructured the Department of Family and Social Services. We've reorganized; we've refocused our resources. I might point out that I have shifted some 250-plus positions out of corporate and regional and district offices right to the front lines as a result of the changes that I'm making. Those are the kinds of efficiencies, those are the kinds of efforts, that's the kind of focus that Albertans expect us to have, and that's what we're doing.

MR. DECORE: I'm glad the minister is starting to fess up. I'm glad he's starting to admit failure. It hasn't been evident for a long time.

Mr. Minister, your own assessor says that the management of your department is deficient, and it's clear from the report from the advisory council on women that you can't even deliver programs. Tell us what you're going to do to fix up the mess of delivery of programs and the management of your department.

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, again the leader of the Liberal Party has a hard time grasping things, and that's been demonstrated time and time again in this Legislative Assembly. I obviously need to be providing him with a little more information. He just doesn't get all the information that he needs to be able to make intelligent comments in this Assembly. I would be happy - in fact I'll even send the charts with pictures on them so that he'll clearly be able to understand what we're doing in this department. I'll send him all the information on the supports for independence program and all the good changes that we've made there. I will send him all the information once again on our day care initiatives. I will make sure that he has that information. I will give him a copy of the restructuring that has occurred in our department. I will give him a copy of the new automation that we've put in place.

Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, if he'll take the time, the tick, tick, ticks that he talks about, if he'll put a few of those aside and read the information, I'm sure he'll be the first to applaud this government for the initiatives that we've shown.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Fish Creek, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

Glycomed Incorporated

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's fair to say that diversification of Alberta's economy took a major step forward today with the Alberta Research Council's announcement of a \$10 million research and development contract with Glycomed Incorporated, a California-based biotechnology firm. As I understand it, this expanded research program will focus on developing inhibitors of such diseases as arthritis and cancer. Could the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications outline to the Assembly this afternoon the anticipated benefits to Alberta of today's announcement by the Alberta Research Council?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that this announcement today will come as a significant shock to those opposite who have claimed for so long that the money that went into Chembiomed research was down the tube, as they often said, because that is not the case. In fact, one person who has great knowledge of the biopharmaceutical industry indicated, and I'll paraphrase, that it was one of the most significant biotechnology-related research agreements of its kind in Canadian history. I'd like to take the opportunity to commend the Alberta Research Council for following the type of direction that we have given to it, to focus in on the management of this research and to find strategic partners, and they have done so.

Insofar as the benefits, as the hon. member indicated: \$10 million into the research project over a period of 39 months to pursue the carbohydrate chemistry of Dr. Ray Lemieux, a significant new partner, an international partner coming into Alberta to participate in our biotechnology community. There's potential for substantial royalty cash flow to Alberta from this very significant project. I believe that it's a vote of confidence in the science of Alberta, the scientists of Alberta, and the growing advanced technology industry.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you'll agree with me that that's an encouraging response not only for members of the Assembly but for all of the people of Alberta.

I wonder if I could ask the minister to clarify the government's intent with respect to the contract's provision that Alberta will have the right of first refusal to be the location of future manufacturing plants for products resulting from this important collaboration.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, it is obviously the name of the game, in order to really capitalize for the benefit of Alberta on the commercialization, to have the manufacturing of this product here in Alberta. I am pleased that the Alberta Research Council was able to get those assurances, that if Glycomed does not manufacture this in Alberta, then the Alberta Research Council with other partners perhaps has the first opportunity to do that. So we are assured that the manufacture of this product will be done here in Alberta.

Day Care System

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the Minister of Family and Social Services made the preposterous comment that there is "exhaustive accountability" within the day care system. However, a day care program review conducted by his own department over a year ago indicated that children were at risk because day care regulations were not being enforced. Since that time, an enforcement system has been developed, but it has not been implemented. To the minister: in view of the fact that children are being placed at risk, as stated by his department, when will this minister approve the enforcement system so it can be put into operation thereby assuring quality of care for Alberta children?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the current day care regulations are being enforced. As the member knows, we are in the process of updating and introducing new regulations, and at this very moment they're in the hands of a parent advisory committee. I've always emphasized the important role that parents have to play in this day care system in Alberta. The parents, interestingly enough, are meeting this afternoon. I would anticipate that they'll have their recommendations finalized very shortly, and we will then call upon our licensing inspectors to enforce the new regulations, as they do the old.

3:00

MS MJOLSNESS: Policy development is not the same thing as enforcement, and enforcement of day care regulations in this province is a mess. Given that the department official who enforced regulations in the fall was removed from her position, day care appeal panels are stacked by Tories, the minister has intervened to reopen a day care suspected of criminal activity – and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker – when will the minister quit playing politics with the lives of children, recognize the seriousness of this issue, and take some action to ensure that current day care regulations are strictly enforced?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the member was reading her own misinformation or someone else's, but again a lot of incorrect information is being shared. I would again point out that in this province we have an exceptional day care system. There isn't another province in Canada that has been able to meet the demand as well as we have in Alberta. In this province we have a good team of day care workers on the government side. They've been increased in terms of the number of licensing inspectors that we have because I believe that it's a very important component of our day care network. They're out there on a daily basis looking at day cares, evaluating day cares, and making sure that if there is any chance of a child being at risk in one of those facilities, that facility will be closed.

Mr. Speaker, again I can only say that if we want to compare it to other provinces, and as reluctant as I am to use Ontario as the comparison, I would point out that in Ontario, where there's already a two-year waiting list to get in, how are they responding? They're responding by closing another 800 subsidized day care spaces. That's the kind of response you get in Ontario.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed by Red Deer-North.

MLA Remuneration

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some Conservative MLAs are paid extra fees for patronage appointments to various boards and agencies, fees which do not appear in the public accounts listing along with the rest of their pay. In 1990 one such Conservative MLA actually received as much as \$20,000 in extra pay. My first question is to the Treasurer. Why do the public accounts not reflect the total amount of pay received from Alberta taxpayers by Conservative MLAs?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member's been around a long time. The public accounts reflect what is paid from the General Revenue Fund and the General Revenue Fund only.

MR. MITCHELL: Then, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting to note that the chairman of the Multiculturalism Commission's fee is in the public accounts, but the chairman of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, every bit as much a government institution, is not put into the public accounts. There is, of course, a report that does separately report some of this information, but we've been waiting fully 13 months to see that information for the last fiscal year. Will the Treasurer please indicate what exactly he's trying to hide?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, now the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has put the facts on the table, that in fact all disclosures by the government are reported here at the Legislative Assembly. The reports come in two different ways, as I am

attempting to point out here. First of all, we make a complete and full disclosure of all the amounts paid to MLAs through the General Revenue Fund. That information was tabled, I think, about two Fridays ago. It's been the focus of some public debate obviously, but we're here to account for it and to explain why those dollars were spent as they were.

As I've just said in the first part of the Edmonton-Meadowlark question, Mr. Speaker, payments to MLAs do flow in other funds as well, and on an annual basis we report to the Legislative Assembly on two factors. The first factor we report to is by way of declaration to report those people who have associations with Members of the Legislative Assembly. That may well include wives or husbands. It would certainly include corporations. That public information is disclosed here in the Legislative Assembly following the direction of our Legislative Assembly Act. As well, we disclose fully any payments made by the government to those associated people or corporations. Finally, amounts paid both as remuneration and as expenses to MLAs are also reported through supplementary filing, which will take place very soon.

Now, this is routine, Mr. Speaker. It's quite conventional and is a process which we have followed in this Legislative Assembly for at least five years, that I can recall. There's nothing that we're attempting to hide here. It's all upfront and forward for the people to examine. I think this current debate about the expenditures is in fact a valuable debate, and we look forward to the pros and cons of that interaction and certainly look forward to the recommendation from the all-party committee which is looking at expenses of MLAs themselves.

Provincial Tax Regime

(continued)

MR. DAY: Well, even though this is tax day, Mr. Speaker, we can make it a little brighter. A newly released independent study by the Canadian Tax Foundation and another independent study by Runzheimer Canada management consultants indicate that Albertans are paying taxes almost 25 percent below the national average, and I quote: far below any other province. The studies include all types of taxes, health care premiums, utility and insurance rates and even mention, I quote: Alberta's greater provincial grants for education and municipalities. That translates into sizable savings for Albertans and shows that a family of four in an Alberta city pays approximately \$4,000 less in taxes than a family of four in a city in the NDP wonderland of Ontario. My question to the Provincial Treasurer is this: with people like the Alberta Liberals asking for tax increases on the backs of Albertans to bankroll a giant spending spree to finance the resolutions from their recent Liberal convention, will the Treasurer indicate if he is succumbing to these demands from Liberals and others to slap increases onto the backs of Albertans or is he not planning tax increases on the backs of Albertans?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier, first of all, has put the fundamental position of this government forward. I think all Albertans understand clearly the message, that is to say that this government does not support a retail sales tax for Alberta. That's our clear position, and there's no equivocation about that at all.

Now, if you listen carefully to what the Premier and others have said, Mr. Speaker, about increased taxation, we hear from time to time many comments from both sides about the need for Alberta to be more competitive. One of the major ways you can be more competitive is in fact to ensure that you have a competitive tax system so that you can attract investment and therefore generate

jobs. By way of note, I've not been fully informed on the Ontario budget, but I see corporate tax cuts in Ontario to do just that, copying essentially what this province has done in a most recent budget.

Secondly, though, Mr. Speaker, here's a very key point. The easiest thing for a politician to do is to spend money, and the easiest thing and the simplest solution is to give the government more tax dollars. Now, that is just not an acceptable option. This government believes that the best way to discipline political governments is to ensure that they are disciplined in their expenditures but do not give them too much resources.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North, supplementary.

MR. TAYLOR: You've got lots of gall.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer North, not Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. DAY: They always scream for full disclosure, Mr. Speaker, but they sure don't like it when their own secret policies get disclosed.

Our own studies show that if we could become more independent of the federal tax structures, we could design provincial tax policies that would provide Albertans with a more favourable tax regime. Could the Provincial Treasurer give us an update on the status of negotiations with the federal government on that issue?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, this is consistent with this government's position that we should ensure the efficiencies of the current tax system as opposed to taking the obsolete view of the Liberal Party across the way of simply imposing new taxes, such as the sales tax.

What we have done in accord with other provinces across Canada and with the federal government is to essentially complete a study which looks at the ways in which we can improve the current personal income tax system so that, for example, we could access the tax system not on the tax-on-tax calculation but on the taxable income side. Now, Albertans have just gone through a cumbersome process whereby they've had to calculate their own personal income tax based on the federal tax rate. We think, Mr. Speaker, and most governments agree, that we should be able to access the tax system on a fundamental income number, and then from that would flow a variety of economic and social objectives which can be brought together effectively and efficiently on the personal income tax system. That's the way to do it so that you can give personal benefits to those people who have low income opportunities in this province and you can provide economic benefits, such as student assistance or perhaps other kinds of assistance, which flow on the economic side. We need this flexibility as a province.

The Premier and others have carried the argument to the Western Premiers' Conference, and we'll continue to pursue it with the federal government. I think there's an opportunity for change, and certainly we're arguing aggressively in favour of revision of this form of the income tax system.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

3:10

Pine Lake Landfill Site

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Mr. McInnis was wearing a brightly coloured tie] [interjections] Eat your heart out, Dick Johnston. Eat your heart out. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. There is more than one form of pollution obviously.

MR. McINNIS: The Minister of the Environment has been involved for three years in promoting a landfill site at Pine Lake, six kilometres southeast of Red Deer. He said that he would finance the project, and he's been involved in providing hydrology studies which endorse the site. These hydrology studies have been criticized by not one, two, or three but four different consultants who have found them to be erroneous and misleading. It took those citizens three years of sweat and effort and considerable expense to prove the Department of the Environment's studies wrong. I would like the Minister of the Environment to explain now why he and his department supported a landfill site on an environmentally dangerous area and then backed up the support with erroneous groundwater information.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely erroneous on the part of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place to suggest that I've been promoting a landfill site. I haven't been promoting in any way, shape, or form a landfill site. If he's calling into question the integrity of officials in my department, I think that he should think twice. These people have a tremendous amount of integrity, something the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place seems to be lacking. My department goes in, they do the hydrogeology on a landfill site, they make a determination on environmental evidence as to whether the site is suitable or not, they present that evidence to the Public Health Advisory and Appeal Board, and it is that board that makes the final adjudication, not the Department of the Environment.

MR. McINNIS: Well, this is not Edmonton-Jasper Place talking; this is the Development Appeal Board, which is concerned that the proposal was based on erroneous groundwater flow estimates provided by Alberta Environment. When this was raised in the Legislature – anyone could be wrong – the minister came out and said that this is an example of the NIMBY phenomenon: not in my backyard. In other words, he criticized the local residents. Now, anybody can be wrong, but I think it takes a special person to add insult to injury, and I would like the minister right now to stand up and apologize for his NIMBY comment to the people whose concerns have been validated in the process.

MR. KLEIN: I'll apologize for absolutely nothing. My department went in and did an honest evaluation of the situation, presented that information to the local board of health. There was a hearing before the Public Health Advisory and Appeal Board. There was an adjudication on the matter. Certainly in practically all cases when you're proposing a landfill, particularly in the city of Edmonton, there is this situation of "not in my backyard." It is a natural occurrence. Everyone wants to get rid of their garbage, but nobody wants to receive garbage when it's close to their backyard. That is a simple fact of life.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

Aryan Nations Rally

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Attorney General. Today is Holocaust remembrance day, and we were reminded of the Aryan Nations white supremacist rally which took place at Provost, Alberta, September 1990. It is now over two months since the Human Rights Commission board of

inquiry into that rally directed the Attorney General to review the evidence presented with the object of laying criminal charges. My question is: how does the minister justify his department's failure to act on this information, which shows that Alberta is not immune from organized bigotry and racial discrimination?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I've addressed this issue in the House before. The RCMP investigated the circumstances surrounding the Aryan Nations rally and found evidence but not evidence sufficient to bring it to court to prosecute anyone. The Human Rights Commission also held a hearing, with some people coming forward and giving a little different perspective on some of the evidence. They said perhaps there is something in that evidence that would allow a charge to be laid. We have referred that to the RCMP to look at their evidence again. We will then analyze it from the perspective of the judicial system, and if there is evidence, charges will most definitely be laid. Until the RCMP are finished with their analysis and we're finished with ours, we can't do that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Given that the chief commissioner held that the investigation into the Aryan Nations' activities was delayed because no one laid a complaint, would the Premier now commit to amending section 19 of the Individual's Rights Protection Act to allow the commission to initiate investigations and inquiries?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't make the commitment to amend a law of this Legislature, but I'd certainly take the hon. member's representation and review it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Rental Subsidy Program

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Vacant units paid for by the housing division of Municipal Affairs have sat empty for two months while 200 qualified applicants under the rental subsidy program remain on the waiting list. To the minister responsible for municipal affairs and housing: will the minister give this Assembly his assurances that he will fix the approval process to ensure that this problem is eliminated?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, yes. Thank you for the question, because if any process of my department is delaying occupation of these houses by needy people, then I will immediately look into it and take the necessary action.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the response very much, and I hope he does follow through with the rental subsidy program.

My second question to the same minister: in view of the shortage of affordable housing, will the minister explain why housing assistance in the new budget is being reduced by \$4 million?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, without the documentation in front of me, any attempt to answer that question directly may result in unintentional misinformation. I do not want to do that, so as a minister I will have to take the question on notice and provide a full answer in this House to the hon. member.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Outfitting and Guiding

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1989 the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife took a number of very bold steps when he announced the guide and outfitters policy. This three-year initiative expires this year, and a new policy is being implemented in 1993. To the minister: what's new in this intended policy that will benefit the industry?

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, basically the new policy does several things. It ensures a healthy guiding and outfitting industry in Alberta, as a first point. Secondly, it ensures that wildlife resources are managed properly and also ensures that the Crown gets a fair return for the resource. It ensures that the resident hunting needs are also recognized. There have been some concerns raised with respect to the policy, but basically I believe that the new policy will do three things. First of all, it provides an allocation for a five-year term with one renewal. Secondly, the need for an auction will be triggered where outfitter interest exceeds the supply, and thirdly, the two fees will be in effect. The first fee is a resource fee, which is basically the auction price, and thereafter an annual rental fee, which is about 5 percent of what the actual hunt is. So the new policy, I think, has a reasonable term and provides some security and opportunity for outfitters.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In consultation with some of the constituents in Banff-Cochrane who are involved in this industry, concerns have been raised to me as to whether there has been sufficient consultation with the industry in proposing this policy. I wonder if the minister would indicate what consultation has occurred with the industry on this new policy.

3:20

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I might say that I have spent more time working with the outfitter/guides since I became minister of this portfolio than on any other issue, and I mean any other issue. Particularly over the last seven months, both myself and my professional staff spent a lot of time working with them. They've also met with the forestry and natural resources caucus committee. The concern that is being raised by some of them is that they would like a longer term. I have to state on balance, though, that the term that we have selected was a recommendation from them. Initially, it was really a 10-year term. I think it's a reasonable and responsible balance that we've created among all the interests, resident and nonresident, and other than that one point on the tenure, I think the new policy reflects the recommendations of the outfitter/guides themselves.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

Agricultural Marketing

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Farm families producing eggs, chicken, turkey, and dairy products earn reasonable returns based on actual costs of production because of supply management and orderly marketing. Unfortunately, this Conservative government doesn't appreciate the benefits of that system to rural Alberta and the province's economy. In fact, this Minister of Agriculture insists on telling consumers that they pay too much for these products and, by implication, that farmers are paid too much. I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture, at a time when rural

Albertans need people to stand up and speak out on their behalf, why he's afraid to tell consumers that they're well served by a system that provides them with an adequate, guaranteed supply of fresh, wholesome, reasonably priced food.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that the hon. Member for Vegreville totally misunderstands this issue. We discussed it yesterday. I would ask that he carefully read *Hansard* of yesterday afternoon. If that doesn't come through clearly to him, then let's have a private discussion, and I'll explain it to him word by word.

MR. FOX: Members of the Assembly should know that the people who produce these products agree with me, not him.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has a chance to repent and gain the trust of thousands of farm families in Alberta at an upcoming meeting of ministers of Agriculture in a couple of days. I'd like to challenge the Minister of Agriculture to join with his colleagues and issue a joint, strongly worded statement urging that article 11 of the GATT be strengthened and clarified in the current round of negotiations.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that at the last meeting of Agriculture ministers of Canada and the provinces, we did jointly issue a statement, communiqué, supporting the balanced approach that was being used in Geneva. We did not sign the one-sided document that this member keeps alluding to.

Going on briefly, this government with some support from Manitoba, following the Dunkel text of December 20, attempted to lay out clearly in front of our industries what a post-GATT world may look like. I will at no time cease to be anything but honest with the producers of this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Calgary-McKnight.

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

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to welcome to the Legislature and to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 37 visitors from the Sir John A. Macdonald junior high school in Calgary-McKnight. They are accompanied by teachers and group leaders Mrs. Wigglesworth, Mr. Wigglesworth, Miss Bee, and Mr. Cooper. I'd especially like to welcome Moreah Manering and expect that one day she will sit in my chair. Also, a happy birthday to Jacqueline Chan. Please join me in welcoming this group.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places except for the following: 150, 158, 160, and 168.

[Motion carried]

Loan Guarantees

150. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question: In how many cases has the government been called upon to meet third-party loan guarantee obligations in each of the fiscal years 1988, 1989, 1990, and 1991, who were the commercial lenders that called upon the government guarantees, and what was the total amount that each commercial lender called upon for each of the fiscal years 1988, 1989, 1990, and 1991?

MR. GOGO: The government rejects that written question, Mr. Speaker.

Decentralization

158. Mr. Wickman asked the government the following question:
- (1) What is the government's best estimate, by department, of the cost of decentralizing government departments, and
 - (2) how many employees will be affected by decentralization?

MR. GOGO: Reject, Mr. Speaker.

Gainers Inc.

160. Mr. Wickman asked the government the following question: With respect to Gainers Inc.
- (1) who pays the travel expenses for the president and vice-president to commute between Toronto and Edmonton, and
 - (2) where do the president and vice-president maintain principal residences, and where do they pay provincial taxes?

MR. GOGO: The government must reject that question, Mr. Speaker.

Loan Guarantees

168. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What are the details, including beneficiary, amount, and terms and conditions of all loan guarantees included under the "other" category as of March 31, 1990, and December 31, 1990, as specified on page 42 of the government's 1991 Budget Address?

MR. GOGO: Reject, Mr. Speaker.

head:

Motions for Returns

MR. SPEAKER: Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the motions for return appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places except for the following: motions 203, 222, and 284.

[Motion carried]

Minimum Wage Studies

203. Mr. Sigurdson moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all studies the government has done on whether a person or family can live in Alberta on the province's minimum wage.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government spends a great deal of time on matters such as this and is very interested indeed in the ability of its citizens to live on whatever minimum wage has been struck or, indeed, whatever wages are paid throughout the province. It's been the experience of the government that it will adjust its policies with regard to any minimum wage legislation based on that information. It's on that basis that on behalf of the Minister of Labour the government accepts Motion for a Return 203 and provides it.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you to the government for saying they will provide that.

I would just like to make a couple of quick comments anyway. I would be extraordinarily surprised if I found that the government could show how single adult males can live on less than \$500 a month with any studies no matter how many there are or how good they are. I would be surprised if they can show studies that explain why it's okay to keep people at \$720 a month on AISH in this province all through the '80s when, in fact, it was a boom period and other people's income was going up. I would be very surprised if they could show how the widows' pension is adequate for people to live in dignity. I have seen people in my riding ready to give up because they can't get a job in this economy and because they can't live on what the government offers them. We have seen a whole raft of people worrying about expense accounts for MLAs, who are getting as much as \$22,000 in expense accounts, yet we're expecting some people to live on the \$5,000 or \$8,000 range per year. It's time this government did something about it. I hope the studies aren't just some academic exercise with no intentions of doing anything about it.

Mr. Speaker, we need some studies not only on the minimum wage and the poverty-level wages that people are living on but also for the people that are on the social assistance system in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: That's precisely what the motion asked for. Edmonton-Belmont, in summation.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Acting Government House Leader . . . Is that correct?

AN HON. MEMBER: Not quite.

MR. SIGURDSON: Okay. I'm sorry. I apologize.

I appreciate the response and would ask that he convey my appreciation to the Minister of Labour and, perhaps when he conveys that thanks to the minister, that he ask that the documents be delivered in a timely fashion.

Thank you very much.

[Motion carried]

3:30 Advisory Council on Women's Issues

222. Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing details of the government's actions to March 20, 1992, and/or responses to the recommendations made by the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, again on behalf of the hon. Minister of Labour, the minister responsible for women's issues as well as the advisory council on Women's Issues, the hon. member is probably well aware it's been some years now since the advisory council was struck. It would appear to me that they have done a

pretty fair job in identifying various issues and pointing out to government – indeed, the operative phrase is “advisory” – areas that the government should take some action on with regard to those issues. As the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is well aware, the Minister of Labour in her role and responsibility for those issues I think has worked extremely closely with not only the first two chairmen but indeed the latest chairman who’s chairing that advisory council. Hon. members will be aware that although issues raised by that council appeared to be at times somewhat controversial, the hon. minister has always, I think, responded on behalf of government in a very co-operative and supportive way. So on behalf of the Minister of Labour may I say that the government really has no objection to providing any of the details or the responses to any of the recommendations made by the Advisory Council on Women’s Issues and indeed will agree to Motion for a Return 222.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, summation.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the hon. member for that response. I appreciate it. I, too, have been impressed with the work of the advisory council. While I think it’s entirely possible that the government may not accept and act immediately upon all recommendations, I think it’s important that the people of Alberta and particularly the women of Alberta have some understanding of the action that has been taken in response to recommendations and where no action has flowed from them that we have some comprehension of why the government has not acted, which may of course be entirely justifiable, but the information I think must come to us.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment that yesterday we were all circulated with the latest report from the advisory council, the supports for independence and its effect on women, and I would hope that we will also see some immediate response to this. Certainly the questions were asked in the House this afternoon. I would hope that the government will see the severity of the problems that have been very correctly brought forward by the advisory council and will respond to them with alacrity, that this is not the kind of thing that can wait for a year or more for study, that it demands, it begs for an immediate response to relieve the pain and suffering of many women in the province of Alberta.

Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for that response.

[Motion carried]

Students Finance Board

284. Mrs. Gagnon moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the average debt load for a graduating student who utilized the Students Finance Board services in each of the last 10 years.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Advanced Education and the minister responsible for the Students Finance Board and financial assistance, the motion proposed by the hon. member is indeed interesting. I’m not so sure that the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight intended – and I’m not here to quarrel; I’m here to debate the motion – the term “graduating student.” The inference is, I think, by the question that every student who attends an institution in effect graduates. I don’t think that’s the intent. I think the hon. member is intending to mean any student who attended a postsecondary institution. For example, if it were the University of Calgary, an undergraduate in the liberal arts program that left after two years, probably the hon. member would like to know as well what that load may be.

Mr. Speaker, we have in place in Alberta a pretty successful program of student financial assistance, because the whole thrust of our program is based on need. For the first time in history in any province we include assets and not just income of parents, for example, who are expected to contribute to the student who is a dependent child or who has not left home for longer than a three-year term. We set a cap in terms of the total amount, which is currently at \$25,000, for a student who’s not in a professional school.

Mr. Speaker, obviously students would have a different debt load. The hon. member is requesting that information for the average debt load over a 10-year period. Now, I assume again – I apologize to hon. members of the House for doing so much assuming – but today the motion’s moved. It’s Thursday, April 30, 1992, and the hon. member says “of the last 10 years.” I’m not so sure whether the hon. member means 10 years immediately preceding today or not.

Nonetheless, it’s extremely difficult for my department to have all that information. One could realize when one looks at “each of the last 10 years” that it’s a tremendous amount of work involved even if it were possible. In my view it’s really not possible for my department nor the institutions nor the Students Finance Board to produce all that information. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member, that the government would be prepared to certainly go a fair distance in terms of co-operation, even compromise with the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight, and it would be on that basis that I would propose an amendment to Motion 284.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer you that amendment, if the page would deliver copies of it to you, sir, and the sponsor of the motion and each individual member of the House. As it’s being done, I’ll explain the amendment to Motion 284. The Member for Calgary-McKnight is referring specifically to two terms: “average debt load for a graduating student” I think I’ve explained – I’m not so sure that’s the intent, “for a graduating student,” but if that’s the way it’s to be, I guess that’s the way it’s to be – “who utilized the Students Finance Board services in each of the last 10 years.”

The amendment I propose is to strike out the term “in each of the last 10 years” and replace it with the words “in the years 1987-88 through 1990-91.” The reasons for the amendment, Mr. Speaker. We don’t have the information to go all the way back. I’m sure the hon. member can recognize that with some 50,000 students out of our 116,000 students who access the Students Finance Board for loans, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to produce that information up to and including today. Because based on the hon. member’s Motion for a Return 284, that’s the way it reads, “each of the last 10 years.” Well, if we’re going to talk about the completion of the last 10 years, with respect, hon. member, the fiscal year just ended less than a month ago, exactly 30 days ago. So it would be very difficult to compile that information and provide it. However, we would be prepared with this amendment amending that motion to provide that information for those who utilized the Students Finance Board from 1987, ’88, ’89, and ’90. In that way it would provide the information to the Member for Calgary-McKnight, which I think would give perhaps sufficient information to indicate what that average debt load is.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member doesn’t refer to whether or not that student was attending a university – i.e., a four-year program – SAIT, a two-year program; or Mount Royal College, a two-year diploma program. Very clearly, the information is going to come out quite different. Because one would read, just following not only the motion but my amendment, “the average

debt load for a graduating student" – again, we're removing the "graduating student" because there's going to be a different time frame – and, frankly, get some very interesting information.

3:40

Our information, Mr. Speaker, tells us that the average debt load of someone graduating today from a four-year university program – i.e., they go through and they graduate – is about \$14,500 to \$15,500. I know that information now. In the college system, the two-year program, assuming they accessed the maximum student loan that they could, based on needs – and that's a variable as well because everybody's needs are not the same; therefore, each student does not receive the same loan, for obvious reasons. If they don't access the full loan, they get no grant, so it's quite a mishmash. We can produce that information in terms of averages. I just caution that averages are unusual things. I quoted, I think, once before that in my constituency is the Oldman River. That has an average depth of 18 inches. A professor from my university walked across the river and drowned. He fell in an eight-foot hole. You know, he got misled on averages. So one has to be careful. I'll produce the averages, but one must be extremely careful how they read them. Averages mean different things to different people.

Mr. Speaker, I'm more than prepared to move this amendment if it's in accordance with the hon. mover's wishes. I'll just quote it again: that we strike out "in each of the last 10 years" and replace it with the words "in the years 1987-88 through 1990-91." I would then be quite prepared in amending the motion, obviously, to accept Motion for a Return 284.

MR. SPEAKER: On the amendment, Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I accept that amendment. I think the information which I am looking for will be revealed in information regarding a three-year period, and I accept that.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. SPEAKER: On the motion as amended, the mover, in summation.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I'll keep it very brief. I do feel that even averages will provide a lot of information which will help all of us in order to make decisions regarding accessibility to our entire postsecondary system. Really what I'm looking for is the trends. Is the average debt load going up given the various situations that exist in the technical institutes, in the universities, and in the colleges? If it is going up, is it manageable? If it is going up, does this mean that some people will be turned away from a postsecondary education because they look at the debt load which faces them and they say, "I just won't ever be able to pay that off"? They know as well that in addition to the moneys which they borrow in order to meet the costs of increasing tuition, other user fees – and there are user fees in all of our institutions – they are looking at inflated costs of living, which are constantly going up due to inflation.

I do thank the minister for being so agreeable and suggesting that it could be provided by referring to a three-year period. I do thank him for that, because I think it will help me very much in assessing exactly what is going on in the whole area of student aid and in that whole area of debt load which is incurred as a result of seeking a postsecondary education in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion as amended carried]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

Postsecondary Education Transferability

209. Moved by Mr. Musgrove:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to consider ways of improving the transferability of students between colleges and universities in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Bow Valley.

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly my pleasure today to bring to the attention of the House and to the members of the Assembly a very important issue to me, to my constituents, and, I believe, to the government of Alberta.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, what prompted me to bring this to the attention of the House were several incidents that happened in the last year. In particular, I'd been hearing rumours before that there was a problem with college students transferring to the universities for some particular reason. Somewhere about July 1 last year one of my friends came into my office in my constituency, and he said that his daughter had graduated from high school with a very high academic mark and was actually going to university to become a pharmacist. He said: "We can enroll her in Medicine Hat with no problem; she's actually been accepted. We have also applied to have her accepted into the University of Alberta, and she has been accepted. We would like to see her go to Medicine Hat because she's young and she's just starting college and she would be closer to home." There were a lot of reasons. But he said, "I have indications that if she goes to Medicine Hat to take her first two years of a pharmaceutical course, she won't be accepted into the University of Alberta for her graduate studies." I said that I'd heard rumours of that. So I contacted the department, and the minister's response to me was that this better not be happening; that's not what our university transfer courses are all about. But there did show some indications that this could happen. Anyway, this particular person was still concerned. He left there uncertain. I believe the young lady did go to Medicine Hat to take her first two years.

However, things kept happening all summer that indicated more to me that there were some problems with the college transfer cases. Towards the end of the session – this was just before one particular student was about to go to university. This particular lady had taken two years in Medicine Hat College on a university transfer program. She had won the Louise McKinney scholarship. She had been the president of the students' union in Medicine Hat College. She applied to go to the University of Alberta, and she was turned down. I said, "Now, this is a prime example of the problems I've been talking about." So I contacted the University of Alberta. I talked to the parents. They said she was turned down because she didn't do a very good interview when she met with the college board: "She should go back and take an arts course in the college for a year, and we'll find a place for her next year." I couldn't believe this. I said, "This is not good enough for me." Consequently, she was accepted in the University of Alberta, so we have a problem that has to some extent been straightened out.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, this motion is to address the questions concerning the accessibility, effectiveness, and equality of opportunities for postsecondary institutions. Motion 209 urges continued and further review of existing arrangements for the transfer of credits

among colleges and universities and programs and courses. Further, this motion urges examination of alternative approaches which may better serve the accessibility and transfer of students. Now, when we're talking about equality of opportunity, those students that live in the cities of Calgary, Edmonton, or Lethbridge have a lot more equity of opportunity than the rest of Albertans, particularly for the total postsecondary education. However, in such places as Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie and Lloydminster where we have a college, that problem with equity of opportunity is somewhat reduced because we do have those colleges. They can start their postsecondary on a university transfer course, but if those are not acceptable, then we're back at square one to start over again.

People that can send their family to any postsecondary institution and have that family member live at home through the entire time that they're going to university certainly benefit over the student that has to move many miles from their home residence, move into a different background, into a different community, and start there. Of course, a lot of us people who live in rural Alberta have experienced that problem.

When we talk about equality of education for grade school education, we should also be talking about equality of opportunities for postsecondary education. Now, I'm not saying that there should be a university in every town, but I'm saying that some of the problems that we have in those areas can be easily ironed out. Certainly the future of this province rests with our young people. They're going to be our leaders of tomorrow, and everyone should have an equal opportunity to take place in that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there have been some good things happen with our transfer programs, so I'm not trying to suggest that it's all bad. As a matter of fact, I believe 4,000 students transferred from colleges to universities in the last year, and actually Alberta is recognized as being amongst the most developed of any province in this country for transfer programs. Ontario college students, for an example, do not have any linkage with universities and therefore are not able to transfer. The Alberta transfer system was recently cited in the Smith report on Canadian university education as an example for other postsecondary systems to follow. Though we ought to be proud of the excellence in education provided to our postsecondary students, we must continue to look at what we can do in improving it. However, most all of the members of the Assembly will agree that it's difficult to argue the merits of perfection to a college student that has been denied a right to attend a university on a transfer credit course.

Now, there are two kinds of transfers from our colleges to our universities. Basically, the first one is where you transfer credits from some courses you have taken and can get credits in a university degree program or in some other diploma course that you're taking. The other one is where you start university with the intent of going for a degree and are accepted, and your plan is to take the first two years of your course in the college, transfer all the credits to the university, and therefore you're into a four-year course for a degree. This is where we run into the problems. It is difficult to argue that this is the model to follow when the university makes changes to the transfer requirements without proper and due time considerations given to the transfer of the college student. I've run across students in my constituency that have taken university transfer programs and find out that the courses they took in the college, although they were designed for university transfers and were told were the courses they needed – when they got to the university, why there was enough difference that the university wouldn't accept that and they had to take some of those courses over again.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta we spend about – I had the figure here a minute ago. There's a considerable amount of money in advanced education. Certainly I'm not denying that that isn't a good investment. As a matter of fact, I'm a great promoter of advanced education. However, we've got to make the best use of those dollars, and we've got to make the best use of the students' time. For us to have students with all good intent going to our colleges and taking courses that they believe will transfer to the universities and when they get there find out that they're not transferable and they're told that they have to take them over again, then to me that's a waste of our taxpayer dollars and a waste of our young folk's time. I think there's some way where we have to work with our colleges and universities to straighten this out.

I was in Lethbridge earlier this winter. The president of this particular student organization was telling me that they are working on a program so that there will be a list out of all university requirements that they will be able to use in the colleges when they're considering what their courses are going to be in university and the ones that they will take in the colleges so there's no overlapping. However, it's my understanding that that has not at this point been developed. I think that even some of our members of this House have had some bad experiences in university transfers from some of our colleges.

Of course, I believe that the problems are not particularly in one group. There are consistent problems and frequent encounters by students wishing to transfer regardless of the college they attend and the university they plan to attend.

Mr. Speaker, I think maybe my past experience is showing through here a little bit, because as a former member of a school board, when you change from one school to another, no matter which grade you were in, the curriculum was quite often similar enough so that you didn't have a lot of problems transferring to another school. I believe our universities, regardless of what program you're in, should be set up so that you can transfer from one university to another or from a college at a certain level to a university in the same program and have taken basically the same academic requirements as you started out with. That doesn't seem to be happening. I agree that our boards in our universities and colleges should have the powers that they need to operate, but there seems to be a little turf war going on in some places where they think some of them are better. That's pointed out in some of the statistics we found.

As far as academic merits are concerned, the university has different requirements for courses, and colleges may have to deliver additional courses in the same discipline in order for their transfer students to qualify to apply for one of the universities. For example, at the University of Calgary, the Faculty of Management has a standard of statistics course requirements to be eligible for transfer. The University of Alberta Faculty of Business also has a statistics course requirement, but it is not necessarily the same requirement course as at the University of Calgary. That's what I'm talking about. There's a difference there. They should be standard.

4:00

A student attending a college in his or her first year of undergraduate studies must make a decision at the outset which university they will transfer to. They do not always have a choice of universities like a high school student does notwithstanding their grades. It's even more complicated. Faculties within a given university will require transfer students to take courses for that given faculty which will not apply only to that institution. For example, the Faculty of Education at the U of C requires a statistic

course which is different from the statistic course required by other faculties at the U of C and all other education faculties in Alberta. It is unreasonable to tailor a first-year undergraduate course to specific universities or other universities in Alberta. Sometimes I've heard that it is easier to transfer to the University of Montana from some places in Alberta than it is to transfer to another university in Alberta. I find that ridiculous. I think that our education in Alberta should be standard.

We also have a problem with the marks requirements in some of the colleges, and that comes out loud and clear. I've been given to understand that in some of the college transfer courses they favour their own undergraduates to the point where in one particular incident here I believe I saw where if you started out in the university, out of four merit points you could have 1.5, but if you were a transfer out of one of the colleges, it had to be 2.5. Now, somehow or another I'm not sure what the idea of that is, but it would sound like the universities are saying to the people in the colleges: you are not able to train these students as well as we are in the universities, so we're looking at a lower grade requirement. Quite honestly, I find that very unacceptable. I believe I saw in some statistics here that out of the university transfers last year there were 2,500 that were turned down. I don't think we're arguing that colleges should have a benefit over a university undergraduate, but I do believe they should have the same benefit. The marks required should be exactly the same and the courses should be exactly the same, so that when you move from a college into a university, you're on a level playing field.

Mr. Speaker, we could probably correct some of these problems if we had a preprofessional year in all of our secondary institutions where everyone in any particular vocation started out with exactly the same year to qualify. From there on they could make some decisions and the universities could make decisions. The Alberta Council of Admissions and Transfer should perhaps be empowered to bring about a common professional year for all professionals' quota-ed programs. This would enable students to compete on a common first year in a number of locations in Alberta, and if they have the academic standings, they should be able to receive this and transfer to any university of their choice. Perhaps we need to look at the issue of degree granting to certain colleges. Although this is an issue in itself, it nonetheless impacts on the transfer program we currently maintain.

Now, if a person wanted to be a little bit facetious, I guess a couple of ways to correct these programs would be, number one, to give all the colleges degree granting. That would correct it, because then they would start and finish their secondary education in the same institution. [interjection] Well, I'm not sure that it would cost anything more. I think that if the other way of correcting it was to tell our universities that they will only give graduate courses and the colleges will all give the undergraduate courses, everyone would start with the first two years in a college and move into the universities on their graduate courses. I think that would probably save some money, but I'm not sure. Anyway, we spend a billion dollars in taxpayers' money, and we certainly don't want to use it irresponsibly. What I'm saying is that we're all in favour of secondary education.

Yesterday we had some questions about student loans, and we were told that there's about \$9 million more in the student loan program this year than there was last year. I'm all in favour of that. I think this is great, but we want to make the best use of those dollars. We certainly don't want to be discouraging particularly our good academic students from going on into their graduate years and telling them to go back to college for a year to kill time until they can get into graduate programs. I think we

should be making the best use of those dollars and encouraging those students and helping them.

In February of this year the Minister of Advanced Education requested the university board chairmen to conduct an extensive review on transferee issues and to develop recommendations for reducing these barriers to transfers. The board chairmen have been requested to provide an interim report by September 1, 1992. This is an interim step and certainly positive, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly needs to be followed up, and it has to be implemented.

The problems with the transfers are not new. In the early 1970s the need for co-ordination between colleges and universities to ensure reliable and efficient transfer arrangements was increasingly clear. Perhaps we're only beginning to realize the complexity of the problem and the importance of communication and the danger of university autonomy. I can't accept, Mr. Speaker, that qualified and excellent students are being used as tools in the system. I cannot accept that a student who has received the Louise McKinney award does not get accepted into the U of A's pharmaceutical faculty because of transferability programs, and that's exactly what it was. I can't accept the fact that college students must stay in university for an extra semester because they're transferring from a college and the course numbering differences force them to take additional courses. I can't accept that the university students with below average grades are allowed to remain in the program yet college students who have made above average grades are not even considered for application.

We're missing windows of opportunity and not making the most of our students, the system, or our institutions. Mr. Speaker, I urge the members of university and college boards to continue towards open communication and consistent application of the first year of university courses. I urge the government to continue to enhance its efforts to review the transfer issues, and I urge the members of the Assembly to consider the application of quality education on the future of this province by supporting the intent and aims of this motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

4:10

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to begin by thanking the Member for Bow Valley for bringing this motion forward. It gives me an opportunity to complete some remarks that I would have liked to have made in the Advanced Education estimates debate the other evening, but I'd also like to congratulate him for his motion as well, because it's very timely.

Transferability is intimately related to the whole accessibility issue, which is an issue of critical importance to Albertans at this time. What sense, Mr. Speaker, does it make to provide students with one or two years of education in a local community and then not provide opportunities for those students to go on and complete their degrees? Of course, students that are fortunate enough to live in Calgary or Edmonton or Red Deer are able to take the degrees in their own communities, but if you attend a community college or live in other parts of the province, the expense of trying to complete those degrees by having to move out of your residence and move into these other centres where you have degree-granting institutions is, for some families, rather formidable.

There are many other solutions to these problems that we might want to consider. A little later on in my remarks I want to comment on distance education. I think that that could greatly facilitate and enhance. I know that we have made considerable progress over the years in distance education, but I think there's

a little farther road to be traveled in this area, and I want to make some suggestions in that regard.

I'll begin, then, by looking at some of the transfer problems that exist among institutions. Of course, I'm going to turn to my own community, the city of Calgary, because I'm somewhat more familiar with the situation there, but I think that the problems there could easily be generalized to other situations throughout the province. Mount Royal College, for example, has approximately 1,100 students who have five or more arts and science courses with grade point averages of 2.0 or higher. I mention that because the University of Calgary calendar sets that out as its minimum level for acceptance. In fact, only between 500 and 600 students from Mount Royal College transfer to the University of Calgary in a given year.

Among the reasons why transfers to the university are limited has to do with, in part, the controlled growth policy at the University of Calgary. For example, last year the University of Calgary only accepted students with grade point averages of 3.0 – or at least they only gave priority 1 admission status to students with 3.0 grade point averages or higher. This year they're contemplating a 2.5 grade point average in the last five courses taken by the students for transfer privileges, yet there's a bit of a contradiction here, because the University of Calgary allows students with 1.5 GPAs within their own institutions to proceed into their third and fourth year. So in a way this could be viewed as a lack of equity in terms of acceptability of students from outside their own institutions. Another restriction that exists as far as the University of Calgary is concerned – again, it's because of their controlled growth policies – is that they'll only accept two transfer students for every high school student they admit. So that puts a further restriction on the ability of students to transfer to the U of C.

Now, Mount Royal College students constitute 60 percent of all transfer students, yet no special arrangements are made by the University of Calgary to facilitate the transfer of those students to the university. For the past two years, and I understand that this will be the practice this year, there's been no winter intake. I think that acts as a barrier as well for transfer students.

I'm not trying to suggest that these situations are the University of Calgary's fault. They have only so many resources available to them, and it makes eminent educational sense, I would argue, to have a controlled growth policy. In some respects the problem is created as a result of a certain amount of shortsightedness on the part of the government. A few years ago they recognized that more and more students were trying to get into our postsecondary institutions, were trying to get degrees, and they provided funding to a number of our colleges to allow these colleges to offer more and more courses at the first- and second-year levels, but no provisions were made, Mr. Speaker, to allow these students to go into third- and fourth-year courses. So what is happening in many of the institutions is that the universities are restricting in some ways, through these kinds of practices that I've just mentioned, opportunities to students who try to get into the third and fourth year but come from other institutions.

Another rather difficult transfer issue, and it was raised by the Member for Bow Valley, involves transfer students between institutions. Because of differences in the universities, colleges find it difficult to structure course content. One example that I'm aware of is that it appears that Medicine Hat College prepares undergraduate students in first-year chemistry courses, yet the University of Calgary's first-year course in introductory chemistry is different from the U of A's and is different from the course that's offered at Lethbridge. So it means that if Medicine Hat is trying to prepare students for transfer, in effect they have to offer three different introductory courses, and that's more than their

resources can bear. It would make sense to have some kind of body that would, without imposing on a university's autonomy, try to develop more common curricula in these core area courses.

This whole question should be dealt with by the Alberta Council of Admissions and Transfer. This body is rather well respected throughout the nation. It's provided a lot of leadership, but essentially it's an advisory board to the minister and has little influence in ameliorating these problems. There is a guide that does provide for transfer of courses from the colleges to universities, but it's relatively silent on transfer of courses between institutions. So much work has to be done there. I'd also like to point out that the boards of colleges have asked to meet with the universities to deal with some of these issues, such as the one I just mentioned at Medicine Hat, and they haven't been able to go very far in this direction. They haven't met with a great deal of success when they've asked to meet with the university community.

Another aspect of this whole transferability issue involves degree completion. I've mentioned that there are four degree-granting institutions in the province that are public: the University of Calgary, the University of Lethbridge, the University of Alberta, and Athabasca University. I mentioned that individuals who reside in communities where you have a university have an obvious financial advantage in completing degrees. If you live outside these communities, it obviously costs more. Particularly if you're a single parent, you find it very difficult to pull up your family and move into a city. The financial difficulties in some cases create an impossible barrier for many students who would like to get degrees. So there's an element of unfairness in this whole situation.

Obviously, you can't have a university in every little community in Alberta, but certainly we could begin to look at other arrangements. One would be to create more universities. In effect, I suppose, that's what's being considered when a community like Red Deer argues very strongly to have degree-granting status. Even if it's called a college, there's no doubt that over a period of time the people in that community – and not just in the college itself but people who live in that community – will argue that eventually that college should be called a university and have that kind of status. That's very understandable. People who live in Red Deer look enviously at Lethbridge, and they say, "Well, if Lethbridge could get a university, why can't Red Deer get a university?" I suppose the people in Grande Prairie are saying the same thing, and there are some people in Medicine Hat that would argue the same thing, but I rather disagree with the Member for Bow Valley when he says that this would be an inexpensive solution to the problem. I think it would cost enormous dollars. If we had that oil money that was pouring into the Treasury 10 years ago, maybe we could consider this option, but I think there are a lot of other intermediate steps that we could look at if we don't have the finances to build universities.

I'm really impressed by a proposal that is being developed between Medicine Hat College and the University of Lethbridge. I know that that has to be watched with a cool, analytical eye as well. Lethbridge is prepared to offer third-year courses at Medicine Hat College. They would improve the instructors and the course content, but the courses would be offered in Medicine Hat and they'd be transferable, obviously, into degrees that would be issued at the University of Lethbridge. So students would at least save one year of out-of-town living expenses through a program such as that.

4:20

I think the key item to learn from the Medicine Hat/Lethbridge proposal is that there is a tremendous demand out there now on

the part of more and more young people to get degrees and adults who are out in the work world who want to come back and get degrees, and to meet those needs we have to show increasing flexibility in terms of assisting this whole process.

I am also impressed by what I know is taking place and what has taken place at Athabasca University. This institution, by the way, provides the lead in developing transfer arrangements between institutions. I know that at the moment they're working on trying to straighten out the core programs in bachelor of commerce programs so that students who want to go into a bachelor of commerce program either at Athabasca University, which now offers such a program, or at the University of Calgary or the University of Alberta would be able to transfer between any of those institutions if the core courses that are offered in bachelor of commerce programs are virtually identical in those institutions. They're working with the college commission on transfers to try to bring that about.

Now, in terms of past achievements on the part of Athabasca University, they initiated a capstone program in conjunction with Keyano College, and I think that has had a reasonable degree of success. It wasn't a completely perfect program, but at least a student could live in Fort McMurray, take courses that were approved by Athabasca University, and sometimes even be taught by people who had the sufficient qualifications who were on the faculty at Keyano. They could get credit for these courses, and they could get a degree without having to attend or take other Athabasca University courses.

The problem I mentioned that's associated with the capstone program is that in some ways people who taught in it felt that it was too controlled by the Athabasca University, and they wanted to see more flexibility. I think that the Athabasca University is moving in this direction. They're working with a number of colleges at the moment, and what they're attempting to do is offer even more capstone type programs on the campuses of colleges throughout the province, so that it would be possible for a student, say in Red Deer College, to register with Athabasca University and take courses on the campus of Red Deer community college that would be offered by faculty members at Red Deer College. Many of the Red Deer College courses would appear in the Athabasca University calendar if they were involved in a collaborative arrangement. A student would be able to stay in Red Deer, do a resident's year - because if his courses appear in the Athabasca college calendar, that would meet the Athabasca University requirement for a residency year and the student would be assured of getting adequate instruction and a degree from Athabasca University - and the degree that student received would be just as significant a degree as he would get from any other university in the province. I think that's an extremely reasonable approach given these rather tight financial times that we're in: to expand the distance delivery systems of Athabasca University.

There's a problem again, though, when you get into specialized third- and fourth-year classes, and it is that there maybe are not sufficient numbers really to justify classes being offered in one community. If you only have three or four students, it becomes a rather horrific expense to try to offer a course for that few a number of students. Institutions like Athabasca have in the past tried to get around these problems by setting up teleconferencing. They'll put students in different centres together and try to link them up through some kind of telephone arrangement. This hasn't worked out very satisfactorily in the past, because you don't get to see the other students in the class, you have to wait for somebody to get on-line, the lines break down, and it's very difficult to carry on a discussion that way.

They're beginning to make some considerable progress in using television, in fact using television lines through a slow scanning

technique. So you could have three students in Keyano, maybe five in Medicine Hat, four in Grande Prairie, maybe half a dozen in Red Deer, all hooked together in a class that might be taught, say, out of Keyano. Maybe it's a class in abnormal psychology. You find somebody at Keyano who has the qualifications to teach at this level, you give him a room with some students, you give him a television camera, and then you line up students throughout the province who are all hooked in through a television communication system to that Keyano classroom. It can be interactive so that you can switch the camera around and switch what's on the screen, so you might pick up the students in Medicine Hat talking or raising questions about a lecture that might be given in Keyano. If we ever get around to hooking up all of our colleges and universities through a system of fibre optics, even that could be enhanced to a greater degree.

In fact, if you want to look at the future, you know these windows 3.1 programs that are available for computers: you can sit that screen down, and you can divide it into 16 or more compartments. You could actually have all of the students who are taking that class on the screen in front of you. You wouldn't have to have a teacher in all these areas. It all could be done out of some kind of central video studio.

So I look for some great improvements to be made in that area, Mr. Speaker, over the years. I think that will go a long way to reducing the extremely high costs that are associated with advanced education. I recognize that that technology's not here with us today, but it's certainly the future.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to make a few points. First of all, I think there's a need for a central registry. We really don't know the extent to which transfer ability and accessibility is a problem in this province. I'm not talking about a central registry that would assign students to institutions or anything like that. I'm just saying that with the kind of technology we have available to us now, we could establish a central registry in Stettler, Alberta, or any other community in Alberta that would gather information about the number of students who are actually applying, doing it by name, and then we'd be able to track those students and find out which ones never made it into an institution so that we'd know how many additional spaces we have to create within the system.

The second recommendation that I would make, and I made this the other night during the estimates debate on Advanced Education, is that there's a need for some type of commission at the postsecondary level that goes beyond the advisory committees to the minister that are set up. These are commissions that would function much like the old colleges and universities commissions. This wouldn't be able to determine what an institution did, but at least it would bring colleges and universities together in such a way that they'd have to listen to each other's problems, and out of that hopefully we'd begin to address many of these very, very critical educational issues at the postsecondary level that are facing Albertans today.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate the Member for Bow Valley for bringing this motion forward. He's shown a lot of courage, because in a way it's an indirect criticism of the Ministry of Advanced Education for not grappling in a more firm and forthright way with these issues. They're very timely. They're critical issues. I just would again like to congratulate the Member for Bow Valley for bringing these issues to the attention of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It being 4:30, pursuant to Standing Order 8(3) the Chair is required to move on to the next order of business.

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than**
 head: **Government Bills and Orders**
 head: **Second Reading**

4:30

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of Bill 205, An Act to Require Full Disclosure and Maintenance of Government-Backed Pension Plans.

This is the second time that I have risen to speak to this particular Bill, the second time that I urge the government to take more detailed and specific action with respect to unfunded liability. I'd like to start by setting out a little history for the hon. members of this Assembly.

Before 1981 employees and employers, in contributing what they thought was money for pensions when it went off to the government for a pension plan for the public service, really saw those moneys being put into the General Revenue Fund of the province. So from the time the pension operations, pension benefits started in our province in the public service, moneys have been used by the province of Alberta for all sorts of things in running the general affairs of the province. That's until 1981.

After 1981 the then Treasurer of our province says, "Oops; we've got a problem." The problem is that accounting for pension plans should be done on the basis of having a specific fund, a specific pension fund where moneys are put in from government, from the employer, and from the employees. The then Treasurer, Mr. Hyndman, identifies that some \$4.8 billion of unfunded pension liability exists as at 1981. He indicates and implies that there are some plans that are in danger, where the moneys that are being requested to go out of the plan are greater than the contributions into the plan, and he talks about the danger down the road with respect to such plans. He takes \$1.1 billion out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and he puts it towards the unfunded pension liability of \$4.8 billion. That leaves \$3.7 billion as the unfunded pension liability as at that moment. If you look at the statements that the then Treasurer makes – and it's right in the budget – you'll see that he talks about further transfers of money being required towards this unfunded pension liability.

Now, the Auditor General of our province has over a number of years complained about the fact that the province is not doing statements on the basis of consolidating all of their affairs, consolidating liabilities wherever they might be and showing a true picture of the financial position of the province. He has kept calling on the Treasurer, the now Treasurer, the now government, to do something about putting unfunded pension liability into the liability category of the financial statements. The government has done nothing with respect to that suggestion from the Auditor General. The Auditor General two years ago identified the unfunded liability of the six pension plans as \$9 billion.

Now a little more history. In 1984 the then Treasurer, Mr. Hyndman, in this Assembly promised to make public documents that related to pension plans in Alberta. Specifically, he promised to make available actuarial data that related to these pension plans. That information to this day has not been made available to members of this Assembly or to the public. The promise has not been fulfilled. Numerous questions have been put to the government by the New Democratic Party and by the Liberal Party asking for information on the actuarial data. Numerous questions have been put asking for financial data, to no avail. I have asked

the Treasurer of our province for information in question period, and it has been rejected. I have asked for information by way of written questions, by motions for returns, and they have been rejected. Those requests have been denied. This is from a government that now cloaks itself in a cloak of freedom of information, and it doesn't even have the courage to provide the information that is requested by hon. members in this Assembly on a serious matter.

Mr. Speaker, I think I and others and the public are entitled to draw some conclusions from this denial of information, the denial of giving this information to me and to other members of this Assembly and to Albertans. The conclusion that one is entitled to draw is that there's something fishy going on, that there's something that is damning, that there is something that the Treasurer and the government wish to hide, that there is something that the government and the Treasurer wish to cover up. I can only continue to believe that, because information isn't being given.

Now, I want to recall for the memory of the hon. members here the statements made by the hon. Premier with respect to providing information: that any hon. member need only stand in this Assembly, ask a question or put it on the notice paper or as a written question, and wheelbarrows full of information will be provided with respect to items. Then he amended that very broad statement and indicated that, well, where there were dealings with entrepreneurs, that couldn't be given out, and where there was some danger to Alberta's well-being, that couldn't be given out.

Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for this government to be secretive and to continue to hide information from Albertans on this most serious of matters. Those people in the public service that are involved in the pension plans are entitled to know the status of these pension plans fully and completely, and Albertans are entitled to know the status and know how it fits into the scheme of things in a government that is riddled by deficit and debt.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill 205 has two parts. The first is a part calling, demanding, ensuring that there is full disclosure of information that relates to pension plans. It implies and states that that information should be actuarial data, data that is put together by the profession of actuaries who are dealing with the government, providing that information that Mr. Hyndman said was already in the government's possession, and that that be made available to the public. It means, implies, and states that information relating to the financial well-being of these plans needs to be made available to this Assembly and to the public. It implies, states, and means that all assumptions that the government is making with respect to pension plans need to be disclosed.

The second part of the Bill calls on the government to provide a plan for the paydown of these unfunded pension liabilities and that that plan be legislated. Now, I admit that the government has been shamed and embarrassed into doing something, shamed and embarrassed by the teachers of Alberta, some 30,000 teachers who have waged a strong and very successful campaign to get the government to stand up and take notice of a most serious problem. The government has come forward with what they say is a solution to part, not all, of the unfunded liability plans but has given us no information. It has disclosed no actuarial data, no assumptions, and no financial information, specific information that I think Albertans are entitled to have.

So, Mr. Speaker, again a government that starts off being secretive, comes forward and tinkers a little bit with the problem, but still remains secretive and still doesn't show Albertans the arithmetic, the actuarial data, and the information that's required. A government that again, I repeat and I stress, now claims that

they're going to give Albertans more information by way of freedom of information legislation. What a joke.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about critical assumptions, because the Auditor General has accepted changes that have been made by the Treasurer and the government with respect to the total amount of the unfunded pension liability, and I'm not satisfied. I want to say it right here, clearly: I'm not satisfied with what's been done by the government, and I'm not satisfied with the explanation that's been given by the Auditor General.

Let's deal with these critical assumptions, because they've changed and somehow the Auditor General's been put in a position where he and his staff have accepted these critical assumptions. The assumptions that I'm talking about, the change in unfunded liability, are these. First of all, you have to know what the size of the civil service is going to be now, 10 years from now, 20 years from now, and 40 years from now. Somehow that information has been factored into this deal and this arithmetic that the Treasurer has come forward with.

Another assumption is that you must know the age of the civil service. Another assumption is that you must know the growth of salaries of that civil service. Something has been set out and factored in by the Treasurer and this government in that respect that I would be most interested in seeing, as would Albertans. What is the government factoring in as the salaries for employees 10 years and 15 years and 20 years down the line? Inflation predictions have to be set out in order to deal with the plan over a period of 40 years. The rate of return of pension profit has to be factored in. If you look at the data with respect to Alberta's pension plans and how they've been handled by the government, the rate of return, about 2.5 percent, falls far short of the rates of return that are accrued in the private sector and the rates of return that are accruing to the public sector, the province of Quebec being a good example.

4:40

Another assumption that the Auditor General and the Treasurer have dealt with is the size of government. Now, Alberta has one of the biggest governments, more civil servants, as I understand it, than the average in Canada. What is the size that the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East has factored into the assumption for the size of government? Because the bigger the government, the more civil servants, the more pension contributions that would be made and the less requirement on the government to make good the unfunded pension liability.

Another factor is the acknowledgement of mortality. What does mortality look like 10 years and 20 years and 40 years down the line? What about the final assumption, survivor benefits? What have they dealt with and concluded with respect to survivor benefits?

Mr. Speaker, it is critical for us to know the answers to these assumptions. I stand here and I challenge the government speaker that stands to speak to this Bill to give that information to us or to agree to provide that information for us. Show us the arithmetic; show us the assumptions; show us that we can believe that this thing is properly dealt with and handled. I don't believe it is and has been.

Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that the government in its five-page handout, when it talks about settling the unfunded pension liability of our province, talks about contributions coming from employees and employers to the extent of some \$25 million per year and that government will put in about \$28 million per year, for a total of \$53 million a year, that for an unfunded pension liability of \$4.3 billion, an unfunded pension liability amount that is greater than the amount in Ontario. Our Treasurer tells us that

these moneys, \$53 million a year, will be sufficient to pay off this \$4.3 billion over a period of 40 years. Ontario, by way of comparison, has a smaller total unfunded pension liability, and they pay over a hundred million dollars a year. They pay more than a hundred million dollars a year towards that unfunded pension liability. There's something fishy in Alberta. There's something that isn't right. Make it right by showing us the statistics. Make it right by showing us the assumptions and the arithmetic and all of the actuarial data that relate to this matter. Don't hide it.

Mr. Speaker, I get the feeling that a government that is on the ropes because of its seven straight deficits, a government that is on the ropes because of a debt that's almost \$20 billion, a government that's on the ropes because by 1996 it's estimated that the debt of this province will be sky-high, a government that's on the ropes because 1 and a quarter billion dollars a year is now servicing our debt – and it's estimated that by 1996, \$1.9 billion will be required to service debt – is trying to hide facts. I take my seat asking for the government spokesman not to be wishy-washy, not to be giving us some phony-baloney statistics on how this thing has been solved. Give us the detail; show us what the assumptions were; give us the arithmetic. Prove to Albertans that this thing isn't just part of your cover-up and mess like your whole debt and deficit problem is.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start with an assumption. I think the leader's still out to lunch. To suggest cover-ups and everything else is not only demeaning to me as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and as a person; I would suggest that the member is insulting the intelligence of the members on this side of the House and the intelligence of his own members and himself.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that considering the debate that's gone on on this issue for some time, it's quite a nice time for me to be able to stand up and offer some comments relevant to the Bill. We all know that our population is steadily aging. More people are retiring at an earlier age, and our methods of funding pensions are becoming increasingly important. As a government we want to make sure that people can face their retirement and old age without overwhelming concerns about their financial future, which is only reasonable considering that we don't want our aged to have to worry about their financial considerations as we grow older.

Pension issues have been both interesting and contentious as of late, as we all know, and all Albertans have been watching to see how we deal with the current situation. That doesn't mean unloading the taxpayer's pocket to fill the hole that's left there, as the member has certainly suggested on many occasions. For these reasons it's good that we see discussion in the House on Bills like 205 which aim to improve the pension situation for Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I feel somewhat badly that I should be speaking in opposition to such a small, flimsy Bill which is, at best, questionable. However, in the interests of setting the issue straight for the benefit of both oppositions, I will try to highlight some faults of this Bill and shed some light on what is currently going on in the province with respect to pension disclosure and maintenance. You might want to listen too, hon. member.

4:50

Mr. Speaker, freedom of information laws that have been suggested by the member in other jurisdictions do not allow for any more information than we provide without unnecessary and

costly legislation here in Alberta. Now, let's face the facts. Bill 205 contains requirements for the annual reporting of the unfunded liability for the seven pension plans administered or guaranteed by the provincial government as well as other requirements for the recording of the unfunded liability in Alberta's annual financial statements and for the tabling of actuarial valuations of the pension plans in this House. The Bill gives the impression that the pension fund assets are concealed behind some kind of smoke screen that the government is putting up in front of Albertans. Quite frankly, I along with members on this side take offence to this, and I'll try and show that full disclosure of pension fund value is already in place.

To begin, the assets of the pension fund are reported annually in the public accounts for everyone to see. The public accounts are available to the members of the Legislature and to the general public. The hon. Leader of the Opposition simply has to turn to page 5.50 to find financial statements for the pension funds, including a balance sheet, a statement of income and fund equity, and a statement of changes in financial position since the last year. Mr. Speaker, they're already there.

Details of the actuarial liabilities of the pension fund are also available through the public accounts and can be accessed on page 1.8 for any members of this Assembly or the public who care to examine them. Mr. Speaker, there has been discussion about the fact that these liabilities are included in the notes to the financial statements. The practice is in keeping with the standards set out in the handbook of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, that the financial statements would also include, either on the face of the statements or in the notes thereto, information about the pension benefits to be paid.

Mr. Speaker, the full actuarial valuation reports for the pension funds are made available to the pension boards comprised of representatives of employees and employers. We have this fallacy – and it's beyond me – where the opposition, some of the media, and other so-called interested parties don't recognize that there are representatives from the employees on each of these pension plans. It's balanced. Surely to goodness they have a responsibility as well as the government, who has representatives there. These reports are available to the people affected by the pensions under the pension plan. To say they are not available or secret is ludicrous, to say the least. Considering the leader is a lawyer, I don't know whether he understands actuarial details anyway. As I say, he is a lawyer in a fouled-up injustice system that they won't try to fix anyway. So what can we do?

Beyond this, additional information, including annual cash flows and the estimated cost of benefits, is provided in the annual reports of the respective pension plans. Mr. Speaker, these are also tabled annually in this House. These annual reports also provide information from actuarial valuations, including both the actuarial cost and cash flow information for each of the plans.

Beyond this, Mr. Speaker, information can be had by members at any time by submitting motions for returns or questions in the House. All of this adds up to the fact that full disclosure of financial information for these pension plans does exist, and it exists in abundance.

MR. DECORE: By the wheelbarrow full.

MR. NELSON: Anybody interested in the pension fund could fill a wheelbarrow with all the information that's freely available. It can happen without any Bill or any motion or motion for a return. So I would suggest that the leader get his research staff off their butts – maybe they're a little lazy – and use his staff effectively to get some information instead of trying to waste the minister's

and the department's time to get information that's readily available to them by using the money that they get out of this Legislative Assembly for their own research staff instead of using it for political purposes.

Mr. Speaker, we'll turn to the other deemed major part of Bill 205. Actually, we've been discussing a light and fluffy Bill as though it's composed of separate, individual parts. It is a very small, and as I had said at the beginning, a flimsy Bill, and I would suggest that it's precariously top-heavy.

AN HON. MEMBER: Small but powerful.

MR. NELSON: I guess when you look at the Bill itself, you could suggest that it really only has one part to it. As you see, it is kind of flimsy and not too powerful. The member tried to indicate powerful; it is weak.

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of argument, I will move on to the other apparent main objective of Bill 205. It requires that the government enact legislation to eliminate the unfunded liability for the pensions guaranteed or administered by the Alberta government by the year 2032 AD by increasing contribution rates of the participants. The Bill goes on to state that the level of contributions goes up

to a level which will allow the fund to operate without an unfunded liability commencing in the fiscal year, 2033 A.D.

Last year the member introduced a Bill that suggested that he wanted the unfunded liability eliminated by the year 2011 AD. Well, I think the member is really, really confused, quite frankly. We all want to see the unfunded liability eliminated, and I think anybody who doesn't maybe shouldn't be here, but we have taken steps since this Bill was before the House last year, and I think the hon. member should be aware of that.

As we all know, the government was able to reach an agreement with the Local Authorities Pension Plan Board and the Public Service Pension Plan Board on reform of their respective plans, which cover an area of 125,000 members. The reform of these two plans will reduce the combined unfunded liability of all five plans under the Alberta government from \$5.5 billion to \$1.2 billion. The \$4.3 billion reduction includes new assumptions of a 3 and a half percent rate of return and a 60 percent cost of living adjustment. I'm assuming, as the member assumes a lot of things, that this has been done actuarially and is actuarially sound. This was accomplished through the implementation of a government surcharge and an increase in employee and employer contributions.

The other thing we tend to forget, Mr. Speaker, is that this plan presently has assets of close to \$6 billion. All we seem to hear from the opposition is that the plan is broke, it doesn't have anything, and it's full of liability. But it has assets of close to \$6 billion; it isn't broke.

It is important to note that there has been an extensive consultation process with the stakeholders, which led to this agreement. Employers and employees are guaranteed a continuing share in the management and administration of their own plan. A board of trustees is to be set up for each plan and will be responsible for the management of that plan. These reforms to the plans have been made with the assistance and agreement of the people they affect and will be administered with their continued input, and that's a commitment.

5:00

The Teachers' Retirement Fund has been another bone of contention for quite a time, I guess. Currently the Minister of Education and the Alberta Teachers' Association are discussing reform of that plan. Their immediate objectives include working

to reduce or eliminate the unfunded liability, bringing a guaranteed COLA into effect, and working towards improving the teachers' benefits.

Currently there is a memorandum of understanding that is being discussed which calls for the government to match contributions into the Teachers' Retirement Fund, rather than paying one-half of retired teachers' pensions, and an increase in the government's contribution rate from about 6.1 percent to 8.9 percent of actual earnings. It also includes, Mr. Speaker, provisions for an increase in the teachers' contribution rates and for teachers and government working together to solve the unfunded liability problem by 1993. In the overall picture of things, that's not too far down the road. So discussions are continuing between the ATA and the government on this memorandum of understanding, and I'm sure we all hope that they will be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone concerned, in particular the teachers and, of course, the taxpayers of this province.

I believe that some of the advances I've just explained, Mr. Speaker, do represent real changes and real efforts to solve the problems that we are experiencing with pension funds in this province. Now I ask this Assembly: why should we support a Bill which prescribes that we solve a problem we have been working hard to resolve and are doing so successfully? I do not see in this Bill any specific plan to achieve a reduction in pension plans' unfunded liability. It doesn't even propose alternative solutions to those we are already pursuing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we could drag anybody off the street and have them advocate that we should reduce the unfunded liability and make everybody happy. The problem is in asking how we should do it, and that is what we are working on. It's easy for anybody to tell us that there's a problem, but they don't offer any real solutions.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry would be well advised to examine our efforts closely, and then if he wishes to make his views known, make them in a specific fashion that will at least inspire some real debate rather than some vague generalizations, making him look as though he had this idea first. It isn't his idea first, Mr. Speaker. The Treasurer and the Minister of Education have been trying to deal with this issue for some time, and I'm sure they'll come to a successful conclusion that will benefit all.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill leaves it up in the air as to who should pay more in order to eliminate the unfunded liability. The Bill states "participants," while in his statement before, in first reading, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry said the Bill "would require the government to take full responsibility for the unfunded . . . liability of all plans." Here's a member who waves his wallet around and calls for fiscal restraint and responsibility for show, yet he and his party call for more and more expenditures and burden on the taxpayer, who is already overburdened. Well, what is it? Is it all participants, or is it just the government? After all, let's face it; there is only one taxpayer in this province, just one.

This Bill is just too vague an expression for us to take it seriously. Bill 205 is just basically a carbon copy of last year's Bill, and it finds itself obsolete – obsolete, Mr. Speaker – before its time. While the Liberals walk around making generalizations about how someone should pump more money into these pesky funds, the government has been speaking to board members and stakeholders and actually doing something to address the problem. This Bill advocates a disclosure of government pension plan assets which already exist in ample detail. All he needs to do is bring his wheelbarrow, and I'm sure he can fill it up without too much problem, without any of this nonsense.

Further, Mr. Speaker, Bill 205 makes a vague provision that the unfunded liability be reduced through the efforts of an as yet

unnamed source, while this government has been working and taking kicks to actually solve the problem. Just for one moment – God forbid – I wish they could see what it is actually like to run a province and have to solve problems such as this one, but fortunately they never will.

Bills such as 205 do not resolve anything. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Assembly to join me in rejecting Bill 205.

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

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I know that pensions are going to be very much a matter of debate during this legislative session. We know, for example, that following from the Pension Statutes (Transitional Arrangements) Act, 1991, that was adopted by this Assembly last year, we can expect to see a number of pieces of legislation brought forward this session that will basically ratify decisions taken by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to straighten out the plans and ensure that they're in accordance with the Income Tax Act. As well, in conjunction with that, I suspect that some of the negotiated agreements that have been reached concerning some of those plans will be brought to us as part of the package for ratification as well. I'm sure we'll have plenty of time and opportunity in the next few months to discuss this issue at length.

I would just plan on keeping my remarks relatively brief this afternoon and basically give support, in essence, to Bill 205 that's on the table in front of us this afternoon. In essence, what the Act asks the government to do is three things. One is to improve the reporting; secondly, to make public actuarial studies on which pension assumptions are made; and thirdly, to ensure that there's adequate funding of the pension funds in order to ensure that the obligations under that fund can be met when those obligations need to be met. That's basically what it intends to do.

As far as the reporting issue, Mr. Speaker, if there's no problem, why is it, then, that the Auditor General for a number of years now has recommended that the province change its reporting requirements? He has, for example, indicated again in the most recent annual report, for 1991, that he recommends that the Provincial Treasurer reflect the liability in the financial statements, the unrecorded liability arising from the various pension plans, and not so much, as I understand it, in the notes, to change the reporting to ensure that it's quite clear what that liability is and include it as part of the overall financial statements of the province. For example, he also mentions that "the Province continues to exclude from the reported net debt its full liability for pension obligations," and as a result, Mr. Speaker, it may lead someone to not have a full appreciation of what the province's true financial circumstances are, given that exclusion. I think the provincial Auditor General's recommendations are quite appropriate in that it's part of making the public more aware of what the province's real financial situation and true financial statements really are.

5:10

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

The Bill also calls for making public the actuarial studies, and this, Mr. Speaker, is really crucial to understanding what a pension liability really is. Pension liability, after all, is an estimate or a guess of what an obligation is going to be some years down the road, and depending on what assumptions go into the making of that guess, the obligation down the road can vary dramatically. Again, this comes from the Auditor General's report: a change in

the assumption of what the cost of living benefits are going to be over the course of several years will have a dramatic impact on what the final liability can be expected to be. For example, instead of assuming that on an ad hoc basis the government will make an average of 75 percent cost of living increase to match the change in the consumer price index, instead of that being 75 percent on an ad hoc basis over a period of time, now the government is assuming that it's going to be 60 percent and that that's going to be legislated and enacted and not be subject to an annual ad hoc decision of cabinet. Given that that's now going to be a guaranteed 60 percent COLA, that has an impact on what the benefits are going to be to pensioners under the pension fund.

As well, the government has suggested that the assumed rate of return on investments has been increased from 2.5 percent over the level of price inflation to 3.5 percent over the level of price inflation. That means that the performance of the investments of the fund is going to be better than has been anticipated in the past. As a result, some years down the road there's going to be more money in the fund as a result of higher rates of return and better investments. That's the assumption at any rate, Mr. Speaker, and as a result of that assumption, it is assumed there will be this extra money. Therefore, the liability in the fund decreases.

Well, these assumptions, Mr. Speaker, can have a tremendous effect on what the pension liability is likely to be. As the Auditor General pointed out in his most recent report, those two changes – reducing the COLA from 75 percent down to 60 percent and increasing the expected rate of return for the pension investments – has altered the assumed pension liability from \$9 billion to \$6 billion in one year.

Now, are the assumptions valid or not? How do we know that, Mr. Speaker, unless we have a look at what went into arriving at those assumptions? That's where the actuarial studies come into play, because in those studies the professionals take a good, hard look at the fund itself, its investments, what the economy is likely to do over the years in the future, what investments are likely to achieve over the years. They take a look at the demographics. They take a look at what is happening to life expectancy. They take a look at what's happening to the work force. They take a look at what's happening to the actual employee work force of the provincial government, the people that are covered by the plans. They take a look, again, at the impact of COLA adjustments. All of these things they look at in some detail, so one can then evaluate those and determine whether those studies are accurate, whether they're thorough, and whether the assumptions are reasonable. To table those studies, as is being asked for in the Bill, I see no problem with. They're the basis on which the assumptions are made and, therefore, play a critical role in determining what is a reasonable pension liability to be recorded in the financial statements and what is not.

Finally, the Bill asks for funding of the unfunded pension liability to ensure that it's capped and eventually eliminated. That, Mr. Speaker, is something that I think is eminently reasonable and responsible and something that the New Democrat Official Opposition has expressed a concern about for many years now and have been pushing this government to recognize and to take actions to correct. Really, the reason for asking for this is quite simple. We have persons who are retired now in our province who have given their years of service, who have contributed to this fund. We have employees who are currently working and contributing to the fund. If this pension liability isn't dealt with and continues to grow, then some years down the road – it might be five; it might be 10; it might be 15 – it'll come to a point where the funds are not in the fund to meet the obligations and to pay the pensions that were promised to the employees. If

those funds aren't there in a separate plan, it means that the taxpayers of the day will be taxed in that year to meet those pension obligations.

The concern of the pensioners is that if we're in a financial situation such as the mess this government has gotten us in, the government may simply decide that they're going to cut back on their obligations to those pensioners, and they'll find that their incomes would be reduced. That is, if the pensioners are forced to rely on the taxpayers to meet their obligations, they may be vulnerable to not having those funds there, in place, to pay them their pensions. That's why it's important that we fully fund that pension plan and ensure the moneys are in place when people are retired and the pensions guaranteed and promised to them come due.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

The last point which this Bill doesn't deal with, Mr. Speaker, is the whole question of governance. I note with interest the changes that have been made in Ontario, for example, to change the governance of the plan and to take responsibility out of the sole hands of the government and place it into a joint governing body who would be responsible for making the investments and monitoring the investments. The quid pro quo in doing that is that if the fund performs much better than the assumptions and the anticipation, the plan beneficiaries will benefit from that better performance. Of course, if the funds don't perform as anticipated, the plan beneficiaries will have to assume reduced benefits, but what it does, as far as the taxpayers are concerned, is create greater assurance for them and greater stability to the plan. So I would like to see the whole governance issue addressed as part of an overall package for pension reform.

5:20

I will acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that in the last several months some progress has been made, and I congratulate all the parties that are party to that progress for having reached agreement. I note that agreements have been reached on two plans, the public service pension plan and the local authorities plan, and as a result significant improvement and greater security for those plans have been achieved. But what has to be recognized is that it's the employees that have been part of that negotiation, and it's they that are taking the responsibility on their behalf to reach their side of that agreement. That's why when I say I congratulate the parties to the agreement, I mean not just the government but the employees who have reached that agreement.

I would hope that we can have further announcements over the next few weeks and months in regards to other pension plans, and I would look forward to seeing those other plans also put on a solid footing and that the people who are the beneficiaries have a voice in achieving those changes and agreeing to those changes, not the kind of dictatorial action – the government basically gave them sort of ultimatums last summer saying this is the way it's going to be. That's not the way that pension change should be implemented, and I'm pleased to see that both parties to that have reached that agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the areas that the Bill touches on I think are worthy of support. In some key areas that it fails to deal with, the whole question of governance, I see that some changes are being made in the plans, and I would just encourage the government and the plan beneficiaries to carry on with that progress. I look forward to a successful conclusion in the next months ahead to the whole pension question in our province.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Bow.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to stand and to attempt to debate Bill 205. This is a very critical area. It's one that a lot of people have a lot of interest in, a lot of concerns about. When you consider that the government currently administers benefits for 155,000 Albertans as well as 30,000 pensioners, I think we can really realize better the magnitude of the pension issue.

I suppose in view of the hour, Mr. Speaker, it would be better to adjourn debate for perhaps another time.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion to adjourn, those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion carries.
Government House Leader.

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

MR. SPEAKER: 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 5:24 p.m.]