

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, May 5, 1992**
 Date: 92/05/05

2:30 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Private Bills Committee I beg leave to present a petition for a private Bill being a petition from the Victory Bible College for the Victory Bible College Act.

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

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 93 I wish to report that the petitions for private Bills which have been received by the Assembly have been taken under consideration by me as Chairman of the Private Bills Committee and all the petitions received complied with Standing Order 86.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 91(2) the Private Bills Committee has had under consideration the acceptance of a late petition presented earlier today by me being the petition for the Victory Bible College for the Victory Bible College Act. The petition has otherwise complied with the advertising requirements under Standing Order 86. The committee recommends to the Assembly that this petition be allowed to proceed despite the late filing under Standing Order 91(2) and that the Assembly also do now deem this petition to have been read and received.

I request the concurrence of the Assembly in this recommendation and report.

[Motion carried]

head: **Introduction of Bills**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Rocky Mountain House.

Bill 26 **Water Resources Commission Amendment Act, 1992**

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Cypress-Redcliff I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Water Resources Commission Amendment Act, 1992.

When passed, this Bill will name assistant deputy ministers departmental representatives to the commission by department name as opposed to specific position title of the individuals, and it will add a representative from the Department of Transportation and Utilities and extend the mandate of the commission for a further five years, to December 31, 1997.

[Leave granted; Bill 26 read a first time]

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 26, the Water Resources Commission Amendment Act, 1992, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: With respect to Pr. Bills, could we go in numerical order, please. Thank you very much.

The Member for Wainwright.

Bill Pr. 1

Cynthia Lynne Rankin Adoption Act

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 1 being the Cynthia Lynne Rankin Adoption Act.

This Bill is necessary because the Child Welfare Act does not provide for the adoption of persons over the age of 18.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 1 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 2

First Canadian Casualty Insurance Corporation Act

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I request permission to introduce Bill Pr. 2 being the First Canadian Casualty Insurance Corporation Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 2 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Grande Prairie.

Bill Pr. 3

Carmelite Nuns of Western Canada Act

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 3 being the Carmelite Nuns of Western Canada Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 3 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Clover Bar.

Bill Pr. 4

Caritas Health Group Act

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek leave to introduce Bill Pr. 4, the Caritas Health Group Act.

This Bill formalizes a partnership between the Misericordia hospital and the General hospital, Grey Nuns, of Edmonton. This partnership creates the opportunity for optimizing programs and resources and at the same time building a broader base for patient care, teaching, and research activity. Both the Misericordia hospital and the General hospital, Grey Nuns, of Edmonton, have a long history of providing quality health care to citizens of Edmonton and northern Alberta. This Bill assists in providing improved patient care by joining these corporations under Caritas. Caritas is a term which symbolizes charity and care.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 4 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Cardston.

Bill Pr. 5
Lee Justin Littlechild Adoption Act

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 5 being the Lee Justin Littlechild Adoption Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 5 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 6
Rocky Mountain College Act

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 6 being the Rocky Mountain College Act.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 6 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 7
Medicine Hat Community Foundation Act

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague from Bow Valley I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 7, the Medicine Hat Community Foundation Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 7 read a first time]

2:40 **Bill Pr. 8**
Calgary Municipal Heritage Properties
Authority Amendment Act, 1992

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 8, the Calgary Municipal Heritage Properties Authority Amendment Act, 1992.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 8 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 9
United Farmers of Alberta Co-operative Limited
Amendment Act, 1992

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 9, the United Farmers of Alberta Co-operative Limited Amendment Act, 1992.

This Act amends the United Farmers of Alberta Co-operative Limited Act of 1966.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 9 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 10
St. Mary's Hospital, Trochu Amendment Act, 1992

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill being the St. Mary's Hospital, Trochu Amendment Act, 1992.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 10 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

Bill Pr. 11
Frederick James Harris Adoption Act

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being Bill Pr. 11, the Frederick James Harris Adoption Act.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 11 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 12
Calgary Foundation Amendment Act, 1992

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 12, the Calgary Foundation Amendment Act, 1992.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 12 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Bill Pr. 13
Den Tobias Deane Adoption Act

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave today to introduce Bill Pr. 13 being the Den Tobias Deane Adoption Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 13 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 15
Victory Bible College Act

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, last but not least I would like to request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 15 being the Victory Bible College Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 15 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 14
Carolyn Debra Peacock Adoption Act

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Stony Plain I would beg leave to introduce Bill Pr. 14, the Carolyn Debra Peacock Adoption Act.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 14 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the annual report of the Mental Health Patient Advocate for the year January 1 to December 31, 1991.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Assembly today the report of the Minister's Committee on Human Sexuality Education. In filing the report, may I take this opportunity to thank 11 Albertans who took a lot of time to pull together this report under the very able leadership of the chairman of the committee, the MLA for Lloydminster, Mr. Doug Cherry.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly several letters from the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and his deputy minister in regards to tendering of the timber quota in the Peers area and their flip-flopping.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce a gentleman who was introduced a couple of weeks ago, but this time he is accompanied by his wife, Rose. I would ask Mr. John Batiuk to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly, but before I do that, I'd like to mention that he's the gentleman that asked the Solicitor General one time why he got a ticket for parking under a sign that said, "Fine for parking." John and Rose, would you stand.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly approximately 40 grade 10 students from the Assumption junior/senior high school located in the town of Grand Centre in beautiful northeastern Alberta. They're accompanied today by their teacher Seb Stang and three parents: Kathy Rawlake, Don Nuttall, and Terry Zerr. They're seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by the Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 17 students from the Alberta Vocational Centre in my riding. They are from all over the world and are taking English as a Second Language. They're accompanied by their teacher Karen Barnes. I request that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the MLA for St. Albert, who's away on some very crucial constitutional business, I'd like to welcome 25 students from Wild Rose elementary school in St. Albert. They're accompanied by teachers Mr. Dave Jamieson and Juliet Rush. They're seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to rise and have members of this House welcome them.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Education, followed by Rocky Mountain House.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure over the noon hour to spend an hour and a half with a number of student leaders from Edmonton and area high schools. Several of them have joined us this afternoon to watch question period. We had an interesting discussion on a number of very interesting topics that I found useful for my duties, including the curriculum, math 30, teachers, teacher evaluations. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome from members of the Assembly.

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: Rocky Mountain House.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, phase two, if I may. This week in Edmonton the Alberta Debate and Speech Association is hosting the 26th national debate seminar, bringing together some 64 young people from 10 provinces and the Northwest Territories. They are here all week to participate and debate in speech and model parliament. They are joined by their cochairman Mr. Rolph Pritchard, who serves as the president of the Alberta Debate and Speech Association. A number of them are visiting the Assembly today and later this afternoon. For those who are here, I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Rocky Mountain House, for sure.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly some 18 bright, young students from the Sylvan Meadow Adventist school. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. David Bell,

parent Beth Reimche, and helper Ruth Eaton. I believe they're seated in the public gallery, and I would now ask them to rise and receive the cordial, warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. McINNIS: I would like to introduce a special guest who's not a stranger to our galleries but whose presence is always welcome. He is the chaplain of the Edmonton Trappers professional baseball club in addition to being the representative of the Christian Embassy and ministers to many of us in this Assembly. I would like Jerry Sherman to stand and receive the recognition of the Assembly.

head:

Ministerial Statements

Individual's Rights Protection Act

MS MCCOY: Mr. Speaker, almost everywhere we look these days, we see people in conflict: tank battles in Yugoslavia; looting, arson, and murder in the streets of Los Angeles; riots in Toronto. The issues are as varied as they are complex. But perhaps Rodney King, the man beaten by four Los Angeles police officers acquitted last week, spoke to the nub of the problem when he pleaded with a frightened nation: all I'm saying is, can't we all get along?

How do we get along given the racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and philosophical differences in our society? America thought it had the answer with its melting pot, but last week the pot boiled over. Canada thought that we had the answer with our mosaic, but that, too, is crumbling at the edge.

Perhaps the answer begins in a document introduced into this Legislature 20 years ago today: the Individual's Rights Protection Act. The IRPA says that we are a society that believes in equal opportunity, fair treatment, and respect for all individuals. The IRPA tells us that it is possible to be equal and different at the same time, but the IRPA alone is not enough. We need more than a law, however eloquent, or a commission, however active, before we truly get along. The experiences in the U.S. tell us that much.

Every one of us must make a personal commitment to the values of equality, fairness, and respect. We must realize that there is no magic formula or poetic image that will resolve conflict forever and in all places. We will get along when we stop trying to impose simple right answers, because there are none, and begin instead the relentless daily effort to behave in a way that accords with the values in our IRPA, values that spring not from any legislator's pen but from the very heart of all that is good about humanity.

Mr. Speaker, on this the 20th anniversary of the IRPA I invite all members of the Assembly to join with me in rededicating ourselves to making fairness, equality, and respect for all individuals the unshakable bedrock of human values on which we agree to base all our decisions and actions. If we do so, I know we will find the way and the wisdom, as Mr. King begged his country last week, to work it out and to get along.

Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, certainly I agree with the minister. These are some very difficult, fragile times, and we see it immediately with very brutal images on television. I think in Canada we've often thought that somehow we are immune to that, but I certainly see recently in Toronto that we're not. I would say that we in Alberta cannot be smug about that either, because we do have our own problems.

Now, I certainly agree with the minister when she says: "Values that spring not from any legislator's pen but from the very heart of all that is good about humanity." Well, I agree with that.

I think there is some onus on us in terms of the Legislature, in terms of legislators to look at this problem.

As mentioned the other day, immigration is going to increase in this country. It's going to increase in this province, and that has big implications on how we handle it in this provincial Legislature. We've advocated from time to time – and I wish the government would take a look – emphasis in education, beyond math and science, on tolerance and understanding. We need more money for English as a Second Language. We need to look at employment equity. We need to look at all these things.

Above all, as we celebrate the Legislature bringing in the Individual's Rights Protection Act 20 years ago, we do need some changes, and a major amendment, as the minister knows, that we've been pushing for is for the Human Rights Commission to be able to initiate inquiries on their own rather than waiting for individuals.

So, Mr. Speaker, I certainly do join with the minister in rededicating ourselves to making fairness, equality, and respect for all individuals the unshakable bedrock of human values on which we agree to base all our decisions and actions.

We certainly do want to promote tolerance, but also we in the Legislature do have to look at these issues and see if the legislator's pen can make it easier.

head: Oral Question Period

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

Grain Transportation

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday Canada's ministers of agriculture met in Alberta to talk about the future of western Canada's grain transportation subsidy. They released a report on a series of producer meetings held last winter to discuss the issue. Now, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture would have us believe that all Alberta farmers support the government's position that farmers want to pay much higher freight rates, but anybody that travels around rural Alberta, as I have, realizes that producers are very split on this issue. My question to the minister is simply this: how can the Minister of Agriculture be so adamant in his pay-the-producers approach when there is no consensus on this among producers in the province?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is incorrect when he suggests that the Alberta government wants the farmers to pay a higher cost of transportation. The whole concept of changing what we're currently doing is to bring down the cost of transportation for the producer. The hon. member should review the final report of the third-party facilitators that conducted the 138 Transportation Talks meetings across the country, which definitely comes to the conclusion that in Alberta there is strong support outside of the Peace River region for pay-the-producer. That's not my assessment; that's the assessment of the third-party facilitators.

It's also reported in the final report that in Saskatchewan there was strong support to retain the status quo, with some shifting of opinions once you got into southern Saskatchewan but not significant. It showed that Manitoba is split just about down the middle between pay-the-producer and pay-the-railway. It also showed quite plainly on behalf of those that support pay-the-producer that the preferred method of paying is a bond.

MR. MARTIN: I would question that. If you talk to a lot of farmers in the minister's own area, northeastern Alberta, they

would say that those meetings did not reflect what the producers were saying, Mr. Speaker.

Beyond that, he says that he's trying to lower transportation costs. How could handing out money to the producers rather than the railways lower it? It's impossible. It's not going to lower it. He knows that. If the pay-the-producer concept becomes the rule, freight rates will escalate. Make no mistake about that. Almost everybody says that except the minister, and this is going to be especially true the further away you are from the terminals. My question to the minister is simply this: how does the minister justify this approach to the farmers in the Peace River, for example?

3:00

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that the Leader of the Official Opposition is finally recognizing agriculture to the point that it's his opening question. I would, though, certainly suggest to him that maybe he should do a little homework before he starts discussing some of the issues. His preamble obviously indicates that he doesn't really understand the grain collection and transportation system in western Canada. The way you bring down costs is to bring in efficiencies, to eliminate branch lines that were built to serve our grandfathers in the days of hauling grain with horses. You have grain companies with high throughput elevators that can load up to 100 cars during a day. So the railway simply comes along, hooks onto those cars, out to the coast and back. You'll see a significant reduction in turnaround time and, as a result of that, less cars to haul the same amount of grain.

I think it would do the hon. leader very good to review the work that was done by the Alberta government, the B.C. government, and the Alberta Wheat Pool that was started in the days of my predecessor. Outside consultants were brought in, did the studies, and numbers were accepted by the two levels of government and by the Alberta Wheat Pool. They all led to cost savings in transportation. They led to removing the distortion caused in the prairies by the current system, which in turn led to more . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. Thank you. I'm sure we've got some left for the last supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I thought I was asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture, not the minister of the CPR. The wheat pools right across this province and across western Canada are against his approach, and he knows full well. So let's not distort the issue.

I want to come back to the question. We talked about the Peace River, which is probably the furthest away from the major terminals. Is this minister standing in his place in this Assembly and saying that freight rates are going to go down for the farmers in the Peace River? Is he really trying to tell them that?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, those that try to perpetuate a myth that the Peace River is a drain on the transportation system in western Canada are out to lunch. The Peace River has a direct run to the Prince Rupert terminal. The Peace River has a much less elaborate system of branch lines than much of the southern prairies do. I would say that if you did a real cost analysis, it is not the rest of the prairies supporting the cost of transportation in the Peace; it's the Peace supporting the cost of transportation on the part of the rest of the prairies.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition. [interjection] Second main question. [interjection] Second main.

MR. MARTIN: My second question I'd like to designate to the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

Midwifery

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Solicitor General. The Chair of the Council on Professions and Occupations last week revealed that amendments and regulations to the Health Disciplines Act which would allow midwives to practise will take at least two years to be put into effect. That is too long. It means the formal integration of midwifery into our health care system will be delayed once again. Not that I am surprised. We've heard promises regarding midwifery before, only to wait and wait and wait. My question to the minister: how does the minister justify a delay of two years before midwives will be able to practise in Alberta?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the process on midwifery legislation is this. First you designate midwifery. We've had consultation with all of those that are lobbying for midwifery, and we have agreed with them. I think the chairman had agreed last week. I believe in midwifery and have agreed. Second, we have consulted with those in the midwifery association, and they have agreed with us that they want the two-year time to put forth a committee to look at the regulations and to work with the other groups. All I can say is that we have agreed to designation and so has the midwifery association, and they have agreed that it will take upwards of two years to properly look at the regulations.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, members of the task force believe that it's a maximum of a year to a year and a half. Last week the Solicitor General ordered the ALCB immediately to implement recommendations on strippers in Alberta, but when it comes to midwifery, we hear it will take at least two years. Will the minister now commit to implementing the recommendations without delay and interference?

DR. WEST: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to communicate to the rest of Albertans when we can't even communicate among ourselves in this Assembly. There is a report there that all of the impacted groups had input into, and it was tabled in this Assembly. We are following their recommendations. First, we designate midwifery. That was their first designation. If the member would look at page 29 of the report, she will find out that this process that has been outlined was accepted by all groups including those that want midwifery, the midwifery association.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, the concern is not the process. The concern is the time that it will take. Will the minister now commit to establishing within two months a regulatory body to be designated in a fair and open manner with broad representation from stakeholder groups and the public immediately that he has brought forward the legislation?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, we will follow in due course with the process that's needed to see midwifery in this province. Perhaps the Minister of Health would like to supplement this.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could speak to one of the reasons for the delay subsequent to the designation. One of the issues with respect to midwifery is: how will the midwives be paid in Alberta? One of the issues in that is not to simply

create an add-on to perhaps the Alberta health care insurance plan, particularly when arguments are made that midwifery will allow a certain level of pregnancy to be done by a midwife as opposed to a physician. So part of the cause of the delay is to get the players together to look at what pregnancies do appropriately go to midwifery, how they can be paid for, instead of creating yet another add-on to our health care system. I think that taking the time to ensure that we fund it in the appropriate way is a major issue in health. If it can be done in a shorter time than the two years suggested by the minister, fair enough. That would be good. The issue is to get the process in place – and in this way I disagree with the hon. member – to ensure that we've got an appropriate method to pay the service.

Teachers' Strike

MR. DECORE: My questions are to the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, a monthlong strike in central Alberta is keeping 16,000 students away from their classes. The evidence is clear that there is a total and complete impasse between the parties involved in the negotiation process. My first question is: what action is the minister taking to resolve this strike?

MS MCCOY: With respect, Mr. Speaker, that is a labour issue, and properly I should be answering it, although of course we all recognize that the Minister of Education and I are working very closely together to address both the education and the labour issues in this matter.

I take it that you are referring to the Battle River School Authorities Association. There are 10 boards involved. Two boards have made a settlement with their own teachers. The other eight boards were continuing until 11 o'clock last night to hold discussions with the teacher bargaining units. Our mediators were there all that time. Our mediators are again attempting to bring them back to the table. We are very much aware that the future education of the young people involved is what is truly at stake here. The Minister of Education and I are both urging both parties to get to the table and take the responsibility of settling this matter just as soon as possible.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I spoke to representatives from both sides today. It is true that there is a complete impasse, and I think I'm correct in saying and representing the position of both sides that both sides want some sort of intervention. Will the minister agree to visiting the parties and getting this logjam cleared?

3:10

MS MCCOY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that many of our MLAs have also been speaking to their constituents, who are the taxpayers who are going to have to pay for this service. Now, I believe those taxpayers, the parents, are in fact talking to their elected representatives; that is to say, the school boards. The school boards and the unions have a responsibility to come to a decision. They are local governments, and they should be taking this responsibility and not trying to evade it. I would imagine that they would be taking instructions from their ratepayers and parents in the areas, as indeed two boards have done.

Now, I continue to say that our mediators have been involved and have tried to bring the two parties to a resolution. However, my belief in collective bargaining is such that we shouldn't just impose a solution. Certainly that has been done and is done frequently in a dictatorial manner, but I for one have great faith in the wisdom of the parties on both sides of this dispute, and I

have great faith in their dedication to the future of the young people who are innocent bystanders in this struggle.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not suggesting for a moment that a solution be imposed. One side, and I think I'm correct in saying the other, believes that the mediation process has not worked. I'm asking the ministers to get involved, call the people together, go out and visit them, get the logjam cleared, and solve the problem. It's the students that are getting hurt in this process, and that's the number one concern.

MS MCCOY: I've been saying that and the Minister of Education has been saying that for many weeks now and so have the MLAs who are involved in these areas. I wish the boards and the schoolteachers and their negotiators would say it out loud more often. Certainly the parents are saying that the number one concern here is the education of the young people involved.

However, you can invite people to the table. The mediator has invited the people to the table time and time again, but those people have the responsibility to find that common ground whereupon they can agree. It is something that they have within their power to do, and again we strongly urge them to come to that conclusion.

MR. SPEAKER: Innisfail, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

Grain Transportation

(continued)

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal and provincial ministers of agriculture met in Leduc yesterday, and I understand that transportation, more specifically the Western Grain Transportation Act, was on the agenda. The vast majority of my constituents are looking forward to changes in the Western Grain Transportation Act to make a more cost-efficient system. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Was the option of the Freedom to Choose, or the bond payout, discussed? If so, how did the other ministers react to it?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, we did spend considerable time yesterday discussing the transportation issue, and an agreement was reached by all provinces with the exception of Saskatchewan to reduce the number of options that were out there under Transportation Talks by removing the phaseout-with-no-compensation option and by removing the ongoing pay-the-producer option, which basically then left three options on this table: the status quo, paying out through a bond or an annuity, or the safety-net approach. Further, the ministers did agree that individual provincial and/or producer choices be examined in the context of the above three options. So the simple answer to the question of a possible provincial-only way is in the decision document, and maybe the more imaginative way of letting the farmer make his or her own choice is also being assessed.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The individual producer choice is a new concept. It seems to me that it could be a bureaucratic nightmare to administer. My question: does the minister think this is administratively feasible?

MR. ISLEY: We have staff that will be assessing that between now and the July meeting in Halifax, as has the province of Manitoba. It seems to me, though, that if it is administratively feasible, there couldn't be anything more democratic than saying

to each farmer out there: "Look, you have the option. You can leave your share of the Crow benefit with the railway and continue to ship grain the way you always have been, or you can bond it out and start facing the true costs." Then we would all know what farmers wanted, because they'd make the individual choices. I find the idea, which was submitted by Manitoba, to be rather interesting and something that we're certainly going to work on.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

Poverty

MS MJOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government recently abandoned their promise for a national child care program and yesterday announced some initiatives to alleviate the effects of poverty on children. Much of the money will be directed to providing information to parents when what families who are poor really need are opportunities for education, training, higher incomes, and jobs. What is startling is that as a result of a ceiling on federal transfer payments, Alberta will lose \$850 million this year alone, the very money that would give opportunities to these low-income families. To the Minister of Family and Social Services: given that this federal transfer money is crucial in assisting low-income families, what is this minister prepared to do to stand up for Alberta and get the federal government to lift the ceiling in order that Albertans get the money that we deserve?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that this government took it to the highest court of the land, and they've made a decision that the federal government is within their jurisdictional rights to put the cap in place that they have. Obviously we're not very happy about it. We're continuing to express our dissatisfaction with our federal counterparts at every opportunity that we have. We're working, I might add, in co-operation with the governments of British Columbia and Ontario in expressing our concerns. I can say to the member that I'll be attending once again a ministerial conference next week along with our federal counterpart, and once again I will raise the concern that the member has drawn to my attention in this Assembly with my federal counterpart. We are doing all that we can.

MS MJOLNESS: Well, obviously it's not good enough, Mr. Speaker, because the federal government has not changed their mind on this.

The total cost of the program is less money than the federal government is taking from the province of Alberta in one year. A large amount of this money will provide written information to parents, but what is needed are direct services to children. Given that advocacy groups have already expressed concern that the money will just go to creating more bureaucracy, I would ask the minister: will he guarantee that any funds which are accessed by Alberta through this program will end up in direct assistance to children who are poor?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, again the member, first of all, is asking a request of me that isn't possible for me to guarantee. This is a federal program. This isn't a provincial program that we're talking about. This is a federal initiative. At this point the federal government has indicated that they're going to be spending some \$500 million over the next five years and that those dollars are going to be focused or targeted towards prevention and promotion and protection and community action for children.

Mr. Speaker, again, as I told the member earlier, I will be meeting with my federal counterpart. I will take that opportunity

to sit down and discuss these very initiatives. I will take that opportunity to work with my federal counterpart to encourage him to make sure that these dollars are spent in a focused and efficient way. I might note that the early information I have received seems to be indicating they're going to be placing a high emphasis on partnership with community agencies, and I welcome that. Yes, I'll work with my counterpart to make sure these dollars are spent as wisely . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Westlock-Sturgeon.

3:20 Energy Industry

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the Energy minister is off on his own royalty holiday in the Middle East with a 16-member entourage, Petro-Canada has announced today that it will be laying off an additional 1,200 workers in its Calgary office. It's obvious by now that a state of emergency exists within the energy industry. To the Provincial Treasurer: between January '89 and the end of April '92 there has been a work force reduction of over 12,000 in the energy industry - 12,000. The minister made job creation a plank in his recent budget. Now, what concrete plans does the minister have to stop the tide of the horrific job losses in the energy industry?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it is true that there have been job layoffs in a variety of energy industries, not just in Alberta but across Canada. I know that the member has some knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of the energy industry personally. I would expect that we have to make these kinds of adjustments as the private sector goes through the economic changes. We have said in our own budget, and others have raised the same question, that perhaps the worst is behind us in terms of the energy sector in Calgary. I must say that I think there are some observations that may be worthy of a debate at some point about the numbers of people who in fact have been directly impacting the energy sector in Calgary and what sort of responses government should do as a result. To that end, I would ask for the consideration of my colleague the Minister of Career Development and Employment to perhaps supplement my answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps. Thank you.

Supplementary question, Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have been interested, because actually this government is bankrupt when it comes to ideas on getting the energy rolling.

The government's two-year royalty holiday, for instance, on new oil wells saw drilling activity fall from 57 percent of the rigs used down to only 33 percent in the last year and a half. This government is paralyzed by indecision. Will the minister commit - and this is something that's not that difficult to do - to approach the Premier to immediately establish a joint industry/government task force to deal with this issue in order to get the oil industry back on track again?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to introduce a rhetoric into this very serious matter, then I'd be glad to exchange those kinds of words with him, but I think this is much more important than simple rhetoric. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon should not be content or for that matter smug simply saying that the government is not concerned about this issue. Nothing could be further from the truth. We consider this to be

a very important matter. We know that the energy industry in Alberta is a key driver of investment and jobs and economic growth for our province. It commands a significant export profile for us both in terms of oil and natural gas both into the Canadian and national markets and as an adder of value in terms of the petrochemical industry is significant. So we see this as an important building block.

We have expressed a tremendous amount of concern about the adjustments or restructuring which the industry is now going through. The Minister of Energy has said already that he's looking at the royalty question. That is an ongoing review. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon confirms the outlook that the energy industry has. That is that it is a viable, internationally competitive industry and is exporting its expertise around the world because of the experience garnered here in Alberta. We should not belittle that. Still further, Mr. Speaker, because of the impact on the energy sector here in Alberta of the job opportunities, this government through a variety of programs and a variety of ministerial responsibilities is on an ongoing basis assessing any reaction it may be called upon to react to.

MR. SPEAKER: Lesser Slave Lake, followed by Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Teacher Training

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Students from small and remote communities in the north must leave their homes to get teacher education training. This limits the number of people with knowledge and expertise in these communities and creates teacher shortages in the north. It is my understanding that there have been two innovative programs or proposals respectively submitted by the four universities and Northland School Division regarding teacher education programs to address these issues. Would the minister update northerners on the negotiations between the universities, Northland School Division, and the Department of Advanced Education?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, certainly the uniqueness of education in rural communities is of particular importance to this government because it's one of the high priorities. The Minister of Education is well aware of school districts such as Northland and High Prairie school divisions having such a high component of native people with their unique cultures. These discussions have gone on for some time between the universities, the only people legally qualified to certify teachers. Recently we had the Grande Prairie Regional College working with the U of A with regard to having a completion program for a bachelor of education. I can't add much by way of additional information, although the Minister of Education may wish to. We continue to work on it, looking for solutions. A recommendation has been made continually by the chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Lesser Slave Lake.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister stated, this has been ongoing for quite a length of time now with little or no resolution to date. Would the minister ensure that these negotiations will address specifically the teacher education and the Northland school proposals so that we can get on with the work, which is educating northerners to become qualified teachers without having to leave their homes?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly take the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake's representation extremely seriously and will do everything that certainly is within the power of the Minister of Advanced Education to see that that can reach a successful conclusion whereby those remote communities have teachers, particularly those with native expertise.

Professions Legislation

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Solicitor General this afternoon. We will recall that on March 24 the Chair of the Professions and Occupations Bureau said in this Assembly that the report on foreign qualifications would be tabled the first part of next month, referring to April. It is now May, and we still have no sign of this report on foreign qualifications. To the Solicitor General: given that Albertans have been waiting for three years for this report, can he give us some reason why there are these ongoing and continuing delays in releasing this report? When is it going to come out?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the report on this is being worked on as an internal document at the present time, and when we have reviewed it to its fullest extent, we will be bringing forth information to this Assembly.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, is the Solicitor General admitting that the Chair of the Professions and Occupations Bureau misled the House with her previous statement on March 24? Is that what he's saying?

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Disabled Children's Program

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The city of Edmonton's report on out-of-school care for special-needs children verifies what we've known all along. The uncertainty over access is a major concern for parents. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. There are four straightforward, simple-to-implement recommendations, Mr. Minister. Will the minister state what his position is regarding these recommendations in the report?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar knows full well that we're going through a very comprehensive review of our handicapped children's services in this province. Once we have completed that process, I'd be happy to respond to the question that the member has raised.

MRS. HEWES: Well, I'm glad to hear that, Mr. Speaker.

Then following right along: will the minister immediately send this report from the city to that review committee on handicapped children so that they can take it into consideration if he's not going to respond?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to share that information with the review committee if they don't already have it.

MR. SPEAKER: Wainwright.

Agricultural Trade

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. The economic health of the grain

producers in Canada is largely dependent on the reduction of agriculture subsidies in other parts of the world, mainly the U.S. and Europe. Producers have been looking forward to a GATT settlement that indicates a reduction for a number of years now. After your meeting yesterday with the federal and provincial ministers, has there been any new development regarding Canada's position with GATT?

3:30

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, we did discuss GATT yesterday and were brought up to date on the latest negotiations that are going on at the federal level. I think it would be fair to say there is some degree of optimism that there will be a political breakthrough before the G-7 meeting in early July. We, I suppose, can only hope that that breakthrough will occur and we can get on to the fine details and the drafting of an agreement so that it does benefit our grain producers and anyone else in the export sector in the longer term.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you.

Has the start-up date, January 1993, for the Dunkel proposal been delayed?

MR. ISLEY: I think it would be fair to say that with the slippage that has occurred, even if there is a political breakthrough between now and July, the chances of getting that through the U.S. Congress prior to sometime in '93 would be virtually impossible. So I would expect that even if we get the breakthrough, the date that the agreement would kick in will have to slip somewhat from January 1, 1993.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by West Yellowhead.

Kan-Alta Golf Management Ltd.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, in January of 1991 the former MLA for Calgary-Buffalo began to circulate a petition demanding that the government release secret details of financial arrangements between the government and Kan-Alta Golf Management. Unfortunately, the member is no longer with us, but the questions remain unanswered. Kan-Alta now has moved to expand its golf course onto some sensitive wildlife habitat which was set aside for wildlife under the 1977 policy, which raises a question of whether you can ever trust the government on an environmental matter. I would like to ask, in view of the close connections between this company and the government, if the Minister of the Environment will commit to a full public disclosure of all relevant information dealing with the Kan-Alta project prior to a full and fair public review of that project.

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. member. We're into the problem of estimates for tonight and anticipation. That's my concern with that one. I'm sorry. Thank you.

West Yellowhead.

Forest Management

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Constituents of mine west of the hamlet of Peers are furious with the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife for his willingness to sacrifice jobs in the community through what amounts to be a permanent closure of a sawmill in Peers, this despite the fact that the minister has

stated on a number of occasions in writing that there would be no sale of coniferous timber quota in the Peers area unless the manufacturing jobs were maintained within 35 kilometres of Peers. I'd like to ask the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife how he's justifying doing a last-minute flip-flop and removing the condition of a timber quota which required manufacturing jobs to stay in the town of Peers.

MR. FJORDBOTSEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, the operation, A & V Logging, at Peers has been in receivership since 1991. The receiver has been searching for someone to take over that operation without a great deal of success to this point. There is a condition on that quota that says that the wood must be processed within 35 kilometres of the community of Peers. That was put in there to protect local jobs at that time. Now, I agreed to the removal of that condition after I received assurances from the local community that the people were strongly supportive of that. I must say that there was a public meeting held by the receiver, and there have been a number of petitions. In fact, in some cases the same people signed the petitions both ways, trying to be on both sides of the fence on the issue. I did that because I believe that fairness demands that we modify the condition and that the process be open to anyone and treats everyone fairly.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you I'm not on both sides of the fence.

The fact remains that at the time the timber quota was first tendered back in February, there was only one company, A1 Shakes & Shingles, that was prepared to agree to the condition requiring manufacturing jobs to be maintained in the Peers area. On that basis it seems to me that the bid was won fair and square.

I'd like to ask the minister: given that the timber quota is being retendered on May 7 and given that it is important that all companies wanting to bid meet the same terms and conditions, will the minister ensure that any successful bidder keeps manufacturing jobs in the Peers area, and not remove special condition 12? Yes or no?

MR. FJORDBOTSEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, my deputy has sent a letter in effect removing the condition, and that position will stay. Along with that was a direction to the receiver, who makes the decision on who is selected – it's not the government that makes the decision – on the assignment of the quota. The job component at Peers will receive very strong consideration. As I said, there was a public meeting held in the area, and the people in the area strongly support the removal of the condition and are open to fairness, but recognizing that we want to maintain jobs in Peers as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

Outfitting and Guiding

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. During the recent supplementary auction for unused and returned hunting tags most of the hunters were supposed to and did follow the rules and went to their local offices. However, one enterprising outfitter went directly to the head office and purchased all of the tags in person and usurped the line. My question to the minister is: what is being done, first of all, to compensate the hunters who didn't have a chance to buy the tags, and what's being done to prevent this unworkable practice from happening again?

MR. FJORDBOTSEN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, we designed a process of allocation in this case that was strongly

supported by the Professional Outfitters Association, but I have to say that in this case my department made a mistake. There was an error made. A registered letter was sent out to all of the outfitters and guides in Alberta saying that if they wanted to acquire any of the turned-back permits that there were, then it would be on a first come, first served basis – but only at the district offices; none would be done at the head office. In fact, I guess you could call him enterprising. I think he knew the rules. Anyway, he came into Edmonton and went to the head office and acquired them, and that was wrong. There was a mistake made. There was one outfitter that did that.

It disadvantaged one outfitter in Alberta. Only one outfitter was disadvantaged by that happening. What I've done now is worked closely with the Professional Outfitters Association to reach a satisfactory way of resolving the issue, and I think I'm nearly to that point now.

MR. BRUSEKER: It's good to hear the issue is being resolved, but government policy still seems to be creating some difficulty for Alberta in the international scene. We now have a reputation in Denmark as the place for hunters to avoid. So my question to the minister with respect to outfitting policies is: when will these policies with respect to tenure and to hunting tags be corrected and hopefully then also correct our negative reputation we're building up internationally?

MR. FJORDBOTSEN: Mr. Speaker, the negative reputation has to some degree been caused by one other gentleman that caused a problem. I think that in working with the Professional Outfitters we have pretty well resolved that issue.

Basically, the tenure decision has been made and announced, and I would refer the hon. members to the April 30 *Hansard*, in which I outlined very clearly what the new policy is.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Highwood River

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposed Little Bow/Highwood rivers diversion project raises serious questions about the health of the Highwood River. My question is to the Minister of the Environment. With the cost of the project at about \$27 million and with escalating costs always a possibility, what evidence has the minister got that the project is cost beneficial?

MR. KLEIN: Well, the project is designed to replace a structure that has been in place since 1922. The principle is quite simple: we need to widen that structure to capture the spring flush, Mr. Speaker. [interjection]

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: Whoa, whoa. Thank you. Take your place hon. minister.

I'm sorry. The House has indeed corrected me, in the correct fashion. It's a question to the Minister of the Environment. Your estimates are up tonight. Bingo.

Thank you.

We go on now to Grande-Prairie.

3:40 Highway to Fort Chipewyan

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northern Alberta Development Council receives many briefs during the course of a year from people throughout northern Alberta where they express

concerns about local development issues. Such has been the case over the past 20 years. Off and on we receive briefs from people in the Fort Chipewyan area concerned about infrastructure and road construction. These have been passed on to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. I'd like to have an update on the activity in the infrastructure of roads in recent years.

MR. MITCHELL: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Grande Prairie is right in the sense that over the last – I would even go so far as to say over 21 years, because it was before my time. That's in relation to the construction of an all-weather road to Fort Chip. Obviously, there are two things in there one has to keep in mind. It's the oldest community in Alberta without access. There is presently in place a winter road that's operated in the wintertime. With the co-operation of the northern development branch and the Department of Transportation and Utilities we have done a study that will update the Femco report of 1986, I believe it is. On April 27 I journeyed to Fort Chipewyan to release that report to the residents of that area for them to review it, and with it the three alternatives, and to get back to me.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, would the minister have any indication of the dollars involved and the time frame on when we can see results?

MR. ADAIR: Yes. Based on the study there was the east route, the central route, and the west route. It ranged anywhere from \$52 million to \$266 million. I was asked that question in Fort Chip, as to when the road might be built. I said that first of all the process is under way; we're going to deal with it from the standpoint of you the people of Fort Chip checking the area for which is the best of the three routes, recognizing also – and I must make this point – that the westerly route goes through the majority of Wood Buffalo national park and across the delta. If that's the one they choose, it may be a long while before we get that resolved, because there are a number of things there that must be taken care of to ensure that the environmental aspects of that are protected.

I also mentioned that with the dollars the way they are in our budgets right now, it may be a 10- to 15-year project whenever we start it.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, there have been a lot of notes up here today. Has the Chair missed that there are other people to be introduced at all? No. Thank you.

Point of Order Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: All right; point of order, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order under *Beauchesne* section 410(14). I appreciate your concern with anticipation and, of course, the concern of government members with the rule of anticipation, but section 410(14) reads: "Questions should not anticipate an Order of the Day although this does not apply to the budget process." It's on that basis that I would argue that the questions I asked today and the questions my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place asked today in fact are in order, and we should have been permitted to continue with those questions. I would certainly appreciate the opportunity to do that now if that is your ruling.

MR. McINNIS: Just very briefly to remark on this, it's always been my understanding that the rule of anticipation was intended that there would not take place in the question period something that would take place in a substantive debate. I can see that that rule makes some sense if there is a particular issue that's set forward. Budget estimates are in a category where potentially anything that the minister has administrative responsibility for may come up, so the area that then becomes subject to anticipation becomes extremely broad, which takes away, I think, from the purpose of question period, which is that matters that have some urgency be dealt with in that forum where an answer is sought and perhaps even accountability might be sought. So casting the rule of anticipation so broadly as to cover the departmental spending estimates I think is too broad a net. Reflecting on the particular citation that the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has brought forward, I think there is some indication there that the budget matters are intended to be handled somewhat differently in parliamentary procedure.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional? The Government House Leader.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I believe it's been the long-standing practice that we would look to the general rule on anticipation provided in *Beauchesne* 409(12), debate being scheduled for the day and the questions should be reserved for that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members. Indeed, the Chair has ruled before on this matter in the previous five years. The point of order is listened to. I understand the frustration, but the practice of the House has indeed been that on the one day of the year that the estimates occur, questions to that department are not in order in question period.

We also went through this last week, when again the Chair missed the fact that there were a couple of questions on agriculture the day of the Agriculture estimates, and then we got that straightened away. The long-standing practice of the House does indeed conform to 409(12) of *Beauchesne* and will continue.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places except for the following: motions for returns 187, 188, 248, 328, and 331.

[Motion carried]

Magnesium Company of Canada Ltd.

187. Mr. McEachern moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the audited financial statements of Magnesium Company of Canada Ltd. for the fiscal years 1990 and 1991.

[Debate adjourned April 23: Mr. Elzinga speaking]

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity in speaking to Motion for a Return 187 and do so on the basis – and I would hope members would forgive me if I am somewhat repetitive, because we are extending this debate on this issue. As hon. members are aware, we are going to reject this motion for a return for reasons that I have stated earlier, but if you will allow me, I just wish to repeat them again. If one looks at *Beauchesne* – and I refer as I did refer earlier to section 446(2)(a), (e), and (g) – I would like to put them on the record, that being that the following criteria are to be applied in determining if the government papers or documents should be exempt from production:

- (a) Legal opinions or advice provided for the use of the government.

Then going to subsection (e):

Papers containing information, the release of which could allow or result in direct personal financial gain or loss by a person or a group of persons.

Subsection (g):

Papers of a voluminous character or which would require an inordinate cost or length of time to prepare.

I quote those simply so that hon. members are aware and do recognize the difficulty that we do face in responding to some of the motions for returns.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I appreciate the concern that has been expressed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, so let me indicate to him why we did involve ourselves with the Magnesium Company. He asked for the “financial statements of Magnesium Company of Canada . . . for the fiscal years 1990 and 1991.” We involved ourselves with this company recognizing that it could play a very important role to the further diversification of this province. We on November 10 of 1987 gave approval for a loan guarantee which was to be phased in. Phase one offered a loan guarantee slightly in excess of a hundred million dollars. This was given so that this project would successfully proceed. The plant would have provided many jobs. As hon. members are aware, as a result of Alberta Natural Gas's recent decision not to continue with the project any longer, the MagCan plant has shut down and the government will be taking over and securing the plant. Consultants are currently evaluating and preserving the facility with all options being thoroughly reviewed. It's too early, Mr. Speaker, to determine what, if any, losses will take place, but as has been indicated in this Legislative Assembly on a consistent basis, the cost of the assets exceeds the guaranteed loan commitment.

3:50

I'm sure the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway and all hon. members will be curious as to what prompted this decision by the Magnesium Company of Canada. As all hon. members are aware, we did go through a period of high interest rates, a period of high dollar levels, thus adding to the lack of the competitive nature of our magnesium exports, plus magnesium prices fell considerably, making the economics not as attractive as projected when the plant was originally proposed. I should indicate, too, as I have indicated to hon. members in the past, that there is projected to be a greater use of magnesium products and magnesium components in a number of industries, the automotive industry being one.

Mr. Speaker, we saw this as an important component of our further diversification of the Alberta economy. As hon. members are aware, we have gone through some difficulties as it relates to the economic well-being, and we have been buffered somewhat because of the proactive stance of this government. This was just one of our innovative approaches that we had involved ourselves

in. As hon. members also are aware, we have asked for broad public input as to whether the Canadian and Alberta public especially do support the approaches that we have taken in the past by offering loan guarantees and a number of innovative financial packages so that we could create meaningful employment for Albertans. We have come forward with our discussion paper Toward 2000 so that we can receive feedback from the Alberta population. It is interesting, I'm sure to all hon. members, that there has been broad public participation as it relates to our involvements in the past.

I indicate to the hon. member that I can appreciate his concern, but as I have indicated, we do not wish to violate *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*. We also face certain constrictions, too, as it relates to commercial confidentiality, and for that reason we will be rejecting this motion for a return.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to talk briefly about commercial confidentiality, the closing words of the hon. minister in rejecting this motion. Well, the commercial confidentiality is \$102 million of the people of Alberta's money, and I find it difficult to accept that that's commercial confidentiality. What we've got here is a mothballed plant in southern Alberta in which we have placed ourselves at better than \$100 million exposure; a million dollars a month in interest payments lost on this particular facility. From my understanding from the minister and from discussions with others, there is no one waiting in the wings to purchase this particular facility because, as the minister pointed out, the cost of magnesium is down, the cost of electricity is up – as a result of government policy, I might add – the dollar is still higher than what the economics called for when this thing was created. Yet the minister says: well, we went into this thing with proud anticipation; it would bring us towards the future. Well, unfortunately this one has turned sour in three different directions for three different reasons, all of which individually make it more difficult and collectively make it impossible for this plant to proceed.

So, Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves now in the province of Alberta owning the Magnesium Company of Canada, making payments on this facility, making payments to the bankers on this, and the minister says to the people of Alberta: sorry; you have no right to this information, to know how we're spending our money. Well, I find that simply unacceptable. It is the responsibility of government to tell people how and why and where their dollars are being expended. The minister has talked a little bit about where. We know where the plant is; there's no doubt about that. We know a little bit of how much, but we don't have any indication of what's ongoing here.

What the minister is basically saying by denying access to these financial statements is: “We're not going to tell you anything ever, because it's none of your business.” Yet, “Sorry; we're going to take your hundred million dollars, and we're going to spend it in any way we like.” That's not acceptable. If you accept, which I do not, that the Crown should be involved in these kinds of things, in making loan guarantees to corporations – and this is one of the larger ones we still have on the books – then I think you also have to accept the responsibility that those dollars should be accounted for to the people of Alberta.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the Assembly should accept this motion for a return and ensure that the information on a hundred million dollar expenditure is provided to Albertans because it's their money.

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion merely calls for the release of the financial statements for the years 1990 and '91. The minister stands up and says: oh, *Beauchesne* says that you can't do that, because there might be something in the financial statements that offers a legal opinion. Financial statements don't offer legal opinions. For him to release the statements isn't going to cause anybody any great hardship in a court of law, I don't think. I don't know; maybe the government's taking the company to court or something. Surely the financial statements would be put into the court system and the facts should be clear and straight and we should all know what they are. Or maybe he expects the court to run some kind of a case without the facts and figures or something. I don't know. I don't see how releasing the financial statements can possibly prejudice a court case that as far as I know at this stage doesn't exist. If the minister's in a court case, why doesn't he say so?

Releasing the financial statements might cause somebody a financial loss. Who, the government? Mr. Speaker, I think the only loss will be the loss of face on the part of the minister in this government for putting the money into MagCan in the first place. I mean, this whole idea of MagCan was really dreamed up for the 1986 election. The government ran around this province telling everybody: oh, look how we're going to diversify the economy; we're going to build this magnesium plant; wonderful diversification of the economy and it will create jobs. Everything was going to be hunky-dory. In 1987, according to the minister's words of just a few minutes ago, he said that the government approved a loan guarantee of, I think, close to a hundred million dollars. According to the public accounts, which I took the time to check, in 1990 anyway the amount was \$102,750,000. That had been increased a little bit over the time.

Now, they approved the loan guarantee in 1987, but nothing happened, Mr. Speaker. The minister forgot to mention that. Nothing happened in 1988. Along came an election in 1989, and guess what's back on the agenda? The same magnesium plant. So we're going to diversify the economy; we're going to create all these jobs. That time they actually got it started, but it didn't last the year.

What the Auditor General says about Crown-controlled corporations is that the information in those Crown corporations should be released. I refer the minister to page 12 of the Auditor General's report, recommendation 3.

It is recommended that the Treasury Department seek the necessary legislative amendments to achieve appropriate accountability for Crown-controlled organizations, including the disclosure of financial statements.

So the Auditor General is coming down really clearly on our side. Those statements should be released. Maybe the problem is the government still hasn't secured ownership of the company. I believe that's still a problem. I think I have something here that says that, if I can find the right document. Yes, here we are. At the time of the shutdown, which was April 11, 1991, Provincial Treasurer Dick Johnston told a news conference that the government expected to control MagCan within two or three weeks, yet he admitted the other day that the government doesn't control the company yet. So what has been going on? Why doesn't the government control this company yet? We've put up all this money. Besides the \$103 million I mentioned a minute ago, there's about \$12 million, or a million dollars a month, in interest payments that the government is making, yet they still don't have control of the company.

4:00

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the government is just carrying on its usual secretive ways, not telling the people of Alberta, not telling this Assembly what they're doing with their tax dollars. There's no excuse for it. Oh, the minister did a little side trip and talked about how they're consulting the public now about their involvement in the economy with Toward 2000 Together and getting this broad public input. I'd like to ask the minister: why is it, then, that his department put out this Going Global document as an internal document back in February and didn't release it to the public to make it part of the dialogue of asking Albertans what we should be doing with the economy? There's a very important idea in there. Somebody in his department is putting forward this document with the suggestion that the government set up a risk-sharing fund. Now, if you're going to be using taxpayers' dollars in some kind of consistent way on a risk-sharing fund basis, maybe the people of this province should be debating that. Not only is he secretive about individual and specific companies. Even though he's doing a public process called Toward 2000 Together, behind the backs of those participants he is also doing some secret planning about what should and shouldn't be government policy without putting it out there into the open so people can debate it.

I'm just sorry we didn't get a chance to debate that the other night. There were so many things to be said about the budget itself and its many other areas that we didn't get into that. Of course, that's the problem with having two hours for the estimates of something as important as Economic Development and Trade, which I remind you doesn't just cover the \$94 million in the budget but has to do with a very large part of \$5.2 billion in loans, loan guarantees, and investments that the government is involved in. Of course we should have had more than two hours. Each speaker should have been able to get up two or three times, and other members of the Assembly should have been able to get into it. So don't talk to me about broad public participation. You don't even allow the members of this Assembly a reasonable amount of participation.

So just more of the same secretive stuff that this government is famous for, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sorry that they choose to be like that. I do think that the members of the Assembly should at least have the courage to vote in favour of the information being released, even if the minister doesn't want to.

[Motion lost]

Magnesium Company of Canada Ltd.

188. Mr. McEachern moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all studies, reports, and analyses done by or on behalf of the government prior to deciding to provide a \$103 million loan guarantee to the Magnesium Company of Canada Ltd., including those done on the viability of the magnesium production process employed in the High River facility.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, this motion is somewhat similar even though there are differences. It's very similar to 187 dealing with the same company even though the request is for analyses and data done on behalf of the government prior to deciding to provide the loan guarantee to the Magnesium Company of Canada.

Because of that and because of the obvious misunderstanding by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, I'm going to repeat what I put into the record coming from *Beauchesne*. I didn't indicate it was before the courts. I ask the hon. member to listen; in fact, I will quote the specific sections I'm referring to. I

indicated nothing as it related to the issue of the Magnesium Company of Canada being before the courts.

I would refer him again to section 446, which is on page 129, which the hon. House leader of the New Democratic Party the other day said was irrelevant, that *Beauchesne* was irrelevant. But we have orders that we have to abide by within this Legislative Assembly, and in the event that the hon. member wishes to have those orders changed, we're open to having further discussions. I understand that there will be further discussions as it relates to parliamentary reform which will be headed up by the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. If they have suggestions as it relates to changing these orders, we look forward to their recommendations, and I'm sure the hon. chairman looks forward to them also. Let me just repeat for the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway's benefit. I referred to section 446(2), which indicates:

The following criteria are to be applied in determining if the government papers or documents should be exempt from production. I go to subsection (a):

Legal opinions or advice provided for the use of the government. I use these just as an example. Subsection (e):

Papers containing information, the release of which could allow or result in direct personal financial gain or loss by a person or a group of persons.

Then I jump down to subsection (g):

Papers of a voluminous character or which would require an inordinate cost or length of time to prepare.

I recognize that hon. members opposite don't care as to what it costs, because on a daily basis we have them asking in the Legislative Assembly and again last night. We're doing our level best to curtail our budgetary deficit, whereas the New Democratic Party on a consistent basis suggests that we should spend, spend, spend. We're not going to take that advice, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make sure that we are proper stewards of the Alberta taxpayers' dollars.

As I indicated earlier, approval was originally given in November of 1987. He criticizes us saying that we just used this as an election gimmick in the '86 election campaign, which was not the case, and I'm happy to indicate that to the hon. member. We had given this recognizing the important role it would play to the further diversification of our province. As I indicated earlier, it's impossible to predict the future. We have had difficulty as it relates to our own oil and natural gas prices. We couldn't predict the future as it relates to magnesium prices, but forecasters are suggesting that there is going to be greater usage of the product that is produced there, and we believe that to be the case. We very much hope that will be the case.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking forward to turning this company back to the private sector. That is our desire. I indicated earlier to the hon. member that the cost of the assets exceeds the guaranteed loan commitment, which the Provincial Treasurer has indicated on a consistent basis. The hon. member indicated control. We want to make sure that in the event control does come to the provincial government, all of the environmental concerns and all of the outstanding liabilities are taken care of. The company is being very conscientious in doing that, and until we are assured that all of that has taken place, we are not going to take control because we don't want to have the additional liabilities when we do not have any exposure to date, as has been indicated by the Provincial Treasurer and myself, whereby the assets exceed the loan guarantee exposure.

If you'll allow me, Mr. Speaker, I want to just deal with some of the hon. member's criticisms as they relate to our involvement with our manufacturing paper, Going Global. I'm glad that he raised that issue. We have a number of discussion papers, and as I indicated to him last night, we wanted to make sure that the

discussion paper we released on Toward 2000 was not one that would prohibit all types of public input. I'm gratified that we sent out 20,000 copies of that discussion paper. We've received in excess of 3,000 questionnaires that were returned. We've had a number of stakeholder groups give us their advice and counsel. We've had public forums, of which the hon. member attended the one that I chaired in Edmonton. In addition to that we had the Banff school conduct round tables so that we could again have a more objective viewpoint expressed to us. All of this information, which the hon. member is invited to, will come together the latter part of May in Calgary at a conference that the Premier is going to chair. The hon. member surely can appreciate the sensitivity of not offering specific direction to various stakeholder groups. We want to receive their direction, and that was the purpose of the discussion paper itself.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West has suggested along with the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway that we're being secretive. All of these items, in the event that there is some loss suffered, are highlighted in public accounts. When we originally involved ourselves with MagCan, an extensive news release was issued as to our involvement. In addition to that a number of them go through order in council which are made public, Mr. Speaker.

4:10

The hon. members also suggested that we should not involve ourselves in initiatives such as this. But we're in a competitive world, and if we don't involve ourselves, we might as well shrivel up and die as a province. We have involved ourselves and we see the fruits of that involvement. I highlighted a number of those last night in our budgetary debates, whereby we have seen within this province the creation of jobs. We're the envy of all other regions within Canada because we have had jobs created in this province whereas in other parts of Canada they have suffered job losses. That doesn't happen by accident. That happens because we have innovative policies that encourage industry, thus in turn creating meaningful jobs for our young people within this province. We've attracted and we're going to continue to attract – and hopefully after the Toward 2000 process is completed, we will receive that valuable input whereby we can make sure that we do have a competitive climate within the province of Alberta to attract industries more so on their own.

In the event that other governments are offering incentives, are hon. members suggesting that we back off and let our people within this province suffer without meaningful jobs? I indicated to hon. members yesterday the concern that I had with their policy whereby they're looking to create temporary jobs. We want to. We recognize and I respect the hon. members' raising the endeavours that we have been involved in that have not worked out as well as we would have liked, but for them to suggest that we should withdraw totally is a very foolish suggestion on their part.

Because of the comments that I have shared with hon. members dealing with this issue, we again will find that we will have to reject Motion for a Return 188.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it will be any great surprise that I disagree with the hon. minister. I looked at his quotation of 446(2)(e) that talks about

papers containing information, the release of which could allow or result in direct personal financial gain or loss by a person or a group of persons.

It dawned on me that what the minister was probably talking about was the fact that after the next election the people in the province of Alberta are going to fire their collective keisters out the door of the Legislature, and the personal loss is going to be that government that we see across the way that refuses to provide information to people in the province of Alberta.

AN HON. MEMBER: Unparliamentary language.

MR. BRUSEKER: Look it up in the book.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister refers to loan guarantees being less than the value of the assets. Well, the value of the assets so far seems to be absolutely zip, because there's nobody standing at the door waiting to buy it. If you have an asset that nobody is prepared to write a cheque for, that asset doesn't necessarily have a whole lot of value. That's not to say that the money hasn't gone into it, but I and obviously the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway are concerned about: what are we likely to get out of this thing? We've seen GSR, for example, where this government invested \$31 million only to turn around and sell it for less than \$2 million. We've seen the same kind of thing happen with Myrias Research computer company. The net return on our assets there, the dollars that we put in, was 6 cents on the dollar.

The concern that we have here with the \$103 million loan guarantee and the ownership of the technology still in dispute: not only are we potentially going to lose the \$103 million that we've already put into it, but there's a potential, from my understanding – as the minister has said, we don't necessarily own the technology – that we may be on the hook for more money. I think that we've thrown some good money into this. The minister is hinting, I think, or suggesting that there's a possibility more money may have to go into it yet before we continue or complete the process of owning a corporation that at this point in time is uneconomic.

Earlier, Mr. Speaker, when this was just getting going back in 1989, I had the opportunity to speak with some of the people from the Magnesium Company of Canada, and a question I put directly to the president was this: was it necessary for the loan guarantee to be given for you to come to Alberta? And his answer was no, it wasn't necessary. They said: we like Alberta; it's got lots of things going for it. And I agree with the hon. minister – we've got lots of things going for us in this province; I'm a native Albertan and proud of it – but why do we have to give \$102 million when it's not really necessary? The minister says we've got to have jobs – we've created jobs in the past – and talks about our rosy future. Well, the future according to the Royal Bank doesn't seem to be quite so rosy. The Royal Bank has issued a prediction. They say that jobs will actually decline in the province of Alberta over this next year and project the unemployment rate to increase from 8.2 percent to 9.1 percent here in the province of Alberta. So to have the minister crow and sing the song of all is wonderful and glorious in the province of Alberta simply doesn't wash.

Mr. Speaker, I guess in saying that he can't provide this information for the reasons that he quoted from section 446, really what he was saying to us here in the Legislature and I guess to the people of Alberta is either one of two things: number one, it's none of your business and we're not going to tell you, or number two, we didn't do any studies, so we can't give them to you because they don't exist. Neither one of those is acceptable as a possible reason. I believe that whatever documentation is available, this government, this minister has a duty to produce.

I urge all members to support the motion before us today.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, has it ever occurred to you that when a company looks for money in the magnitude of a hundred million dollars or more from the government, the chances are good that the private-sector financial institutions, which enjoy, I don't know, several billion dollars' worth of profits every year in Canada – I think it's about \$6 billion actually; and that's just the chartered banks – that something's wrong with the picture? You see, if the hon. minister was so certain of the investment that this government made by way of a loan guarantee, even if he didn't want to give out "all studies, reports, and analyses," all he'd have to do is give us reports of some of the analyses. We might even see bank loan applications by MagCan and see what the bank said to them, why they had to go and get public collateral. That would tell us something, wouldn't it? I don't think that would jeopardize the assets. I mean, I don't even see how it could jeopardize the assets, because these guys – that is, the Conservatives: the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the finance minister – keep saying that the assets are worth more than the loan guarantee; therefore, the assets are protected.

So then the minister comes along and makes this citation from *Beauchesne*, which he did a week and a half ago and which I'm also going to refute by the minister's own words. If you don't need to protect somebody, other private interests, because you've already said on the record ad nauseam that the assets are worth more than the loan guarantee, then how can you use *Beauchesne* citation 446 to justify hiding the information? One is caught in a logical web, but of course webs are something that these guys are really good at building, n'est-ce pas? Those little webs do come and crawl around your neck and eventually strangle you.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a light subject. There's a lot of money involved here. I'll tell you something. The minister might benefit from knowing this. I was out knocking on doors last night, and the first thing that people didn't say to me was how badly they wanted a triple E Senate. The first thing people said to me is this: "What's the matter with those guys? We've got all this debt and nothing to show for it." I said, "What's the matter with these guys is that they gave out loans and loan guarantees hand over fist; we now own a bunch of shell companies that don't do anything, and now the minister won't even give us the information."

I don't often agree with the Member for Calgary-North West, but I think he has caught a good point here. Either the information that they have which they won't reveal is very damaging to them or they don't have it. In other words, you get to admit to being stupid or being a liar; not a comfortable position for the government but it's one I expect that they shall increasingly find themselves in.

I also would ask members to support this motion. Let's see a couple of free votes on the Conservative side. Let's just put that new Getty philosophy to the test, okay?

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

4:20

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Speech from the Throne indicated that this government had a whole new philosophy, a whole new way of doing business: the public business would be done in public; there'd be access to information. This was going to be the hallmark, the theme of a new administration and a new way of doing things. Well, I guess that new way of doing things finished as soon as His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor finished reading the speech; either that or the Minister of Economic Development and Trade was not here to hear it, because obviously here's a company the public has plowed

a lot of money into, and in trying to get some documentation about what persuaded this government to get into it in the first place, the minister says: I'm not going to give it to you.

I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, if the real reason that he's not able to give it to us is not because of the reasons he outlined, the quotations from *Beauchesne*, but the fact is that they really didn't do the studies, they really didn't show due diligence, that in fact they failed in their duty to the people of Alberta, failed in their duty as ministers of the Crown to do a proper assessment, a proper analysis. Maybe that's the real reason that the provincial minister is unable to provide us with documents of studies and reports and analyses: because he didn't show due diligence.

The reason for my speculating in that regard, Mr. Speaker, is that the Auditor General has made some very pointed criticisms of the way this government does business when it comes to evaluating and monitoring specific loan guarantees. It can be found on page 13 of his most recent annual report. Even though it occurs under the section regarding the Treasury Department, clearly

the Treasury Department does not make final decisions about specific loan guarantee[s] . . . it is responsible for providing the Provincial Treasurer with an independent evaluation of proposals. These proposals normally originate in other departments.

Other departments: i.e., the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The report goes on to say:

For example, proposals received from departments are sometimes inadequately supported because they lack business plans, operating budgets, and financial statements.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to know from the minister or from a member of this government whether in fact the government of Alberta approved the Magnesium Company of Canada loan guarantee without having either business plans, operating budgets, or financial statements to support that loan guarantee. Is that really the reason why the provincial minister is unable or unwilling to give us the documents called for in the motion for a return: because he doesn't have them? Is that the real reason?

The minister, in his earlier remarks – and I was just taking notes; I may not have gotten his exact words, and I'll be checking the Blues and *Hansard* to ensure that I heard him correctly. I think he said that the government will not be taking over this facility. Well, if that's correct, I presume the minister will stand by his statement. However, in this very Assembly on March 26, 1992, the Provincial Treasurer said, and I quote:

We have secured the position, as I said before . . . As to whether or not we appoint a receiver still remains to be seen. We do have the responsibility, the liability for the ongoing commitment, and we want to ensure that in fact the plant is mothballed effectively and it is not vandalized or damaged over the period when we look for a buyer.

He went on, Mr. Speaker. That was not the only impression he left. This is also what the Provincial Treasurer said:

The government of Alberta wants to deal with fairness and provide the real truth to the people of Alberta.

That I wonder about. But then he went on to say:

The fact is that we have taken back and secured our position under the guarantee call, which is \$102 million at this point.

The question is: have they or have they not? The Provincial Treasurer says they have taken back their position. The provincial minister this afternoon says that they will not be taking back their position. These are two contradictory statements, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that this Assembly is deserving of hearing the truth from these gentlemen. Which one is it? Have we taken back our commitment and our position in this facility or have we not? I think that is one we're owed some explanation on. Either we are in control of this facility as a guarantor of that loan or we're not. If we're not, why not?

We're on the hook, the minister has indicated, \$102 million. Why have we not been able to take control of this facility? Why have we not been able to secure our interest in this facility? Why is it still outside the ownership of the province of Alberta if the minister's statement this afternoon is in fact correct? If his statement is in fact correct, then why did the Provincial Treasurer indicate the contrary to this House on March 26, 1992? A hundred and two million dollars was what the Provincial Treasurer quoted on March 26. What is a hundred and two million dollars, Mr. Speaker? It's all of the money of this minister in his operating budget this year plus a couple of other departments thrown in to boot. This is a lot of money.

He says that he's not going to be spending money the way the Official Opposition wants him to spend it. Darn right; you bet. We don't want him to have to spend a hundred and some million dollars to bail out an empty piece of equipment down near High River. You bet. That's not the way the money of the people of this province should be spent, sitting there as some empty monument to somebody's folly. Of course not. That's not how the people's money ought to be spent in this province. He wants us to shrivel up and die if we don't involve ourselves in empty, useless, unproductive monuments that sit there rusting in the prairie sun? No, of course not. This province will shrivel up and die if we have any more monuments like that. That's where the wealth of the people of this province has been invested, to sit there and rust. All we've got to show for it is some hunks of steel and a big debt that we don't even own. Come on now. Give me a break.

He wants us to talk about job creation. Sure, we've got lots of jobs created for the lawyers who are going to be sorting out the mess. The liquidators: sure, people have to come in and sort out the financial problems. Lots of jobs there, Mr. Speaker. Accountants who are going to try and trace the money? You bet. But did he create a single job for somebody to do a proper analysis before they gave a loan guarantee? I don't know. He isn't going to give us the reports or the studies to prove whether they even did the proper assessment or analyses prior to doing the loan guarantee. I mean, we should have had some jobs created at least in making sure that it was a proper job and it was a credible project before they got into it. He said the people of this province will suffer if they don't have meaningful jobs. I think we can do better for our children in this province than setting them up to have a career in sorting out government mismanagement, have a career in figuring out liquidation procedures for loan guarantees that go bad. We can do better than that.

He asked about incentives. Why is it that when some people get help, it's called incentives, and when other people get help, it's called welfare? Okay. People get welfare in this province. If they get paid too much, this government will hound them and hound them and hound them to repay out of their meagre resources something that they've been overpaid. When it comes to the big bucks, a hundred and some million dollars, this government doesn't even want to give any accounting, take any responsibility: "Oh, well, that's too bad. Isn't it terrible that we've lost money? But, you know, you've got to do something." Come on. What is this government doing to recover that money? We're just going to sit there and lose it? We go after other people when they lose this government's money. How come we're not going after MagCan? How come we don't have anything out of this minister as far as an announcement that we've secured this facility and, by the way, we're going to court to get that money back? Not a thing. We don't even have control of it, according to him, and we're not even going to, according to him.

4:30

Well, we can do better than this, Mr. Speaker. All we're asking for is for him to show us that he's done some due diligence before the loan guarantee was provided, let alone due diligence after the company went under receivership or if it went belly-up and we've lost some money. There's due diligence before and after. The motion simply asks for him to prove that he's done due diligence before. We'll maybe get around to asking him to do due diligence afterwards, but I'll be fair to the hon. minister. Once the deal is done, it's out of his hands; I will admit to that. It's up the Provincial Treasurer through the Treasury Department, once the deal's been done and gone bad, to do something about it. It's the Attorney General and the whole gang of them over there who have to take responsibility for whether we're going to get our money back. That's what we're hoping to find here.

No, it is simply not good enough to say, oh, we've got clauses in some book called *Beauchesne's* rules and forms. Does the taxpayer in Alberta care about *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms* that says the minister may or may not or should or should not provide certain documents to this Assembly? The taxpayers want to know where their money went, they want to know what this government's doing to get it back, and they want to know why that money got lost in the first place. They don't care about *Beauchesne*. They want to know where the money went, and this government owes them a duty to convince them that they showed due diligence in the administration of their funds. That's what they want. They don't want *Beauchesne* quoted at them. They want to know the answers to where the money went, and that's what this minister owes us in this Assembly.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, for a minute there I thought the Minister of Health was going to get up and join the debate.

Mr. Speaker, it's really quite amusing to listen to the minister, when he has nothing that he can possibly say, find words to fill in some time, to make out that he's putting up a defence. I couldn't quite believe my ears when he started out by saying, well, this motion was almost like the other one. I was rather careful, actually, in discussing the first motion not to spend too much time other than asking for the financial statements, which is exactly what the first motion, 187, does. It asks for the financial statements for 1990 and 1991. It would amaze me that a government would put \$100 million into a company and have no mechanism by which that company would have to report to the government and to the public of Alberta that's putting up the tax dollars. But in this second motion, Motion 188, I was not re-asking for those financial statements, although certainly if the minister had a change of heart, I wouldn't be broken up about that. If he actually gave them to me, well, I might just faint. I suppose after all these years it would be rather startling to actually get them.

In Motion 188, Mr. Speaker, I'm asking for the "studies, reports and analyses done by or on behalf of the government prior to deciding" to put the money in. Surely it's not an unreasonable thing to expect that the minister should explain to the people of Alberta why, "Oops, we just lost \$115 million of your dollars; sorry, guys." It might just be nice to have a little bit of an explanation and sort of say, "Well, gosh, you know, there was a downturn in the economy we didn't expect," or something at least, maybe some studies, some details about what convinced this government that that was a worthwhile project. Or would the minister perhaps like to just admit that in fact there was a very shallow analysis and that it was just very convenient at election time to go around telling this country, the people of Alberta, that they were going to have this wonderful diversification project that

was going to create so many jobs? When it didn't work the first time in '86, they just sort of kept it alive and used it again in '89.

The other thing that amazes me is that the minister goes back and quotes *Beauchesne* again. That has been rather well dealt with except for the third point. The first two I dealt with last time, and he gets up and reiterates them but doesn't tie them to any reason why he shouldn't give the information. The third point, 446(2)(g), something about too much paper – you know, it would be too lengthy and too difficult – and he quoted that also on the annual statement. Annual statements for companies aren't that long. They don't take that much paper. We don't want a couple of million of them, we want just a few for the people of Alberta, and it really wouldn't break the bank. I mean, we've already spent \$115 million on this company, and every month another million is going down the tube. A few dollars for some paper to tell us what happened wouldn't really be resented by the people of Alberta. What would be resented, of course, is the fact that we've lost \$115 million. Now, when the minister was asked about this on March 25, he denied that he knew anything about it or had anything to say about it. He didn't say he didn't know anything about it, but he denied he had any responsibility for it and said that once the disaster has occurred, then the Treasurer has to take over these things. "These disasters that I make, the Treasurer has to pick up the pieces and answer the questions."

In fact, it prompted Mark Lisac of the *Journal* to say:

Astonishingly, the government still does not have legal control of the plant. And when Martin . . .
This is the leader of the New Democrats.

. . . asked Economic Development Minister Peter Elzinga what was happening, Elzinga sounded as if he had no idea.

And really he didn't, the first day. Then the next day Johnston came along and did answer some questions and raised some interesting points, actually, and we started to get some information at that stage. One that startled us a little bit, although the minister hasn't mentioned it again, is that there is evidently some kind of an environmental problem. Now, the Treasurer didn't indicate that that had anything to do with why they hadn't taken over the company again, but the minister today seemed to imply that, well, the government didn't really want to take over the company because they thought the company would be better to secure the assets and make sure it was environmentally safe than the government would be. I don't quite know why the government couldn't find environmental experts in the Department of the Environment or hire the same people the company could to take care of the environmental concerns about taking over control of this company. Nonetheless, those are the kind of strange answers we're getting.

What we should do is just look back a little bit at some of the history. You know, this Magnesium Company of Canada – I remember a year or two ago, the Leader of the Opposition asking some questions about this company and who were the directors and the shareholders. They evidently reside in Houston, Texas, and the Cayman islands; I'm not sure which comes first. I really wonder. The minister never did answer just who these guys were, what kind of backing they had, what work had been done prior to getting to the point of getting the government money to indicate that they really did have a technology and an industry that was viable and would go somewhere, and whether they were going to be around to see it through.

One of the partners, Alberta Natural Gas Company, decided to pull out, and that's what caused the collapse on April 11, 1991. The Treasurer at that time, as I mentioned earlier, said that within two or three weeks the government would be securing their position and taking over the company. Here we are over a year

later, and they still don't have control of the company. The minister keeps making assurances, as he did today and as the Treasurer did the other day, saying, "Oh, but the assets are worth more than the liability, the money that the government has put in." Maybe. It sure wasn't true in GSR, sure wasn't true in Myrias, as was just indicated a few minutes ago. It sure wasn't true in Chembomed, sure wasn't true in Northern Steel, which has just been auctioned off in the last few days. Mr. Speaker, I'm very skeptical. If you can sell it as a going concern, it might be worth what you put in, but if you have to shut it down and liquidate it, it's certainly not.

The minister also took his chance to jump back on the story about the reason he hadn't released some of these studies that he's been doing in a number of areas in terms of getting participation and input from the population of Alberta about Toward 2000 Together. Quite frankly, the Going Global document has some important ideas in it that do need to be discussed, and I don't really think the minister should be shy about putting it out. There are two aspects of it, just on the surface of it. One is that the risk-sharing fund he's proposing I assume will require a certain amount of taxpayers' dollars, so that idea should be out there and kicked around on how you might do that. That's one aspect. The other thing is that I wish he would release some documents in preparation for the conference coming up at the end of the month on Toward 2000 Together.

4:40

Just one other small thing. He keeps bragging about the jobs and the expansion of the manufacturing sector in this province, but in the last two years we've lost 5,000 manufacturing jobs. I have a document from the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Alberta section, which clearly points that out. So, yes, we are in a certain amount of trouble in this province, and one of the reasons is the minister and the secrecy and the refusal to be up front with the people of Alberta about what they're actually doing with our dollars and how the economy is making out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

Big Knife Provincial Park

248. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all bids in the tendering for the maintenance contract at Big Knife provincial park in the tender competition which closed March 22, 1991.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Tourism, Recreation and Parks – who makes it a strong practice, consistent with government policy, with regard to tendering anything. The minister has informed me that he certainly is in total agreement that these matters should be made public. Therefore, on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, Recreation and Parks, we accept Motion for a Return 248.

[Motion carried]

Senior Citizens' Petition

328. Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the petition presented to the government on June 5, 1991, by the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired and the Alberta Council on Aging.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to accept that motion.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, just a couple of comments. I want to thank the minister for accepting the motion. I think it's important that we keep reminding this government and the people of Alberta about what happened last year. It was in my view an unconscionable act, one I think the government has sincerely regretted, and they have tried in some ways to show to seniors that they are uncomfortable with the decisions they made last year and trying to convince seniors that that kind of action will not be repeated. But the petition itself seems, quite strangely, to have disappeared. I haven't seen hide nor hair of it since it was presented here. My understanding is that it asked for a reinstatement of the cuts that were made which gravely impaired seniors in their life-style, their ability to make what usually are fixed incomes go as far as they had, particularly for seniors who are on the edge, whose incomes are minimal to start with.

Mr. Speaker, the difficulty, of course, ensued when the government, in ignoring the desires of people and their needs, went ahead and put various cuts in the budget without any consultation, without any consultation with their own advisory committee let alone seniors throughout the province, and, as far as I can tell, with no real knowledge or understanding of what the consequences were going to be. Well, they got a very rude surprise, because seniors all over the province signed this petition and other petitions, called their member, complained, and explained painstakingly what the effects were like. Now, the government insisted that this was not a big cut, that they in fact had not really hurt anybody. The Premier stood in this House and said that seniors wanted to help in controlling and managing our debt and our deficit position. To be sure, they do, but the fact of the matter is that seniors were gravely affected by this.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier or the minister has never been able to convince anybody here that these cuts could be sustained by seniors in our province. They at no time, to my knowledge, discussed them before or afterwards as to what should go back in, what should be reinstated. A few items were dealt with by the Minister of Health, and other than that there's been no major change. In fact, in this year's budget we see further attempts made to kind of chip away at seniors' incomes.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we have developed a department of Seniors, and we now have a full-blown ministry responsible for seniors and people with disabilities. One assumes that the results of that are going to be that seniors will in fact be talked with, but there is no guarantee that means that in fact their wishes will be met or acted upon. There's no guarantee at all. Now, I think the minister is very sincere in developing that department and, hopefully, in responding to this petition – although I've seen no response to the precise items in the petition – and that this kind of thing won't happen again, because he seems to be setting up meetings and attempting to deal with and find out how seniors are managing.

Mr. Speaker, it's my hope that the government has learned a lesson, a lesson about consultation, particularly with people who are vulnerable in our society when changes are made that affect their life-style, their capacity to be contributing and productive citizens in our society, and that the government will never do this kind of thing again. I think the government has learned a political lesson, but what I want to do is to be sure that neither the government nor the people of Alberta have an opportunity to forget what happened to the seniors last year and what their petition asked for and the government's nonresponse to the precise wishes and desires expressed in that petition, because the petition

requested reinstatement, which has not happened. Now, I'm assuming that the minister has been able to convince himself, if not seniors, that in fact the cuts could be sustained. I believe, to the contrary, that they could not be and that we have caused harm and damage and pain to many people in our province, the pioneers in our province, some of whom are already operating on very marginal incomes.

Mr. Speaker, I will welcome a copy of the petition, and I will be consulting, as I hope other members will, with seniors in our constituencies to find out how they're doing and whether or not they believe the government has responded adequately.

[Motion carried]

Pulp Mill Regulation

331. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any certificates of variance or control orders that were issued to Procter & Gamble Inc., Grande Prairie, and Millar Western Ltd., Whitecourt, under the Clean Water Act for the period June 1989 to March 12, 1992.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, speaking on behalf of the hon. Minister of the Environment on Motion for a Return 331, moved by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, I believe it's been self-evident that Alberta has the highest environmental standards in the country, if not the world. The minister has consistently acted as a policeman to ensure that they were enforced, and that's why there were variance orders and control orders issued to both P & G of Grande Prairie and Millar Western of Whitecourt under the Clean Water Act. There were a variety of those issued, and the government is more than pleased to accept Motion for a Return 331 to table that information.

[Motion carried]

head: Motions Other than Government Motions

4.50 Community Health Services

208. Moved by Ms Barrett:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to shift the Alberta health system from one based on the treatment of illness in institutions to one based on the pursuit and maintenance of wellness in the community by adopting the first recommendation of the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans, which advocated spending an additional 1 percent of the health care budget on health promotion and illness/injury prevention by 1995.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Motion 208, I'd like to start by making two observations. One is my appreciation to members of the House for letting this motion stand while I was away in Ottawa, and number two, I'd like to note that the hour is now 10 to 5. What I would propose is that I speak till shortly past 5 p.m. and allow the third-party health spokesperson to speak for a few minutes, if we could agree, then, that the Health minister could have the concluding 10 or 15 minutes for her remarks. Thank you; I seem to have eye contact agreeing with that proposal. [interjection] How much do you need? All you need is 10 minutes? Great. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this motion will probably enjoy the support of all members of the Assembly because it is a motion that calls for

pursuit of attainable goals, ultimately to improve the quality of life of Albertans and to reduce reliance on expensive institutional care, which in this day and age, with cost pressures on all government departments, is a very serious matter. There are a couple of subelements to this motion, if approved, and that is that we would be implicitly encouraging people, individuals, to take control of their own health and well-being, to be more acutely aware of how they can do this. Ultimately, the real effect of pursuing a preventive health system is to bring it into the community; in other words, to move away from institutional health care and into community control over care. In other words, a focus on wellness and not just on sickness.

Now, the World Health Organization has as its goal health for all by the year 2000, a pretty lofty goal. On the other hand, health is defined broadly as a way of life and as a resource that enables people to lead socially and economically productive lives. It means that primary care, which is essential health care, must be made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community. Essential health care is understood to include promotion, prevention, cure, and rehabilitation. Part of my motion talks about prevention, Mr. Speaker, both in terms of health promotion and in terms of preventing illness and injury.

Now, this idea was originally sponsored, to the best of my knowledge, in any event, by the Calgary board of health. Having met with that board, they have advised me that they knew of no other agency that was sponsoring such a move prior to the establishment of the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans, the result of which, of course, was the Rainbow Report, and that is the first recommendation to which I am now referring. The Calgary board of health submission pointed out that additional expenditures of \$27 million – now, that was 1 percent of the Health budget in 1988, okay? – in the area of injury control, cardiovascular disease, reproductive health, tobacco, independence in old age, and an Alberta health data centre would result in a recognized saving of \$550 million. That did not include items such as disability payouts or other social costs or expenditures in the area of treatment of infertility.

The government, I'm sorry to say, took two years to respond to the Hyndman report. However, respond they ultimately did. It was sort of like waiting for Godot. Their response was to create a health innovation fund, and that established for last year a \$1 million fund. That's a far cry from the \$34 million that would have to be set aside for what is called the 1 percent solution; that is, for the satisfaction of that solution.

Alberta has one of the highest injury rates in Canada, which in turn has a poor record when compared to other industrialized nations. That's surprising, isn't it? The fact is that we haven't put a lot of emphasis on prevention of illness and injury in particular. The cost of workplace accidents in Alberta is estimated in excess of \$2.5 billion a year. That's a lot of moola. The Calgary board of health suggested that a 50 percent reduction in injury rates was clearly attainable. Now, six, eight months ago when I was brand-new in this shadow portfolio, I wouldn't have felt confident in agreeing with that, but I have read a number of studies now that would indicate that that is a very realistic goal, perhaps not in one year but in three or four.

As I mentioned at the outset, I think the only way we're going to be able to pursue this successively is not just by allocating the money. I'm not talking about new money. I'm talking about transferring money that is already allocated to the health system into this program over a four-year period, so at the end of the four years you've transferred an additional 1 percent purely into this program. As I said at the outset, I think we have to seek these solutions in the community. Now, we're aware of these

new concepts of hospitals without walls, which may be problematic. I don't know where the minister stands on this, but I'm certainly concerned that once you're engaged in running a large physical plant, it's very difficult for you to conceptualize treating people outside of that environment. I know that attempts are going to be made, but I would suggest to you that chances are very good that the more successful models for this concept are the community health centres. Now, we don't have a community health centre in the way they do in Saskatoon or Prince Albert, but let me just tell you - I don't have my notes here; I thought I brought them, but I didn't - that they did two studies of those centres, for the first decade of their operation and the second decade of their operation. The second study was just released last year. I guess the Conservative government didn't want to release it. The New Democrats took them to court under the freedom of information Act and said, "Release it or else," and we got it.

What it showed is that hospital utilization rates for patients who were using the community health care clinics were between 15 and 30 percent lower than those who either did not have access to community health clinics or did not use them. It also showed that duration of stay in hospitals, when they were being utilized by those patients, was lower. It also showed that the rate of prescription drug consumption amongst those patients using the community health centres was significantly lower; 18 percent comes to mind, although I could be challenged on that. Nonetheless, it was a significant amount. I think that's the approach we should take right here in Alberta. I've suggested this publicly before.

The minister knows the Boyle McCauley Health Centre is in the riding that I represent, and it is an absolute jewel of a centre. I'm not so sure that it could be expanded to be a broadly accessed community facility, given the nature of the community in which it is physically located; that is, the inner city. However, I would suggest that the work that facility does and similar facilities in Calgary could be expanded both in terms of hours of operation and care provided to the local people. The reason I avoided the word "practice" is because some of the preventive care work that is done is not actually a practice. It's offered by people who are not necessarily in the direct health care frontline worker occupations. Nonetheless, it seems to me that that's one example of where we could start right away.

Another example would be to start using language that is very different. I noted when I was at the Workers' Compensation Board meeting a few weeks ago that they emphasized that there is no such thing as "accident." I should tell you that philosophically speaking I'm Aristotelian, and I've been making that observation since I was about 12 years old. I do not believe in the concept of accident, period, philosophically. Things happen because A and B did something to make it happen; whether or not they knew of the consequences is irrelevant. Accident does not exist philosophically, in my opinion. I would hope that we can start to see more and more of our health care facilities, institutions, and care givers moving away from the concept of accident and that we can encourage employers to do the same thing. I think that's going to be very important in turning around the approach to health care that we have in this province.

As I mentioned earlier, the government had established this health innovation fund, with a \$1 million base for it, and had specific purposes: to foster innovative approaches to disease and injury prevention and health promotion, and to foster innovation in the development, organization, and delivery of health services to increase quality and promote cost efficiency and effectiveness.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

5:00

The problem, Mr. Speaker, first of all, as I noted, is that it was a \$1 million fund and not, as it should have been at that point, a \$24 million fund. Worse yet, the projects granted under the program only came to \$375,000 of the million dollars. I think that when any government - I mean, why am I giving you guys strategic advice? I want to see you all defeated - regardless of its stripe, makes a commitment to doing something progressive, it should also make a point of spending the dollars in the way that they were committed when the original announcement was made. I'm not saying chew up the dollars. Let's say we were using '92-93 estimates for the year 1995. Now, the kind of funding that we'd be looking at is \$34 million, \$35 million to get this 1 percent solution in place.

When you consider the budget for Health - and this is only what we directly know is Health, okay, because you've got workers' compensation costs related to off-work sick and injury time. You've got a lot of people taking time off work for problems that have not been diagnosed and don't show up in anybody's balance sheets. Three and a half billion dollars is being spent just on essentially institutional care and auxiliary care and what I will say is tertiary care, all of the other smaller programs that go along with this.

I'm pleased to note that the Saskatchewan government has moved further to enhance their community co-operation in designing their health care policy, especially highlighting community needs and preventive care. They observed, by the way:

Changing lifestyles, social conditions and our physical environment is the key to better health for Saskatchewan people. Studies show that 90 percent of health problems are related to these three factors.

All of them are reducible through prevention. I like their new emphasis. As I said, they're not just concentrating on treating illness.

That reminds me of a subject that came up earlier today, the subject of midwifery. When I was canvassing last night, I ran into a woman who said, "When are they going to act on the midwife report?" You know, she gave me sort of chapter and verse about why it is that she wanted it. I said: you know, I'd like to add to that. I'm tired of pregnancy and child delivery being treated as some sort of illness. Even though the medical establishment won't use that word, that is the insinuation that goes along with institutional delivery of children. I think it's time we got out of that, just as we got out of other language that is not designed to encourage the public taking control over its health and well-being.

I'll wrap up pretty soon so I can let the other two speakers in. I saw some statistics recently that I thought were quite shocking: "Every year, 1,500 Albertans die from injuries. Another 6,000 suffer brain and spinal cord injuries." Remember I said there's no such thing as an accident. This is a preventable statistic. It should be one that could be eliminated, although I guess in the world of probabilities, statistically speaking that's not likely. The cost of treating these injuries, when you combine the health care dollars and the workers' compensation dollars and all the other costs that go with it, is \$3 billion to \$4 billion a year. That is a significant chunk of money. In Canada as a whole last year "\$13.2 billion was spent on acute hospital care related to injury." That is a huge amount of money.

Between 500 to 600 people end up in wheelchairs each year in Canada. It costs between \$1 million to \$1.5 million to keep each of those people over the rest of their lives. That is significant.

The statistics are actually endless. Suicide rates are another aspect that we could be looking at with a refocus on preventive

health care. Suicide rates amongst our natives here are seven times the national average. Surely that tells us the work that we could be doing.

I just found something else in my notes. This is again the statistical review of injuries. It is said:

A death from injury is the tip of an iceberg; for every fatal injury, 45 require hospitalization, about 1,300 result in a visit to an emergency department, and an unknown number a visit to a physician or a clinic.

It is these sorts of things that we could work towards if we really had the political will. As the minister knows, I'm very much looking forward to her response on this. This is the first opportunity I will have had to have this debate with the minister since I took over as health care spokesperson for the Official Opposition New Democrats.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that if we don't take physical measures this year, and I mean concrete and new measures beyond what was announced in the budget, which I've been through rather thoroughly, I think that the 1 percent solution is going to slip away from us well beyond the 1995 target that the Rainbow Report suggested. We need to recognize that for every penny that we put into prevention and community care now, we save dollars, and dollars starting right away, next year. It is an investment, and I would urge all members to support this motion.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will keep my comments rather brief because I am interested in the comments of other participants in this debate. While I agree with the general thrust of what the hon. member has brought up for the prevention, certainly, of sickness and injury and trying to have a better life-style for everybody in Alberta, I have some problems with a separate funding arrangement for this.

When you talk about the 1 percent, basically we're talking \$30 million to \$35 million a year. That's not to say that we're not already putting the emphasis on this type of care through our various agencies that we fund at the present time. If you take the public health area, where we already are working on independence in old age through home care and home help, we try and keep people in their homes a lot longer and try and make them aware of the health problems that are out there and have them live in a much better way. The ones that I'm most familiar with, Mr. Speaker, are of course in rural Alberta, where we have embarked on a role statement procedure with not only the hospitals but the health units and the various health care givers in rural Alberta. If you look at it carefully, you'd find that there's a lot of turf being protected out there through different agencies and different funding arrangements. I think that's something. If we're going to have a total health care service we can all afford, we have to look at the overlap and the 'interlap' of the different agencies and the different services that are being given out there. I have some problem with this separate funding because it creates that atmosphere where when you go back, as we have now, and ask them to come up with their role statements and try and determine exactly what they do and what their partners are doing, it becomes more than just an exercise in efficiency. It becomes a battle to try and maintain your little empire, whatever your little empire may be.

Mr. Speaker, we do have one of the most comprehensive, accessible, and caring health services in Canada, and I think we're doing an excellent job on that. While I do support the general thrust of what the hon. member is trying to put forward with this,

I do not support it being 1 percent of the health budget in a separate fund.

Thank you, and I'll allow the other people to participate.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands for bringing this motion forward. I do support it, although like the previous speaker I have some concerns and some qualifiers about the 1 percent solution, which is a great and easy buzzword, but I'm not just sure where it comes from. I'll look forward to the minister's comments on that.

Mr. Speaker, no question there's been a tremendous change in attitude in the last two or three decades about health care: change in technology, change in life-style, change in our approach to fitness and nutrition, and a real shift in our thinking towards health promotion, prevention of illness and of injury. I think we have to be careful not to place the medical institutional model that we've been committed to in decades past in competition with the promotion of wellness. In my view, these two systems need to be integrated with one another, and the costs need to be integrated as opposed to being stacked.

5:10

Mr. Speaker, the Hyndman recommendation on this subject was one of the points that our caucus did fully endorse. According to the government's response to Hyndman,

The Commission's mission statement resulted from a conviction "that every Albertan has a role, responsibility and opportunity to achieve quality of life through good health - physically, mentally, spiritually, socially, ecologically and economically."

My own view is that I do not see a separation of health and healthy communities from the healthy economy. In fact, it is my belief, my conviction that a healthy economy will only exist where we have healthy citizens in healthy and safe communities. To go on, the government response says:

Included in this conviction was the belief that the ability of Albertans to achieve these goals would be determined by the Government of Alberta's commitment to developing healthy public policy and programming [to] support personal endeavors to achieve good health. According to Partners in Health, the government agrees that additional funds should be provided within the budget.

Now, the response promised funding in '91-92 beginning at \$1 million, incremental increases expected thereafter from new or reallocated funds. The question that is begging to be asked, Mr. Speaker, is where did this million dollars come from, and where was it spent? Is this the new health innovation fund? One assumes so. The government response says that this fund is one vehicle for this increase in funding. As a major immediate initiative the government promises, in its response to the Hyndman, a commitment of a million dollars in '91-92 for planning and development of that health services innovation, and we know what it's designed to do.

During the first year of the fund a million dollars was to be allocated, and we expected increments. Well, what did happen? If, in fact, the Hyndman request said 1 percent, we all recognize that that would mean \$34 million or \$35 million, not the \$1 million that was allocated. But the government's promise even on that allocation was short-lived. In March of this year, just four months into the program, the government very quietly cut off the funding after allocating, I understand, \$375,000. The government explained that cut as part of the government's overall restraint packages that were announced on discretionary funds. This year's budget allocated \$960,950 in this fund, and claims that it's only

a decrease of 3.9 percent, but that's based on a spending estimate of a million dollars, which we know didn't happen. So that's – can I use the word "misleading"? – somewhat misleading in that it's based on something that in fact did not occur. I think it's worth questioning here in this House how long that \$960,000 is going to last, given the cut that was endured in last year's program. In fact, the government has cut back on injury prevention and promotion, and it calls into question the commitment to the whole initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment for a minute on the work that Occupational Health and Safety and the WCB are doing. Along with other members I was at an event that the Workers' Compensation sponsored not too long ago. They are getting some very impressive results from their injury prevention program. The results aren't always in the high-cost injuries, some of the fatality and very damaging injuries, but they are, in fact, achieving remarkable results along with the department of Occupational Health and Safety. What I hope to hear is that we are going to see a far greater emphasis on those kinds of programs both for physical injury and for stress-related injuries in the workplace, because I believe that is where there can be immense savings.

I was struck, Mr. Speaker, by a document from Dr. Krawetz of the Environment Council of Alberta, the chief executive officer, and it's a speech given in Fairview in August of last year. Dr. Krawetz relates how we can save money. She says:

A few years ago, if you told any right thinking businessman investing a lot of money into occupational health and safety would make more money for them, they'd tell you you're crazy . . . Everybody knows . . . that every dollar you invest in worker health and safety beyond what the law makes you invest is a dollar down, a dollar less . . . Well, you know, we switched our thinking on that. We put a lot of money, time and effort into worker health and safety and you know what happened? . . . absenteeism went down, productivity went up and we are making more money as a result of our investment in worker health and safety.

All over we are seeing those kinds of results from an investment in the healthy workplace.

Mr. Speaker, just a few comments about the Liberal position here. We recognize that the majority of funding has in fact gone towards institutional treatment as opposed to prevention and promotion: public health, environmental health, home care, family support, school lunches, community kitchens, you name it. There are many, many innovative programs that are begging for more resources to continue. However, we don't believe that an immediate or pre-emptive de-emphasis on institutions is the answer. What has been missing in the past, I believe, is a balance of funding and co-ordination between institutional and community and workplace care. The support to the institutional care, to acute care must continue as the emphasis shifts and until a balance is achieved. Only then, I believe, will savings accrue.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there is waste in this system, and I do commend those institutions in many of our urban centres that are attempting to curb expenditures and are collaborating both with acute care, institutional care, and with public health. Despite the government's boasting of its support for greater community health initiatives, two public health units in Edmonton were forced to close last year. Our caucus has been warning the government that if the funding crisis is allowed to continue, layoffs and program cuts would escalate, placing the entire community health system at risk. We believe that community public health programming, particularly those that stress prevention, is essential if we're going to move our dependency away from institutional and very costly care. If the government hopes to take the pressure off health institutions by stressing

prevention and promotion, then sufficient funding levels must be in place or we risk further loss of vital community units and professional staff.

Mr. Speaker, just finally a few comments about things we see that need to happen. We believe we have to be more creative about the use of professionals in addition to medical practitioners, that we need to redirect health care funds into more community-based primary level services, especially those that stress health promotion and disease prevention, that we have to be creative in reaching high-risk groups. Many of the poor and isolated, natives, and seniors in our province don't have life-styles that are aimed at wellness. Informal public health clinics can provide a rational and systemic approach to health care delivery for these groups of people. One is reminded of the Trout Lake experience of last month that one hopes has been corrected, of the threat to the men's hostel, to close down the nursing unit in the hostel and what that would have done to a very high-risk group in the city of Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, reducing poverty will go a long way to health promotion, and I'm interested in the federal government's initiative of yesterday relating to poverty in children. I'm not convinced that their program will achieve what it's supposed to do, but in any event it is a beginning.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of local health clinics such as the example that we've seen in Boyle-McCauley in the city of Edmonton – wherever the demand is recognized by the community, especially in rural areas and isolated communities, either as permanent facilities or mobile clinical teams I think will go a long way. We need to think about secondary prevention as well as primary: home care, respite care, day care. We need to implement the recent recommendations of the FCSS review, which calls for greater collaboration between health services and FCSS.

Mr. Speaker, to ensure ongoing cost effectiveness and rationale for health promotion, a Liberal government, a Liberal caucus would also establish a mechanism for ongoing review and research to determine the efficacy of these health/prevention initiatives. All too often when we set up new programs, we don't have the research, we don't have the indicators to tell us whether or not they are being successful.

I have long been a proponent, Mr. Speaker, of healthy workplaces, injury-free workplaces, that are mentally healthy, reducing stress by providing stress management, that are more productive, and that produce more for the employer.

Mr. Speaker, I have not had time to get into mental health here. The minister knows my real and continuing concerns about prevention of mental breakdown and the kinds of human and dollar costs; that is, on our taxpayers and on our families and on our communities. I don't think we have significantly addressed that as yet.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the success of our initiatives depends upon close collaboration with health care professionals and consumers and with community organizations. This isn't something that I believe the government can or should be doing alone, but I think the government needs to provide the vision, the political will necessary to ensure that prevention and promotion programs become an integral component of health systems and not a discretionary component, as we currently seem to approach it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

5:20

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to discuss the motion before us as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. It certainly focuses on a number of very important issues which are central to how health services are to be delivered in the future. It rightly focuses

discussion on the purpose of our health system and the growing recognition that we must focus on health as opposed to illness. We must also focus on promoting good health and strive to provide an environment, both physically and socially, that promotes healthy Albertans living in a healthy Alberta. Indeed, that was the goal and the overriding direction which the Rainbow Report led us towards.

The motion also emphasizes the need for health service delivery to shift from institutions to community services. I would support the hon. member in her recognition that new modes of delivery which foster independence and respond to local needs are the way to go in health care. We've certainly demonstrated this approach and this emphasis in our review and revamping of long-term care in this province.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar and the Member for Drayton Valley expressed some concern, and I would like to express – two assumptions in the motion which I disagree with. The first one is that the answer to all problems in the health system is found by simply adding more resources in order to deal with an issue. The second is that health promotion and disease and injury prevention is somehow an isolated government program, or indeed in some place in the health care system. In fact, our most effective health promotion efforts may well be found in areas that are completely disassociated with the health system per se.

In response, then, to the first assumption of adding more resources, I would simply say that this is not the answer. We can't just accept that we will keep adding on, because in my view, for what it's worth, it takes away the discipline from the rest of the system to start to deal with change. Let me give you an example. When we were looking at attempting to reform the way we fund acute care in this province, one of the issues we had to deal with was a system that was committed to itself, looking somewhat inward and forgetting that we had to be concerned about the costs of this health care system, not only to our economy but in terms of the social costs and the need to effect reform. When we decided to move from an input on costs funding to output of costs – how well are we doing with the dollars that we have? – we knew that if we added new dollars, which was frankly the Ontario decision, you would take all the discipline away for the rest of the system to find a better way to deal with it. It was only when we said that we're going to take it away from the inefficient facilities and give it to the ones who've been efficient, thus rewarding efficiency, that we finally got a buy-in, and we have a fundamental reform under way in terms of how we fund acute care.

Health care is more complex than simply adding on more resources.

MS BARRETT: I didn't talk about adding on.

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, the motion suggests additional dollars in Health. I take issue with it.

The health system has a tremendous capacity to consume resources. I certainly know that. More resources is not the only answer. In fact, if we would read the information from the World Health Organization, we know that the most potent health promoter is in fact wealth. Individual health is directly linked to economic health. So as Minister of Health one of the best health promotions I can do is to control the growth of health expenditures to allow those resources to fund education, to fund economic development, and to ensure fiscal balance for future Albertans.

The question is why. Why are we going through all this pain? Well, in my view the reason we're doing it is because we want to ensure that 20 years down the road we've still got a health system, and if it consumes at the rate it has consumed over the

past decade, I fear that may be the result; we may not have one. That's why we're pushing so hard to reallocate within the resources. The health goals project currently under way is focusing our attention on what really impacts on the health of Albertans and will, therefore, allow us to set priorities.

The second assumption of the motion is the belief that one can isolate health promotion expenditures. We do have a health promotion branch in the public health division of the department, but we don't assume that that accounts totally for the activities of promotion. Health promotion has to be part of all of the system of health and all of the players in health.

Hospitals are becoming involved in health promotion activities. Physicians tell us that most of their time is spent in counseling and promoting health, talking to Albertans about how they can manage their health, and health units through all their programs are building on the leadership shown in their community health nursing programs in promoting health of communities. Promotion of health is fostered through how we educate our young, through stable employment and fulfilling work, in safe streets, in pride in our country, our province, and our children. Children of today must develop the coping skills to deal with tomorrow. Our social institutions have to do the same, and the well-being of individuals mirrors the well-being of society.

While we do have much to stimulate in the area of health promotion, there is much to do, obviously. We've completed phase 1 of our health promotion strategic plan, and this year we'll be developing phase 2, which will identify mechanisms and strategies to place health promotion issues on the agenda of communities, business, other government departments.

The \$375 million was allocated last year for the health innovation fund. The remainder was to be allocated with decisions made by the community, as opposed to the Ministry of Health. The health fund is there in '92-93. How we best use those dollars is what I have asked an advisory committee to look at, the resources. Our health partnership program is attempting to link institution and community for the purpose of looking at how to better use dollars. I could name specific health promotion activities which the province has undertaken, but I would rather just leave the member with these two thoughts: don't always assume more is always the answer in health, and don't limit your view of health promotion to a single-line item in the budget of the Department of Health.

In view of the hour, Mr. Speaker, may I adjourn debate.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister's moved to adjourn debate. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

Hon. Deputy Government House Leader:

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that when members reassemble this evening at 8 o'clock, they do so in Committee of Supply.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the hon. Deputy Government House Leader's motion, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Carried.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:29 p.m.]