

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, May 14, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/05/14

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a group of visitors from the Parliament of the Republic of Yemen. We have accompanying us today Dr. Yassin Saeed Noman, President of the Council of Deputies, and to my colleagues here that means Speaker of the Assembly; Mr. Alawi Hassan Al-Attas, Member of Parliament; Mr. Ahmed Ismail Abou Hourieh, Member of Parliament; Mr. Ahmed Abbad Sherif, Member of Parliament; Mr. Negib Kahtan Al-Shaaby, Member of Parliament; Mr. Abdul Jabbar Al-Sefyani, Member of Parliament; His Excellency Mohamed Saad Ali, the ambassador of the Republic of Yemen.

Mr. Speaker, we're indeed very pleased to host this delegation in Alberta. Their visit coincides with the recent visit of an Alberta delegation to Yemen headed by the Hon. Rick Orman. Alberta places high value on our steadily increasing relations with the Republic of Yemen, and we want to continue our excellent co-operation for the mutual benefits of both parties. I would ask Dr. Noman and his delegation to now rise in your gallery and receive the warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MRS. B. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice under Standing Order 40 that after question period I'll be seeking unanimous support to consider the following motion:

Be it resolved that recognizing the devastating effects of child sexual abuse, the Legislative Assembly show its support for the Break the Cycle tour, which began today in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Thank you.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to file with you four copies of the press release plus copies of the inputs that we've received through our public forums at the Banff school dealing with the Toward 2000 Together process.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today on behalf of the government and the Premier, who is attending the Western Premiers' Conference near Williams Lake, British Columbia, to file with the Assembly today a document entitled Improving Efficiency and Accountability: Rebalancing Federal-Provincial Spending Responsibilities.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file copies of a letter which I've sent to you, sir, as the chairman of Members' Services Committee asking that before the order is cast on the out-of-town per diem for people within a 100-kilometre radius that it be

amended to clarify that receipts are required so that the confusion in the mind of the Liberal leader can be eased.

MR. SPEAKER: I deem it appropriate that I ask the hon. member when the correspondence was sent to my office, because I'm not aware of it.

MR. McINNIS: It's stamped on the letter. It was approximately 2:20 this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. HORSMAN: I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Forum for Young Albertans is in the gallery. They are. I would like to welcome 35 senior high students from around the province who are in the gallery as part of the Forum for Young Albertans program. These students are participating in a unique, nonpartisan program which gives them exposure to the people and processes of the different levels of government, the major political parties, the judiciary, the media as well as business and labour, as just some examples. They are accompanied by a team forum: Blair Stolz, program executive director, who many members will recall was a page in this Assembly and the youngest alderman elected in the city of Medicine Hat, as an editorial note, Annette Klassen, Amy Hanson, Richard Fix, and Paul Corbiere.

These students have spent a considerable amount of time this week discussing and prioritizing their own views on the Constitution. They also prepared presentations to celebrate and encourage national unity. Tomorrow they will be debating two motions raised in private members' hour in a mock parliamentary debate. This evening they will be having dinner with their respective MLAs, and I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming them to this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Bow.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Margaret Johnson and Theresa Warencia are the Edmonton co-Chairs of the Break the Cycle Tour which starts today in Newfoundland. The tour is expected to pass through Edmonton on August 22. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would like to ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. HORSMAN: Well, I hope that the Crestwood school students are here from Medicine Hat. We are pleased today to have 80 visitors from Crestwood school in Medicine Hat. Some are seated in the members' gallery and some in the public gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. David George, Mrs. Bev Slater, Mrs. Leanne Biberdorf, Mr. Wade Lawson, Mr. Doug Lamarche and by parents Mrs. Wendy Smid, Mrs. Marilyn Siegmund, Mrs. Lynne Brower, Mrs. Dixie Lee, Mrs. Diane Weiss, Mrs. Devonna Voeller and by bus drivers Jack Whenham and Ivan Jesse. Once again it's a privilege for me to welcome these students. Crestwood school has been diligent in ensuring that their students have an opportunity to visit this Assembly and to see it in action. I'm very pleased to welcome Medicine Hat visitors here, and I would ask my colleagues to give them a very warm welcome as they rise to be acknowledged.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly a group of students from St. Angela school. They are 38 in number.

They are accompanied by their teachers Miss Donna Sasges and Miss Anik Champagne and by parents Mrs. Lise Dechaine and Mr. Eric Bodnar. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the members.

head:
2:40

Oral Question Period

MLA Remuneration

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Members' Services Committee referred the matter of an independent review of MLA remuneration and allowances to a subcommittee which would establish the review's scope, composition, and mandate. That is what we have been pushing for in the Official Opposition for years. Sadly, the Conservative majority on the committee have refused to set a time limit on when this subcommittee will report. This looks like a government tactic to delay consideration of this important issue. My question to the Deputy Premier is this: will the Deputy Premier assure this House that the subcommittee will report within 30 days so the business of the review can proceed as quickly as possible?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's not really in the government's purview to direct the operations of a committee of the Legislative Assembly which is established by a vote of this Assembly earlier on during the course of its proceedings. I'm rather puzzled by the hon. leader's referring it to us as a government to direct the outcome of that particular committee's deliberations.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this was a response directly from the Premier of the province in a letter that he tabled in here the other day, and it was a direct response from the Premier when he asked the Members' Services Committee to look into it. So don't hand us that.

To the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask him again, then, because of the lack of an answer on that: why is the government stalling on this issue? Why don't they get on with it and do it within 30 days? Let's get on with it, and we'll all be out from under this cloud.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I just have to repeat the answer I gave earlier. This is a matter for a Legislative committee established by, as I recall, the unanimous vote of this Assembly to deal with issues of this nature. I do not believe that it's proper for the government to direct the outcome of those deliberations.

MR. MARTIN: If it wasn't proper, why did the Premier direct them to do it in the first place, Mr. Speaker? For the government to now hide behind the Members' Services Committee is ludicrous. If you'll sit down, you'll get the question. [interjections] I can understand them being nervous. If you don't want to answer the questions, you have that right, but listen to the question. My question . . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Questions about a Legislative Committee

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Quite appropriately, the government cannot answer on behalf of the whole committee, and that's why the Chair has been allowing the questions to continue and the fact that perhaps some discussion could be made with government members of the committee, but the government certainly cannot direct what happens to all the committee.

However, the final supplementary.

MLA Remuneration

(continued)

MR. MARTIN: Then will the Deputy Premier make a special request of the Members' Services Committee to at least do this: require all MLAs surrounding Edmonton who claim the capital city allowance to submit receipts? Could he make that request at least?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition asked a question, I rose to answer it. He's now asked two questions, and that makes four, as I count them up, that he's asked during the course of this particular line of questioning.

Mr. Speaker, I would certainly check the record, but it was my understanding that the vote which was made on the motion in the Members' Services Committee was supported by all members present and voting. In any event, it's the work of that committee to carry out its responsibilities. It is my view as Deputy Premier or as the Premier that it is not up to us as the government to direct the work of a special committee of this Assembly established, as it has been every year since I've been in this House, under the rules, and this year, as I recall, was adopted by unanimous consent of the members of this Assembly. That's the proper way of handling these matters.

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

MR. MARTIN: You may think that's a cute answer, but the people of Alberta know full well where that's coming from, Mr. Speaker. Shame on you.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjections] Stop it, please. It's not a playground.

Calgary-Mountain View.

Canmore Golf Resort

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The two promoters of the Canmore golf resort were previously senior officers of the Northland Bank and one of its subsidiary companies. When Northland failed, losing hundreds of millions of dollars, it was in large part because of questionable real estate deals. Mr. Justice Willard Estey, in his inquiry into the failure of Northland, was especially critical of the actions of the subsidiary company Epicon Properties Inc. of which one of the principals was executive vice-president. To the Minister of the Environment: was he aware of the business track record of these two principals of the Canmore resort golf resort at the time the decision was made to exempt this project from an NRCB review?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, there was no decision to exempt this project from the NRCB because the NRCB simply wasn't in existence when this project was approved. This project – the planning, the zoning, all of which is the responsibility of the town of Canmore – was approved between 1986, I believe, and 1989, long before I was in this Legislative Assembly. Relative to the NRCB ruling on the business practices of proponents, that is not their responsibility. The NRCB has been set up to look into the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the project.

Now, with respect to one of the proponents, I know Mr. Walker very well, as the hon. member has pointed out on many occasions. He's the president of my constituency association. I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that this particular individual has been highly successful in a number of business ventures, which is a lot more than I can say for the hon. member.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I haven't lost hundreds of millions of dollars either.

Mr. Speaker, the minister could have submitted the project if he wanted to, but it has to be remembered that the Canmore golf resort is still a highly speculative proposal. All the promoters really have done to this point is get an option on public lands. They haven't even bought the property outright. Given that the resort is proposed to be built on lands that might be purchased or leased from this government, would the minister agree that the only way to ensure that there are no hidden dangers or conflicts of interest is to insist upon a full review by an impartial body like the NRCB?

MR. KLEIN: When the proponents proceed with phase 2 of this project, if and when they do, then of course that phase will be subject to a hearing before the NRCB if an environmental impact assessment is ordered, and I'm sure that one would be ordered considering the magnitude of the project. The simple fact is, Mr. Speaker – and I've said it before, and I'll say it again, and I'll probably have to say it again because the hon. member obviously doesn't understand – that the proponents play by all the rules of the day.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Let's point it out, Mr. Speaker. This government has a lot riding on this project, and there's nothing more to it at this point than faith in the ability of those two promoters. Won't the minister agree, given all of these circumstances, that it would only be prudent to move carefully and take all the steps necessary to ensure the right things are done before committing totally to this project?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, the NRCB, as I pointed out, does not do an examination of the individuals promoting a particular project. If they did, they would find that Mr. Walker, in particular, has a very, very good track record overall in his business dealings. I can only repeat what I've said before, and I promise to repeat it again because he brought up the point again: they play by all the rules of the day. What more can be asked of an honest, committed promoter?

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

2:50

Poverty

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today's figures from Statistics Canada show that over 10 percent of Alberta families are living in poverty and that Alberta comes in fourth in the national average in incidence after Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland. That's a staggering number of people in our province. My question is to the chairman of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families: does the council have a plan to deal with and to ease the problems of families in poverty in Alberta, especially where children are involved?

MR. DAY: I appreciate the question and the concern, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure the member that it's one of the areas that the council has received significant input on. The council

right at this time, as a matter of fact, is involved in putting together a report of the consultations done in communities across the province. At that time the member will see a number of suggested ways in which we're suggesting strategies on this be approached.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't really give us much of a sense of the immediacy or the urgency of this situation for many families.

Mr. Speaker, another question to the chairman: will the chairman undertake immediately to act on the proposals? Let's not wait for the committee to come forth with its report. Will you act immediately on the proposals that came from the recent Alberta Teachers' Association conference on children and poverty?

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, those are among the proposals that we looked at. I'd have to say that as the chairman of that council I can't presume to take action unilaterally myself. These things have to come before the members of the council, who are citizens representing a broad spectrum of families in Alberta, and we are doing that. These things will be coming forth, and I'd be happy to pass them on to the member when they do.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, that's not much comfort to the 10 percent of people who are living in very difficult and tragic circumstances.

Will the chairman tell this House how he plans to use the principles that he has enunciated in the family grid to insist, in fact demand, that cabinet address the tragic situation?

MR. DAY: I'm happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that very recently there was a meeting with all deputy ministers of departments, most of whom were in attendance, in which the Family Policy Grid was discussed and how it will be implemented. Three departments have already piloted the use of the Family Policy Grid to determine their own policies, programs, and legislation. So that is already under way. Now all departments are involved in full implementation of the Family Policy Grid to look at their policies to see how these policies affect Alberta families regardless of their income.

MR. SPEAKER: Now the unusual circumstance. Red Deer-North, to ask a question.

Constitutional Reform

MR. DAY: The Chair doesn't usually offer me such liberties to continue speaking, and I do indeed have a question to the Deputy Premier regarding the discussions on the Constitution. Unfortunately, there's a perception that the constitutional discussions do get shadowed by somewhat of a veil of secrecy from time to time, and even though there have been efforts to make these as public as possible, we're concerned and we hear suggestions that some decisions in fact have already been made, possibly without full public knowledge. The Deputy Premier has been there, has been fully involved. Can you please give us your view on this as an Albertan and as representing Alberta?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the processes are rather complicated and difficult, and I won't go through the whole set of circumstances surrounding them except this: it is absolutely clear from our perspective that no decisions have been made by this

group of ministers who are now meeting to discuss the Constitution along with representatives from the territorial governments and the aboriginal groups. It is not a decision-making body. It was never intended to make decisions. What it was asked to do and is in the process of doing is to try and formulate reasonable positions on various issues to put together a full package called the Canada round, which would then be taken to a first ministers' process and from there back to Legislatures and Parliament and in the case of Alberta to a referendum by which all Albertans would be asked to decide.

So I want to make it clear that the use of the words "decided," "decisions," "agreement," "having been arrived at" on any of the elements is misleading and unfortunate. No decisions have been made in the process and will not be made in Alberta, at least, until it is the people who make the final decision.

MR. DAY: We're pleased to get that assurance. The flip side of that, Mr. Speaker, is that as long as decisions are going unmade, there's a degree of instability on the national scene. That, of course, has an effect in terms of investment and all kinds of other considerations. There's been discussion of an end of May deadline for Canadians to be informed of just the status of the discussions. Is that realistic at this point?

MR. HORSMAN: That's a major challenge that all of us in the meetings have been struggling with. In the process which was agreed to back in March, it was agreed that there would be actually 18 meeting days when we would be considering these issues. All participants are working very hard. There's no question about that. We've now finished 10 of those 18 days, and we are still struggling, quite frankly, with the fact that Quebec is not a participant in the discussions. We are going to Montreal next week. I have made arrangements for a meeting with the minister of intergovernmental affairs there.

We will continue to press Quebec to come back to the table. If at the end of this process Quebec is not part of the table, until there is a so-called offer to Quebec arrived at by the rest of Canada and then we have to start all over again, I would think that the prospect of arriving at an agreement that Canadians could consider for a total package in the Canada round, including Quebec's concerns, Senate reform, aboriginal issues, the division of responsibilities, those key elements . . . If they're not all together in the package and agreed to by all governments and the aboriginal groups, the end of May would be a very, very difficult target. I have real concerns about making predictions, but perhaps the work of this particular group will be concluded by then. Certainly I do not believe the final package will be agreed to, involving Quebec in the process, by that date. That would be, I believe, impossible to achieve, but we will as a group continue our work towards that goal.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that my riding of Edmonton-Centre has the most and some of the finest restaurants of any other riding in all of Alberta. Of course, there's the fine dining at Claude's or Normand's, the delicious Vietnamese, Greek, and Italian restaurants, even the cafeteria at the YW that offer something for every palate and every price range and show the great value of hundreds of hardworking, risk-taking small businesspeople in Alberta. One thing that my

constituents and restaurateurs cannot stomach is the fact that Vencap Equities of Alberta, with over \$200 million from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, has decided to back a Texas steakhouse chain called Western Sizzlin with an unfair investment of over \$2 million. To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: given that Vencap's mandate is to promote economic diversification by providing venture capital to newly emerging companies, how can the minister possibly justify Vencap's investment in an established U.S.-based restaurant chain which is simply going to take business away from my constituents and restaurateurs throughout Alberta?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, Vencap is a publicly traded company, and they do have, and we acknowledge, some substantial support from the provincial government. This support was established some many years ago. They have their own board of directors, which the administration responds to, and those decisions are totally independent of any action that this government might involve itself in. So I would suggest that the hon. member inquire with Vencap.

3:00

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta who are watching know that Vencap has over \$200 million from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I remember a throne speech which talked about the stewardship of Alberta's resources and concerns about the rates of return to the trust fund. If the minister and this government have any concerns about the trust fund and the \$200 million, which is now a very sour deal for the province's taxpayers, and given that last fall the standing committee on the trust fund unanimously approved resolutions to call for a significant portion of Vencap investments to be returned to the trust fund, when is the minister going to act on these recommendations and stop trying to give unfair advantage to U.S.-based restaurant chains?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me again reinforce with the hon. member that Vencap is a totally independent organization answering to the Alberta population at large. We do acknowledge that they do have secured funding which does pay a return to the Alberta government, and they are also involved in diversification. I do acknowledge and also salute, as the hon. member has done, the outstanding restaurants that are throughout the entire city of Edmonton, not only within his own individual constituency. I would suggest to the hon. member that, as the Provincial Treasurer said some time ago, we are presently examining the recommendations that have come forward from the heritage trust fund committee, and at the appropriate time we're more than happy to respond to it.

Litigation

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, in what is literally an unprecedented initiative, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife is going after three environmental groups for court costs arising from a case in which they unsuccessfully challenged the government over its forestry policy. To the Attorney General: will the Attorney General please tell the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife that it is highly unusual for government to undertake a case of this nature against groups which were acting only out of concern for the public interest and with no possibility of personal gain.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has obviously told the minister of forestry that directly across the House.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Minister of the Environment: could the minister please explain why he has chosen not to pursue similar action in similar cases that have involved his department and whether in fact he has taken up his reasoning with the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member could be more specific, maybe I'll attempt to provide him with an answer.

MR. SPEAKER: Little Bow. [interjection] I'm sorry, hon. member; it's finished.

The Member for Little Bow.

Drought

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, it appears Capt. Palliser is again revisiting southern Alberta and parts of northeastern Alberta. Many farmers have already quit seeding this spring due to the present drought and wind conditions. Thousands of acres have been seeded into dry, parched soils anticipating germination moisture which hasn't shown up. DAs in the MDs of Willow Creek, Pincher Creek, and the county of Lethbridge are advising farmers to halt seeding operations until such time as adequate moisture has arrived from the heavens above. My question: should these conditions persist, would the Associate Minister of Agriculture undertake to closely monitor these adverse conditions and work with all the DAs and the farm producers to make their decisions in a timely and effective manner so that any shortcomings may not have a detrimental effect on these producers?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly there is a serious situation in parts of southern Alberta and indeed isolated parts of the province in lack of adequate spring moisture. Our district agriculturalists and our service boards work very closely with producers in these situations and in some cases are making recommendations not to seed at this time.

The concern certainly from the producers rests with crop insurance and the revenue insurance program and the fact that the program applies only if they seed, and I know that is a concern to producers. I would say that there are five weeks left till June 20, which is the seeding deadline. We encourage producers certainly to continue to work with our people in the field and to make management decisions that are in the best interests of their land and the conservation of that land.

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, the supplementary is also to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Alberta hail and crop insurance and GRIP do have certain requirements that the producers have to meet in order to fulfill their insurance obligations. One of them, on a little bit of a humorous note, that I'm asked when I go back home is to have my friend here from Athabasca come down and do a bit of a rain dance. Part of it is in jest, but they'll take anything they can get in terms of success. Crop varieties and acres seeded will be substantially changed if these present conditions remain upon us. Given the five weeks that they have left, if it remains dry, no doubt they will change. This may not only be problematic for those . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. Take your place, please. I don't want to do a little dance up here, but I really need to have a question right now, please.

MR. McFARLAND: Would the associate minister, given that irrigation waters may be curtailed, work with the people involved

to make sure that any costs that they may lose due to these changing cropping practices and lack of water are minimized?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, coincidentally, as we're doing pretty well on a daily basis right now, I was reading the water supply report that we get in. I should say that we have a standing drought committee in the Department of Agriculture that monitors this at all times and works very closely with Alberta Environment. The encouraging thing at this point is that both the hydroelectric and the major irrigation reservoirs to the main are in a normal supply at this time. I should say that we are working closely with the people in the irrigation districts and monitoring this situation and keeping them apprised of it as we go along. Certainly we'll continue to do that as the spring progresses.

Health Care Premiums

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I raised questions about the need to raise the income threshold for people so that they don't have to pay health care premiums when they're already living in poverty. The minister, I think, didn't really take the point. I'd like to just quote from a recent report from the National Council of Welfare, one line. They say, "Albertans of modest income pay the same flat rate as millionaires." Maybe that will drive the point home. Poor people can't afford to pay health care premiums. Knowing that 10 percent of Albertans are in poverty, what more will it take for the minister to agree to raise the income threshold so that poor people, the working poor don't have to pay health care premiums?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, we do have a premium subsidy and a premium nonpayment for groups of Albertans in this province. I understood the point of the member perfectly well yesterday when she raised it. The judgment I made and the judgment I recommended in my estimates the other night was that because the increase in premium was relatively small this year, in order to keep at the 50 percent threshold for costs - I made the decision and recommended to our caucus and our cabinet that we make adjustments in health rather than adjustments in the premium. I fully accept the hon. member's point of view that the premiums need to be reviewed. That won't occur in this fiscal year because of other fiscal priorities.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, you have to be desperately poor to get premium waiving in this province; \$3,500 a year is the income threshold. Do you know how poor you are at \$3,500 a year? If she doesn't want to review premiums, I don't care. My question to the minister is this: will she please commit to reviewing the income threshold for poor people who at \$3,501 a year have to pay health care premiums?

3:10

MS BETKOWSKI: I'm perfectly prepared to review the premium levels, Mr. Speaker. It's simply that in this fiscal year there were other health priorities. I stand by the decisions that were made to recommend the expenditure of the \$4 billion in health in this province. There won't be an adjustment in this fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

Belmont Correctional Centre

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 7 I asked the Solicitor General if he would meet with some of the staff of

the Belmont Correctional Centre so that he might get firsthand information on the problems that staff perceive exist in that facility. Unfortunately, the Solicitor General has refused that request to meet with the staff members personally. Given the unfair practice that management at the centre has alleged to . . . that is one of the major problems there, will the Solicitor General now agree to meet with Belmont Correctional Centre staff and not delegate the responsibility of this matter to management, who in fact have a conflict of interest?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, on May 7 I did answer your question and did indicate on that day that the staff of the Solicitor General's department meets on an ongoing basis with all of our personnel in corrections. If there is a need there or if there's an ongoing discussion out there at the present time, we'll certainly be willing to meet with them. I did not commit personally to meet with them because as we have 16 facilities across the province, I have a very competent staff in the Solicitor General's department that meet with these people on an ongoing basis.

MR. EWASIUK: But there's a conflict there, Mr. Speaker. Unfair staffing practices by management are not the only problem. Other problems include inadequate training of temporary staff, wasteful use of the fine option workers that makes a mockery of the program, and the dispensing of drugs by staff that's not medically trained. Will the Solicitor General agree to hold a comprehensive public review into the problems at the Belmont centre before morale and safety deteriorate to even a more dangerous level?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has brought forth some strong allegations which I believe are unfounded. I don't know what the basis of these allegations is, but I certainly will, as I said before, have our staff look into these. The Belmont centre, as I pointed out before, is a correctional house that provides provincial inmates who have received minimum classification re-entry direction into our society, and I believe that they are doing the best job they can under difficult situations. We know that in the criminal justice system and in corrections we are certainly loaded right to the hilt with individuals that have accessed the criminal justice system.

I had some stats brought to me today that show in one way or the other that 17,000 Albertans today are on some form of entrance into the criminal justice system on a daily basis. I might say, bring forth specifics, as you've done, but back them up because I'm going to have the staff of the Solicitor General's department ensure that what you have just alleged here is true, and if it isn't, I will bring it to this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud.

Radiation Equipment Certification Fees

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've obtained a leaked document that appears to be a \$400,000 money grab by the department of Occupational Health and Safety. What makes it so interesting is that it's entitled Proposed Fee for Service, yet the revenue is already incorporated into this year's revenues in the budget. My question is to the Minister of Health in that it's the people she represents in her portfolio that are affected in that it applies to radiation equipment. Has the Minister of Health consulted with those people in the health care field that will feel the pinch of this additional registration fee that is now going to be imposed on them?

MS BETKOWSKI: I would refer the question to the acting minister of occupational health. Before I do, Mr. Speaker, the question with respect to certification of equipment within a hospital is done through agencies other than the Health department.

MR. KLEIN: I'm sorry. I'll take it under notice, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that when these documents, these proposals that are supposedly drafts – and the minister of culture should pay particular attention to this – are incorporated in the budget, there's no consultation between members here. To the Minister of Health: will you in fact agree to consult with the minister responsible for Occupational Health and Safety so that the people you represent in the health care field are aware of the implications to them?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to consult with the minister of occupational health. I'd be more than happy to do that, but the hon. member does not understand the way the certification and the operation of health care services work. I would be happy to work with the minister of occupational health, to pass the question on to him.

Speaker's Ruling Tabling a Cited Document

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member willing to table documents so maybe some people know what he's talking about as well?

Calgary-Glenmore.

Economic Development Strategy

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Economic Development and Trade tabled a report today updating this Assembly on the Toward 2000 initiatives. There have been many, many groups who have participated in this Toward 2000 initiative. There are big businesses, small businesses, educators, industry, associations, and so on. They have great expectations as to the outcome of this report. Now, Albertans are really concerned about jobs and the lack of jobs, and with the unemployment crisis they're looking to this government for direction in our economic future. Could the Minister of Economic Development and Trade tell this Assembly what the outcome of this report will initiate and create for these people?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's a common theme that we share as a government as it relates to job creation within this province, and that is why we have been so proactive in making sure that our economy remains strong. If one examines the record as it relates to job creation, in excess of some 120,000 jobs have been created within this province since 1985. Last year alone we saw the creation of an additional 14,000-plus jobs. Our budget, which was just recently introduced, projects an additional 15,000 jobs to be created within the province.

Just dealing with the papers themselves that I tabled, let me salute the broad public input that we have received in that and leave the individuals who have participated the assurance that we are going to make sure that their valuable input is recognized as we do draft a new economic strategy for the province of Alberta. We have distributed in excess of 20,000 discussion papers. We have received in excess of 3,400 responses by way of the questionnaire. We've had our six regional public forums, whereby there have been hundreds of participants. In addition, the Banff school has conducted their round tables, and in addition to that, we have

had separate groups conduct their analysis and offer us their advice.

We are, as the hon. member is aware, having our conference on the economy on the 28th and 29th, which the Premier is chairing in Calgary. From that we are going to put together a white paper draft economic strategy for this province so that we can continue to be forceful as it relates to the strengths that we enjoy. We're not going to conclude at that time. We recognize that the process is fluid and that we have to be proactive and reactive to the situations, because we are within a global community. We are going to take into full account all the excellent submissions we have received.

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, people are looking forward to the Premier's conference on our economy at the end of this month, but time is marching on. Could the minister outline what type of time frame there will be from the Premiers' conference to the final commitment that this government will be making, following up the presenters?

MR. ELZINGA: We're looking to have the white paper draft this fall, Mr. Speaker. Let me indicate to the hon. member, too, that during this process we are not operating in a vacuum. We have been very proactive in making sure that our economy maintains the strength that we presently enjoy. One only has to refer again to the recent provincial budget whereby we did reduce taxation for the individual on a personal level plus for those in the manufacturing and processing sectors within the province. Plus we came forward with our western economic partnership agreements which have eight components so that we can continue on with those strong economic thrusts creating jobs within this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

3:20

Free Trade

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question is to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Brian Mulroney and Michael Wilson have been saying that we don't need to pay any attention to the North American free trade talks because after all only 1 percent of our trade is with Mexico. Well, the talks are a big deal because United States is using those talks to get concessions from Canada that they couldn't get in the last round. So given this fact, will the minister tell the Mulroney government that we will not agree to the North American free trade deal until there's been a broad public debate? We don't want the fast track.

MR. HORSMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway is confused a little bit I think on this issue because the term "fast track" is the system used in the United States Congress to move matters through in terms of international treaties. The process in the Canadian Parliament, of course, requires debate there, if there's any legislation which arises from this issue. I should point out to the hon. member, however, that during the last few days there was a conference call, which I participated in on behalf of Alberta and all governments in Canada from the various provinces and the federal government, bringing us up to date on the steps being undertaken relative to the negotiation of the North American free trade agreement involving Mexico, Canada, and the United States.

I think the hon. member's preamble is somewhat misleading because it has been made very clear by the government of Canada and by the provinces who are participating in these discussions that the United States is not going to obtain concessions from

Canada through this process which they did not achieve in the previous round. There's no intention on the part of governments in this country to see that occur. All governments have made that point, including this government.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the leaked document is the only information we've had, and it indicates clearly that the federal government . . . [interjections] Well, the government has not put forward any good information. We have to have leaked documents before we know what's going on in the free trade talks. The United States government is bullying us in such areas as financial services, intellectual property, quota tariffication, and transportation services, to name but a few, and it's their intention to gain what they couldn't get last time around. And the North American free trade agreement will supersede the American free trade agreement.

Now, my second question is to the Minister of the Environment: given that the provisions of the draft NAFTA agreement, leaked to the public, shows that transportation of large volumes of water between countries is a possibility and that this government claims that they have a nontransportation of water . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. It's gone on in some length. Could we now have the question, please?

MR. McEACHERN: I was into the question. The question is: will this government change its verbal policy of no major water transportation to legislation saying that Alberta does not intend to export water to the United States?

MR. HORSMAN: On the subject of water, the member is all wet. There is no intention whatsoever. There's nothing in the discussions at all which would have Canada export water to the United States of America or Mexico unless it's bottled. There are, of course, requests for further exports of water through tankers and that sort of thing that may be considered by provinces such as British Columbia or others. The fact of the matter is that to bring out this old scarecrow again is just nonsense, and the hon. member should rely on something other than leaks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Before we deal with a number of items related to House business, might we revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

First, the Solicitor General, then Edmonton-Calder.

Introduction of Special Guests (reversion)

DR. WEST: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to introduce to you and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 50 grades 5 and 6 students from the Killam school in my constituency. It's always good to see our youth here. It's kind of a breath of fresh air in this Assembly after question period. I would also like to introduce with them their teachers Denis Boutain and Gary Zettel and parents Mrs. James, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Freadrich, Mrs. Larson, Mrs. Herzog, Mrs. Lindseth, Mrs. Cole, and Mrs. Munro. It's always good to see a great number of parents accompanying them. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 38 students from St. Angela school in the constituency of Edmonton-Calder. They are accompanied by their teachers Miss Donna Sasges and Miss Anik Champagne and parents Mrs. Lise Dechaine and Mr. Eric Bodnar. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I too have some visitors to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly: 34 students from the Two Hills high school in the Vegreville constituency. They're seated in the public gallery accompanied by teachers Miss Underhill and Mr. Wlos and parents Mrs. Soprovich, Mrs. Eagles, Mrs. Ewashko, and Mrs. Robinson. I'd ask those students and their escorts to stand and receive a warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: On a point of order that arose today, Deputy Premier.

Point of Order Oral Question Period Practices

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to Standing Order 7(1) relating to question period and the ruling of the Chair which has been traditional at the outset of the opening of this Assembly and in previous Assemblies relative to the conduct of question period. I've noticed with alarm and increasing concern the abuse of the privilege of asking questions on the part of the Leader of the Opposition in that at the end of his first series of questions when the answer has been supplied, before proceeding to the second question he comments at length, as he did today, on the response to the second supplementary.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is really quite a serious matter because question period is obviously taken seriously by all members of the Assembly, by members of the government who are called upon to respond in their responsibilities as members of the Crown, and is also taken note of by the public through the advent of television. That has been commented on. I refer to *Beauchesne* 410 with respect to that particular aspect, where the Speaker of the House of Commons put forth some observations of the impact of television coming into the Assembly.

I think it's only fair that the Leader of the Opposition having been given special privileges and special treatment in that he alone in this Assembly is entitled to ask the leading question, two supplementaries to that, and then the second question and two supplementaries to that . . . He alone is entitled to that. He's also entitled, Mr. Speaker, to assign his second question to a member of his caucus of his choice. Today we saw that occur, and we saw occur again at the end of the answer that I gave to a set of supplementary questions a lengthy statement by the Leader of the Opposition on the response that I gave.

That is unfair. That is an abuse of the question period. I object most strongly to that, Mr. Speaker, and I urge you to caution the Leader of the Opposition to stop abusing this Assembly in that manner.

3:30

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, there's an old saying in this House: "thin so skin."

This is not a point of order; it's not a point of order at all. If he wants to talk about . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, I allowed him to finish, and I would hope I'd have the courtesy here. They want to talk about question period being abused. It happens on all sides of the House. You may notice that a number of them wait until the last question and try to put their little comments in.

That's just as much of an abuse as anything he's talking about. I think the member was embarrassed in question period, and now he's trying to draw out a debate here. This is certainly not a point of order. I think it's silliness on the Deputy Premier's part.

MR. SPEAKER: In the last number of days, in fact two days ago, I was visited by the House leader for the Liberal caucus with respect to question period: the length of questions and the length of answers. As a follow-up to that discussion I sent notes to the House leader for the government as well as notes to the House leader for the New Democratic caucus again expressing the concern that in the House as a whole, while we started out in this session with better use of questions and answers – the questions were much shorter, they were much snappier, and a number of hon. members have indeed really put their minds to being much more concise in their line of questioning. For the most part, on most days that applies to the Liberal caucus.

MR. PASHAK: Small victories.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order. There may indeed be a second shoe to fall; you never know.

I know that other members of the House from the government side and from the New Democrat caucus, some of the members in particular, have worked very hard at trying to shorten the preambles, shorten the questions. Again, the Chair is appreciative of that.

The Chair also has from time to time spoken to some of the cabinet ministers about trying to speed up the answers that they give. That, of course, is a very difficult thing, because if you take 20 seconds to ask a question, it doesn't necessarily follow that you can answer that question in 20 seconds. Of course, certain issues demand a little more time to occur.

Also, it was raised that some of the questions from government backbenchers to ministers might perhaps be then interpreted as ministerial statements. The Chair pointed out and continues to point out now that in the last couple of years the direction was – the encouragement was given by the Chair, because the Chair cannot direct – for the government to make more ministerial statements in the House, and that has indeed taken place. That matter was raised with the Government House Leader by note on Tuesday, and I'm quite hopeful that that continue to be the practice.

Now, for all of us it is indeed difficult to stand in this House to ask a question; it's difficult to stand in this House and answer a question, especially when the galleries are full and especially when television is trained on us. Some of you indeed are very proficient because of your background and experience in the House to be able to ask the question or make the response. Sometimes the Chair allows more latitude to some members who don't get to stand that frequently in the House to be able to ask the question or to answer.

It's pointed out on this particular aspect that indeed it is the right of the Leader of the Opposition to get the first two main questions. Perhaps today, after having listened to this exchange in the House, some careful consideration will be given to following the format a bit more closely, and on both sides of the House we might try not to twist each other's tail, to use an expression, in our last few comments, although I suppose that's a vain hope. I hope that all of this might be helpful to the House and that due care and attention will be given by hon. members to what is really going on in question period: the opportunity, which is very unique in the parliamentary process, which does not occur in the American system, which does not occur in many of the foreign parliamentary

systems, of being in a position to have daily accountability of the government. So, I'm certain that all members will indeed come back to what question period is truly about.

Thank you.

Privilege

Libel against a Member

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to deal with a matter which was raised at the tail end of last week – a play on words, to go from twisting tails to having to deal with this particular matter. First, please, the galleries can proceed to clear in spite of my being standing.

Thank you.

On May 11 the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services raised a matter of privilege in accordance with Standing Order 15 relating to comments made by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon on Thursday, May 7, and again on Friday, May 8. The comments made by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon alleged a certain conduct on the part of the minister with regard to the acceptance of employment applications on behalf of a private employer through the minister's constituency office in Barrhead. The minister objected strongly to the allegations as being untrue and filed with the Assembly a statutory declaration completed by a member of his staff to support his rejection of the version of events as presented by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

On May 12 the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon agreed to accept the minister's version of the events as true. The Chair notes that Westlock-Sturgeon correctly acknowledged that the word of other hon. members must be accepted, and the Chair would remind members that this also places a strict duty on all members to ensure the veracity of their statements.

In consideration of this ruling the Chair would like to again remind all hon. members of two specific sections of *Beauchesne*. The first, 409(7):

A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

Again *Beauchesne*, 486(1), and this is a lengthy quote.

It is impossible to lay down any specific rules in regard to injurious reflections uttered in debate against particular Members, or to declare beforehand what expressions are or are not contrary to order; much depends upon the tone and manner, and intention, of the person speaking; sometimes upon the person to whom the words are addressed, as, whether that person is a public officer, or a private Member not in office, or whether the words are meant to be applied to public conduct or to private character; and sometimes upon the degree of provocation, which the Member speaking had received from the person alluded to; and all these considerations must be attended to at the moment, as they are infinitely various and cannot possibly be foreseen in such a manner that precise rules can be adopted with respect to them.

Erskine May states on page 287:

Questions which seek an expression of an opinion, or which contain arguments, expressions of opinion, inferences or imputations, unnecessary epithets, or rhetorical, controversial, ironical or offensive expressions, are not in order.

And again in *Erskine May* on page 380:

Good temper and moderation are the characteristics of parliamentary language.

So, hon. members, this is indeed a parliament. It is a place which is accorded proper respect, and those people that watch this place sometimes are a bit concerned as to how much respect some of our members on occasion happen to have for this place. Again the Chair underlines the fact that all hon. members have the compulsion, they have the duty upon themselves to be absolutely

true in their facts before they make statements and allegations in this place.

3:40

As there seems to be acceptance on the part of both members with regard to the minister's account of the facts as being accurate, the Chair finds that no prima facie case of breach of privilege has taken place.

Hon. member, I don't think I would pat anybody on the back in this circumstance.

head: Motions under Standing Order 40

MR. SPEAKER: A Standing Order 40 request. Calgary-Bow.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the urgency of this motion, I believe it is very fitting that this Legislative Assembly show its support for Break the Cycle tour on the very day that it begins in St. John's, Newfoundland. This is a very special tour because it involves two Alberta women from Canmore, the constituency of the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane. Alyson Lockwood and Terry Smith are both survivors of child sexual abuse. Beginning today, they will cycle across Canada to increase the awareness of the problem of child sexual abuse and to raise money for the national Break the Cycle foundation. I know that the hon. members for Edmonton-Avonmore and Edmonton-Gold Bar agree that it is indeed fitting today to recognize these two courageous women on the very day that they begin their long journey across Canada.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Standing Order 40 request, urgency the matter proceed. Those in favour of allowing the matter to proceed, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously. The Member for Calgary-Bow, additional comments, speaking to the motion.

Sexual Abuse of Children

Moved by Mrs. B. Laing:

Be it resolved that recognizing the devastating effects of child sexual abuse, the Legislative Assembly show its support for the Break the Cycle tour, which began today in St. John's, Newfoundland.

MRS. B. LAING: I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Labour to reply, please.

MR. SPEAKER: I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. members, I don't know if this is who's who. The Chair recognized the Minister of Labour.

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the recognition. I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar wishes to speak next, and I would like to speak following that.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, hon. member, it technically puts the Chair in an interesting position. The Chair has already recognized the Minister of Labour. Sorry.

MS McCOY: In that case, Mr. Speaker, I will speak in support of this motion.

I'm sure everyone in this Assembly knows and abhors the violence that child sexual abuse is. It is a crime against children and, of course, a crime against all society. It attacks at the very roots of a child's trust. It attacks at the very roots of a child's love. It attacks at the very roots of a child's ability to reach out with generosity and build friendships with and respect for other people, the difficulty being, of course, that even though the child grows up to be a man or a woman, the roots so often remain stunted, the damage continues, the pain still throbs.

Of course, if one person in our society suffers then we all suffer. Therefore, it is a deep obligation of everyone of us not only in this House but all across the country and in Alberta to help: to help prevent the violence, to help repair the roots, in fact to help break the cycle. I very much support this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of all members of the Liberal caucus to support this motion as well.

This project is designed to raise awareness across Canada of this very grave problem of sexual abuse, and we should thank the two brave women who are cycling across the country and the organizers in all provinces.

Mr. Speaker, these are survivors. Or are they? Survivors of child sexual abuse are alive, yes, but they often carry an immense burden, a burden of emotional problems and anger. So the tragedy may continue, as the minister has suggested.

This is a subject that was barely acknowledged in our society 50 years ago, but now the numbers are revealed to be of epidemic proportions. Robin Badgley's study in Alberta estimated in 1984 that one-half of all Canadian women and one-third of Canadian men had been victims of sexual assault. Eighty percent of the cases occurred when they were children. Further, Alberta social services has reported increases of about 41 percent each year of child sexual abuse between '85 and 1988. Reports now number slightly more than 2,000 a year. Estimates are that 80 percent of prison inmates and 70 percent of teen prostitutes were abused as children. Those numbers come from the Edmonton Sexual Assault Centre. In part of the Cawsey study the Elizabeth Fry Society stated that over 90 percent of native women in prison have been physically and/or sexually abused. A footnote in the Elizabeth Fry brief indicated that the 90 percent estimate may be low. These numbers are frightening. They're terrifying.

Mr. Speaker, these two women in this project called Break the Cycle are going to go across Canada. They will be here in Edmonton on August 21 and 22 and in Calgary on August 23. They themselves are survivors. They are willing, with a great deal of courage, to share their grief, to help us all to understand the horror of child sexual abuse, and to strengthen our resolve to deal in an open manner with a very complex human problem in ways that go far beyond just punishing the offenders but demand – in fact, require – our concern and support for families, our understanding of the use of power and of human sexuality.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that all caucuses have agreed that we in this House should support this event and this motion that's put before us today. I think it's very important that we convey to all Albertans and to all Canadians that members of this Assembly from all parts of the House deplore the tragedy of child sexual abuse and commend the efforts here to mobilize action to prevent it and to ease the pain. For that reason I propose the following amendment to the motion:

and further, that this motion be recognized to have the endorsement of the government caucus, the Official Opposition caucus, and the Liberal opposition caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I think this correctly reflects that all members of this House from all parties do deplore the tragedy of child sexual abuse and support this project.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair is not prepared to accept the amendment as being in order, the reason being that when we have a resolution that says "the Legislative Assembly," we are then speaking of all hon. members no matter what their political stripe. Given the degree of concern which I am assured of from listening to various members, this motion will probably carry unanimously; therefore, that carries the effect of being endorsed by all three political parties. Therefore, the Chair rules that the amendment is not in order.

Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Official Opposition and specifically the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, who has worked with Alyson Lockwood in organizing this particular event, I would like to thank the Member for Calgary-Bow for bringing forward this motion on behalf of all three parties of this Assembly. We commend Alyson Lockwood and Terry Smith of Canmore for their courage and commitment in bringing to the attention of all Canadians the tragedy of child sexual abuse.

Two national studies have revealed that child sexual abuse is at epidemic levels with serious long-term repercussions for the victims and the survivors and their families. Mr. Speaker, we can no longer deny the suffering of so many Canadian children, and we must understand that child abuse occurs in our homes, in our streets, and in our communities and that all children are at risk to abuse not only by strangers but more often by trusted adults in relationships of power and authority. I would urge that each of us make a commitment to take seriously allegations of child abuse, to break the conspiracy of silence, to advocate on behalf of children, to work and to ensure that services are available to child survivors and their families, and that each of us work very hard to prevent child abuse.

Thank you.

3:50

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the interest of gender balance I want to speak to this matter. It's a very serious matter. I don't think it's related to one gender or the other.

There are some programs available in the schools. I cite the CARE program that deals with kindergarten to grade 2 and helps children to deal with potential abuse without frightening them of any kind of relationship with an adult. There's also another program, the elementary program Quest, which in fact gives youngsters a strategy for dealing with unwanted experiences. As a longtime teacher and school principal, teachers are often looked upon as someone who can hear a child tell of unwanted situations.

I think it's a society thing that we need to discuss openly so that we can get it out onto the table so that we can see the devastation that is caused to far too many of our children. Therefore, I support this motion.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional?

Calgary-Bow in summation.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank all members of the Assembly for their support of this motion. We

know that this is a very serious problem, one that is in all levels of society and, as was indicated by the hon. Minister of Labour, both male and female victims. It has a devastating effect on people's lives, and we know that it's a long time to recover and to heal.

I'd like to express my thanks to everyone for their support of this motion.

These two young ladies from Canmore are undertaking a very courageous and a very long and lengthy trip to bring public awareness to this problem. I'd like to think that we, by addressing this motion and supporting this motion, show them that we do understand and we do support their efforts. So I'd ask all the House to vote in favour of the motion.

Thank you.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please signify? Carried. Let the record show it carried unanimously.

Privilege Freedom of Speech

MR. WICKMAN: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. What's the point of order?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I had served notice in the appropriate time that I was to rise today on a breach of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The Chair took note that you did not raise the matter at the early part of the proceedings, but that's fine.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry; what?

MR. SPEAKER: Our normal course is that we've been giving notice of these incidents when they're called earlier in the day, but that's fine. Please continue.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I felt that submitting the written notice was sufficient attention that I intended to rise on a point of privilege, which I do.

Of course, I rise on a question of privilege in accordance with Standing Order 15(1).

A breach of the rights of the Assembly or of any member constitutes a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, if I could refer to Standing Order 62(1):

The standing orders of the Assembly shall be observed in the committees of the Assembly so far as may be applicable, except that

- (a) a member may speak more than once, and
- (b) in Committee of the Whole . . .

Again, I go to *Beauchesne* 760(1), which makes reference to committees.

Motions need not be seconded, there is no limit to either the number of times a Member may speak in committee, nor do the House time limits on speeches apply.

I refer, Mr. Speaker, to the events that occurred yesterday in the Members' Services Committee. The Speaker has been kind enough to provide I believe all members with a copy of the *Hansard* that's entitled Standing Committee on Members' Services, May 13, 1992, 8:02 a.m. Now, we go firstly to page 10 towards the bottom in the second column where I say my question and then it goes on.

That was on the amendment.

Then I go to the next page, where the chairman says:

No. I'm sorry, hon. member. The rules of the House again say Standing Orders.

MR. WICKMAN: I didn't want to speak. I simply wanted to ask a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Sorry, hon. member.

Then the Member for Edmonton-Highlands states:

You ask your questions and then move your subamendment. I mean, that's the way it works.

I don't understand her reference there. But in any case, I go on.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, things change in that respect, because I didn't realize . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please . . . The Chair declares a . . . recess.

We come back.

MR. WICKMAN: Can I move another amendment, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, sir. Hon. member, you make one amendment. In order to do that, you speak to the main motion. Therefore, you've been precluded by yourself to continue to speak on the main motion.

MR. WICKMAN: I could challenge the Chair, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know you can, but you're wrong, hon. member. I'm sorry. It's [in] our . . . Standing Orders.

The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place states his support to my point of view, that he feels I do have the right to speak more than once.

Then we go on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can only speak once to the main motion.

You see, what we're dealing with here is that in the ordinary course of events, there would be more members of a caucus present.

Mr. Speaker, let me just explain now. We have a situation of the Members' Services Committee that is made up of a substantial number of members of the Tory caucus. We have two . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Let's keep to your purported point of privilege. We're not going to revisit a committee. So very briefly, please.

MR. WICKMAN: My point of privilege is very, very clear. In accordance with the Standing Orders, in accordance with *Beauchesne*, it is very, very clear that in committee a member has the right to speak more than once on a motion; a member has the right to make more than one amendment. Mr. Speaker, you as chairman – the Speaker is chairman of that – ruled against me, gave me no opportunity to abide by the Standing Orders, therefore infringing on my rights as a member to conduct myself in accordance with my ultimate abilities of fulfilling a certain role as an MLA representing this caucus on that committee.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that my privileges as a member have been breached, that I was not given ample opportunity to conduct my role as an MLA.

MR. SPEAKER: First, hon. member, you do not have a point of privilege. You might possibly have tried a point of order, but that does not apply either.

I suppose the Chair will then quote a little bit of parliamentary references back to yourself and to the House from the Mother of Parliaments. *Erskine May*, page 602:

The rules which govern the admissibility of amendments in a Committee of the whole House apply to proceedings in a standing committee.

Further on:

Following the principle which governs procedure in Committees of the whole House, no appeal can be made to the Speaker regarding the decisions and rulings of a chairman of a standing committee.

Again, in *Beauchesne*, 821(2):

There is no appeal to the House from the Chairman's ruling except by way of a report from the committee.

Beauchesne 822:

Procedural difficulties which arise in committees ought to be settled in the committee and not in the House.

The matter should be dealt with in the committee, not in this House.

Orders of the Day. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order, hon. member. Take your place. The decision has been made. The reference is there. The matter is dealt with in committee. [interjection] Order, hon. member.

MR. MITCHELL: How could you rule on your own ruling?

MR. SPEAKER: Order. It's very simple. Just look at the rulings and pay attention, hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. WICKMAN: With due respect . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Take your place.

The Deputy Government House Leader, on the next motion, please.

Point of Order Procedure in Committee

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

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: What would the point of order be? Citation? Which one of you is doing it?

MRS. HEWES: The citation is 62(1) through (3), Mr. Speaker, and you've just referred to it. Standing Order 62(1) indicates, of course:

The standing orders of the Assembly . . . observed in the committees of the Assembly so far as may be applicable.

We all comprehend that, and further, the one that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has referred to, that "a member may speak more than once." I believe this is the one that is in question.

4:00

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. This is completely out of order. Take your place. [interjection] It's completely out of order. The Chair has already ruled on that specific incident, and it's referred. It must be dealt with in committee, not here. [interjection] I'm sorry, hon. member. This is not an argument. [interjection] Order please. [interjection] Order please.

Point of Order Appeal of Committee Chairman's Ruling

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon on the point of order. [interjection] Order please.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is that as chairman of the committee and as Speaker both, you automatically rule yourself out. How can you judge the chairman's actions when you are the chairman? Should it not be relayed to the Deputy Speaker? It doesn't seem right that you can be . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. [interjection] Thank you hon. member. You're now challenging the Chair. There's a way to do that: with a substantive motion. The Chair has made it perfectly clear. [interjection] Order please.

[interjection] Order. We will not go into the details of how fairly the member was treated yesterday in committee where the committee dealt at great length. [interjection] Order please.

Hon. members, your points of order are invalid. The committee can deal with the matter itself when it next meets.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

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.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: I know you're upset, hon. member, but please . . . [interjection] Order please, hon. member.

Opposed to the motion, please signify.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion carries. [interjections] Order please.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, recognizing the importance of Motion Other than Government Motion 212, the government would move that all motions for returns on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

Employment Initiatives

212. Moved by Mr. McEachern:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to take action to fight rising unemployment by enhancing partnerships with municipalities by providing funding assistance for local infrastructure improvements that are necessary for economic development and environmental protection by placing emphasis not only on trade expansion but on replacing imports with competitively priced Alberta produced goods and services, establishing a community bond program designed to encourage local investors to help finance regional economic revitalization, and encouraging worker ownership and worker sponsored investment funds.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I intend to deal with those four or five different topics in some depth, but first a few minutes of background just to make sure that everybody realizes the gravity of the situation here in Alberta. It is true that the provincial government of Alberta has run eight deficit budgets in a row, that for the last three years for which we have public accounts, expenditures exceeded revenues by approximately \$2 billion each year. We know that last year's will be approximately \$2 billion, and this year the government intends that it will be well over \$2 billion; in fact, on a consolidated basis it will be at least \$3 billion if the Treasurer's numbers are anything like accurate.

In 1988-89 the expenditures of this province were \$13.2 billion. In '89-90 they were \$14.2 billion, and in '90-91 they were \$15.2 billion. That's \$1 billion extra spent each year and tells a different story than the Treasurer tells when he says that they've had expenditures under control over the last number of years. His last year's projection for a balanced budget turned out to be, by his own admission, a \$1.6 billion deficit. It will be \$2 billion when we see the final numbers, and that's not on a consolidated basis. On a consolidated basis it will be closer to the 2 and a half billion dollars that we projected before the budget was brought in. In this year's budget the Treasurer says he will have a \$2.3 billion deficit. Again that's not on a consolidated basis, so by the time you add in a number of other elements, it will be \$2.9 billion; in other words, approximately \$3 billion when we see the final figures.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a serious problem in this province, and that's the context in which I say that the government's economic policies have failed and that it's time for some new orientations and some new directions. The government has oriented its policy towards becoming internationally competitive, and they've taken us into a free trade deal with no studies to show that that would be of benefit to Alberta. We're now going into a Mexican trade deal that is going to be, again, devastating to this country.

We have already lost close to 500,000 jobs since the free trade deal came into effect in Canada. Even here in Alberta where the government thinks they have managed to diversify and talks a lot about manufacturing and upgrading and that sort of thing, the manufacturing sector is still only 8 percent of the economy, of the gross national product of this province. The increases in the last five years have been minimal, a less than 10 percent increase in manufacturing in the last five years. The number of jobs lost in the last two years in this present recession is 500,000 manufacturing jobs.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

So, Mr. Speaker, this opening our country to the global markets has proved to be something of a disaster. It's time for a different orientation. The ministers at the federal level and the provincial level like to talk about how the world is going global and how if we're going to be part of it we have to be right in there on the front edge. What I would like to say to the government is: if you take the G-7 countries' average openness, if you like, or amount of trade compared to their local economies and measure that and then compare Canada to the G-7 countries, you'll find that Canada is twice as open as the other G-7 countries and that we are not scrambling to catch up to international trade; we are, in fact, twice as open as anybody else and running policies that bare us to competition far before we are ready.

The solution I'm going to propose, Mr. Speaker, is one of turning our attention to the local economies and the local orientation of our economic development. I want to spend some time on those ideas. So I'm going to take the first idea in my motion and talk about the infrastructures for municipal governments. The first thing I want to say is that it's fairly clear that we have a different idea of the partnership between ourselves and the municipalities, if we had a New Democrat government, and the partnership that the Alberta government has with the municipalities. The Alberta Tory government has taken some \$300 million of the municipalities' money out of the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation, given them back \$200 million of it on an unfair basis compared to who generated that money, and then said, "Oh, this will meet part of the obligations that we've already made earlier in the AMPLE program and then we

won't have to give you any more money next year or the year after." So I just want to tell everybody clearly that in the job strategy paper that we put out, when we talked about \$120 million into municipal infrastructures, we were talking about \$120 million above the normal grants and above the AMPLE program, to try to help get this province out of the recession that it's definitely taking part in.

4:10

Now, those infrastructure improvement programs, of course, would be targeted to trying to employ unemployed workers, and it would also help for some of them to upgrade their skills so that they could find the necessary employment. This small stimulation of the economy would be quite useful, and even though it's difficult now because of the leakages, if you like, the interconnections, the trade between nations and the lack of control that we now have over our economy in Canada, particularly given the degree to which we have bared ourselves through the trade deal to American control, it is still possible to stimulate the economy we think through the local infrastructures. A study in Ontario shows this. It's called *Capital Investment: Infrastructure and Canada's Future* versus the Economic Policy Institute, by Fox and Smith, and it shows that public expenditures on infrastructures increased the gross national product by a factor from two to five times as much as private investment does. That's an important point. It means we can still through government action, then, stimulate economies.

A drop in the United States' investment in infrastructures has been shown to have played a significant role; that is, it's over 50 percent of the reason for the slowing down in the U.S. productivity growth in the '90s. That's another reason for the recession in the United States, and of course that affects Canada for our recession here. So we think that the stimulation of local infrastructures through the municipalities is still a viable option.

It's important that we also recognize that the environment is an important concern in terms of these infrastructures. We think we should be looking at the protection of the environment as an opportunity for job creation and not looking at it as an extra cost for business, and there are a number of reasons for that argument. We've put forward the idea in our job strategy that we should be able to create some green jobs. There's a number of different ways of doing that besides just the municipal infrastructures like proper sewage and clean water problems that need to be coped with just from a sanitary and health-related basis.

There's a number of other areas in which green jobs can be an important factor in getting local economies moving again, a number of examples that we could use here in Alberta. We could encourage the use of ethanol-blended gasoline in motor vehicles, something this government has consistently refused to do. We could encourage green energy alternatives like wind farms, solar energy, co-generation plants, and make it easier for small-scale hydroelectric power to get on the electrical grid. We could require that by the year 2000, 50 percent of all waste in the province should be recycled by providing incentives and setting content rules for recycled paper, glass, and rigid plastics. At a cost of something like \$25 million it's not a major expenditure, but it could have an important effect. We could encourage the manufacture and use of Alberta-made environmentally friendly products, and we could strengthen and enforce pollution standards. All of those things, Mr. Speaker, would go towards helping the development of green jobs in this province.

Another aspect of local economic initiatives is to make sure that we go ahead with this idea of creating a provincewide business development data base. This is something that the government

has talked about to some extent, but in talking to the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Alberta division, recently, I found that they were concerned that the government was not getting behind the idea of helping to set up an information data base that would help grass-root and local companies know who's producing what and where they can buy things and that sort of thing. Now, that idea is related very closely to our import replacement suggestion, which is the next one on the list, and I want to take a minute to describe again to this body the import replacement program that Oregon started. I'm going to give them the short Alex McEachern version. You'd need to look at the whole document to get the whole picture.

Basically, back in 1982 Oregon discovered that they had 25 percent unemployment in a lot of their lumber towns because the bottom had dropped out of the lumber industry, so they decided to initiate a new program. They sent business economists around to various communities to start a project. It went something like this. They would walk into a small town and would say, "Who is the biggest purchaser of goods and services in this town?" It would usually turn out to be the local school board. So they would go to the person making the decisions for that school board and say, "What are you buying, where are you getting it, and how much are you paying?" When they found that out, they would say to that person who was making the decisions, "Would you be prepared to buy more of that locally if we can find you local businessmen that can meet more of the orders than they presently are?" Almost inevitably the answer was, "Yes, we would do that."

Then they would hold a series of meetings and hearings and talk to other businesspeople in the community, and within a very short time, Mr. Speaker, they would go from a town where 10 or 15 percent of the businesspeople had some notion of the efficacy of buying locally to a situation where 85 percent of them would be willing to buy locally, many of them probably even willing to pay a premium to buy locally because they would get the advertising benefit of saying, "Yeah, I purchased these locally." Once they had done that, what they really ended up doing was just making up a computer data base on all the buyers and sellers and what they bought and sold in the town.

The next step, having done all the little towns around the region, was that they'd go to two different towns. They'd say, "We think you two should share your information." "Oh, no, no, no; we're competitors. We don't want to do that." You know the kinds of rivalries you get between small towns and their hockey teams; they tend to think the same thing in their businesses. They'd say, "Well, you know you've already got your local market sewn up where you have the products to fulfill it, so really you've got more to gain than you have to lose." "Oh, maybe you're right." So you'd get two towns deciding to share their data bases. Pretty soon they'd have all the towns of a region sharing their data base, and pretty soon they had the whole state. A year and a half ago when we heard this story, they said they were then starting to work on their neighbouring states.

Now, had this government and the Mulroney government had the brains to do that before we went into a free trade deal, there might have been some sense in going into a free trade deal. We might have been ready for it. In fact, we've gone into a free trade deal before we did any homework at all in terms of our local community economic development, and we're now in a situation where in some industries it's easier to trade with Texas than it is with Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this idea of a data base and the idea of import replacement programs are the antidote to the devastation that free trade is costing in our manufacturing sector in this country. While Alberta didn't have much of a

manufacturing sector to devastate, nonetheless it's really been struggling getting off the ground and in the last two years has lost 5,000 jobs.

Even Michael Porter, when he came up to tell us how to run our economy, agreed that we had to do more community-based economic development and more value-added industry in our country and not sell our raw products, yet this government seems to be happy to sit there and allow the Americans to impose a 15 percent tariff on our lumber and then say, "Oh, we'll leave it off if you'll export logs to the United States." If we export logs to the United States, we export jobs to the United States, and that's what our country has been doing for far too long. For too long we've been selling raw materials and buying back manufactured products. It's like exporting jobs. It's time we took a hard look at the amount of emphasis that we put on exports and the total ignoring of the imports that we could produce for ourselves. If our exports amount to 23 percent of our production, which is the case in Alberta, then that means that 77 percent of our production is sold locally. So why don't we put more emphasis on that local production and local trade?

Another aspect of that, and again the free trade deal gets in the way, is that our three levels of government – local, provincial, and federal – taken all together make up something like 45 percent of the gross national product in this country each year. So why don't we have local procurement policies? The North American free trade deal is working toward having national treatment. Alberta, for example, if the North American free trade deal goes through and is carried to its logical conclusion and the direction the Americans are trying to take it, will have a situation where Alberta will not have the right to purchase locally as opposed to purchasing from the United States. In fact, the idea they want to incorporate is that the purchases would be done on a proportional basis between Canada and the United States. Even if we just take it to the federal level for a moment, that would mean that nine-tenths of our federal procurement would have to be done out of the United States. Sure, we would get one-tenth of the American procurement and in dollar terms that would be the same amount of money, but think of the devastation that would cause to Canadian businesses in Canada, because their own government would be purchasing nine times as much from foreign companies as it would be from Canadian companies, and the encouragement of foreign companies then to penetrate the private markets of Canada would be incredible. I just can't believe that we are thinking of entering into that kind of an arrangement.

4:20

Mr. Speaker, the economic multiplier tables show that if we could have government procurement policies by just 5 percent more than that is previously imported, we could create as many as 4,900 jobs. If you take the economy as a whole, if we could reduce our imports by 5 percent, we could create as many as 24,000 jobs in this province. The minister often likes to stand up and brag that for every billion dollars in exports we create 19,000 jobs. He changed it to 16,000 jobs the other day. The same thing works the other way around. If we could cut our imports, we would create more Alberta jobs too, and we think that we should be doing that.

One of the ideas that we put forward some time ago, and the Liberals and the Conservatives both have jumped on the bandwagon a bit I'm glad to say, is that we should take up the idea that started in Saskatchewan called community bonds. We think that could be a way of developing some local industries where there's presently a lack of capital. It was a Grant Devine idea to try to save his dying government in rural Saskatchewan,

and it was not such a bad idea. It doesn't mean that it doesn't need to be looked at and modified, but it was basically Grant Devine's idea in Saskatchewan.

AN HON. MEMBER: He had all the answers.

MR. McEACHERN: No, Grant Devine certainly did not have all the answers. He wrecked the economy of Saskatchewan, and you know that. I'm just saying that this one idea he had was a little late and a deathbed repentance idea, but it certainly did have some merit.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

What that raises is the need for capital for local economic initiatives. A related fact is that Alberta . . . [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, could I have a little quiet around here? I can't hear myself, let alone if anybody else can.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair has some sympathy for the hon. member but observes that some of his colleagues are involved as well. But I would call the House to order, please. You have a point.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you. I was saying we're looking for new local sources of capital for local economic initiatives, and we have to put the context on that. It is true that the banks in the last 10 years have pretty much abandoned Alberta. They had \$16 billion in Alberta back in 1982. In the last 10 years that dropped down to \$7 billion, so certainly we can't turn to the big eastern banks for capital for our small businesses. That means that we have to look at other sources. The government has put some money in, of course. We have the Treasury Branches and we still have North West Trust – Lord help us on that one – and the credit unions, and so there are some local banks, but we think that this community bond idea would be a worthwhile one that might put some more money in the hands of local communities, and it would give local people that have some money a chance to invest in their own communities. The Alberta government also has Alberta Opportunity Company and Vencap, but quite frankly they have not been very successful in meeting the capital needs of this province, so those programs need to be looked at again.

Now, of course, what you need to do even with the community bonds, because there is a certain amount of risk to them, is make sure that the projects are well screened and that there is a semi-independent administration in charge and that there's a set of criteria by which people apply. In other words, we don't want any ad hoc handing out of taxpayers' money even through the community bonds. It has to be done in a thoughtful, carefully laid out sort of way.

Another area that we think could be helpful for local people is to set up a workers' ownership investment fund. If it looks like an industry is in trouble, it seems to me that the Alberta government and the workers together might find a way to try to keep that company alive so that we don't continue to have the denuding deindustrialization of our country that we've had in the past. The province of Quebec has set up what's called a Solidarity Fund, and they've already got \$380 million under management since 1985 in a program that helps start up Quebec industries.

Mr. Speaker, we are not advocating here that Alberta and Canada withdraw from the international scene in terms of trade. We are a trading nation, and we think that we always will be an exporting and trading nation just because of the nature of some of our industries and some of our resources, but that doesn't mean

that we shouldn't make a much more concerted effort to try to upgrade those resources before we sell them, and it doesn't mean that we shouldn't take a hard look at what we are importing and see if we couldn't produce some of those things ourselves.

The way I see it, the Alberta government, without one study to show that it would benefit, basically backed the federal government, who again when they did some studies, when they were finally forced to release them, deleted all the negative parts about any kind of a trade deal with the United States and released only the good parts that said they were going to create jobs, jobs, jobs. And yes, they have: down in the southern United States and Mexico. We've lost jobs, jobs, jobs – in the neighbourhood of 500,000 jobs – since the free trade deal came into effect because of the way we went into that free trade deal.

So what we need to do is look at: how can we build our own local economies, how can we make our economy strong, how can we stop from exporting raw materials and importing finished products and hence exporting jobs at the rate that we've been doing?

That, Mr. Speaker, is the essence of the motion which I have put forward. I would hope that all members of the House would pass this motion as a new orientation, a new direction for the government in its economic policies.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to rise before this House to speak to Motion 212. I find it hard to believe that a Member of this Legislative Assembly could put his or her name beside a motion like this as sponsor.

The member talked about green jobs as one of the priorities and talked about spending dollars on infrastructure, on water and sewer. Last year when Edmonton dumped 1.6 million litres of raw sewage into the river, the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, who is an MLA from Edmonton, and his colleagues were not around. I never heard him stand up to say, "Let's improve the system," but now that it's maybe convenient at this time, he's moving forward on it. Mr. Speaker, it frightens me to think that someone could so narrow-mindedly propose a motion such as Motion 212. Mr. Speaker, how many times have we seen this motion brought before this Assembly?

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon member, but according to Standing Orders we're required to move on to the next order of business.

The Member for Drumheller.

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

4:30 **Bill 207**
Tobacco Control Act

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a strong sense of urgency that I rise today to move second reading of Bill 207, the Tobacco Control Act.

Mr. Speaker, we as a Legislative Assembly can no longer afford to ignore the devastation being inflicted upon the residents of this province through the consumption of tobacco and tobacco products. We must act now if we are to curb the death and destruction associated with tobacco consumption.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, which I am very pleased to sponsor, will do much to help solve the rapidly increasing number of tobacco related deaths in our province. Since this 22nd Legislature of the province of Alberta was convened in 1989, over 9,000 Albertans have died from tobacco or tobacco related illness. Bill 207 will

help snuff out the increasing number of deaths due to tobacco use by protecting adolescent Albertans from the disease, disability, and death associated with the consumption of tobacco products.

Bill 207 would be effective because it would accomplish two things. First, the Bill would help ensure that tobacco products would not be sold to individuals under the age of 18 years. Second, Bill 207 would increase the penalty for those found guilty of selling tobacco products to persons under the age of 18 years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay special recognition to the individuals who encouraged me to sponsor this Bill several years ago. I have become completely convinced of the need for the provisions of this legislation because of the tireless effort and work many groups across this province have made. These groups include the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association, the Alberta Public Health Association, the Alberta Home & School Councils' Association, the Alberta Lung Association, the Alberta Council on Smoking and Health, and a widely recognized group known as Action on Smoking and Health. There have also been several individuals who have provided me with an exhaustive amount of material on the dangers of tobacco consumption and have kept me up to date on the latest information and statistics.

I would like to pay particular thanks to Mr. Les Hagen for his support in connection with this Bill. Mr. Hagen has worked many long, hard hours to convince many people of the necessity of legislation like this, and of course Les is associated with the organization known as Action on Smoking and Health. Mr. Speaker, it's because of his efforts and the messages I was receiving from my constituents that I decided several years ago to sponsor this legislation which, as you know, has been on the Order Paper continuously for the past several years. Fortunately, the process used to determine the order of private members' Bills was very good to this Bill 207 this year, placing it early enough on the Order Paper to ensure its debate.

Mr. Speaker, most of us in this Assembly are well aware of the pain and suffering that often is associated with tobacco consumption. According to the experts, nicotine and tobacco products are as addictive as heroin and cocaine. It is odd, I believe, that we should take such a hard stand against the use and abuse of drugs such as marijuana and cocaine, yet say very little against the abuse of a comparable drug like tobacco.

It is also known and reported by the Alberta Lung Association that cigarette smoking is the single most important cause of preventable illness and premature death in Canada. If we had a segment of our society that was dying due to malnutrition and/or starvation, we would take immediate action to solve the problem. Death due to starvation is completely preventable if food is provided. The same is true with death due to consumption of tobacco. These deaths are preventable if we successfully remove the source of the cause: smoking and general tobacco consumption. Mr. Speaker, Bill 207 would help us prevent many premature deaths in our province.

Not only is the consumption of tobacco the leading cause of preventable death; those who do smoke and chew use our health care facilities 50 percent more than those who do not consume tobacco. Mr. Speaker, this year alone our health care budget is \$4.3 billion. Since the budget needed to meet the health needs of Albertans consumes so much of our taxpayers' dollars, it would seem logical to reduce the budget wherever possible. Millions of provincial tax dollars are spent every year to treat illnesses associated with tobacco consumption. Since these illnesses are preventable, it would almost seem that the money we spend on the treatment of these illnesses is wasted. The people of Alberta are trusting us not to waste the money they give us in taxes. Many of these Albertans are arguing that the millions of dollars we spend

to treat preventable tobacco related illnesses are wasted and wasteful.

How will Bill 207 help us solve the problem? Mr. Speaker, Bill 207 targets youths. Youths are so often the victims of the tobacco industry's campaign of deception, which has left the public largely unaware of the risk levels involved in smoking. The tobacco industry has recruited children as replacement smokers for those who have died from smoking or have quit. This has allowed the industry to thrive, despite losing great numbers of customers every year. The highly addictive properties of nicotine can result in a lifetime habit after just a few cigarettes, as many of us in this Chamber know. Children are often addicted before they're able to make a mature decision about tobacco use. As I have already mentioned, the U.S. Surgeon General has reported that the addictive properties of nicotine are just as severe as cocaine and heroin. The average age of onset of smoking is now 12 years, with over 70 percent of young smokers in Alberta now smoking daily by age 17. This means that over 15,000 children begin smoking each year in our province, but the problem is one that can be corrected. One study that I've read has argued that if we can keep youths from smoking until they are 18 years of age, there is more than an 80 percent chance that they will not begin smoking later in life. This percentage is increased to 90 percent if a person does not begin smoking by the time they are 20 years of age.

4:40

The Tobacco Control Act proposes an effective way of helping curb tobacco use among the young people. The Bill outlines the following directives. First of all,

No person may manufacture, distribute, keep for sale, offer for sale or sell a tobacco product unless the tobacco product and the method of packaging and the package in which it is contained conform to the regulations [of the Act].

Second,

No person may directly or indirectly sell, distribute or furnish tobacco products or tobacco paraphernalia to a child.

That is, a person under the age of 18 years.

In regards to youths,

No child shall use, possess, or purchase a tobacco product or tobacco paraphernalia.

If so, he or she shall,

if so required by a peace officer inform where and from whom the tobacco product or paraphernalia was obtained.

If someone offends the regulations of the Tobacco Control Act, they would be subject to the following punishments. First,

every person other than a licensed retailer who contravenes this Act or the regulations

(a) if found guilty on summary conviction . . . is [subject]

(i) for a first offence, to a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or to both, and

(ii) for a second . . . offence, to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or to both.

For

every licensed retailer who contravenes this Act or the Regulations if found guilty on summary conviction . . .

(a) for a first offence [is subject to] a fine not exceeding \$2,000 and a licence suspension for a period not exceeding 12 months.

Mr. Speaker, I'd suggest that licence suspension is the most important part of this legislation, because that would mean that person would not be able to sell tobacco products to anyone of any age for a specified period of time.

(b) for a second or subsequent offence [is subject to] a fine not exceeding \$5,000 and licence revocation, not just suspension.

If a corporation commits an offence against this Act, each director or other person concerned in the management of the corporate body is also guilty of, and liable to the penalty provided for, that offence

unless the director or other person proves that he exercised reasonable diligence to prevent the commission of the offence by the corporation.

Mr. Speaker, in my estimation Bill 207 would provide a law that would help our province win in the battle against tobacco addiction. The Minister of Health has publicly indicated her support of the Bill that is before us today. She has commented that she has examined this Bill and fully supports action on this important initiative. I am pleased to see that the minister has given this support, and I urge her to accept it.

After all, it would appear that a strong force from the minister's constituency of Edmonton-Glenora also supports the acceptance of this Bill. As I understand it, there are more than 70 students here today to listen to this debate. These students are from the junior high schools of Crestwood, Westminster, and Westmount, all within the constituency of Edmonton-Glenora. I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, these students who are in the gallery this afternoon want to see their MLA accept this Bill, I'm sure.

In conclusion, I would urge all members of the Assembly to receive this support from above and, hopefully, pass Bill 207.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice the Member for Calgary-McKnight saying, "Let's call the question right now." Well, if everybody else was prepared to do that, I certainly would. I'll tell you what, though. When Les Hagen called me about this Bill, he asked if the New Democrat caucus would be supporting it, and I said yes, we would. He then asked me if we would be prepared to make sure that none of our members are standing at about 5:25 p.m. today so that we could bring it to the vote, and the New Democrat caucus is prepared to do that. We would like to bring this Bill to a vote.

The member sponsoring the Bill gave us some very useful information in his comments. You know, it used to be thought that the incidence of smoking at a young age was essentially not caused by but related to whether or not either or both parents in the home smoked. That started to change in 1965 with the release of the Surgeon General's report on the implications of smoking. Even in the mid and late 1960s a lot of children of smoking parents declined to smoke in the wake of that information. A lot of the smoking population just turned on denial and said, "No, no, no; it can't be true." But it turns out we know that the 1965 report has proven itself to be true time and again, year after year.

The critical factor here in the issue of smoking is to prevent young people from starting. As the news release issued today by the Alberta Council on Smoking and Health indicates, virtually nobody starts smoking after age 18; it's before age 18 that they start. Measures which could be taken to prevent them from smoking are more than welcome. In one respect I wish this Bill could go a little further. It can't, I understand, because it is the federal House of Commons which controls rules on advertising. But, jeepers, those guys. I mean, they're making a lot of money. They run a slick organization, and they can make smoking look very alluring. That's a shame.

I think that if we could find ways to force tobacco companies in every one of their ads which are currently permitted, even though they're not allowed on TV and radio anymore, force them to publish statistics at the bottom of every one of their ads, they would not be successful in attempting to increase their market share by going after young people. That is their market, they know it, and I think they really push the line when it comes to ethics in advertising. I wish that we could do something about

that provincially, but I understand that is not our jurisdiction. However, we can do some things.

In some respects this Bill may cause a problem, I suspect, in terms of the definition of a child as being under 18, because in other areas of legislation – such as, for example, entitlement to earn a driver's licence – age 16 is considered the appropriate age. Now, I understand that if you tie this concept to the age of majority – the age of majority is 18 – maybe in that respect it's not testable. Nonetheless, I think even people who are age 14 to 18, if they were sitting in this Assembly representing the ridings that we do, on the regional, gender, et cetera, basis that we do, smokers and nonsmokers alike would probably support this Bill.

When I spoke with the representative from the Council on Smoking and Health, we talked also about the importance of moving towards removal of vending machines from hotels. At first I thought, gee, I wonder how you could handle your adult requirement. Of course, it's obvious. Hotels operate their front desk 24 hours a day; they can stock smoking materials hidden from the public behind the counter for those who don't want to run out to the nearest convenience store at midnight or 2 a.m. There are ways around it. If we didn't have vending machines, kids wouldn't be able to go out and buy smokes unbeknownst to their parents.

This Bill calls for one other policy that I really think is useful, and that is getting rid of what's called the kiddie packs. I asked somebody at work lately why she bought this pack of 15 cigarettes, and she said she did that because she believed it would help limit her. In other words, she would smoke more than 15 cigarettes in a day if she had to buy a pack of 20 or 25. I thought about that, and I weighed it against the chances of youth only being able to afford a small pack if they're not in their income-producing years. I realized that if adults are already hooked, whether they're smoking 15 or 20 is not going to make a difference in the size of the pack that they buy. This Bill does not focus on trying to get adult smokers to quit. It focuses on the ways by which we can achieve a smoke-free society, and that is by discouraging youth, our next generations, from smoking.

I applaud the Member for Drumheller, our Deputy Speaker, for sponsoring this Bill and other similar Bills in the past. All I can say in closing is that when the Minister of Health is prepared to proceed on her own legislation, I hope that she will take into account the concept of de-legalizing cigarette vending machines, and all sorts of other progressive measures that have been recommended by Les Hagen's group. The more we can do and the faster we can move, the better a society we're going to have.

As I said, at 5:25 the New Democrats have agreed that we will not be on the floor. We hope it comes to a vote.

4:50

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to thank the Member for Drumheller for presenting this Bill, which I will support on behalf of the Liberal caucus. My question is: why isn't it a government Bill? I'd like to see this become a government Bill, and I feel there is a tremendous amount of support on all sides of the House for this. We've certainly talked about it often enough before. I, too, would support this Bill coming to a vote today. Hopefully, that will indicate to the government what needs to be done in this province.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the object of the Bill is to prevent young people, adolescents and future generations of adolescents, from the harmful effects of tobacco: disease,

disability, and death. It does it by increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco products to 18; by committing to a comprehensive provincial strategy to reduce tobacco use, involving licensing and regulating of retailers, banning cigarette vending machines, banning kiddie packs, tobacco discounts, and candy tobacco; and finally, by increasing the penalties of those found guilty of selling tobacco products to persons under the age of 18. The Bill, of course, gives the minister authority over licences and also inspectors to ensure compliance.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal caucus supports this Tobacco Control Act. I'm glad to see Mr. Les Hagen, the executive director of ASH, present in the gallery today, and we have assured him that our caucus is hopeful that this Bill will pass. It does have our support. Our caucus has a long history of tobacco control. We've recognized the need for legislation in this area, and we've introduced Bills aimed at reducing the tobacco epidemic before. In 1988 the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, Sheldon Chumir, introduced a Bill which would have ensured a smoke-free environment for employees. Unfortunately, it never did get to a vote. I'm sponsoring this year, this session, Bill 224, the Non-Smokers Health Act. That would ensure that employees can work in a smoke-free environment while allowing enclosed designated smoking areas for those who are hooked. It can be emphasized that my Bill complements Mr. Schumacher's in a firm effort to reduce the epidemic. Let me say at the outset that I'm hopeful that when Bill 224 comes before the House, all members will support it as well as supporting this one and that it, too, will come to a vote.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Drumheller gave us some good statistics, and we've all had some excellent information from ASH. The evidence is incontrovertible. The Minister of Health in her comments about cancer the other night referred to the problems of smoking, that there are some kinds of cancer we do know how we can prevent, and that we should be putting our minds to that. There's no question that action needs to be taken to prevent all future generations from becoming victims of tobacco related illnesses. It's used by less than 30 percent of the adult population, but it's directly responsible for more deaths than traffic accidents, AIDS, alcohol, suicides, and drug abuse all combined.

Mr. Speaker, I've never been a smoker. I'm not sure why, but it has never been part of my habit. But I understand how highly addictive it is, and I've watched friends and family members struggle with trying to shake the habit. I know, once you are addicted, how very difficult it is to get rid of it. It requires a lot of commitment, so my theory is don't ever get started. I think this is exactly what this Bill aims at, to keep young people from getting hooked.

Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded, too, you know, that people look at this and say: "Well, why are you struggling? You don't need legislation. All you need is education." Clearly, that hasn't worked in the same fashion that we would have hoped, and I'm reminded of – was it Bob Newhart or Nichols and May that did a cute little segment on Sir Walter Raleigh?

AN HON. MEMBER: Newhart.

MRS. HEWES: Newhart. Thank you, member.

Newhart did a segment on Sir Walter Raleigh and how ridiculous it is. While we can laugh at that, we also know the immense struggle that people go through once they are hooked and the tremendous problems of health care that it causes, to say nothing, Mr. Speaker, of the cost once you are addicted.

Mr. Speaker, there are 38,357 deaths in Canada every year from smoking. That accounts for 57.7 percent of the annual preventable

deaths in the nation. One in every eight Albertans dies from tobacco use, or 3,000 Albertans every year. Tobacco not only kills its users but their families and associates as well. The general public and particularly children, in our view, need to be protected. In Alberta 19 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds were daily smokers in 1989. Average consumption among these 40,000 teenagers was 14 cigarettes a day, representing a \$50 million kiddie market. That's 17 and under. Over 10,000 minors join the tobacco market every year.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands has spoken about the advertising that's aimed at this particular market. One hopes that we can, in fact, convince our federal colleagues to get a better handle on the tobacco advertising that makes good use of market strategies in making cigarette smoking seem chic, glamorous, mature. It's still happening, so we need to collaborate with them to see if we can get that stopped or at least under some better control.

The Alberta government, Mr. Speaker, does not profit from tobacco taxation. Due to tobacco related expenses the total cost of tobacco use to the Alberta government exceeds \$300 million annually.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is a good chance for me to bring up once again my Non-Smokers Health Act, which I hope to introduce later on in the session. In fact, these two Bills, in my view, complement one another. There are a few considerations in this particular Bill that I'd like to comment on, and perhaps the Member for Drumheller may have some answers.

The first concern is regarding section 2, which states:

Subject to section 3 this Act does not apply to a person doing business in a municipality in which there is in force a by-law that forbids the sale of tobacco products and tobacco paraphernalia to a child.

This Bill deals, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, with more than just selling tobacco products to minors and should apply everywhere in the province, so I'm questioning why in fact that restriction is in there.

Mr. Speaker, another concern is section 3(3), which states:

No person may manufacture, distribute, keep for sale, offer for sale or sell any candy, novelty or other item that is designed to resemble a tobacco product.

I recognize, certainly, the intent of this section, but it doesn't seem feasible to me in many ways to – I suppose we can put it in to ban anything that resembles a tobacco product. How shall resemblance to a tobacco product be measured? That's the question I would have for the member.

Another consideration. Section 3(6) states:

No person shall manufacture, sell, possess, control or supply a tobacco vending machine or permit such a machine on premises owned or occupied by that person.

We recognize, Mr. Speaker, the intent to prevent minors' access to cigarettes. This can be achieved by limiting vending machines to areas prohibited to minors. This would remove minors' accessibility to cigarettes without necessitating a total ban on vending machines. I expect that this has been considered by the member, and perhaps he can describe for me why it has the form it does.

5:00

A final consideration, Mr. Speaker, is ensuring that the Act is monitored and enforced. I think that's very important. Under the Tobacco Restraint Act, passed in 1908-odd, it's illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 16, yet the cigarette market in Alberta continues to sell \$50 million a year to teenagers. We need assurances that the minister will regularly make inspections of licence holders to ensure the provisions of this Act and the regulations, terms, and conditions of the licence are being complied with.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I support the Bill, as do members of my caucus, and I would hope that members of the government will also support it and will make this their Bill.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I think first of all I would like to propose, with your concurrence, that the members of the Assembly consider today forming a new organization. I propose that the name of the organization be as follows: MLAs in support of health and mobilizing action on smoking and health. The obvious acronym, of course, is MISHMASH. I would hope that all of the members here today will buy into MISHMASH and buy into this very worthwhile legislation.

Do you recall, Mr. Speaker, the cartoon of the anxious father climbing up the ladder and peering into the attic? Behind a bunch of boxes in the attic there's about an eight-year-old boy puffing away. The father looks shocked and dismayed, and then the caption under the cartoon says, "Relax, Dad; it's only a cigarette." Now, of course the implication of that cartoon was that a tobacco addiction is really a very minor consideration compared to soft or hard drug addiction. But as several members have pointed out in the Assembly today and now a very commonly held scientific observation and conclusion, tobacco for some can be every bit as addictive as soft and even hard drugs. Consequently, the proposal that is before us I think bears very serious consideration by opposition and government members today.

I'm very anxious, frankly, to leave time today for the Minister of Health, so I'd like to abbreviate what really has been some very useful stuff prepared by my researcher, but I would like to make three points. Hon. members, the people of Alberta support this Bill. Hon. members, the tobacco industry supports the main thrust of this Bill. Number three, many provinces have already done what this Bill is attempting to do. My rhetorical question is: why in heavens can't we?

First, on the question of public support, Marktrend Research here in Alberta recently conducted a survey for both smokers and nonsmokers. They were questioned: would they support action to curb the use of tobacco consumption for minors? The question specifically was: should we raise the legal age to purchase tobacco products to 18 years? Eighty-four percent of our constituents said yes. In response to the question, should we license and regulate tobacco retailers, fully three-quarters of our constituents in that sample said yes. Obviously, there is considerable public support for this initiative.

How about industry? An old public relations colleague of mine by the name of Jacques LaRivière is now the spokesman in Canada for the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council. He and his council colleagues were recently quoted in a national newspaper that they support raising the age limit for the purchase of tobacco products to 18. I mean, that's the tobacco industry themselves, and I praise them for this progressive step.

The question, of course, of other jurisdictions. Just to summarize a page or two of notes I had made in this regard, in addition to federal legislation, five provinces, including Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, now have provincial legislation prohibiting tobacco sales to minors. In three of these provinces the minimum age for tobacco purchase is set at 18 years. Ironically, Mr. Speaker, most of these laws were also enacted in the first half of this century, so we're hardly in the vanguard of legislative initiatives on the issue of minor consumption of tobacco products.

Suffice it to say, Mr. Speaker, that today the public supports what we're doing, the industry supports what we're doing, a number of other provinces have already shown this is the legislative way, and I would hope that we would follow.

Now just a PS. A recent survey of 150 Edmonton tobacco dealers shows that more than half of the tobacco retailers in this city are quite prepared to sell cigarettes to minors. Compliance with the federal Tobacco Restraint Act was tested but five years ago, and the test revealed that children can purchase tobacco with ridiculous ease. In the Alberta trials conducted in Calgary, my hometown, and in Edmonton, a child was able to purchase tobacco in every single attempt. Seventy-seven percent of regular smokers between the ages of 12 and 15 – in other words, young teens – report that they obtain their tobacco products from retail outlets. Just this past week in Calgary, a Calgary man attempted to lay charges against a Mac's convenience store on the basis of the federal Tobacco Restraint Act. The store had knowingly sold tobacco to underage individuals, including one of his sons. However, because of the weakness of this legislation, the charges simply did not materialize.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for us to take another bold step toward guaranteeing a healthy and prosperous future for the children of Alberta. As I have understood, the Minister of Health has been waiting for the federal government to amend their Tobacco Restraint Act. However, since there's been such a flurry of movement within several provinces, I have heard that the federal government is no longer considering immediate action on amendments to their legislation. Apparently, they're waiting to see what action happens at the provincial level. This being the case, Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for action rests on our shoulders, the members of MISHMASH. I'm convinced that passage of the Tobacco Control Act would result in many benefits for our province, both now and in the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to leave ample time for the Minister of Health. I know that she wants to participate in this debate. Could I simply conclude by asking the hon. minister if she'd be prepared to consider one of two courses of action: either agreeing to adopt this Bill as government legislation or, alternatively, to ferret out the one or two or three legislative provisions that there does not appear to be a consensus around, take the best parts, and roll it into existing provincial statute. That is my plea this day.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Health.

MS BETKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Drumheller for bringing forward the Tobacco Control Act. As Minister of Health I believe that reducing the use of tobacco products is a very important public health objective, and as a member of this Assembly for Edmonton-Glenora I would like to welcome all the young people from schools in the constituency of Edmonton-Glenora to this debate this afternoon. I think it really is a tribute to their schools and to themselves as individuals that they are here today to hear this very important debate and discussion.

I believe very strongly that we need legislation to further control the use of tobacco. It's an important part of an overall comprehensive strategy in terms of getting Albertans to understand the risks associated with smoking. But in the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, I still believe fundamentally that it will be Albertans choosing not to smoke, choosing to do things to protect their own health that will ultimately be the best protector of health in this province and the goal which we must all strive for.

To begin with, I am pleased to stand in the House today and indicate my keen support in principle for Bill 207 for the following reasons. First of all, it makes it easier for children to make healthy choices. Secondly, Bill 207 gives children a greater chance of remaining smoke free as adults. Thirdly, if it's

successful, it would reduce the costs to the health care system of tobacco related diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory diseases. Fourthly, Bill 207 restricts the activity of the tobacco industry. I support it for those reasons.

5:10

As I've stated in the House, this Bill and my support for it – and in discussion with our colleagues we even contemplated adopting it as a government Bill. The conclusion was, however, that Bill 207 would be difficult to enforce in its entirety and very costly. You win some; you lose some, Mr. Speaker. However, I think that the second suggestion of the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek has great merit. I think that as a government we have to use Bill 207 as the base to move ahead to develop legislation which would contemplate a less costly and a more enforceable strategy. The Member for Drumheller and I have the support of some of our colleagues for this approach, but we don't have the support of others. But we're going to keep trying, and we believe very strongly in the need for the legislation.

It's important to note that while Bill 207 prohibits the sale of tobacco to Albertans under the age of 18, Bill 224, if I may speak to it as well, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar's Bill, is based on legislation introduced by our late colleague from Calgary-Buffalo which would control smoking in all public places and in the workplace. Some portion of that legislation as well as Bill 207 would duplicate the federal Non-smokers' Health Act. Because the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek has raised the issue, I would like to update the members of the Legislature and the members of the gallery on the federal legislation and where it is.

Currently, the Tobacco Restraint Act of 1908 is undergoing a much needed overhaul, an overhaul which is a very strong priority of the Minister of Health and Welfare, M. Benoît Bouchard. The federal minister has updated provincial ministers regularly. He's indicated to us that there is support for raising the present age of 16 to 18 for the purchase of tobacco products. He has indicated their support for restricting access to vending machines to premises where minors are prohibited. He has indicated that there is support for increasing penalties for the sale of tobacco to minors. I expect to have a further update on the federal legislative plans when health ministers meet next month. I was going to say where, but we haven't yet decided where; we just got the date finalized.

I would, however, like to give some of the implications of both Bill 207 and the other one, because it leads to the conclusion of my remarks, which is about my preference for the kind of legislation that I think we need to develop in Alberta. First of all, with respect to Bill 207 and the implications for the health care system, Alberta Health has done a major consultation with the Department of the Attorney General, and we have identified several concerns which I think are worthy of being brought to your attention. First of all, under the Bill's provisions the Minister of Health would become responsible for licensing, inspecting, reporting, and regulating the sales of tobacco products. Thus, additional fiscal and staff resources would be required for tobacco inspectors to administer the legislation. The question I have as Health minister is whether or not that is in fact the best use of Health resources and whether or not there's a better way to achieve that end.

Secondly, strict enforcement of the Bill would potentially reduce the number of children who smoke. However, strict enforcement could also criminalize possession of tobacco and increase illegal street sales. I don't think that's an outcome we want to have as a result of the legislation. Although there is certainly – I agree with the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek – public support for action on restricting tobacco sales to minors, there may not be

sufficient support for the costs to government involved in enforcing the legislation.

With respect to the Bill that the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has identified, I think it's just helpful for the discussion to highlight the concerns with it following the Attorney General's and Alberta Health's review. Firstly, portions of that Bill are very duplicative of the federal Non-smokers' Health Act. Secondly, the Act is administered by the Minister of Labour, and it sets up an inspection scheme similar to that in Bill 207. The problem is that the fines under the Bill for the employer are relatively high. A second offence, for example, has a \$10,000 fine. However, the fines for smokers are so low, frankly, that they invite being ignored. The first offence has a fine of not over \$50, and not over \$100 for the second offence. That is the concern I have.

Getting down to, then, what the Minister of Health and MLA for Edmonton-Glenora would like to propose, I would do this. Firstly, my preference would be that we have government legislation which combines the most enforceable provisions out of Bill 207 and Bill 224. While legislation isn't the whole solution, it is a very important part of the solution. Secondly, I believe it should include prohibiting the sale of tobacco to persons under 18 years of age. I believe it should ban or restrict tobacco vending machines. I believe it must have contained within it realistic and enforceable penalties for selling tobacco products to minors, and finally, it should prohibit smoking in the workplace.

To achieve this, however, we need to develop a comprehensive strategy with our municipalities and consult with them to ensure that the actions that they may take have a backdrop against provincial legislation, which is what is missing now. Secondly, I think we need to develop enabling legislation which is going to make smoke-free workplaces the accepted standard, as well as a tobacco retailers licensing system. Thirdly, I believe we need to ensure that provincial legislation would be consistent with the new federal legislation. That would be my preference, Mr. Speaker. I support the Bill, and we'll see how we carry on from here.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

However, before I conclude my remarks, I want to go back to the whole issue of what we are discussing in health. What we're discussing in health is: what do we want to achieve by this health system of ours? We have, as we all know, increased by 300 percent the resources that we spend on health in the past decade in Alberta. The question has to be: are Albertans that much healthier with that trebling of costs for the health care system?

We have put that question, as a government, to Albertans. Our health goals project is a very major undertaking, following up on the important consultation which has been part of the Rainbow Report on future health care for Albertans. Really what we're saying in that health goals project is: what are the kinds of things we want to achieve in Alberta? Do we want to have a smoke-free province by the year 2000 or by the year 1995? Do we want to reduce teenage pregnancies by 20 percent by the year 2000? Do we want to reduce deaths by cardiovascular disease by 20 percent by the year 2000? Then what we would have at the end of this decade, unlike what we have right now at the beginning of this decade, is a measure by which we could assess how well we've been doing in our health care system, a measurement of indicators of how we can serve the health needs of Albertans better. Our purpose has to be creating a healthy province and healthy Albertans in it.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to the issue, which was the start of my remarks, of Albertans choosing not to smoke. That is what it really all comes down to. Let me lay

before you some statistics. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has done some, as has the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. Let me lay before you some statistics that are the raw, cold, hard facts about health risks that are due to smoking. These are statistics out of Health and Welfare Canada which I think everyone should listen to. First of all, a total of 38,000 deaths in Canada in 1989 were attributable to smoking. Secondly, smoking is the major cause of heart disease in Canada. About 30 percent of all heart related deaths are tobacco related. Three, there were 7,000 respiratory deaths in 1990 in Canada related to tobacco use. There were 119 deaths in fires caused by smoking in 1989. Health and Welfare Canada calculates that 15,327 cancer deaths in 1989 would have been prevented if the victims had not smoked. Smoking also increases the chances of mothers giving birth to children of low birth weight, children with respiratory distress, children who suffer health consequences for their lives. Finally, it is also calculated that 333 nonsmoking Canadians died in 1989 as a result of passive, or secondhand, smoke.

5:20

Those are scary statistics, Mr. Speaker, very scary statistics, and while I believe legislation is a very major part of the solution, do we need legislation to drive those facts home? Should we outlaw those 38,000 deaths? What we really need is choosing not to smoke. If you are a smoker, you can quit. You don't need a law passed to make you come to that decision. What you need is a commitment, a commitment to your own good health. Do we need a law passed to make this Legislature smoke-free as a worksite? No. We could all simply choose not to smoke here. We could simply refrain from smoking in this building. It is a choice, and as most things are, we can make it.

The Rainbow Report contemplated healthy Albertans living in a healthy Alberta. Good health is what it's all about. We can choose it, and we could make our health goal making Alberta smoke-free.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Millican.

MR. SHRAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think if the public could all tour our hospitals and see some of the people who have had their voice box removed and see some of the people who have

cancer – cancer of the throat, cancer of the lungs – I don't think we'd have any trouble at all getting public approval for a Bill like this. Unfortunately, the public often see – and I can remember the movies, seeing Humphrey Bogart always smoking a cigarette, and he looked, I guess, really cool or distinguished or whatever. Then we see the advertisements of the Marlboro Man – this healthy, hearty guy out on the range with a horse is the type of guy we'd all like to be – smoking these cigarettes. Yet it's such a different thing when you hit the hospitals or any of the cancer clinics.

I used to be deputy chairman of the Calgary General hospital board. I wandered through a few times, and I saw some of these things, and I was so surprised because back then we actually still allowed smoking in the General. This one guy actually had this small hole – he had this type of operation where much of his throat had been removed, and with this small hole he actually placed the cigarette in and was still trying to smoke.

I think we're on the right track of getting the smoke-free areas. At least it's no longer the big acceptable thing. I think we're getting the message through: it's no longer the desirable thing. You're not looking macho when you die of cancer of the lungs, cancer of the throat.

Mr. Speaker, with the time, I'd like to move that we adjourn debate.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion carries.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, before moving that we adjourn, all members should know that this evening it's intended to debate Bill 20 in third reading and then to continue with the Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:25 p.m.]

