

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, May 26, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/05/26

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to present a petition signed by some 400 Albertans urging the Government of Alberta to immediately release and make public the Final Report of the Task Force on Recognition of Foreign Qualifications.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition which I presented yesterday be read and received.

CLERK:

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to call upon the Government of Alberta to review the present N.E.F. Contours as they relate to Calgary International Airport. These contours have been in place for over twenty years and have been used to make land use planning decisions by the City of Calgary in the area surrounding the Airport. Since their determination the usage level of the Calgary International Airport has greatly increased and the types of aircraft have changed drastically. We respectfully request that these contours be reviewed so that it is certain that they are accurate and truly reflect current noise levels.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place tabled with the Assembly his account of a meeting in Bonnyville. I would like to table today my recollection of that meeting in the form of a report.

Thank you.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to file with the Assembly today the answers to written questions 359, 360, and 361, that were accepted on May 12.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today on behalf of my colleague Ken Rostad, the MLA for Camrose and the Attorney General, to introduce a number of visitors from Chester Ronning school. The Attorney General and I had the opportunity to visit Chester Ronning school a couple of weeks ago, and they have a reputation that now spans the continent in that the students in that

school have read a total of nearly 1.4 million minutes over the past 10 months or so in a contest that they've been running that values the importance of reading. They are led today by their teachers Mr. Brian Baker, Mr. Robert McClarty, Miss Kathryn Osborne as well as parents Bev Berkholtz and Wendy Kosinski. I'd ask them all to rise and receive the warm welcome of all members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce three entrepreneurs and developers within the province of Alberta, true builders of our province. At this time I'd like to introduce Bob Schuyler, Jim Hole, and Ian Murray. Further to that, we have the pleasure of having 60 industrious business developers from the city of Grande Prairie and surrounding community with us today and meeting with the entire government caucus as well as the opposition members. They're presenting the case for a new development within the area of northwestern Alberta that indeed is exciting and one that we're all looking forward to in terms of development. I'd like to introduce Tom Shields, Barry Dietrich, Fred Tissington, world chuck wagon champion Kelly Sutherland, the reeve of the county, Bill Housman, as well as 56 other members who have made the long trek from Grande Prairie to be part of this group and process here today. Seated in the members' gallery, we'd ask them to rise and receive the usual welcome of the House.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly this afternoon two individuals who were instrumental in preparing and co-ordinating the petition that I presented earlier this afternoon. In the public gallery on behalf of the Alberta Association of Immigrant Professionals is Dr. Jose Morales and with him on behalf of the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Coalition, Mr. Harvey Voogd. I'd ask them both to stand now and receive our very warm welcome.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, earlier today my colleague the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services and I had the pleasure of unveiling a new product, the Agriplast fencepost. This fencepost is made from 100 percent recycled plastic from pesticide containers, and the funding for this recycling program comes from the pesticide industry. In the members' gallery today is Mr. Barry Coates, executive vice-president of Rhone-Poulenc and chairman of the Crop Protection Institute's Container Management Committee. I would ask that Mr. Coates rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature 48 bright, energetic grade 6 students from Millgrove school in the city of Spruce Grove in the constituency of Stony Plain. They are accompanied by teachers Pat O'Callaghan and Debbie Schellenberger, whom I had the pleasure of working with for many years as a colleague, and parent Pat Bodnaruk. I'd like them all to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS BARRETT: Oh, I was going to say last but not least, but I guess there is one more.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I visited with a group of people who are visiting from Australia: Frank and Lorna Tudball, their daughter Karen, another daughter Michelle and her husband, Stuart Mayne. They're on a whirlwind tour that included the Bahamas last week, Canada this week, and who knows where next week. They are visiting the nephew of the former Speaker of the Assembly, John Amerongen, and his wife Mary Lou. I'd ask the group of them to rise and be recognized by members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly three individuals who are involved with the Fourth World, which is a recreation club. I'd ask them to stand as I call out their names: Patty Lee, Kathy Matsen, who is the treasurer, and her son Ricky, who watches question period every day and is an aspiring politician. I'd ask members of the Legislative Assembly to give them the usual warm welcome.

head: **Ministerial Statements**
National Access Awareness Week

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, June 1 marks the beginning of National Access Awareness Week. During this week governments, the private sector, and voluntary organizations across Canada will be raising awareness of issues related to access for all persons with disabilities. These efforts will not only increase public education and understanding of the issues but, as well, will stimulate action that will see the actual removal of existing barriers and the creation of accessibility in the broadest interpretation of its meaning.

2:40

Mr. Speaker, the theme of the 1992 Access Awareness Week is Local Community Action, because it is recognized that Albertans and Canadians are ready to move beyond the point of acknowledgment and are ready to take more aggressive local action to resolve those issues. The theme recognizes that it is only through concrete action that physical and psychological barriers to programs, services, and full participation in society can be removed.

The logo for National Access Awareness Week is composed of five interconnected stars representing transportation, housing, employment, recreation, and education. Full integration for persons with disabilities requires effort in all five areas. It also means changing attitudes and support systems so that not only persons with visible disabilities but also those Albertans with invisible disabilities, such as learning, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities, can participate fully in all aspects of community living.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the assistance of all members of this Legislature in promoting the principles of National Access Awareness Week, and I would invite all Albertans to become involved.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As usual with these ministerial statements, I certainly find nothing to disagree with. As they mentioned, existing barriers are much more than physical, and if you have a physical disability, that of course can be psychological also. In saying these words, I think we have to look towards some concrete action. There has to be an opportunity for education, for

employment. People with disabilities have to be part of some employment equity that the government has so far refused to bring in. People should be supported in taking risks.

Specifically to the minister, the \$3,000 ceiling on funding for moving into the community: frankly, with many people that's still not enough; it still makes it impossible. Also I'm sure the minister is well aware that many people with disabilities are on AISH, and many of those people live in poverty. We still have a lack of housing. I'm sure the minister is aware of all these things.

So while I certainly agree with the intent and the sentiments in the ministerial statement, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to look for concrete action coming from this government.

head: **Oral Question Period**

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

NovAtel Communications Ltd.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier suggested that the opposition was saying that the Auditor General was part of a government cover-up. Well, that's absolute nonsense, and the Premier is well aware of it. We're talking about this government covering up the NovAtel mess. Now, instead of setting up a process to investigate political decisions, the Auditor General can only examine financial decisions. He's made that clear himself. That lets the government off the hook before the investigation is even started. My question to the Premier is this: will the Auditor General have the power to subpoena documents, including ministerial correspondence and briefing notes, from any department the Auditor General deems necessary to investigate the NovAtel fiasco?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd just draw the hon. Leader of the Opposition's attention to the letter which I tabled, quoting a portion of the Auditor General Act, and that would be the responsibilities and the legislative strength of the Auditor General's investigation.

MR. MARTIN: That's precisely the point. You can't do any of these things, Mr. Speaker. You're hiding behind the Auditor General Act under 17(2). The Premier's just confirmed this.

Let's go a little further, Mr. Speaker. Will the Auditor General have the power to call witnesses, including cabinet ministers, NovAtel managers, Telus managers, and do this in public so that they can explain their responsibility in the largest financial fiasco by a provincial government in Canadian history?

MR. GETTY: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I just draw the hon. Leader of the Opposition's attention to the letter which I referred to.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, then clearly it is a cover-up. He can't do any of these things.

If the Premier is saying it's not a cover-up, then there's a simple thing that he has to do. Will the Premier now admit that the Auditor General does not have the power to do the job that needs to be done? Will he now establish a public inquiry into the whole NovAtel mess?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, again I reject the hon. Leader of the Opposition's reference to the Auditor General being part of a cover-up.

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

MR. MARTIN: I can understand the Premier being a little nervous. [interjection] We're getting into the question. We're in the second question, Boomer. Don't get excited. It's not baffling why the Premier continues to resist a public inquiry. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, he has something to hide.

Let's look a little further into this whole sordid affair, Mr. Speaker. We notice that one of the prominent people on the board of directors of Northern Telecom is former Premier Lougheed.

MS BARRETT: What?

MR. MARTIN: Yes, of Northern Telecom. Research has also revealed that two members of Telexel, which is buying part of NovAtel at fire-sale prices, are members of McCarthy Tétrault, a Calgary law firm. Another interesting part of this is that John Zaozirny, a former minister of this government, is a partner in the same law firm. Now, I'm sure these things are just coincidence. I'm sure of that. To the minister of technology: under these circumstances, how can the minister assure Albertans that they have the best possible deal for NovAtel?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, the matter of finding a buyer for NovAtel was a process that went on over the course of about a year. It was done by a management committee of private-sector individuals and telecommunications experts that we put in place. They in turn engaged the services of Warburg & Co., internationally known as financial advisers. They conducted a search internationally. They found about 60 companies that they should approach. They did so. That list then boiled down to 11 and then, subsequently, to two. It was a price and a negotiation that took place in the marketplace with a number of considerations of both financial and otherwise in order to result in the sales that were announced last week.

MR. MARTIN: All these things are just a coincidence. It's the Conservative old boys' network, Mr. Speaker. Just a coincidence.

Let's look at this deal. This company paid only \$3 million up front for its share of the company. It seems like a fire-sale price to me, Mr. Speaker. My question to the minister of telecommunications is simply this: if the minister is so sure that this is such a great deal for the taxpayers of Alberta after they've lost \$566 million, will he now make public the written agreement between the province and Telexel so that Albertans may know what the terms of the deal are?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated, a process was put in place so that there will be full disclosure of all aspects of the NovAtel deal including the sale agreements. That's a very important matter for the taxpayers to know, but the Auditor General is the person who acts on behalf of all Albertans. I think it's very important that we have the process in place that can fully analyze and assess the judgments of government in this regard, the judgments of the management committee, and the judgments of others in respect to NovAtel.

MR. MARTIN: That's precisely the point. They can't do this under the Auditor General. He doesn't have the right to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the minister won't reveal management letters from the Auditor General. He won't reveal the actual deal between Telexel and the government. We have prominent Tories involved up to their eyeballs. To the Premier. Surely he must understand what this is saying to the public of Alberta. Will he now put in an

independent review, Mr. Speaker, and do it properly and quickly instead of this charade that he's doing?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there is an independent review. I again just draw the attention of the hon. member to the request to the Auditor General. The Auditor General reports to this Assembly, and the Auditor General is independent. I reject the hon. Leader of the Opposition's position that somehow the Auditor General is involved in a cover-up. The Auditor General will make everything that's involved public. Obviously he'll be making his management letters public. All of this information will be in the Auditor General's report.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry, on behalf of the Liberal Party.

2:50

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for telecommunications made an incredible admission this morning on a radio talk-back program in Edmonton. He's smiling and laughing, I see. I can't understand how this can be so funny. The minister admitted that he had received the 1991 management letter but had not read the management letter thoroughly. Those were his words on the radio talk-back program. Yesterday that same minister told this Assembly: "We," presumably cabinet, had given a "firm mandate" to NovAtel. Ministers are supposed to do their homework, and they're supposed to lead. My question to the minister is this: how could the minister and how could cabinet give a firm mandate if the minister says that he didn't look at the 1989 management letter and that he only glanced at the 1991 management letter, all serious matters according to the Auditor General?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, in talking about what various people should or should not do, the leader of the Liberal Party should put things into context when he makes reference to certain programs that we may have participated in. The fact of the matter is that a management committee was put in place, and we gave it very firm instructions. Those instructions are not hidden or not being disclosed in any way. Even over a year ago the Premier indicated that the instructions to the management committee were to refocus that company, restructure it, get it on a businesslike basis: sell it if you can; otherwise shut it down. I can't think of any clearer mandate than that, and that's the mandate which we gave to the management committee and which they pursued.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, section 28 of the Auditor General Act puts a special onus on the Provincial Treasurer. That onus is to be informed of management difficulties that exist in a department or a Crown corporation. I can only assume that the Auditor General informed the Treasurer and that the Treasurer saw these management letters. I would like to know what special action the Treasurer took when he looked at both of these management letters and should have done something to stop the hemorrhaging of taxpayer money in this NovAtel fiasco.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the question from the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry certainly puts into context the trouble with his own research. Much of his position's been speculation, and much of his position has been out front of the important work being done by the Auditor. Surely you have to give the Auditor an independent review, an opportunity to bring together in a full way and to report clearly what has happened here.

This is particularly the point: this government works on the basis of fact, not fiction. We don't base our opinions on rumours; we base our opinions on facts. Clearly the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry across the way has no knowledge as to whom the letters were sent. I can confirm in this House today, Mr. Speaker, that the letters did not go to Treasury. Therefore, like the rest, his questions are obviously out of order.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, either the Auditor General is negligent – and I don't think that's the case – or the Treasurer is negligent. The Treasurer has a special duty when a problem arises in a Crown corporation to do something about it. Now, Mr. Treasurer, my question is simple. You knew this company was in big trouble. You should have seen these management letters. I want to know specifically what you did to discharge the onus you had on you.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, here he goes again. I mean, you can go up and down the rows here and talk about what should be perceived in his mind to be the truth, and that's exactly the error he's making. He's got some imaginary position that he's trying to develop to drag the classic red herring across the track here. That's what the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry is doing. He is misleading Albertans, or as he has said in his own words just today, he is shading the truth, to quote the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

This is what's happened, Mr. Speaker. In the case of Crown corporations the Auditor General, should he find any kind of a management recommendation, sends it to the ministers involved and to the Crown corporations involved. The case of universities and colleges is the same thing, the same thing in the case of all Crown corporations.

Now, if the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry is suggesting, as I think he is, that the Auditor General appointed by this Legislative Assembly is derelict in his duty, then that is just unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, just unacceptable.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River. [interjections] Order please.

MR. TAYLOR: Ask him about NovAtel.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. He can't hear you. Thank you.

MR. DECORE: Total negligence.

Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You had your three questions. Now please pay attention to the rest of the operation of the House. [interjection] Thank you, Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. MITCHELL: He didn't get three answers.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Edmonton-Meadowlark. Smoky River.

MR. TAYLOR: Ask him about NovAtel.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Westlock-Sturgeon. Some hon. members may think this is a playground. It is not. [interjection] Order. You're wasting your own time, hon. members. Smoky River.

Licensing of Crop Dealers

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is of grave concern to the agricultural community, and I think it's a serious question. To the Minister of Agriculture. The Alberta specialty crops association has been lobbying that those who purchase their product be properly bonded or covered through a bonding or insurance agency. Since many of those who purchase these particular products are located throughout Canada, has the minister discussed this issue with his federal counterpart?

MR. ISLEY: Not at this point in time, but following recent representations from the new Pulse Growers Commission, I've made a commitment to carry out such discussions.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Further, to the Minister of Agriculture. Since Alberta is such a diversified product production area as far as agriculture is concerned, what crops would the minister envision being covered under this bonding agency?

MR. ISLEY: Currently the six major cereal crops are covered, where the dealer has to be both licensed and bonded. The proposals that are being assessed would bring in things such as field peas, lentils, beans. We've also extended it to assess whether or not alfalfa products should also be looked at.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

NovAtel Communications Ltd. (continued)

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the telecommunications minister admitted that the deal the government made to sell NovAtel really had more to do with saving jobs at Northern Telecom's Calgary switching plant than the 500 jobs at stake in the NovAtel plant. In other words, Northern Telecom, realizing the desperation of the government, threatened to close its Calgary plant. No wonder the minister did his best to obscure the number of jobs lost in his press release. Will the minister now admit that Northern Telecom was able to reduce what it paid for NovAtel by threatening to close the switching plant and that the minister conveniently left that out of his news release because he didn't want Albertans to know about it?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member couldn't be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that Northern Telecom and its switching plant, by virtue of the type of technology employed, didn't say they were going to shut anything down. They just indicated that over time they would scale that down and it would go out of existence because of its technology. But here was an opportunity to capitalize on the new technology. The new technology is wireless. That's where the action is going to be. That's where the future of telecommunications is. I'm just pleased that the type of negotiations that were held will result in a worldwide centre for wireless manufacture and research and development in Calgary.

MR. McEACHERN: All that, Mr. Speaker, doesn't give the minister any excuse for misleading the people of Alberta about the number of jobs created.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, Northern Telecom has only promised to hire 150 of the NovAtel workers – the minister didn't say that – and maybe another 135 over the next year out of 500 workers.

Now, given the minister's failure to negotiate a better deal and the misrepresentation yesterday of the jobs in his news release, will the minister now resign and tell the Premier to call that public inquiry that we need to get to the bottom of this?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I'd just refer the hon. member back to *Hansard* of yesterday. I went through those figures for him. The arithmetic was there. The representations and the announcement were correct in every respect.

Insofar as a public inquiry is concerned, I think the taxpayers of Alberta want an answer, and they want it soon with respect to NovAtel, and we want that to happen soon. A public inquiry, as we all know, will result in probably a two-year type of process at a cost of probably \$25 million to the taxpayers. I don't think the taxpayers want to go that route, but they do want full answers, and we're going to get them full answers.

3:00

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When half a billion dollars is lost, it doesn't just go up in smoke. It's obvious that some people have made some huge profits from this deal. My first question is to the minister responsible for telecommunications. I'd like to know what finders' fees and commissions have been paid by the government in the purchase from Nova, in the repurchase from AGT, and in the final fire sale.

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have all of those facts at my fingertips right here. It's a matter for the Order Paper, that the hon. member can get that information. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Through the Chair, hon. minister.

MR. STEWART: Again, Mr. Speaker, I refer the hon. member to the letter that the Premier sent to the Auditor General. You'll notice that itemized in that letter are all aspects of the acquisition of NovAtel, going way back, and all matters pertaining to that will be in the hands of the Auditor General so that he can do a clear assessment of the decisions of government in respect to that and other individuals that may have been involved. That's the process, and I think it's a responsible one.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I'm not surprised the minister doesn't know the information. It seems he's the minister of 'noknowledge.'

Well, let me ask him another question then: will the minister provide the information on what was paid out last year in severance packages to the three executive officers who were turfed out of NovAtel for mismanagement?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, no severances were paid by this government at all. Telus Corporation owned NovAtel at the time that the terminations were made. Whatever arrangements and the basis upon which they were made are the business of Telus. It does not impact in any way on the taxpayers of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills.

Utility Rate Regulation

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Public Utilities Board has recently approved a rate increase for Canadian Western Natural Gas. Many of my constituents are very concerned that yet another increase in utilities has occurred this year. Could the Minister of Energy please explain why approval was given for this increase?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, as all hon. members know, the Public Utilities Board is a quasi-judicial board, and the decisions that they make are independent of government influence. I can, though, speak briefly to the process by which the Public Utilities Board comes to their conclusion with regard to the issue mentioned by the Member for Calgary-Foothills. The Public Utilities Board in setting rates into the future must look at traditional weather patterns, historical weather patterns. That's because the utilities have fixed costs. Those fixed costs have to be recovered whether or not the natural gas is sold. If there is a decrease in sales of natural gas, the fixed infrastructure doesn't go away; it must be amortized. So in the recent case of the PUB decision, in that warmer temperatures occurred, less gas was sold, and there was an increase in rates to cover the costs of infrastructure.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-Foothills, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona. [interjection] Order please.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've seen a depression in gas prices this year and interest rates come off and many changes within our economy. I'm wondering if the minister could explain: was this increase absolutely necessary?

MR. ORMAN: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, the decision was made by the Public Utilities Board. It was a result of intervenor submissions made before the board, and the decision was based on a balance of those submissions.

I should say, though, Mr. Speaker, that the board is endeavouring to move away from the traditional decision-making process to a more contemporary decision-making process. The normal weather pattern that they used for an average was 50 years. It is now reduced to 20. Because in the last 20 years it's been warmer on average than in the former 50 years, it then resulted in this higher rate. It is an important point, because I have, as indicated in this House before, asked the board to quickly review the process of incentive rate making; that is, if there is a reduction in consumption that is a result of the utility's efforts, they be rewarded. Right now the process worldwide is that rates are set based on expanding the rate base. There is a movement afoot in North America to move away from that, and I've asked the PUB to be just as contemporary and look at those issues in very short order.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

Western Canadian Shopping Centres Inc.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister of career development has tried to deny his government's responsibility in the Joe Dutton immigrant investor scandal, but the facts are: Western Canadian Shopping Centres was an Alberta company, Dutton appears to have violated the offering memorandum he was required to file in Alberta, Dutton has had political connections with this government, and Saskatchewan maintains that this is a made-in-Alberta mess. To the minister: given that Alberta's international investment reputation has been seriously damaged by

this incident, does the minister intend to continue to abdicate his responsibility simply because Dutton had friends in high places?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I'd rather have them in high places than low places, as referred to just a little earlier.

AN HON. MEMBER: Big joke, big joke.

MR. WEISS: I don't think it is a joke. Mr. Speaker, it's plain and clear that the issue is a Saskatchewan issue. The Western Canada Properties Inc. was an Alberta offering, which is entirely different from what the hon. member has suggested. It has nothing to do with Alberta. Mr. Dutton's offering, as far as complying with the federal regulations for business immigration, may be at question, but that question is before the courts, and I would suggest that that is the place it should be dealt with. I'm prepared to listen and wait for the answers, because Mr. Dutton has no involvement with an Alberta holding company and has no business interest in Alberta in relation to the business investor program.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely clear as a result of a federal report on the immigrant investor program which condemned the fact that many of the funds operating under the program are nothing more than vehicles for land speculation, which contribute nothing to economic development. To the minister: given that provincial approval is required for ventures under this program, will the minister undertake to the Assembly that his department will withhold approval of programs such as Joe Dutton's land speculation ventures which offer no significant job creation benefits?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, that is a very fair question, an undertaking this minister has and always will undertake and commit to this Assembly, but I once again must reiterate that Mr. Dutton does not have an offering in the province of Alberta. It was a Saskatchewan offering. Therefore, there's no impropriety created in Alberta by Mr. Dutton, and I wouldn't want that false impression being left by the hon. member. As far as the undertaking, we will certainly undertake and review, as far as the regulations, the offerings that may be presented to Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

NovAtel Communications Ltd.

(continued)

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications stated that he is not trying to fool anybody about getting \$78 million for the sale of NovAtel. To the minister: will he tell us whether he is aware of what figure his own management committee is recording as the cash proceeds for the sale of NovAtel?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt about the fact that out of the terms of the transaction that was entered into with Northern Telecom and with Telexel last week, the total investment in Alberta as a result of this is \$78 million.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, a member of the NovAtel management committee has explicitly told us that the government received \$47 million as the sale price for NovAtel. How can this minister continue to say that he is not trying to fool anybody about the sale of NovAtel when he is using the figure of \$78 million as

the sale price and his own management committee, the one that he set up to run that company, is saying that he only got \$47 million for that sale?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the total amount that was invested in Alberta as a result of this and came into Alberta as a result of that sale . . . [interjections] Just look at the announcement. If the hon. member could just look at the announcement, it is totally broken down as to every aspect of the sale, with respect to the centre for research and development, with respect to the sale of assets, with respect to the sale of the subscriber's business. It's all there, and I stand by that. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. [interjection] Order.

Red Deer-North.

3:10 Economic Strategy Conference

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Energy in relation to the upcoming Toward 2000 conference. Recently, just a few weeks ago, in Red Deer some 80 individuals from a broad cross section of the community gathered together and formulated some very in-depth input. They spent a day and a half preparing for this conference. A number of them have been recognized to attend as delegates, but a number have not, and I'd like to ask the minister what determinations were involved in deciding which people would be able to attend the conference. Was it regional? Why were there limitations placed?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Conference on Alberta's Economic Future is to be held on Thursday and Friday of this week in Calgary. This is the culmination of a long process that involved thousands of Albertans with thousands of submissions to basically myself as chairman of the economic planning cabinet committee on behalf of all my colleagues on that committee. We have received a number of requests to attend this very important process that have involved a range of individuals, from the mayors of the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, who have made submissions, to environmental advocates from as far away as Rocky Mountain House, to small towns and villages across this province. Labour groups and economic development authorities have been involved. They will all send delegates to Calgary. We are constrained by the number of people we can accommodate in Calgary, between 500 and 600. We've asked many organizations to send delegates despite the fact that many of them would like to have their whole organization there. That's not possible. At this conference all of the delegates will be considering the submissions that we've received both in the seven public forums and the seven round tables that have been facilitated by the Banff centre. We see from that an opportunity to develop a white paper on the future of this province's economic future.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, in the development of the Red Deer submission, people were taking time from their businesses, from their homes. The one question that came up, even though they were very willing to spend a day and a half of work on their submissions, was: is there going to be something actually in place to ensure that there will be a response mechanism to the submissions that are going to be coming forward?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I should have said in the first answer that I encourage all MLAs in this Assembly to attend. As

the organizer of the event in Calgary said: I hope everybody can take their uniforms off and come as interested Albertans and not with some political agenda. About 80 percent of our government caucus will be there. We understand that five of the NDP and one of the Liberals will be there. I would encourage the opposition to take an interest in the economic future. They will have constituents there. This is an important process, and for them to ignore this process I think is a poor reflection on their commitment to their constituents that have participated in this process.

The last point of the question that was made by the Member for Red Deer-North – let me simply read you a line from the documentation from the round tables. We will be taking direction from these Albertans that come together in terms of designing an economic future, and they say:

In this new world, the role of government may be to manage the process rather than the issues . . . acting as a facilitator . . . and providing a forum in which the stakeholders can come together to plan and discuss.

Mr. Speaker, that's the intention of this process, and we are doing just that in Calgary.

Oil and Gas Exploration

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, as more and more of the major oil companies are pulling back or out of the oil patch here in Alberta, they are taking with them volumes of important seismic and geophysical data which could well be used by other smaller producers who want to continue to explore in this basin. When I asked the Minister of Energy about this last week during estimates, he in his pompous and arrogant way told me that I should somehow apologize . . .

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. member. Take your place. There's really no need for that inflammatory language. Let's just get on with the question.

Oil and Gas Exploration

(continued)

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I was most astounded by the response of the Minister of Energy to my question, as I was simply trying to raise the concern, which is of importance to the Geological Survey of Canada as well as to hundreds of Alberta-based explorers. Will the minister today apologize to me and to those who are legitimately raising this important question by outlining his plans for the establishment of a library for existing seismic and geophysical data to help those who continue to want to take risks in exploring for oil and gas in this province?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is looking for some solace from me for his thin skin, he's not going to find it. Let me say that the market works. If there is a demand for this data in a library basis or in an accumulated basis, then it will not go anywhere. The hon. member does not understand the process. I tried to explain that to him. All of the companies maintain their own libraries of well data and seismic data, and there are exchanges in the industry that catalogue this information and broker it out. If people are looking for particular data on reservoirs or core samples, it's done on a commercial basis. The hon. member should understand that before running off and talking about something he's not sure of.

REV. ROBERTS: On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, the minister's office doesn't know how desperate it is in the oil patch for people

to get out there and be able to successfully explore and drill for oil and gas in this maturing basin and the frustration they have in having volumes of important data either excluded from them or taken away because of this so-called marketplace where they've been allowed to retain this data.

I want to ask the Minister of Energy if he will undertake to contact officials at the Geological Survey of Canada in Calgary, who themselves have said that this data is crucial for oilmen of the future as well as having scientific value and that they, the GSC, would be certainly willing to consider playing a role in storing this data, and other provincial energy ministers to determine how best to make this valuable data available to present and future generations of Albertans.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, this information is available. It's available on a commercial basis. I have talked to individuals in Calgary who are interested in the government buying this information and spending dollars to keep it in the province. I've explained to them that the market works. If there's demand for this information, then it will stay here on a commercial basis. If there's not, then what is the role of government? To second-guess that decision? I don't believe that.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

St. Stephen's College

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. St. Stephen's College has a long and venerable history as part of the postsecondary system in the province of Alberta, but recently the Minister of Advanced Education eliminated its annual grant with a \$50,000 good-bye kiss. The minister in the estimates debate justified this cut by saying that the government does not fund theological degrees. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Given that theological studies are always ecumenical, philosophical, and wide-ranging in their approach to significant social issues and they are a legitimate part of the arts and sciences, how does the minister justify selecting this institution for such discriminatory treatment?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I think history tells us that the Alberta taxpayer has been extremely altruistic in terms of funding various programs: the very fact that this was the only one in Alberta. As a matter of public policy, this province has not funded theological programs. That exception to the rule was really historic, and at some point, with the matter of setting priorities in public institutions with regard to education, it simply had to go.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, many of the courses that are offered there are undergraduate courses. They're continuing education courses. They're courses that are accepted at the University of Alberta for transfer credit. The minister's already approved funding for other private, denominational colleges. Will he at least now commit to reviewing his position and consider restoring equity to the postsecondary system in Alberta?

3:20

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, let the matter be abundantly clear to all members. We fund public institutions with regard to those programs in some 27 institutions at over a billion dollars.

Mr. Speaker, we believe to a very great extent in the freedom to choose. Whether it's King's College or Concordia College or Augustana College or Canadian Union College, those who are

offering Albertans the opportunity of undergraduate liberal arts training including, I would point out, St. Stephen's College and others, if there's a transfer program, we fund those programs. We do not as a matter of public policy fund nor do we plan on funding theological degrees.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Social Assistance Policy

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Evidence showing disarray in the Department of Family and Social Services continues to grow. Earlier we highlighted the failure of the department to pay foster parents on time. Now it seems that the department has even had trouble getting payroll cheques to its staff. Astonishingly, that was handled by issuing welfare cheques to employees. My question to the Minister of Family and Social Services is: will the minister explain how his department could not process a payroll cheque on time yet could suddenly produce a welfare cheque for an employee?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, it's always somewhat awkward and somewhat difficult to talk about a matter that the member knows full well is before the courts, but I will say this. Obviously there were some unusual circumstances that occurred in one of our offices, and upon their being brought to my attention, I took immediate and very quick action and we responded appropriately.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. This is a question of great concern to taxpayers in Alberta and to people who work in the department. The last three reports from the Auditor General have made strong recommendations that the department find ways of improving compliance and determining eligibility for benefits. Now we have an incredible gaffe. How could the minister possibly ignore the Auditor's recommendation and allow employees to get welfare cheques?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, again as is so often the way opposite, the member is wrong. She's quite right that the Auditor General made some very good recommendations. Again as a result of this minister and this government acting so quickly on the recommendations that the Auditor General has brought forward in the past, because we've acted on those recommendations, we had the systems in place that when someone went beyond those systems, when someone went beyond their mandate, when someone went beyond those guidelines and parameters, they were caught immediately, and we acted on it immediately.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Bow.

Western Heritage Centre

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. Mr. Minister, my question is with regards to the western heritage centre on the Cochrane Ranche site. There seems to be growing concern about this project being completed as there appears to be no visible evidence of construction being done at the site. Mr. Minister, could you please tell the Assembly: is the western heritage centre going to be built as promised?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to get this question today because it will allow me the opportunity to set the record straight on an earlier question raised by the Member for Calgary-North

West. It's funny how things turn out that way. Some of these coincidences are interesting.

Let me say, first of all, that the western heritage centre of course will be built. There's an intensive effort under way to get this built, but depending on when you drive by, it may not look like anything's happening because of the prudent actions of the Western Heritage Centre Society in not spending money they don't have. They're going through an ongoing fund-raising process. I'd like to quote from the *Calgary Herald* of May 20. It references the Member for Calgary-North West.

[He] comes up with this every three or four months . . . he never brings it up when there are 18 to 20 people crawling around down there working . . .

Speaker's Ruling Quoting Documents

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. minister. We're really not here to be quoting what is supposed to have been printed by some supposed expert somewhere else. Let's deal with what actually happens here.

MR. MAIN: I take it from that, Mr. Speaker, that you're not interested in having me table this document.

MR. SPEAKER: You can table it, if you wish, tomorrow at the appropriate time. In the meantime, we'll have a supplementary from Calgary-Bow.

Western Heritage Centre (continued)

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is to the same minister. There are several more millions of dollars needed to complete the western heritage centre. Where will these funds be coming from?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the western heritage centre is of course continuing its fund-raising efforts. I have a news release from the western heritage centre that says, "Contribution Planning . . . have completed a very successful meeting with the Auctioneers Association," and they're going to have "an 'Auctioneers Bronze Garden Walk' which will raise considerable funds. Details to be announced soon." As well, a downtown business group is "poised to begin solicitation in June." They're saying that the way they handle this project leaves them open to some criticism to the unthinking, but they know it's the right way to proceed.

I'll file this tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sure that's probably a more reliable source of filing too.

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Hospital Safety

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of weeks I've been meeting with a number of health care workers organizations. They're concerned about a lot of things. They're concerned, for example, that last week the Royal Alex announced that it's laying off 12 more nurses. I mean, these are frontline health care providers that the patients need. We've had chronic problems at that hospital and other acute care facilities. Another type of problem that health care workers are facing, and this is across the board, is increases in on-the-job injuries, which is resulting in increases in workers' compensation claims, in fact, in acute care

alone almost a 15 percent jump over the last year. My question to the Health minister is this: considering the health and safety of these workers and the patients who could also be injured, is she prepared to address this problem by providing adequate resources to our acute care facilities?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, our health facilities across Alberta have received a 4 percent increase in their general grants this year. We entrust to hospital boards the responsibility to make decisions with respect to the best use of those dollars, and I have every confidence that they can do that.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, the facts show something different. The facts show that we've got a 30 percent increase in the accident rate in the hospital industry over a three-year period. This is not just a problem affecting the workers; it is also affecting the patients, who sometimes fall when the workers can't catch them. Is the minister not concerned that this problem could be redressed by measures in her powers?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, that's a very different question, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we know that the health sector is one that has, I would say, an unacceptable rate of accident and injury for workers. Addressing that is not just a matter of finding new dollars but rather starting to address the issue from the point of view of health safety of workers, the kinds of incentives we might put in place to encourage greater safety precautions in the health sector. The minister of Occupational Health and Safety may wish to supplement my remarks, but suffice it to say that I agree with the hon. member that it certainly is an issue that health has to be dealing with and in fact is through the health sector itself.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

head: Introduction of Special Guests
(reversion)

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce two people in the public gallery. I would ask them to stand when I call their names and remain standing until they are acknowledged by the House. First, Peter Woloshyn, the reeve of the county of Parkland, brother to my colleague on my left and a colleague of mine for many years when I was teaching at Harry Ainlay. The other person is Anne Hatfield from Jasper. She is the constituency manager for my colleague on the other side. I would ask the House to give them a warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

3:30

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 38 energetic young students from Rundle school in Edmonton-Beverly. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Hudson, Mr. Loewen and parents Mrs. Karen Cook and Mrs. Doris Gare. They're seated in the public gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have guests in the members' gallery this day. They are 34 students from the John Barnett school located in the constituency of Edmonton-Belmont. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. Collins and by parents Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Koren, and Mrs. Murray. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased and very excited to have 22 young and energetic students from the land of the mighty Peace joining us today. They're accompanied by Mrs. Hicks, who is truly one of the outstanding teachers in Alberta, who is assisted by three helpers, Brenda Banham, Simone Gagnon, and Tony Flowers, and their bus driver Jean Forseille. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them all to rise and receive the usual warm welcome of the House.

Privilege
Access to Information

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry raised a purported point of privilege. Under Standing Order 15(5) it was appropriate to raise the matter at that time.

Various citations were given, most of them citing the mechanics of the process of raising a question of privilege, namely Standing Order 15(1), Standing Order 15(5). The references to *Beauchesne* 114(1) and 115 both are basically the same points as Standing Order 15(1) and Standing Order 15(5). *Beauchesne* 118 as quoted is a reference which is only appropriate to cite if the Chair has already decided a prima facie case of privilege exists.

There was some possible confusion as to whether or not the Minister of Technology, Research And Telecommunications had quoted from correspondence from the Auditor General. Upon examination of *Hansard*, the minister did not quote from correspondence; however, the minister did quote from the annual report of the Auditor General, 1990-91, as publicly tabled in this House on April 10 of 1992. The direct quote is found on page 1077 of *Hansard* of May 25, 1992, and is taken from page 100 of the Auditor General's report. The quote is this:

NovAtel's new management has proposed, or taken action to address my recommendations. It is understood that the Province of Alberta is seeking a purchaser for NovAtel.

At the request of the Chair the minister met with me at 8 a.m. today. He brought with him two letters of transmittal. Letter one is dated November 22, 1990. It was sent from the Auditor General to Mr. J.R.S. Stankiewicz of the chartered accountant firm of Ernst & Young. No copy is shown as having been sent to anyone else at that time. The date stamp shows the letter as being received in the minister's office May 25 of 1992, and fax transmittal codes of May 25, 1992, 12:01, from the Auditor General to a fax number, 7-0178, and May 25, 1992, at 2:32 to the office of the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. It would appear that this letter or the fax arrived at the minister's office after question period began yesterday. The minister left after question period for Calgary and reviewed this correspondence earlier today. He then delivered it to my office. The Chair retained a copy of the transmittal letter.

Letter two is dated July 30 of 1991. It was sent by the Auditor General to Mr. W.D. Grace, chairman of the management committee of NovAtel Communications Ltd. Five persons were shown as being copied, the third being the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. The date stamp shows this letter as being received by the minister's executive assistant

on August 1 of 1991. The Chair also retained a copy of this transmittal letter.

The Auditor General, like the Ombudsman, Chief Electoral Officer, and the Ethics Commissioner, is an independent officer of the Legislature. He is appointed pursuant to the Auditor General Act, and his duties, powers, and responsibilities flow exclusively from the Auditor General Act and not from the privileges of this Assembly. The interpretation or application of any part of the Auditor General Act, including section 28, which was referred to by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, is not within the purview of the Chair. Members may wish to refer to *Beauchesne* 31(9).

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry also cited *Beauchesne* 25. It is worthy of comment, and when it refers to the House of Commons, we should note it applies to this Legislature. I quote:

The Speaker has stated: "On a number of occasions I have defined what I consider to be parliamentary privilege. Privilege is what sets Hon. Members apart from other citizens giving them rights which the public does not possess. I suggest that we should be careful in construing any particular circumstance which might add to the privileges which have been recognized over the years and perhaps over the centuries as belonging to members of the House of Commons. In my view, parliamentary privilege does not go much beyond the right of free speech in the House of Commons and the right of a Member to discharge his duties in the House as a Member of the House of Commons."

This is cited in the *Debates* of April 29, 1971, page 5338.

In addition, Joseph Maingot in his book *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* states on page 190, and I quote:

In deciding whether there is a prima facie case, the Speaker also excludes any matters which are otherwise properly to be dealt with under the practice or Standing Orders of the House. That is to say, where the answer to the alleged "question of privilege" is contained in the rules or the practice of the House it would unlikely involve a breach of the privileges of members.

The matter of the two postaudit memoranda, the two letters, could properly be requested singly or collectively as motions for returns and debated and dealt with by the House. However, this matter as raised by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry does not constitute a prima facie case of privilege.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

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

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, in view of the very interesting private member's motion today, 215, I hereby move that the motions for returns on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

3:40

Union Membership

215. Moved by Mr. Fischer:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to support an individual's right to work as he or she chooses by endorsing a policy which would give each Alberta worker the privilege to work with or without joining a union.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to raise Motion 215, a motion that I feel very strongly about. I realize how sensitive this motion is to all the people involved. To propose changes that affect employment certainly could impact their very livelihood. The intent is not to be critical of the worker, the union, or the management but to search and examine alternate ways of improving the process of setting collective agreements. Motion 215 intends to raise concerns of how our labour laws are hurting our people, our country. The laws themselves and the process that is allowed are outdated and need changing just as the economic times and regulations have been changing around us.

Although union membership makes up 26 percent of our work force here in Alberta and is growing, it is important to note that 71 percent of the unions are public unions. I am extremely concerned about the direction that the compulsory membership is leading this province. The labour force and their activities affect the whole economic fibre of the country. They involve practically every business, every industrial development, and every public service. The working man must be treated fairly whether he is union or non-union. The freedom to have a job is the freedom to life itself.

I have utmost respect for our ambitious work force in this province, whether they be union members or non-union members, union management or non-union management, but I cannot respect our labour negotiating process by which we settle our differences. While collective bargaining has its merits, it has not been without huge financial losses that we can no longer absorb. We did get away with this in the past in good economic times, in high inflation. Governments had lots of money. Mr. Speaker, those times are past. Global competition dictates to trim all of the fat. Become efficient or become a second-class nation.

Collective bargaining also has not been without a lot of significant personal sacrifice by innocent persons caught in the middle. Alberta is rich with natural resources. We have a highly skilled and educated work force. I do not want to see Alberta's labour climate interfere with the development of these resources or the potential for our economy. The freedom to have a job and a future is the freedom that our Canadian settlers came to our great nation for. It is an important part of our heritage. Our settlers came here to Canada for a better life. They fled from hunger, unemployment, and hatred in other countries. They chose Canada for its freedom and respect for the individual. They chose Canada for its international reputation for peacekeeping and tolerance. They chose Canada because they knew if they were willing to work hard, they could build prosperous farms and businesses and enterprises that they could turn over to their children and to their grandchildren.

These are the freedoms and the opportunities that our soldiers and our immigrant sons fought and died for. These are the freedoms that the members of this Assembly serve to protect. So, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely vital that the laws governing our society encourage freedom and tolerance, encourage individual initiative and rewards for hard work.

I realize that not all employers are fair. I believe that the voluntary membership can provide the necessary balance to irresponsible management. Workers in some cases need a union or another form of representation to get their concerns addressed. Certainly if the employers are extremely unfair, then the workers will join the union and will be protected from unfair labour practices while also making the unions more accountable to their membership. It is for these reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I introduce Motion 215 to

urge the government to support an individual's right to work as he or she chooses by endorsing a policy which could give each Alberta worker the privilege to work with or without joining a union.

The laws governing our work force must reflect freedom and fairness to both the employee and the employer and must also protect the public interest. I would like to highlight my reasons for encouraging freedom of choice. I'd also like to raise some concerns about our current labour climate and also to talk about some of the successful alternatives. Mr. Speaker, we must look around the world and see what it is doing. Great Britain's new Prime Minister, John Major, in a recent speech said that in the 16-month parliamentary session the government will continue the vigorous program of privatization and deregulation started by Major's predecessor Margaret Thatcher. Also, they were going to change laws that would force unions to hold a postal vote of members before a strike and end a system whereby union dues can be automatically deducted.

The U.S. has 21 states with right-to-work legislation in place. Mr. Speaker, I would like to see us encourage some form of the policy which comes from the state of Idaho in their declaration of public policy. I quote: in order to maximize individual freedom of choice in the pursuit of employment and to encourage an employment climate conducive to economic growth, the right to work shall not be subject to undue restraint or coercion; the right to work shall not be infringed upon or restricted in any way based on membership in affiliation with or financial support of a labour organization or on refusal to join, affiliate, or financially or otherwise support a labour organization.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Other people feel very strongly about voluntary unionism as well. One American gentleman by the name of Fred Hartley Jr., who had had years of experience in the labour/management field, called compulsory unionism a dangerous cancer. He said, and I quote: the goal of union leaders who are advocating compulsion is clear; they want monopoly control of jobs; they want compulsion submission of all workers to government by unions; this eventually means control of the entire economy by the rule of labour, a labour dictatorship. A labour dictatorship, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid that we are watching compulsory membership move this province in that way.

Most of our public unions are dictating to us now as witnessed by our recent school strikes. Labour dictatorship was what brought Great Britain, a world economic powerhouse, to her knees before Margaret Thatcher had to make drastic changes by privatizing and restructuring. This was not done without a lot of suffering in near-revolution conditions. So it is wrong economically and morally to force a worker to join a labour union in order to hold or get a job. Mr. Speaker, we do not want to see this cancer spread. We want what's fair for the employee, we want what's fair for the employer, and we also want what's fair for the economic health of this country.

3:50

Freedom-to-work legislation could further improve our Alberta economy as it has done in some of the states. In Idaho the Times News from Twin Falls reported in 1991 that during the five years since voters approved the right-to-work law, Idaho has led the nation in both per capita income, growth, and creation of new manufacturing jobs. Idahoans employed reached record highs. Unemployment hit its lowest point in 20 years.

U.S. Department of Labour statistics for 1988 showed that nationwide the 21 states offering right-to-work protection created 92 percent of the new manufacturing jobs in the United States in the decade that ended in 1985. This represented more than 10

times as many new manufacturing jobs as non-right-to-work states. Right-to-work states are being called opportunity-to-work states. The paper *Idaho This Week* accounted another similar story in April of 1988. Their research showed that more jobs were created in the state of Louisiana during the first five years of the right-to-work law existence than during the 25 years prior to its passage. They also reported that they experienced an eight-year low in unemployment with a per capita increase in income since the passage of the right to work. Still, the right-to-work law did not put the unions out of business in that state. It made them more honest. It made them get out and sell their membership like an insurance policy. It made the leadership listen to the needs of the worker.

These are very impressive statistics that Alberta should be looking at very carefully. They are part of the reason for cheaper products in the U.S. We can learn much from the U.S. in this area. We can also look to other successful countries and companies for knowledge. New Zealand has just put in the right-to-work legislation this past year, and it has been working very well. Germany is a highly competitive country. Their studies show that their workers are very satisfied, and they're productive without unionism by statute. An example of companies. General Electric from the United States is a union company, and they satisfy their employees by dealing with thousands of unions. On the other hand, there's IBM, another very successful company, which is entirely non-union. At the root of these alternatives is the employee/employer choice.

Now, I'm not saying that we're doing everything wrong here in Alberta and throughout Canada, but I am saying that we have to be open to alternatives and make decisions for the most fair and prosperous future we can create for Alberta. The Ontario and British Columbia governments have indicated that they are going to shift their labour laws left to create greater union control and less worker strength. Mr. Speaker, this immediately drives their investors and jobs out of their country. I don't believe for a minute that binding the hands of the employees or the employers is fair, nor do I think that it will lead to greater prosperity. I think Alberta needs to have the alternative of choice, and these investors and these jobs will soon be here in Alberta.

I'd like to mention just a few quick examples of how compulsory unionism is depriving our labour of its right to work. Now, if you're a new employee and you cannot get a job because of the union monopoly, you go to a project to get a job, and you have to pay your union dues. You put your name on the union list, and you have no guarantee that that name will ever get to the top. I guess you go home and go on unemployment insurance. New teachers today can't get on. We have a big problem with that. Maybe we've turned out too many teachers, but when we look at the way the wage settlements are, we look at the number of dollars – those are limited, and the teacher/student ratio is getting higher – they're just not providing the same jobs for the people. Nurses are the same way. The boards only have so much money to spend, so they eventually have to hire fewer people. Local employment opportunities are limited because of all this as well. Many companies are forced to bring in a union man, pay his living expenses, where they could have had a local man. Certainly qualifications and the marketplace should dictate, not the union leadership through these union lists.

Compulsory membership also allows unions to destroy our country. I would like to just mention a story or two; I'm sure that we all have strike stories and what harm they have done. Down in my own area – I can think back; it was before I even got

into politics – the Alberta Union of Public Employees had a strike there with the maintenance and janitors. It went on and on and on for a lot of days, got very bitter. Pretty soon they broke into the schools, turned on the water, flooded the schools. It cost the taxpayer in that area about \$250,000 to fix that up.

We also went through the nurses' strike. We've gone through a number of nurses' strikes in the last 10 years. The end result is: we lose people, we lose the health care that should be given to our elderly, and when we're all finished, everyone has lost. There are no winners. I look at the grain handlers' strike out at the coast. Mr. Speaker, there just isn't any way that we should allow that to happen. I don't see how 19 grain handlers can walk off the job and cost the taxpayers \$50 million. It just isn't right, and the process that we have in place allows for that. We don't have any winners out of any strike situation; we only have losers. We have a loss to the employee, there's a loss to the employer, and in the case of public unions there's the loss to the people that they're taking care of. Certainly there's a big economic loss in any of our private unions.

The morale loss and the productivity loss is expensive in terms of human and economic loss. It takes years for these kinds of wounds to heal and for people to get back to trusting one another. About the time the wounds heal up, it seems like we get another strike. Quite often it takes the next generation before those wounds have completely healed.

We've heard many stories also about the outrageous settlements that have forced plants to shut down, stories of projects that have gone bankrupt by labour costs and overruns and work stoppages from union interference. This is one of the contractors' biggest fears; they know that the union can make them or break them. It's interesting how big the cost is when we think of many of our larger projects. The cost overrun in a project like Lloydminster, for instance, might not be nearly as high had we not had union people in there. Certainly the competition for bidding limits that.

4:00

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that volunteer union membership would help us get around a lot of these difficulties. The increasing freedom of choice would be the single most important item to make union management more accountable to the membership. This would increase enthusiasm and goodwill and result in greater productivity.

I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, that there is a better way. There are many companies that are successful. Many of them are non-union and some are union. I want to use Syncrude as an example, because I'm probably a little bit more familiar with that. They have an excellent employment relationship. They have a work force of about 4,400 people who are highly skilled and highly trained. They have also 1,600 contracted union people. They have continually set new records over the past few years in their production, in their safety, their operating costs, and their productivity. Each year they reach and strive for a higher goal. This can only happen with full co-operation and dedication from both the employee and management. Positive performance is the result when both parties have a sense of pride, trust, and respect for one another.

What makes this relationship happen? Well, management treat the employee fairly: they pay exceptionally good wages, they have a good pension plan, and they treat people like their own family. Management include workers in management decisions. They include workers in a profit-sharing scheme. They also provide training programs and education programs, and they work with the individual to give him the opportunity to better himself.

Mr. Speaker, that's what builds the trust and the pride and the confidence that create the good work ethic. There is no confrontation. There are no strikes. There's no intimidation. Their efforts are all focused on how they can do better. This shows that big business and labour management can work together for the benefit of everyone.

I saw a little poem in the homebuilder's book that just tells this story, and I'd like to read it to you. In the words of the author, Clarence Francis,* it says:

You can buy a man's time;
You can buy his physical presence at
a given place;
You can even buy a measured
number of his skilled muscular
motions per hour.
But you cannot buy enthusiasm,
You cannot buy loyalty,
You cannot buy the devotion of
hearts, minds, or souls.
You must earn these.

Mr. Speaker, Syncrude and many of our other companies have placed themselves in a very highly competitive position because they have earned these.

It is time now, Mr. Speaker, for us to look at a better alternative. Later this week the hon. Premier is hosting *Toward 2000 Together*, a conference on economic prosperity for Alberta. I believe that creating a freer and fairer labour climate would very much boost the ability to perform economically as a province.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to stop confrontation and intimidation and coercion. As I said at the beginning, I'm very concerned with the direction that our labour laws are leading this province. We have seen in other countries the harm compulsory membership has done. I have shown you the harm that it is doing right here in Alberta. The labour legislation that we have in place will not allow the union membership the freedom to make their own decisions. Motion 215 will provide that freedom.

I urge members of this Assembly to be open minded and take a long look at the motion. I am sure that you will see a picture of Alberta as a strong and prosperous province, more prosperous with the freedom of choice.

I look forward to the members' debates. Thank you very much.

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

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As you well know, sir, the parliaments in the British Commonwealth are places where people can come and exchange ideas in a free environment, and it's my respect for parliament that will constrain me today.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that when I looked for points of agreement between myself and the Member for Wainwright, I didn't think I'd find any at all, but at the very start of his introductory remarks he stood up and said that the labour laws need to be changed. Well, we on this side of the Legislative Assembly have been saying since 1988 when we adopted those regressive Progressive Conservative labour laws, that indeed those laws should have been amended in 1988. We have attempted since 1988 to introduce amendments to the Labour Relations Code to no avail. Now I'm glad to see that perhaps out of the back bench there will be some agreement that we ought to revisit those labour laws, because, goodness knows, working Albertans have certainly suffered under this Labour Relations Code, and if the Member for

*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

Wainwright had the opportunity to make a similar amendment as this motion would suggest that he wants to see contained inside a labour law, they would suffer all the more.

The Member for Wainwright suggests there's a need to have right-to-work legislation introduced in Alberta and then goes on to cite the statistics of what percentage of the work force is unionized: 26 percent. Mr. Speaker, one out of every four jobs in the province of Alberta happens to be unionized. Can you imagine going out and the likelihood of stumbling into one of those jobs? I would suggest that if you're going out and trying to find a job in today's economic environment, you're not going to find a unionized position anywhere in Alberta. My goodness, when I have phoned up some of my friends and colleagues that are in the trade union movement and asked them what their job boards look like – are they taking any new members inside their union right now, even if they've got the skill and the qualifications? – they say no they can't, not because they don't want to have new members inside their union but because their unemployment lists are so great that they can't even dispatch the people that currently hold memberships in their union. One in four jobs in Alberta are unionized.

The Member for Wainwright says that we'd become more efficient if we had right-to-work legislation. Well, here's an opportunity for the Minister of Labour to perhaps stand up and again reiterate that 97 or 98 percent of all contracts or all negotiations that end up with a collective agreement do so without any kind of work interruption: no industrial dispute. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? No industrial dispute. Two or three percent of the contracts happen to go to the limit where there's either a lockout – a management decision, sir – or a strike. The strike is the workers' decision. Because of that two or three percent, the Member for Wainwright wants to take away the rights of those people to have a vote to strike. Well, perhaps if it were reversed and 98 percent or 97 percent of those contracts that need to be negotiated – perhaps then there might be some reason to introduce such a motion in this Legislative Assembly. But two or three percent . . . I can't for a minute begin to subscribe to any kind of theory such as what's contained in Motion 215.

4:10

Efficient, he says. Well, Mr. Speaker, when I look at those states that have right-to-work legislation, progressive industrial states like Louisiana and Alabama and Arkansas and Missouri, I just want to say no thanks; don't bring it into Alberta. I don't want to see it. Working Albertans don't want to see it. Progressive and fair-minded people don't want to see it. We don't need their kind of imposed poverty on our society. The right-to-work legislation that those states have adopted has only gone to bring down the standard of living of the very poor and the impoverished. The people that have the least medical coverage in the United States happen to reside, coincidentally, in those states that have minimum wage codes that are under a couple of dollars an hour and have right-to-work legislation. Coincidental? I think not. No protection? What's more likely is that there's no protection enshrined in the labour code in those states that ensures that people have the right to get ahead. Efficient? I'm sorry; I just can't buy that argument either.

The Member for Wainwright spoke of the freedoms that are being endangered, and he spoke of how Canadians went off to fight to ensure that there were freedoms coming out of World War II. Canadians went off and risked life and limb so that freedoms could be expressed in this society. I'm very thankful, Mr. Speaker, that a number of Canadians went off to Europe and fought that war, but I can tell the Member for Wainwright that

there were among them some very strong trade unionists. This just didn't come out of the right-wing right-to-work legislation. There wasn't an exclusivity on the membership of those people who were killed overseas. They were people who decided that they would go and join in a fight for democracy so that they would be able to still protect democratic institutions once they came back from an international struggle, and those democratic institutions for some happened to be enshrined inside the trade union movement, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and any number of other institutions.

I am amazed that the Member for Wainwright would quote whomever it was that he did about compulsory unionism as a dangerous cancer. I haven't heard that kind of thought expressed in a long, long period of time. I would have thought that if there were some arguments that would have been made, they would have been made upon economic lines, that there would have been arguments made that would have brought some statistical figures into this Legislative Assembly, but I didn't see that. We have the ranting and raving of a right-wing individual in the United States who says that this is a cancer. I wonder if it's from the same individual who said, "Oh, we have a cancer in the presidency," during the Watergate era. That's the same era that that nonsense comes from. My goodness, to describe unionism as something that's cancerous is just an insult not only to the people who are trade unionists and try and establish trade union rights in this province but to those people who work with trade unionists. For anybody to describe trade unionism as a cancer is an insult, quite frankly, to not only those who happen to believe in trade unionism but to all people of Alberta, and quite frankly I'm surprised that the member would describe it in such a way.

Economic clout. Now there's an argument, Mr. Speaker, that's somewhat meritorious. Economic clout: that's what our society is all about. We develop an economy so that people can participate in it. Goodness knows, I'm sure that if you were to ask the Minister of Economic Development and Trade how often he has to offer out some economic incentive for a company, a corporation, an individual to make an investment in our province to provide jobs, he will tell you that he probably has to do it quite frequently. Given the record of loss, I would say it's been done a little too often. Now, I know that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade argues that, oh, we shouldn't concentrate on losses; we should concentrate on the victories that we have in Alberta through our economic development schemes. So let's concentrate on those victories, all of those dollars that go out through Economic Development and Trade.

They go out because people have good ideas, Mr. Speaker, but it's not just good ideas between the Rocky Mountains and the borders of Saskatchewan. Those people that are looking for economic investment in the province of Alberta are also looking for economic investment in the provinces of British Columbia or Ontario or Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia or Quebec, and they are going into those provinces looking for the best economic opportunity they can possibly get from those respective governments. They're saying, "Well, we can create 10, 20, 500 jobs if we have this break," and governments compete amongst themselves trying to get that economic advantage to their home province. And rightfully so. We want to have that kind of economic investment.

Mr. Speaker, workers and companies do the same blessed thing. There's an economic advantage that can only be felt when a service is lost. What happens during contract negotiations sometimes is that you get to a point where there's an impasse, when management will say, "We can't go any further," the trade union negotiator will say, "You have to come somewhat further," and there's an argument. Sometimes it's resolved. Sometimes

it's not. Three percent of the time, 2 percent of the time it's not, and there is a strike or there is a lockout. Both sides feel an economic disadvantage. The loss of production: that's what this is. What's the difference between Pocklington's employees going out on strike as they did in June of 1986 because they wanted to make sure they had some economic clout? Pocklington did the same thing with the government, coming back here in December of 1986 saying: I want money, and if I don't get money, I'm not going to build a plant in Picture Butte. So the government said: here's the bucks. And what did Pocklington do? Did he build a plant in Picture Butte? No, but he threatened that he wouldn't build a plant in Picture Butte, and the government said: well, here's some money; go and build; go and invest; here's the taxpayers' money. He used his economic clout in the same way that the workers withdrew their services and used their economic clout. We find that both sides utilized the same economic tools to their own advantage.

What about other jurisdictions? I heard the Member for Wainwright say that Ontario and British Columbia are amending their labour laws. Their labour laws are being amended to move in a direction that the Member for Wainwright doesn't like. Mr. Speaker, in General Motors corporation and Ford, when those plants have been struck or locked out, do you know what's amazing? Those plants don't hire replacement workers. Now, isn't that amazing? They don't hire replacement workers because they want to get back to the negotiation table. That's just company policy. It's not something that's imposed upon the company by legislation. Company policy says: "We'll shut down. If workers don't work, we don't produce. We get back to the negotiation table. We come up with a collective agreement sooner." Both sides suffer an economic loss. Company policy.

Why haven't we got that here? I'm not suggesting that Ford and GM and Chrysler are more progressive than – well, I suppose they probably are more progressive than some of the corporations that we have here, but there is a different idea about how to approach the negotiation process.

4:20

Mr. Speaker, I was quite surprised that the Member for Wainwright said teachers that are coming out of university these days can't get positions in schools, and he blames it on compulsory membership in the Alberta Teachers' Association. Well, I was really shocked by that statement. I just about fell off my chair. Believe it or not, I've had school trustees that have called wanting to know if I know of quality individuals that have come out of the education system that want to move out to take up teaching positions. Now, I must admit that I've not had a lot of telephone calls from trustees, but not once did I hear a trustee or principal say, "I don't want to hire somebody in the ATA." I didn't hear anybody talk about the compulsory membership in the ATA as being that which would prohibit them from hiring a teacher. Their problem was that they couldn't get people to go out. You know, it's just amazing that the Member for Wainwright would argue that the ATA is prohibiting teachers from teaching in our schools.

The AUPE strike he spoke of where he suggests that members of the striking bargaining unit went back into a building and caused damage – well, I'm shocked by that statement, Mr. Speaker. I know that there are laws about trespassing. Were they charged? Did they appear before the courts? If indeed you have that kind of vandalism, then there are laws that protect people and property. Goodness knows that if you call the RCMP or the city of Edmonton police or the city of Calgary police during an industrial dispute, boy, they're there in a minute. I've seen the

RCMP bring in busloads of constables to protect property. I have actually seen more RCMP on a picket line than I've seen strikers out on a picket line. I've just been amazed. So I wonder, if people were crossing and trespassing, why those people weren't arrested and charged.

The Member for Wainwright also suggests that trade unions are demanding outrageous settlements. I see other members mouthing the words, "It's very true." Can you point to a trade or profession that recently, let's suppose in this decade, since 1986, has had a wage package increase of 30 percent? You know, I have read the newspapers, looking at industrial disputes, wanting to see the terms and conditions of settlements of contracts, and I don't recall an employer agreeing to 30 percent, sir. Where did it happen? Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if a trade union or profession were to go out and demand 30 percent in 1992 or in 1991 or in 1993 – I don't care what year – if they were to go out and have a successful strike vote and say, "We demand 30 percent," they'd be out on strike a long time. Management wouldn't want them back. It's a good thing we've got the Members' Services Committee, because management wouldn't settle those terms or conditions. So when the Member for Wainwright starts talking about outrageous demands and outrageous settlements, we should remember that this isn't a Plexiglas house. It's a glass house, and before we throw stones and boulders, we'd best make sure that our living room windows can withstand the kind of abuse that might be directed at them.

The Member for Wainwright also spoke about Syncrude. He was out there praising Syncrude. Well, I too know of the kind of wage package that Syncrude has. It's interesting, though, that every time that the workers at Suncor, the unionized plant, get an increase, so too do the Syncrude workers. It doesn't matter if the Suncor workers go out on strike or whether they're able to secure a collective agreement through the negotiation process, within a couple of days, usually within the first pay period, there's an increase that goes to the Syncrude workers as well. It would seem that the Suncor workers take all of the risk. They may go out on strike, as they did in 1989, I believe, or 1988. They were the ones that lost the income for a short period of time. Suncor was the company that lost production for a period of time. As soon as they settled the contract, what happened? Syncrude workers got the increase as well.

What the Member for Wainwright didn't mention is that the cost of production for a barrel of oil in terms of workers' wages is lower coming out of the unionized plant. Can you believe it? The unionized workers, I am told, are able to produce oil cheaper than the non-unionized workers. How come? Are they less efficient? The Member for Wainwright would have you believe that they're less efficient. Are they less productive? Well, Mr. Speaker, according to the message I received while I was listening to the Member for Wainwright go through a diatribe, they were less productive. There's got to be something wrong with that equation. How is it that the Suncor workers can produce a barrel of oil cheaper than the Syncrude workers?

You know, I am really quite shocked that we would have such a motion before the Assembly. As the member pointed out, 26 percent. When I was writing my notes the other day, expecting this motion to come up, I was being generous; I thought it was 30 percent. I'm quite distressed. I'm quite saddened to see that we've fallen to a 26 percent rate of unionization in the province of Alberta.

It's not prohibiting anybody from getting a job. I would argue, quite frankly, that the policies of this government have more to do with the unemployment levels in the province of Alberta than trade unionism. We have 122,000 people that are unemployed. I'll bet if you offered those 122,000 people a union job, they'd take it.

They wouldn't argue about whether it was union or non-union. They just want a job. I would suggest quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that it's the policies of the government that contribute more to the rate of unemployment than the policies of the trade union movement. The odds of going out and finding work in a trade union today are one in four, as the member points out. If those were the odds in every lottery game, the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services wouldn't have a slush fund. There wouldn't be community facility enhancement program grants, because the odds aren't good enough. There wouldn't be any profits going into the lotteries branch because the odds just aren't good enough. So here we're worried about this rate, this cancer, this creeping unionism. I would suggest that what we've got is a bogeyman, just a bit of a bogeyman that's been raised by the Member for Wainwright.

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that if people will go out and try and find a job, they're more interested in working at Safeway than at 7-Eleven? Safeway is unionized; the United Food & Commercial Workers in Edmonton, local 401. There's an opportunity to go out and get paid a decent wage. Go into 7-Eleven; the wages aren't half that of the employees of Safeway. Now, I would suggest that if we were to have that kind of balance – you know, you've got half the wage going to the workers in 7-Eleven; surely to goodness their prices should be lower. But do you think they are? They're not. If anything, their prices are higher.

4:30

Now, what about in the construction industry? We have the union dispatchers that have a seniority list; they send out qualified journeymen tradespeople that are unemployed and waiting for work. They know that there is going to be a negotiated contract, there's going to be a built-in benefits plan for those workers that are members of the union. Mr. Speaker, those are benefits that go to members that happen to work in the trade union sector. That's not the case with those people that happen to work outside of the trade union sector; those benefits disappear. There's no guarantee that they will be able to move from one job to another job in the same industry, performing the same work, and getting the same wage. How can you make a commitment to buy a car, pay down a mortgage, if you don't know from one week to the next if your wages are going to be up or down, up 30 percent in one sector or down just barely above minimum wage in the next one? How can you make that kind of commitment to a banker?

DR. WEST: Welcome to the private sector.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, let me tell you, the Solicitor General welcomes me to the private sector. I'm hoping that in due course he, too, will be back in that blessed private sector of his, because, Mr. Speaker, I think that people in Vermilion-Viking would love to have the opportunity to once again say, "Well, where shall I mark my X?", and maybe, if the private sector is so blessed, the Member for Vermilion-Viking won't be on the ticket. Maybe he'll just say: "Oh, it's time to leave. The private sector looks so much better. I'm out of here, gone, gone." I think there's an opportunity. You don't even have to worry about it. You don't have to worry about the electorate; just go. Go with my blessing. You have my permission.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what about the democratic process? The democratic process is, quite frankly, enshrined in the trade union movement. It's right there. You vote. If you go out and you organize in a factory or in a plant, you go and you organize. You sign your name to a card if you're interested in joining a trade union. The card is taken to the Labour Relations Board, and they determine whether or not you're an employee eligible to vote for

certification. Now, do you think you'd get a certification with 40 percent of the workers, or 50 percent? You have to have the majority. Even though you've signed a card and paid \$2 for the privilege of signing a card that says, "I want to be a member of this union," you still have a government-supervised vote to make sure that nobody has incorrectly marked their ballot, to make sure that nobody's misinterpreting where that X might be. Democratic process.

Now, when I've gone to union meetings – and I've gone to a number of them – I can tell you that union leadership is held accountable. I've gone there where members have expressed real concern about the investment of pension plans. I've seen union leaders taken to task over dispatching individuals that their members felt should not have been dispatched because they weren't necessarily qualified to do a certain job. That stuff is discussed.

If you want, Member for Lacombe, come with me one Saturday morning. I'll take you to my union, and we'll go down there and you can watch . . .

MR. MOORE: I don't raise my funds from unions.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, you know, the Member for Lacombe makes an interesting point about fund-raising from the trade union movement. There again, Mr. Speaker, if you go to the union and you ask for a political donation, as I have done, the membership votes. You know what? I've been turned down. How about that? I've been turned down. I've gone in and I've said, "I need money," and you know, I have had occasion where I've been turned down. Now, you can't get any more democratic than that. But I'll tell you, I have also received some very nice donations, thank you very much, because these people happen to work under this regressive Labour Relations Code . . .

MR. CLEGG: Oh, quit lying to us, Tom. You're telling stories about it.

MR. SIGURDSON: Remember, I'm on my feet, and I would appreciate it if you'd not call me a liar.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I've also had people that have come to me that have made substantial donations because they've worked under the Labour Relations Code, they know how regressive it has been and continues to be, and they have a vested interest in making sure that this labour law is indeed changed.

I thank you very much for being able to address Motion 215.

Point of Order

Deletion of Item from Order Paper

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-North West is rising on a point of order.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I'm citing from our Standing Orders, number 45. It says, "A member who has made a motion may withdraw it only with the unanimous consent of the Assembly." I have a concern that I would like to relate. I don't want to take away from the debate, but I'm a little concerned about something that has occurred here.

If we look at our Votes and Proceedings dated Tuesday, May 19, 1992, we see that Motion 213 by the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek was debated that day, and debate was adjourned that day. That was a Tuesday, Mr. Speaker. Presumably, then, following

213 comes 214, which was a motion the Member for Cardston had on the Order Paper. Yet when we get to the Order Paper for Thursday, May 21, two days later, Motion 214 has disappeared from our Order Paper. I would draw the Speaker's attention to *Beauchesne* 371. My concern is highlighted in *Beauchesne* 371, and I would like to read from that particular citation. It says:

The paper known as Order Paper and Notices, is the official agenda printed on the responsibility of the Clerk of the House, containing all the proposed questions set out in accordance with the Standing Orders. All the proposed proceedings of the House are recorded in abbreviated form in that paper.

This is the crucial part, Mr. Speaker. It says:

To add to, or to suppress from it, any proposal which the House has ordered would constitute a serious infringement on the privileges of the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, Motion 214 has been on the Order Paper for a number of weeks. For some reason, between Tuesday, May 19, and Thursday, May 21, Motion 214 has disappeared from our Order Paper. I'm not trying to detract from today's motion, but it seems that something has seriously gone wrong, and I would ask that you rule on what's happened here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair appreciates the point raised by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, but the Chair is unable to accede to his request that there be a ruling made at this time, because the Chair is as equally mystified as he is as to what has happened in the record, so it'll have to be checked. The member's point will be taken.

Debate Continued

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: I listened for the last half hour, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. I couldn't gather what motion he was speaking to. For a half hour I listened to negotiation and wage increases and the negotiating process of unions. I don't see a thing in this motion that relates to negotiations. It's the right to work, it's the process of getting into the labour force, not the negotiation process that goes on between unions and employers. We got a lesson in how unions work. Well, that's all right. That's good, but it doesn't have any bearing on the motion. You know, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to get up on a point of order and cut him off, but the boy was having his fun at it, and I guess that's all he knew. He didn't know what the motion was, and I didn't want to destroy his train of thought. He might have been at a loss.

4:40

There are some things he brought up that I'll deal with in a moment, but I want to talk just for a moment on government and the labour laws. Our labour law needs some upgrading. There are many areas in that which we should upgrade. Labour laws are there to provide an equitable opportunity for the labour force and management to operate to the benefit of society and themselves. Under the present setup there are some segments of society it doesn't treat fairly, and this motion deals with that segment. The government this year will spend in economic development \$94 million, \$94 million that we're putting out there to provide job opportunities, an atmosphere here, a climate for private industry to work in the labour force. There would be jobs and people would be able to pay their bills and pay their mortgages. The economic development is there; we're spending \$94 million. But here we tolerate a situation where after we create this climate, create these jobs and bring these businesses here, we do not give total freedom

to our workers to participate in the situation that we have created. I say we should correct that area.

There are four segments in the labour area, if you want to call it labour. There's management, unions, the work force, and the general public. All four need to be protected; all four need to have fair opportunity. Management needs to have a work force, and the work force has to be working for management to exist. If they aren't working and aren't there in the workplace, management isn't going to gain too much.

Unions. Unions need to exist. I've been around longer than that Member for Edmonton-Belmont. He doesn't know what he's talking about in many cases when he's talked. I'm going to go back to what he didn't know because he wasn't born. Back when unions came into being, we needed unions, I'll tell you. I've seen myself working at 2 o'clock in the morning in a store on Sunday morning because there were no labour laws. You didn't have a 40-hour week then. You held on to your job because you wanted the job, and you bloody well worked. There's no question about it; we needed unions. They came in and they brought in good labour legislation. They played their role. They developed it, and we have that legislation that protects the workers. The hours of work, the holidays, the fringe benefits: they're all there, which labour unions brought around, so they played an important role.

However, just like anything else, power corrupts. Total power totally corrupts, and that's just what we have with the unions today. They've got total power, to where they're going against the workers they say they represent. I'm surprised to see the socialists across there always saying, "We're with the worker," yet they say it's a right of the union to not give a job to a man who's standing there, qualified, at the door of that workplace saying, "I want to work." The employer says, "You've got a job," and the union says, "No, you can't go in." That's on the side of the worker, really there.

I say that the socialists are on the side of the unions, because the unions know who fuels their chests. They know it. They don't have to look any further than their bank accounts to know where their money is coming from. So they're on the side of the unions, not on the side of the worker. Let's clarify that right now. The worker is what this government's out there for, and that's who we're speaking for today, on behalf of the worker, to give him a chance to go out there and earn a living, to pay his bills, to educate his children, and to pay his mortgage. No, we don't want him to take his money and give it for union dues and have them say: "You're at the bottom of the list. You haven't got seniority, so sit there." No, we don't want that. This government doesn't want that. The Member for Wainwright doesn't want it. He came here and said: "It's the freedom to choose to work when I want to work, and if there's a job there, to work. Don't put the roadblocks there."

I don't think that when the hon. minister of economic development spends \$94 million, he intends that to go to holding people up from getting jobs. He wanted to create jobs; he wanted people to work. Can we tolerate that here? I can't understand. I wonder - I'm trying to find Edmonton-Belmont. I'd better put my glasses on. I think he would be here. He must be here somewhere. I'm not saying he isn't. He must be here, Mr. Speaker, somewhere.

Anyway, that's the unions. We need unions. They negotiate, and they negotiate well. They're very experienced at it, and that's fine. They get the wages. The Member for Edmonton-Belmont said, yeah, they do a good job. He spent a half hour telling how they did a good job, but he didn't talk about the motion. He didn't talk about that. He kept knocking the Member for Wainwright for being on the side of the worker. I'm over here protecting the unions, he said. We heard it. All we've got to do

is read *Hansard*. I hope all the workers in the country read *Hansard* and hear how it is. The Member for Wainwright just wanted to give the little worker a chance to pay the bills for his family. That's all he asked.

Now, we talk about fairness in the workplace. Well, let's talk about fairness. We have workers. We have an employer. Mr. has a job for a man to work. We have a young fellow that comes along, he goes in, and he hires him. The young fellow does a terrific job; he does exactly what the employer wanted. The young fellow likes to work, but then we run into a certain thing called closed shop. Usually after 30 days, I think it is, in most union contracts, closed shop comes into play. At the end of 30 days the worker must choose to pay his union dues and join the union or he must quit the job he likes or the employer must terminate him, an employee that's doing a wonderful job for him. He wants him, but he must be terminated because he didn't want to give his union dues to the union. Is that fair? I ask you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder where the Member for Edmonton-Belmont is on that question.

Another thing that bothers me on fairness: where's the Human Rights Commission? This is a blatant violation of human rights, but do you see the Human Rights Commission come in there? No; they're afraid of the unions. I don't know whether the unions are paying his bills or not either, but I begin to wonder. I begin to wonder. No, not a whimper out of the Human Rights Commission. They're going to get a new man at the head. Hopefully, he will look at this blatant violation of human rights on closed shop.

AN HON. MEMBER: More women. Don't forget the women; more women.

MR. MOORE: Yeah, that's right. More women in the workplace. They get stopped, too, on closed shop. They don't want to pay their union dues.

We'll talk about a few things that I heard from the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. He talked about World War II. What in the world does he know about World War II? He says World War II was fought by Canadians for a good cause. He's right there. He went to school. I think he was a schoolteacher; I think that was his background. He learned that. But he said - he was relating to compulsory da-da-da. He said there were some union people there, but what he forgot to say was that one out of every 10 Canadians went over there and fought in World War II, but they were volunteers. It wasn't compulsory. They dragged a few in kicking and screaming, then called conscripts, but those were volunteers. It wasn't compulsory. We're talking about a compulsory volunteer. Then he kind of related that in as if the unions weren't da-da-da-da. Well, they aren't. They went over there to volunteer as Canadians, and I'm proud of them too. Nobody looked at whether they were union or not, but it certainly wasn't compulsory. I was there, and we were all volunteers until the conscripts came. I was in the navy, and we never had any conscripts there, thank the Lord.

Then he went on. He talked about Syncrude. They got a wage increase, and thank the Lord they did. They probably deserved it. I'm not here to argue it. The Member for Wainwright isn't arguing that. They negotiated it fair and square. They got their increase. Then he says that the cost of production has gone down; it doesn't reflect that wage increase. That sounds nice to the uninformed, but everyone around this place knows that technology is advancing. Technology is what brought the cost of production down, not the increase in wages or decrease in wages. It was the advances in technology. If you go back to when Syncrude started, it was prohibitive per barrel, but gradually it has come down, year

by year by year, because of the efficiencies brought into this system and new technologies being applied every day in the oil industry. Do not give us the idea that it went down because as people got paid more, the price of production came down. That had no relationship whatsoever to do with it. But the Member for Edmonton-Belmont sounded good over there until you started to look underneath the surface of what he was saying.

4:50

I want to talk about fairness again. If you're an organization and you're charging dues, in all fairness to everybody you should collect your own dues. This is something that's wrong with our labour Act. Our labour Act forces management to collect the dues for the union. I'm talking about fairness now. Is there any fairness in that? Absolutely not.

Let's look at the compulsory part. We talk about compulsory membership and volunteers. If the union were so good and provided such great assistance to the worker, they would never have to have that compulsory element. If they were good, the worker would buy it. They wouldn't have to have the compulsory element, and that is a fact of life.

MR. JONSON: We should pay taxes, too, that way.

MR. MOORE: Hon. Member for Ponoka, I'm just verifying that. That's a fact of life.

If they were so good, you wouldn't need compulsory, but we have compulsory, so there must be something wrong. Let's talk about that. We don't have to go to compulsory in politics because the Progressive Conservatives are so good that everybody will come here; we've got the majority in the House that proves it. If we go on the union theory, we'd make it compulsory, while we're government, for everybody to belong to the Progressive Conservative Party. We don't have to, because we provide the framework and the progressive legislation that people want in this province, and they support it. We don't need compulsory.

Let's look at compulsory, and let's go a little further on the socialists over there. Let's look at Russia. You noticed compulsory membership, just like in the union. Russia had compulsory under Communism. You only had one party. You had to belong to the one party, or you didn't function in Russia outside of Siberia. But as soon as you gave freedom of choice to the individual, you saw what they had to sell. That's what the unions are afraid of. If you were to take compulsory away and give the freedom of choice to the worker, the unions know the real value of themselves. They know the real value of their programs. They know exactly what the worker would do. Then they say, "Well, the worker wouldn't last long." Are they insulting the intelligence of the worker, that only the union knows what's good for them? I believe that if we give them the right to work, they'll make the right choices. I'm all for workers. This government's all for workers. The Member for Wainwright is all for workers, or he wouldn't have brought this motion forward.

When we think of unions, we think of the young worker when he leaves school and we think of the jobs. He has to belong to a union before he can go for a job. He isn't given the choice to go to any job he wants. He has to pick. If he wants to go without joining the union, he's got to go to a nonunion job. But if we bring in the education system, we should leave the whole spectrum of opportunity out there for that young person that leaves our education system.

I can only relate to Union Carbide and Alberta Gas Ethylene and those plants in the petrochemical industry in my own constituency. I've had young people come to me that came out of high

school, went down to get work there. They're union shops. They said, "Hey, you can't get a job here unless you join the union." "Well, how do I join the union?" Now, this is true, Mr. Speaker, as they came to my desk after this little episode. Two of them went down to Calgary, paid their dues, and if I remember rightly, it was \$269 or something they had to pay over there. They'd just come out of high school; their fathers paid it for them. But that's all right; they paid it. They came back waving their union cards, slipped down there to the Joffre area, where they said, "Oh, yeah; we'll put you on the list." "Well, when can we go to work?" They said: "Well, you aren't going to work. You're the bottom of the list. Seniority comes in there."

Now, they weren't forthright with their information. They took the union dues; this is compulsory, you know. So they went down to get to work, and now they've got to wait for seniority. And you know what happened? They never did get a job down there in the five years of construction because Ontario and all those seniority jobs came in and took them. Is that what we've got economic development for here in Alberta, to provide jobs for socialist Ontario? No way. We can't have that, but that's what's happening with the unions. The jobs were open; they had the seniority and they came in. It all sounds very nice. Compulsory. Join the union. Have a job. Live forever. Yeah, I can tell you, live forever. A great way to live.

What about the poor welfare recipient that we're trying to create work for? The Member for Wainwright knows these people. The unemployed: how can they afford to go down and pay those dues? So by saying, "You've got to join the union to get that job that's in your community . . ." When you have a job in Wainwright – I know the Member for Wainwright says that a welfare recipient and unemployed who's willing to work, wanting to better himself, can't do it, because it's compulsory. The job's there – it's there – but he can't take advantage of it. He never will get himself off welfare and unemployment with the union. There is no way he can do it. Yet the socialists are on the side of the worker, the disadvantaged – the champion.

Edmonton-Belmont: I am surprised. He is on the side of the unemployed, he's on the side of the welfare, he's on the side of the union, but they aren't very compatible, not very compatible. I think it's all about getting deals with the socialists. They're on the side of the union; they know who pays their bills. They know who pays their bills; that's all I'll say. They're quite aware of that, but they aren't on the side of the poor worker out there, or they'd be on the side of this motion today.

I ask everybody in this House to do the responsible thing and support this motion by the Member for Wainwright. It's long overdue, it's on the side of the worker, and it's putting the union back in the place where it should be: negotiate the contracts, but get out of controlling the lives of the worker. The worker is number one, and the Member for Wainwright has outlined that very clearly.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Wainwright started out his talk with a couple of phrases. I thought, gee, that's a pretty good beginning. He talked about freedom and tolerance, and I thought, well, that seems pretty reasonable, and then he went off the deep end, unfortunately. The comments that the member made with respect to labour unions being a cancer: I was rather appalled that he would use that kind of a term. I guess he has that feeling, then, about the workers themselves that are involved in labour unions. I guess he

feels they must be cancerous too. Yet I did, unfortunately, listen to the speech, and you read it very well. I wish that it had been written a little bit better, however.

The member did talk about some things that I think are a concern. I think it's important to get some labour concepts on the board, and I think it's important to talk about labour issues. So from the point of view that we're talking about labour issues, I think the member deserves a small compliment for bringing labour issues to the fore. The particular motion, though, I don't think is really very practical. I want to perhaps give him an analogy that he might understand, because as I read the motion, where he talks about "right to work as he or she chooses by endorsing a policy . . . to work with or without joining a union," I guess what the member envisions is that you could have two people working side by side, one who was a member of the union and one who wasn't a member of the union.

5:00

But you know what would happen is that the person who chose not to be a member of the union would probably say, "Well, I want the same salary and I want the same benefits and I want the same privileges." It's kind of like two people driving down the road and one's got car insurance and the other doesn't. They both get into an accident, and the guy says: "I chose not to have car insurance, but I still want to have the same coverage. I still want to have the same insurance that this other guy has because, you know, that looks pretty good." Well, it doesn't work that way. Paying your union dues allows you certain benefits and certain privileges. Just like if you pay your car insurance or your home insurance, it allows you certain benefits. If you don't pay the wage, you don't get the benefit. I'm sure the member can understand that. You don't pay it; you don't get it.

To suggest that this motion is in fact a benefit to the worker – I find that hard to believe. I don't know that it's going to support the individual worker. We do have legislation in this province that says that if a group of employees at a particular location choose to become unionized, they can do so. If they choose to become deunionized, they can do so. That is there within our current labour practice, and I think that's a reasonable sort of approach. The workers choose, "Do we want to be in a union?" If they want to, they can do that. If they don't want to, they can collectively get out of it. Nothing wrong with that. But to have something side by side that says everybody's got to have freedom to choose within one particular location I don't think would work.

The member, I know, made reference to the ATA and made comments that the ATA is preventing teachers from being hired. I find that an absolutely incredible statement, that he would state that teachers are not getting jobs because of the ATA. That doesn't make any sense, quite frankly. Then he goes on to talk about the nurses not getting jobs because of their unions. It doesn't make any sense. I fail to see how having a union prevents people from working. Those comments that the member makes, quite honestly, are illogical and irrational.

It is important that we recognize our labour force. There's no doubt about the fact that the future prosperity of this province, of this nation – in fact, I would say any nation – is going to be largely based upon the strength of the labour force. You need to ensure that the places they have to work are safe, and I think there's no doubt that we need to ensure that members that are in the labour force can go to work, earn the wage that's been agreed upon. Whether it's agreed upon in or outside of a union, quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, I think is irrelevant. It is important that people who agree to work for a set wage get paid that wage at the

end of the week or the end of the month or whatever they have negotiated.

We have to be competitive; there's no doubt about that. This member would have us believe that freedom to choose – I guess that's what we can call this motion in short – is going to help make us competitive. Well, I fail to see how that in fact is going to be the case. I think what we need to do to ensure that our members in our work force become competitive, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to ensure that our work force members have a solid background, a solid education that is continuously upgraded. I'm sure it will come as no surprise to members of this Legislature that I believe very strongly in education. This particular motion doesn't deal with that. It simply says you can opt in; you can opt out. It doesn't say anything about training. It doesn't say anything about upgrading. It doesn't say anything about education. The marketplace – whichever marketplace you're talking about, whether it's agriculture, whether it's manufacturing – is continually changing, continually upgrading, continually, in a lot of ways, becoming much more complex. Simply allowing people to choose one way or another doesn't do anything to make them more competitive. It doesn't address the need for education. It doesn't address the need for continual upgrading and improvement in training and so by itself I'm afraid is very short-sighted.

I would support a motion that talked about some other things in terms of freedom to choose; you know, something along the line of increasing worker flexibility in terms of job sharing. I think there's a concept, Mr. Speaker. We see a lot of people saying, "Well, I want to work," but for whatever reasons, perhaps family reasons, they can't work full-time or always a day shift or something like that. Simply choosing a union or not isn't going to help them solve that problem. Maybe they can only work afternoons; maybe they can only work mornings; maybe they can only work an evening shift. I think this problem is particularly of concern for women, because if the truth be known, most often it's the women that have to look after the children that are in a family and face the problem in terms of getting into the workplace. We see nothing here that talks about helping out those people who are having difficulty finding jobs because of their particular family situations.

Mr. Speaker, this country, in fact this continent, is built upon immigrants. It's built upon new people coming to this country. In fact, all we have to do is look around this Legislature and look at the names of the members. We see people coming from all kinds of backgrounds. We see Ukrainians; we see Russians; we see native people; we see Scots, Czechs, Dutch. Pick a country, and they're probably represented here. Yet one of the biggest problems we have is new Canadians coming to this province, trying to find employment, and having difficulty finding employment, not because of union or nonunion, but having difficulty because the education they got somewhere else maybe doesn't apply in this particular area. We see difficulties within the Department of Labour, where we know there's a report that still hasn't come forward that says how we're going to resolve this issue. There's a concern that's a labour issue that should be discussed, that should be on the Order Paper, but unfortunately we don't see it. This motion doesn't deal with that either.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about standards, and I want to talk about the ATA, the Alberta Teachers' Association, because that is kind of a unique union. It has kind of two sides to it. It has, on one hand, I guess the labour union side that does the negotiations, benefits packages, the whole area in that particular field. But it also has another side, a professional side that deals with standards. In fact, you may remember this particular government introduced the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards, called COATS for

short, which deals exactly with that issue. It says that we need to make sure that our teachers are working in safe conditions, that our students, our young people are in safe conditions, that the curriculum which is being delivered is a standard curriculum that is met across this province, that teachers have the materials to work with. Standards are something that have come out of the teaching profession.

Now, I have to ask the question of myself: if I were not involved with the ATA, or if there was no ATA and everybody was off doing their own thing, who's to say that the education you got, perhaps in downtown Calgary in an inner-city school, might be the same as what you might get in Drumheller? Perhaps Drumheller has got a superior school. I wager the Deputy Speaker may know something of that. There are some fine schools in Drumheller. Or perhaps you might go out to Banff and find some difficulty over there. Well, one of the advantages of the ATA: it's the Alberta – the Alberta – Teachers' Association. It covers the entire province – north, south, east, west – and says, "We need to ensure that we have some uniform standards, some continuity, so that if we have a student who leaves grade 7 from Hinton and moves to downtown Edmonton, that kid's going to find himself taking the same material. He's not going to find a brand-new, different curriculum."

The Member for Stony Plain reminded me about professional standards, professional development of the teachers themselves. This applies, I'm certain, to all other unions as well. One of the things that is often supported by the association – it says: "We want our teachers to be current. When the government introduces a new curriculum for whatever reason, we want to make sure that those teachers are developed and prepared so that when they get ready to go back to the classroom the next fall, they know what it is that is being expected of them, we know what the materials are that are going to be worked with, and we know that we're going to get, again, that standard product, that standard education, as best we can, of course, with all of the variables involved being delivered in all of the different schools." Mr. Speaker, if you didn't have the Alberta Teachers' Association, many of those things would fall by the boards. Many of the concerns that are addressed by the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards, COATS, are not going to be resolved, and you're going to see difficulties in education. Everybody loves to complain about our education system. You see concerns in the newspaper all the time. It can be improved. I think everyone in this Legislature will agree. There are always improvements that can be made. We need to strive to improve that product and improve the standard and raise it ever higher.

I know that's what the Minister of Education works for all the time. He wants the students that leave our education system at the end of grade 12 to be the best prepared that they can be. Part of that comes with standards, and part of those standards, Mr. Speaker, are set through, lo and behold, something that looks like a union called the Alberta Teachers' Association. So how we can say that a teacher in one classroom can be a member of the ATA and the next one not and the one down the road maybe chooses a different association all together – I find it difficult to accept.

5:10

Mr. Speaker, the members have talked about the marketplace and said, "Well, we should negotiate salaries, we should negotiate prices, and we should negotiate benefits," and they're suggesting all of this should happen on an individual basis, I guess. I'm going to go back to the teachers once again for a moment, because there are 30,000 practising teachers in the province of Alberta. Now, if we have 30,000 individuals going to their collective

school board and saying, "Well, I'm here to negotiate my salary today," we'd never get anywhere. How do all of the school boards in the province of Alberta sit down and negotiate with 30,000 teachers? It just doesn't work.

**Point of Order
Relevance**

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wainwright's rising on a point of order.

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, the motion is the right to choose whether or not you would like to be a member of a union. It's not on the ATA. Please call the member back to order. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair understood that the hon. Member for Calgary-North West was using the ATA as an example of how the member's motion might apply if the results of his motion carry.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

**Point of Order
Imputing Motives**

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member is rising on another point of order?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Citation.

MR. FISCHER: In 23(i). The motion is – and I was supporting unions. I was supporting . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. The Chair believes the hon. Member for Wainwright's questioning the ruling of the Chair, and that's not allowed.

Debate Continued

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did use the ATA as an example, exactly as you suggested, and I used it because the hon. member in his opening speech used the ATA as an example of a union. It seemed appropriate, given his comments, to use it as a union.

I do want to make a couple of other comments about workers and right to choose. You know, we recently had a piece of legislation dealing with apprenticeship and industry training in this Legislature, but when you look back on that piece of legislation, the people who were active in that were, first of all, of course the government. We had the employers involved from a variety of different sectors, and we also had, lo and behold, unions once again involved. These three parties worked together, first of all, to develop the legislation, and now, of course, we see the continuing relationship between those choosing to work together to produce a set of regulations.

Mr. Speaker, the comments about freedom to choose I guess suggest that things are going to be better by allowing individuals working side by side to choose yea or nay. There's a term that I'm sure the hon. member's heard before called "teamwork," and very often when you get two or three or half a dozen people

working together, the strength of a team, in fact, can help solve a problem and can create a creative solution that you wouldn't have achieved by somebody working off by themselves here and there and getting a whole variety of different situations.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about changes in technical requirements, I guess is the way to describe it, on both the national and the international levels. One of the advantages of having a group is that you get people who work together and say, "Well, let's work together to improve the quality of our workplace," whatever that workplace is. Now, just imagine the situation where things continue to change, and somebody says: "I'm going to opt out. I'm going to choose not to belong." What are the chances that that individual is going to be carried along by the rest who've said, "Yes, we believe that continual upgrading, the ongoing education, is necessary, is critical." That person's going to be left behind, and pretty soon what that person's probably done is elected to choose not to be employed, because the end result will be that unless that person is really committed to continue personal education and upgrading, pretty soon that individual is going to find himself behind the eight ball in terms of being ready to really partake in the workplace. So by saying freedom to choose, he's really opted himself out of a position. Is that really what we want to do to those people?

Mr. Speaker, safety standards are a concern that I have raised in the Legislature before. It's something that needs to be agreed upon by government. It needs to be agreed upon by employers and employees together. You cannot leave this to individuals. If you allow individuals to choose and say, "Well, my standard is here," and somebody else says, "My standard is down here," the end result is that you're going to see people getting hurt. I don't think anybody over there wants that, but that's what freedom to choose could lead to. I don't think anybody wants to suggest that that should be the case.

The employment standards, Mr. Speaker. I'm not about to stand here and say that our employment standards legislation is the best in the west or the best anywhere, for that matter. But there are some things that are in there that I think are worth while. It says that workers should get paid for the work they do. I think that's absolutely essential. It says that the workers cannot be fired without just cause. You have to have just cause before you can send someone out the door.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes you get some workers who maybe choose not to be part of a union, and you get an employer who says, "Well, I'm not going to follow the rules either, and I'm going to turf the guy out." Who's going to go to bat for that person, that worker? Sometimes you have some real problems that can be solved when you get some help from others.

I do agree with one comment the member made, though. I think we have a problem with too many labour confrontations. There have been too many strikes, and I agree that people generally don't benefit from strikes. I've seen some of them in the workplace. I've been involved in one, unfortunately. It was a learning experience, I must say, but it was not a pleasant experience. Certainly I hope not to see that happen again. I do agree that we have to have mechanisms that work for the best interests of the employee, for the employer, and also for the public that is being served by whatever labour union or work force is being involved. I think we do need to promote that development of a better attitude, a nonconfrontational attitude. I think both parties are going to feel more comfortable. Both parties are going to feel less threatened. This particular motion, Mr. Speaker, does not deal with that. We need to concern ourselves with absenteeism, we need to concern ourselves with labour strife, and that's not addressed in this particular motion.

I think what we do need to do, Mr. Speaker – and that's why I can't support this motion – is that we need to ensure that the individual employee has the opportunity to fulfill his maximum potential, and if we do that, everyone's going to gain: the worker, the company, the employee, and our economy as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

Deletion of Item from Order Paper

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Before recognizing the next speaker, the Chair would like to rule on the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West. Standing Order 45 says that where a member has moved a motion, it can't be withdrawn without unanimous consent. It's a long-held tradition of this Assembly that until the motion is moved, the House has no property in it, and the practice followed by the hon. Member for Cardston in writing to the Clerk to have it removed from the Order Paper is in order. That is what the hon. member did, and that's the explanation of why it disappeared from the Order Paper. There's no point of order.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, on that. It says "made a motion," not necessarily moved a motion. I would also just draw your . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: He's made a ruling.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I'm questioning it under 13(2), for the motion, for which also I did quote another section, which was 371. I quote once again:

To add to, or suppress from it, any proposal which the House has ordered would constitute a serious infringement on the privileges of the House of Commons.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, I'm sure the hon. member does not wish to debate with the Chair, but Standing Order 45 says, "A member who has made a motion may . . ." In this case, the hon. member had not made a motion. It was on the Order Paper, but until the hon. member moves it in the House, it has not been moved. Therefore, the Assembly has no property in it, and that's why the hon. member has the right to request its removal, which he did.

Debate Continued

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise to debate Motion 215 today. I would like to congratulate the Member for Wainwright for bringing forward this motion.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I also support the individual rights of people to choose whether or not they belong to a labour union. I certainly believe that no job should ever be denied a legitimately qualified worker because of his union affiliation or lack thereof. I believe the people in my constituency of Little Bow concur with that. As such, I endorse the motion, which acknowledges the workers' right to decide for themselves. Adopting Motion 215, Mr. Speaker, would maximize the workers' control over their own conditions of employment. The workers will have the ability to choose union membership if they feel it's in their best interests. They also have the choice to pursue other settlement mechanisms.

5:20

Current labour/management systems encourage confrontation, and I believe truly that this results and has resulted in the past number of years in bad feelings, low morale, and a loss of productivity. For example, in negotiations today parties are encouraged to start out with unreasonable negotiation positions. The employer and the employees become outraged at the unreasonable offers and counteroffers. The clients and the public become disillusioned with the process. When negotiations break down and strikes or lockouts occur, upset only increases, bad feelings are created, and the losers are the employees and the employers.

We certainly feel the results of such actions very deeply in rural Alberta, Mr. Speaker, particularly when we come down to picket lines, because in rural Alberta names and faces are known. These are the same people who volunteer within a community. Pickets or strikes or disruptions of working forces have detrimental effects, especially in the smaller communities. The banker quite often is the local curling club treasurer, and the social studies teacher quite often is the Brownie or Guide leader. The home economist may very well be the person that's instructing sewing classes in the evening. These people are instrumental within the community and have a choice, I feel, to determine whether they belong or don't belong to a union, and I don't think any labour group should take offence to that.

I think that given a fair chance, people would prefer to settle their disagreements in a logical and commonsense manner, and I believe our labour system should encourage this. We need to get back to a system that encourages mutual respect and co-operation. Having sat across from a number of groups on numerous occasions in the negotiation process, I have always been amazed at the integrity that both sides brought to the table, but at the same time, there seemed to be this dictate from on high that wasn't really looking after the best interests of the local people that they represented, and I got strong indications during the course of these negotiations that in fact maybe the true picture was never being taken back to the rank and file. I don't make that as a comment to point fingers, only to show that in some instances those of us who negotiate professionally at a table have been so far and distantly taken apart from the actual people they were representing that they can't relate anymore to the rank and file. I believe that adopting Motion 215 would be a step in the right direction to seeing this type of situation enhanced in the future.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, when workers and employers recognize that they need each other to get ahead, I would like to see that they take prosperity as a common aim. All too often in the past we've had union groups and ourselves sit down at a table with the idea that we're going to take back as much as we can, put it all in our pockets, and forget the real reason that we're at the table in the first place. We know that there are people today who because of the negotiation process have holidays which in literal terms are deemed to be in their contract but in fact are sick days, and people have taken it upon themselves to take advantage of them whether they're sick or not. They'll take them as sick days merely as a false excuse to go on a holiday and in fact will even go one step further and, rather than scheduling doctors' appointments at another time, after working hours, will take advantage of a contract to see doctors during regular work hours.

I believe that moving on right-to-work legislation would put more power in the hands of the workers and less power in the hands of the union leaders. I believe also that the remarks made by the Member for Wainwright that support voluntary unionism – it would require union bosses to be more up front and more

creative in attracting members to their union rank and file. In the long run, Mr. Speaker, the worker would be better served. We'd have a heightened worker satisfaction in knowing that a job was well done, and perhaps increased productivity.

If I could, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share with you a bit of conversation that I had with a senior banker working in Asia. He passed along a comment which I didn't take a great deal of pride in, being from Alberta and from Canada, and that was that Canada has been considered a very risky country to invest in because of the high numbers of working days that we presently have lost. I checked with the Department of Labour, and in 1991 Alberta lost 3.77 person-days per 10,000 worked due to work stoppages. This was the eighth lowest in the provinces. Canada's average was 9.44. However, up to February 1992, Alberta ranks highest, with 9.41 person-days per 10,000, and this is double the national average of 4.61. In addition, we know these figures will probably be significantly higher due to the number of recent teachers' strikes.

There's reason to believe that this situation will get worse, and I could only pass on the information that as of this month we have 1,300 collective bargaining agreements in our province, 50 percent of which are still outstanding. If the 2 to 3 percent figure, which the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont suggested is correct, indicates the 25 percent membership of the union people in the province, where will we be at if all working people in the province were unionized? Would that be a 12 to 16 percent figure?

This could be a summer of strikes, considering that there are

very high numbers of workers in the public administration, health care, and education fields in need of settlements. If strikes occur, many people will be impacted. The strikes will be painful for employees, employers, and the clients. This kind of information will get back to our potential investors overseas and our potential investors outside the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think enhancing the workers' freedom to choose will be good for employers, employees, and even the unions. I believe that the government should do everything possible to strengthen the ability of Albertans to gain satisfying and meaningful employment with fair remuneration and benefits. I support Motion 215, and I congratulate the Member for Wainwright for having the courage to bring this motion forward.

Could I please, given the time that we have today, adjourn debate?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

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