

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, June 29, 1992**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 92/06/29

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated.

head: **Government Motions**

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent of the House to deal with an amendment to Motion 20 as requested by the opposition.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there such unanimous consent?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.  
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

### Parliamentary Reform Committee

27. Moved by Mr. Anderson:

Be it resolved that Government Motion 20, agreed to by the Legislative Assembly on May 26, 1992, be amended in subparagraph 3 to strike the name of Thomas Sigurdson and substitute the name of Derek Fox.

MR. ANDERSON: This was at the request of the Official Opposition, and we're pleased to support the change. It's not that we didn't want Mr. Sigurdson, but we're pleased to have Mr. Fox.

[Motion carried]

head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Second Reading**

### Bill 41 School Amendment Act, 1992

[Adjourned debate June 26: Mr. Chivers]

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

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had just about concluded my comments with respect to Bill 41 the other day when we had a visitor without. However, since that time I think all Members of the Legislative Assembly have received a communication from the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta with respect to this Bill, and that highlights a comment I had made earlier with respect to this matter and what should have been the necessity of dealing with the Francophone language provisions of the Bill independently of the other provisions which are controversial.

When some of the provisions are not controversial and others are, and when some persons feel that they've not had consultation or at least not had adequate consultation with respect to portions of the Bill, it is indeed unwise not to separate the matters. My concern at this point in time, of course, in light of the minister's comment earlier on, is that those provisions which are not controversial are apparently not going to be proceeded with at this session. I find that extremely regrettable, because those noncontroversial provisions should certainly have been in a position to be proceeded with at this time, and indeed I see no

reason why they could not be separated, and we could still proceed with those provisions.

With those comments I'll sit down.

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

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Friday, June 19, was a proud day for Francophone parents who have the right and the desire to manage their own schools. We know why they want this. They believe that being able to manage their own schools will stem the very high rate of assimilation of Francophones in the province. Francophone parents spent years of striving, hours of committee meetings going back to – I don't know – at least 1985, many years spent in court, and all of this for naught, it seems.

In addition to all of those things, a committee was struck by this Legislature, and the committee did some excellent work for a number of months. They established the needs through a survey throughout the province. They met with a number of groups. The committee was well structured, representation from all kinds of groups. When that committee tabled its report a year ago, there was broad consent and broad support for that report from the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association, and the Alberta trustees association for bilingual education. When this Bill was tabled on June 19, it was seen as a proud day. Not only that, the minister had a press conference with the interested stakeholders; there were headlines. I want to read some of these headlines from the French Canadian paper called *Le Franco*. The headlines – and I translate – said: parents obtain governance. The second headline: Francophones have something to celebrate. The third headline: at last we have it, governance.

Now it seems that this Bill will not proceed at this time, and I think this is a breach of trust. On March 10 the Premier promised Francophone parents that this matter would be dealt with during this session. Now, I know the session will continue into the fall, and I do hope that what we heard this afternoon as regards this aspect of Bill 41 is true and that the government will actually deliver on these promises. Otherwise, we have a betrayal of trust of a group of people who have the right as one of the minority language groups in this province to have governance over their own schools. Not only that, during the constitutional committee hearings and in our report on the Constitution we said that we supported the Canada clause, which supports and recognizes minority rights for Francophones in Alberta and in the other provinces outside of Quebec and of course minority rights of Anglophones within Quebec. So all of this is to say, Mr. Speaker, that I feel a sense of betrayal and sadness tonight that this Bill is now going to die as of tonight and will not proceed to committee and to third and final reading.

Also, on June 19 the part of Bill 41 which dealt with a very necessary user fee amendment was tabled. Again this was to comply with an order of the Court of Queen's Bench. I think a number of school boards felt a sigh of relief, because they would be able to charge user fees to the parents because of the amendment suggested. Now, my caucus doesn't support user fees in principle except for nonessentials. However, because of inadequate provincial funding a number of school boards find it necessary to charge user fees. So again this part of the Bill, a very necessary aspect of the Bill, is going to be tabled.

Now, of course, these things are happening because the minister tried, I believe, to smuggle a number of very distasteful things into the Bill, and it just won't work. An omnibus or miscellaneous Bill that doesn't have broad support for all aspects of the Bill is simply

not going to go anywhere. All of us heard from many stakeholders in the last week. Superintendents have phoned me and said: we haven't seen the Bill; we don't know what's in it. Boards who hire the superintendents are saying: we haven't seen the Bill, and we don't know what's in it. Because of that, the minister today announced that he will not proceed with the Bill. But what else could he expect when you have issues like truancy records and supervision of home schoolers by private schools, when you have regionalization, a concept which all of us I think will support in order to cut down on the number of school boards and to effect some efficiencies. However, there hadn't been enough consultation. So because of these distasteful aspects of the Bill or aspects that were not supported, the minister says that he will now scuttle the Bill.

### 8:10

My preference would have been to delete all those aspects of the Bill which do not have support, because there was lack of communication, lack of consultation, lack of input, and go ahead with sections 11 and 23. However, that is not to happen. I feel that it is a bit of a travesty and a betrayal, as I said earlier. Alberta will remain a renegade province as regards Francophone educational minority rights for a bit longer. Now, I don't know why the minister did this, why he put all of these issues into one Bill. Was it deliberate? Was it in the hopes that public support out there or lack of support for some of the Bill would scuttle the whole Bill? I don't know. I don't want to be paranoid. I don't want to believe that the minister does not mean it and the Premier doesn't mean it when they say that Francophone parents will have educational rights. However, it looks a lot like that, and for that I'm very sorry. On behalf of this Legislature I want to tell Francophone parents that it is not the way that things should be done, and it is not the way that well-meaning people who operate on trust and confidence would operate.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it is no use asking the minister to proceed with parts of the Bill and not others because he's already said that that's not going to be what will happen. However, I do look forward to the fall session, when I hope that the rights of Francophones will be upheld and that the headlines in *Le Franco* will not become a lie.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to add some comments on Bill 41 while we're in second reading and just express my regret that the minister did not proceed with the relevant sections of the Bill that established the enabling legislation for governance of Francophone education in the province of Alberta.

I'd like to remind members of the Assembly that it was the hon. Member for Stony Plain that rose in this Assembly on Wednesday, June 24, in question period and pointed out to the member and other members of the Assembly that this Bill was not simply a Bill to enable the governance of French language education, which is what it was purported to be, which is what it was understood to be by not only Members of the Legislative Assembly but by the groups in the community that were advocating and working hard to establish this enabling legislation.

The Member for Stony Plain quite rightly pointed out that the minister had included – indeed, snuck in – a number of other issues in this broad amending Act for the School Act, with perhaps a couple of possible motivations. One may be so that the offending sections, totally unrelated to the jurisdiction of

Francophone education in the province, would be debated and challenged by members of the Assembly. Then the minister could say: “Oh, well, we're not going to proceed with it. The opposition's fighting the Bill. It's their fault, not mine.” That may have been one of his motives. Or it may have been that he just didn't think of splitting the Bill; it didn't occur to him that he could introduce an amending Act to the School Act this spring that would enable the governance of Francophone education and then in the fall, if that be his desire, introduce another amending Act to the School Act to enable the other things that the minister referred to. I think that's unfortunate.

I'd be interested in a legal opinion about how close this government is coming to contempt of the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to adhering to the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to the rights of Francophone citizens in the province of Alberta to enjoy governance over their education. I'd be interested if the minister has sought a legal opinion on that issue. For the minister and for a government that has bragged incessantly about their ability to consult with Albertans and look to Albertans for advice and meet with Albertans . . . Open, public government: they're born-again consulters, Mr. Speaker. This has been the line ever since the Throne speech hit the floor of this Assembly this spring, but in fact example after example after example where this has not been the case, where the government just goes ahead and does whatever they feel like doing and ignores, at best, the advice from Albertans or disregards it altogether.

I would like to point out that I got a letter from the board of education in the county of Beaver that said:

We understand that these amendments will be implemented without any prior consultation with stakeholder groups. This seems very unfair, and in light of this we ask that you express our concerns to the Legislature regarding the direction of Alberta Education with respect to some sections of Bill 41. Well, how did they come to that conclusion if the government has been consulting? How on earth do people, perhaps as insignificant in the eyes of the government as members of a board of education, the people elected by the men and women in the county of Beaver to represent them on matters educational, come to the conclusion that these amendments have been proceeded with “without any prior consultation with stakeholder groups”?

Now, maybe to salvage some credibility after the fact, the minister has announced that this Bill is going to sit on the Order Paper through the summer and give this process of consultation a chance to occur. I think that's really unfortunate, because clearly if the minister had done what the hon. Member for Stony Plain suggested almost a full week ago and split the Bill – it could easily have happened – proceed with those sections of the Bill that enable Francophone education and hold the others in abeyance until adequate public consultation has occurred, then we could have accomplished something we could all be proud of in this Assembly. In fact, if the minister was going to proceed with this Bill in committee, we would introduce amendments that would accomplish exactly that: make sure that the important parts of this Bill that have been negotiated with stakeholder groups proceed without impediment and pass through this Assembly quickly. But because of the government decision, it looks like we're not going to have that chance.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising to say a few words on the Bill. As one of the few MLAs that, I guess just

by nature, has a Francophone school in his or her constituency, I'm of course very interested in what the future of Francophone schools shall be. I'm very concerned about the way this has been brought forward as part of an omnibus Bill. It has to give cause for worry to anyone that is as dedicated as this caucus and I have been about the governance by Francophone parents of their schools.

After all, this is the same minister that flew the kite of equalized assessment in his own caucus and blew it so full of holes that it never got off the ground. With a minister like this, with his past record of success in convincing his own colleagues, you have to keep saying, maybe like the 15th time somebody's been jilted, that it's promises, promises, promises. We're very, very suspicious that we're getting another type of promise here in order to try to keep things smoothed out. If this minister has the same amount of pull that he has shown in the past in handling his back bench, which generally has not been that receptive to new ideas, which is all right – that's what the word “conservative” means. I mean, they're elected for that, to stand with both feet in the mud and scream, “No.” The point is that the minister hasn't been able to get them out of that mud very often, and I'm very concerned here.

I have to first personally compliment the minister. In dealing with the Francophone school I have in my constituency and associated problems, he has been very co-operative. So I greet this with very mixed reactions, because I know the minister's intentions are good. I just wonder whether he can deliver. With the way it's been presented, we sometimes wonder. He looks like a man that's starting a 100-yard dash with one of his shoes nailed to the ground already, Mr. Speaker. It gets a person a bit concerned about whether he can leave his shoes and get out there and get moving.

I would like the minister to consider – I've had some experience in establishing a Francophone school, getting it under way. The regular public and separate schools should have a bit of a hiatus or breathing gap as far as grants for their own immersion classes and busing are concerned because of the dislocation that occurs when a Francophone school is established, and it's a good thing. The public or separate schools in the nearby area may have their busing patterns thrown out because of the different school. Also, in some areas they may have their immersion classes depleted. Too-strict interpretation of the grants by the minister's department could cause a severe dislocation, which in turn causes a certain amount of animosity in the district. So I would ask for kindness and tolerance as this is implemented.

8:20

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I think this Bill goes a long way – not far enough in my opinion – to compensate for what I think was one of the more disgraceful episodes that I participated in this Legislature in the late '80s, when we changed the rules that had been here since the province joined Confederation, and French was no longer an official language. That was a very, very low moment for me. I think we all got tarred with the same brush in maybe an almost personal vendetta, I thought, to get back at some of the people that used French in addressing some of the public here. [some applause] Thanks. I think the minister has dragged his party, probably unwillingly, into the last half of the 20th century. To that extent, I guess I have to compliment him even if I say that I wonder whether he can do as much as he says he will be able to do.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education, to close debate.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I must. I simply must respond to a couple of the comments that have been made. Bill 41 is about Francophone education. It is about according to parents who enjoy section 23 rights the right to manage and control their Francophone schools on behalf of their Francophone children. It's also about delivering education in Alberta more effectively and more efficiently through the voluntary creation of regional school boards. In a minor sort of way it's about fees, it's about home schooling, and it's about quorum.

Mr. Speaker, it is not an omnibus Bill. It is a Bill that amends one Act. Just to clarify and define for all hon. members on the other side, an omnibus Bill amends more than one Act. This Bill amends the School Act and the School Act alone. You open up an Act; you make amendments that need to be made at the time you make the amendments.

Mr. Speaker, let all members of this Assembly and let all people who are watching in the gallery and let all people who will read *Hansard* note one thing: the “Hallelujah, But” Gang on the other side of the Assembly are the only ones who have spoken in opposition to Bill 41. The government and no government member has spoken against any aspect of Bill 41. Let's put that on the record here tonight.

Consultation: the words “snuck in” or “smuggled in.” I've got to say to all members of this Assembly that we have been in consultation on this Bill anywhere from the last four months to 10 years. Mr. Speaker, I think it's my hon. colleague the veritable thesaurus from Calgary-West who says that hypocrisy is an unparliamentary word and that there is no synonym for it, so I won't use it. When I hear the Member for Calgary-McKnight talking about the Attendance Board and enabling in this legislation to file Attendance Board orders in very special, very unique situations, where the personal unique characteristics or circumstances of individuals in the interests of those young people must be protected – I hear her say on one day that she's all for it. Then the hallelujah but comes in and she says: no, we're going to speak against that here tonight.

I hear the same about home schooling. Mr. Speaker, let's go back to home schooling. It goes back to the Pastor Jones case, which made it very clear to the highest court of this land that home schooling is an acceptable alternative. We're responding to the needs of home schoolers, to parents who are making that choice. That's something that governments must do: listen to people and listen to that requirement, that demand, that expectation for choice.

Mr. Speaker, I won't get into how various members from the other side have been snookered by some school trustees who are in fact opposed to the creation or in fact the existence of separate school districts in this province, but that's exactly what's been done. They've been snookered by certain trustees in this province who want to eliminate that choice by Catholic parents or by those who live in a minority religious district to have their children educated in separate school districts. I'll leave it there, but I want that on the record so that they know.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the principles of this Bill are ones that all members of this Assembly want to support, and that is to accord Francophones their rights. It's good for their children's education, it's right in the Alberta context, and it meets the needs of the Supreme Court judgment in the Mahé decision. It also brings about greater effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of education in this province.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to hearing from all hon. members throughout the summer and to meeting with school trustees and teachers and chambers of commerce and interested taxpayers about this Bill, but I hope that our approval in principle at second

reading here tonight will send a very strong message to our Francophone community in this province that this government and this Legislature lives by the law and will accord those parents who enjoy section 23 rights their rights that are fundamentally theirs not only under the School Act but under the charter of this province.

I commend this Bill to all members, and I ask that they support it at this second reading stage.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education has moved second reading of Bill 41, the School Amendment Act, 1992. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[Motion carried; Bill 41 read a second time]

**Bill 40**  
**Cancer Programs Amendment Act, 1992**

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

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very rewarding to rise tonight to start second reading of Bill 40, the Cancer Programs Amendment Act, 1992.

I'm pleased to bring forward these changes which were proposed by the Alberta Cancer Board. Early in the development of this legislation the Alberta Cancer Board with the assistance of Alberta Health prepared a consultation paper outlining in a general way the proposed changes which would be of interest to other health care stakeholders. The consultation paper was distributed to 21 organizations, including major professional and health care industry associations, teaching and regional hospitals, and the Canadian Cancer Society. Alberta Health worked closely with the Alberta Cancer Board to review the stakeholders' responses, and Bill 40 reflects those comments made by the stakeholders.

This proposed Bill adds a provision that allows the Alberta Cancer Board to meaningfully carry out their role in the prevention of cancer by educating cancer patients and the general public about cancer. It adds the provision on the co-ordination of cancer care, in co-operation with others, to the objects of the board. It recognizes the involvement of scientists in care by requiring the Alberta Cancer Board to employ the necessary scientific staff and to establish a scientific committee to advise the board on credentialing of scientists and other matters of interest to the scientific staff.

It recognizes the multidisciplinary nature of cancer care by creating a facility committee responsible to the board for items previously assigned to the medical staff. It expands the Alberta Cancer Board's ability to use the Edmonton Radiopharmaceutical Centre to supply radiopharmaceuticals to other users such as physics laboratories and veterinarian laboratories as well as medical laboratories and hospitals. It gives the Alberta Cancer Board explicit authority to manage the cancer outpatient drug benefit program as described in regulation. This will replace the authority presently found in the 1958 cancer regulations. It gives the Alberta Cancer Board the authority to provide education and training programs for health care professionals in the prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer and for cancer research with the approval of the minister.

It recognizes the Alberta Cancer Board's mandate to maintain a cancer registry and legislation and updates the provisions on reporting of cases of cancer by physicians and laboratories. It provides confidentiality provisions for the cancer registry and a fine of up to \$10,000 for unlawful disclosure of information. This Bill also makes a number of changes to use the gender-neutral drafting language.

I would urge all members to support this amendment Act, and I look forward to your comments.

Thank you.

**8:30**

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In second reading I want to show our caucus's support for Bill 40, the Cancer Programs Amendment Act, 1992. I've been looking through it with other members of our caucus, and it seems to represent a number of very progressive and very interesting amendments to the Cancer Programs Act. I don't have too many problems with it at all.

I guess it just does open a number of other questions which perhaps could be answered now or at committee stage or even at third reading. One such question is that it does look as though it moves the Cancer Board in a number of new or at least expanding directions, and I just hope that this is in harmony with the movements of other hospital boards through the hospital role and vision statement process. As we know, all acute care hospitals throughout the province are examining their role in health care delivery and their vision of what they should be doing and what in fact they should not be doing. It's a very rigorous process that has been going on for some time, and I just am hopeful that these amendments are part of perhaps what the Alberta Cancer Board may have been going through in terms of examining its role and its vision of its program within the entire health care delivery system.

It's interesting, of course, Mr. Speaker, that the Alberta Cancer Board does serve as a rather unique model for health care delivery insofar as it's not just based with one set of services on one site in one place. It in fact oversees a number of different cancer programs throughout the province and serves a very useful and creative co-ordinating mechanism for the efficient delivery of those kinds of services. It is a model in fact that I have used to develop ways of approaching other health care delivery; for instance, children's services. I don't think we need to build a whole other children's hospital in Edmonton to rival the children's hospital in Calgary. We could use the Cancer Board's way of approaching cancer and have a children's health board which would help to oversee and co-ordinate children's health services among a variety of different sites and sources, helping to co-ordinate in a very creative way that kind of comprehensive health care delivery. So I think what this helps to do is to strengthen that, as I see it, by adding certain clauses such as outpatient clinics and scientific staff and other provisions which show that it's not just health care delivery that's in one site or in one place.

I would ask some questions about an interesting report I heard on the news just driving back from Calgary yesterday about the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Service's new proposal that hospital boards, and I think it even extended to the Alberta Cancer Board, not be responsible for capital program requests, that in fact the building of new structures – new hospitals, new additions to existing hospitals, any kind of capital expenditure – should be taken out of the hands of the boards of hospitals. This is interest-

ing, because in fact the Alberta Cancer Board, I thought from what I've heard, is wanting, particularly in Calgary at the Tom Baker centre, to expand certain capital components of that program there, and I was looking through this Bill to see whether it would either allow giving the board a further hand to make provisions about capital expenditures or restrict that according to the wishes of the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, who as we know has a lot to say about spending on hospital construction programs. It doesn't seem to go one way or the other on that, and I just wondered if in fact while we're making these amendments to the Cancer Board's provisions, it's intended that the current state of thinking by the government is to move in one direction or the other.

In section 19, it really spells out a number of new special committees of the Alberta Cancer Board, and I like that. I think it's very nice to see in legislation.

The board shall by by-law establish for each hospital

- (a) a facility committee,

which in fact may look at capital expenses. I'm not sure; it isn't filled out in that much detail.

- (b) a scientific committee, and
- (c) a medical committee.

Then a very interesting one – and I think in fact this might be a model that all hospital boards might look at – in section 19.1: that the committee is to look at

- (c) hospital's quality of care,
- (d) the utilization of the hospital, and
- (e) providing advice to the board on any matter referred to it by the board.

I think this is very useful, and I would advocate that if we can get it through, in terms of this Bill 40, it might be applied to the Hospitals Act, that all hospital boards have such committees.

It doesn't go so far in moving in a direction which I would like to see, whether it's through legislation, regulation, or whatever: to move in the direction of how hospital boards need to continue to be in the process of developing their own expertise. There's a lot of literature developing about hospital boards and what their real responsibilities and roles and accountability need to be about. In fact it's not just a lazy way for citizens, the public, to come and sit on a board and perhaps collect a per diem and make certain decisions but rather to really be very much involved with the operations of the hospital and the health care system and its development. It takes a lot of retreats by the board and other ways to develop the board's commitment to the hospital's administration and vice versa. It would seem to me that a reference to continuing board development might be in order at some point, whether it's spelled out in this Act or not. I just see it as something that would be a nice addition.

Finally, again as far as I can tell, not having looked at this through entirely critical eyes or research, it does seem to me at first glance that part 1.1, which establishes the cancer registry, is a very significant step forward. Again, it doesn't help people with cancer to fall between the cracks of various turf wars that may exist between this hospital and that hospital or this physician and that specialist or this drug treatment program or another but rather to have a central registry which can draw together both the diagnosis and the needs on the patient side and the resources and the treatments on the provider side, which can make for the most efficient and effective use of resources to meet those needs, notwithstanding various institutional barriers or whatever. I think this kind of registry is very important, very significant, and very welcome.

As I understand from section 20.4:

The information in the cancer registry is to be used for the following purposes:

- (a) to assess and improve the standards of treatment and care provided . . .
- (b) to assist in the treatment and care . . .
- (c) to assist in cancer research . . .
- (d) to compile statistics on cancer.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, we know that the incidence of cancer sadly is on the increase throughout Alberta. Despite our increased spending for a variety of cancer programs and the amount we devote to health care, the number of people suffering with cancer in all its forms is increasing. So to be able to compile statistics on that kind of epidemiology of cancer I think is a very important thing, to find out what really is causing it. Is it environmental concerns? Is it genetic determinations? What is really driving this increase in the rate of cancer? Having determined that in the aggregate, we're able to more specifically target programs both to prevent and to treat it. I think we need, as I say, to do that not just in a piecemeal or ad hoc fashion but through this registry hopefully in a more effective and efficient manner.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, as far as I and the members of our caucus can tell, it moves the process along in terms of the Alberta Cancer Board's, I think, very unique and very commendable mandate to strengthen its programs and to move in some new directions which are exciting. It does, in terms of my reading, beg some other questions in terms of where it is vis-à-vis capital expenditures, board retreats and development, vision statements, role statements, and so on.

#### 8:40

Oh, another question. Though I like the registry for the cancer research, again it sets a precedent here. I hope the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow and other members of government realize that if we're going to be able to establish a cancer registry by virtue of this Act, can we not, then, move into developing an AIDS registry or a registry for people with certain blood diseases or for certain heart diseases. I think this is a model in some respects. I know it would take some extra work, but it sets a good precedent to be able to move into other areas of health care need.

So, as I say, in the main and in principle the Bill makes a good lot of sense and begs these other questions, which I hope we can get in to at committee stage or at third reading.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few brief notes on this Bill. I see it basically as a housekeeping Bill. It doesn't contain many points of contention. I think I can give it qualified support, but I do have some questions, and perhaps the member would be prepared to answer them either tonight or when we go into Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill itself seems to allow the Minister of Health to relinquish some of the direct control that her department has had over the operation of cancer hospitals and clinics and to hand it over, to lease it out to the Alberta Cancer Board as well as to various hospitals and clinics throughout the province. I must say that I have been very impressed with the planning and thinking of the Alberta Cancer Board in moving their services through other institutions into our communities. I think this has been a splendid move and one that will serve us well over time.

I have a couple of things, however. Section 19, the cancer board committees, I agree with heartily. I think that's an excellent move in the right direction.

Section 10.1, drug supply. Perhaps the member could comment at some time in the future about whether or not the Cancer Board in fact would be responsible for the supply of needed drugs through other institutions and clinics. Or are they responsible for them under their own budget circumstances?

The registry I think is an excellent idea, Mr. Speaker. It will begin to give us some of the clues and trends, hopefully, if we set up our research properly, as to why the incidence of cancer is increasing so dramatically, as the minister herself has spoken of.

Another question that I have, Mr. Speaker, and what I find wanting is any reference to community societies; for instance, the Cancer Society itself, which has done immense work over the past years and considers its primary objective to be education and collecting money for cancer research. This Bill makes no mention of relationship to community activities. I would hate to see the Cancer Board by reason of such legislation undertaking some of the activities that are now being done very skillfully and efficiently by voluntary societies. Perhaps some explanation of where the voluntary societies fit with the Cancer Board's activities, whether or not they are complementary, which certainly would be my wish and my intent. One would not like to see a Bill of this kind, by giving free rein to education and so on, setting up an organization that might take over some of the activities of our voluntary societies in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, our primary concerns in the Liberal caucus have been with the operation of the cancer hospitals and clinics for the treatment of the cancer, and they revolve around the increased waiting lists for treatment. I have spoken about this in the House on a number of occasions. There's a desperate need for some momentum in the activities by the Cancer Board - the Cross Cancer Institute, the Tom Baker centre - to combat this growing waiting list. We all know that people who need radiation treatment don't need it in a couple of months; they need it now. The state of their health can deteriorate very rapidly as they wait, to say nothing of the anxiety that's caused to the patient and the family.

The length of time that patients must wait for radiation treatment at Tom Baker in Calgary is six weeks due to the aging equipment at the centre and lack of space. The centre doesn't have the funding needed to deal with a 16 percent increase in radiation treatments and an 8 percent increase in patients which have occurred just over the last year, Mr. Speaker. Unless there is an immediate increase in funding, it won't be able to handle the 50 percent increase in cancer cases expected over the next 10 years. The wait for radiation at the Cross Cancer Institute has also reached six weeks for many patients due to the increase in the numbers of patients. Although the institute is currently undergoing a \$95 million expansion, it won't be completed until 1994.

Mr. Speaker, if these problems are to be dealt with effectively, we need more than just this kind of a Bill; we need an increase in government funding. The government has to deal with that crisis. This legislation is I think going to be an improvement, and as I say, I can give it qualified support, but I would like some answers. Bill 40 isn't going to do much to solve the pressing problems of radiation treatment in our province.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 40 read a second time]

### Bill 37

#### Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1992

[Adjourned debate June 22: Mr. Evans]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 37 read a second time]

head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Committee of the Whole**

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I ask the committee to please come to order. Before we proceed with the legislation on the agenda, could we have unanimous consent to revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for West Yellowhead.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the gallery tonight we have a 14-year-old young woman from Markham, Ontario, in the Toronto area. She just returned from the national finals in synchronized swimming in Quebec. She's on her way to Calgary through Jasper to take further training at the same pool that Carolyn Waldo trained at. I'd like to ask her to stand: my niece Krista Doyle.

head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Committee of the Whole**  
(continued)

8:50

### Bill 42

#### Motor Transport Act

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this Bill, or does the minister have any introductory remarks?

West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Looking through Bill 42, it's basically a cleanup of the Act, making it just a little bit handy for certain individuals to be recognized. The officers that are stopping them as they're going down the highway have to be in uniform, I understand.

Also, I note the part about buses in Bill 42. The minister could respond, if it's necessary. I've had some calls from hotels where American buses were coming through. They couldn't get a licence. Apparently they wanted to stop along the way in Alberta and pick up passengers and take them on through to a resort in Jasper. They were denied a permit. Does this permit still just allow these buses, I'm wondering, Mr. Chairman, to only bring Americans in? I think it's a good safeguard to protect the Alberta bus companies that we make sure the American companies can't come in half loaded and pick up customers as they go on their routes through to the tourist destinations.

Other than that, Mr. Chairman, the Bill seems to be fairly straightforward. I don't find any real faults in it, and on behalf of the caucus I support Bill 42.

MR. ADAIR: My understanding – and I stand to be corrected on this – is that if the buses are coming in from out of province, they have the right to bring them in, but if they're going to move any others around the province, they're not able to do that unless they can prove that three carriers couldn't do it. That's basically the same; it still applies. I stand to be corrected on that.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to raise a couple of concerns as I review the Bill and see the whole of section 42 with respect to vehicle inspection, part 5, page 39. I guess it's just the conventional vehicle inspection stations, how they're signed and getting in and out of them. The point I wanted to raise was the whole issue around bluntly – how do we say it? – polluting cars. It seems to me that this province has for a couple of years now wanted to look at the whole issue of clean air. We've developed this clean air strategy, and there are a number of directions in which I hear from the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Energy that we're moving to full stakeholders' consultation on discussing further how we're going to get cleaner air in the province.

I don't see anywhere so far in legislation the whole issue of inspecting vehicles to inspect the rate of emissions of nitrogen and other polluting emissions – as we know, not here perhaps but in Los Angeles or New York or Mexico City or other places the motor vehicle is one of the greatest sources of pollution – and to be able to look at incentives for both developing cleaner fuels as well as less polluting cars, newer cars with better pollution control devices. As you know, in California you have to have your vehicle inspected I believe every year to ensure a certain standard so that it just doesn't continue to belch into and pollute the already smoggy atmosphere there. I mean, they've come that far. Now they're talking about electric cars and other things to remedy this.

I must say, just on a personal note, that it really bothers me to drive down the beautiful river valley here in Edmonton along River Road and to go past some car that just has some huge exhaust with smoke billowing out of it. To me, that's just disgraceful, and I feel like pulling them over myself and saying, "Can't we do something to get all that exhaust and smoke and those emissions cleaned up out of this car?" Now, I'm sure it's going to be argued that they can't afford a better car or something, but I don't know how much longer we as a society and as an environment can afford to keep having cars that are that inefficient and contribute that much to global warming.

So perhaps we'll wait for it with the energy efficiency Act, which may come at some point, or in other forms of legislation. It does seem to me that this Bill deals only with buses and trucks. It seems to me that they should have some state-of-the-art pollution control standards on them, and whether it's buses and trucks or automobiles, we should move to a cleaner air strategy in Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Stony Plain.

AN HON. MEMBER: There are two of you.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Not two members from Stony Plain, two members wanting me to speak.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same section 5, I do want to commend the minister on his Safety in Motion program. For

whatever reasons it came about, it is a good program intended to ensure that commercial vehicles are up to standard. However, I do have some concerns – and these concerns are starting to be brought to me quite frequently – with the almost ridiculous way that Check Stops are being operated to do with all traffic. For example, last week on Highway 16 there were a couple of occasions when drivers of vehicles had to wait in line for upwards of half an hour only to find that when they got to the point of conversation with whoever was doing the inspections – in this case I believe it was the RCMP likely in conjunction with the Solicitor General – they could move on their way.

The private citizen has enough of a concern with it, but if you take a trucker – in this case the concern was brought to me by a trucker – who has received his certificate, has gone through the proper inspection channels, and the truck has duly been inspected, and on two occasions with a load with B train has had to wait to upwards of an hour in that particular situation to move along again. Surely there has to be an efficient and effective way to do the on-road inspections without tying traffic up for ridiculously long periods of time. I would imagine that with a little bit of creativity we could come to that. I don't think it's fair to the average citizen who's got a vehicle in good repair and all the documentation to sit in a lineup only to be told: "Okay. Fine; move along."

Again I refer to the responsible commercial operators who are abiding by the law, who do get their certificates, who feel that having got that certificate, they can generally move along. I find it rather distressing that they will go to one of the vehicle inspection stations, the people at the station will recognize the fact that the trucker has got his equipment in working order and won't take up his time unnecessarily, yet you go down the road a few miles and you've got a Check Stop set up at random. I would appreciate it if the minister could look into some process not to eliminate the stops, because I think they have a good purpose, but to facilitate the public that uses them so they're not unnecessarily delayed.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, wanted to rise and make a few comments on this particular Bill. This was brought to my attention by some truckers that I have had occasion to have a discussion on this with. Of course initially one must say that you can't stand and be opposed to the provision of better safety, better equipped and better maintained vehicles on the highway. I certainly have to concur with that, and I think that's necessary.

The questions that were posed to me were somewhat similar to the ones the Member for Stony Plain just raised, and that's to do with the inspection process for one. There was some question with the qualifications and perhaps the attitude of the individuals that were carrying out those inspections. There seemed to be some disagreement with the truck driver. The fellows are out hustling to get a job these days, and it's really tough. Truckers are in a bad way these days, and to make a buck, they've got to keep moving.

The other thing also raised with me was the maintaining of a log book by truckers relative to servicing, to the bills of lading, and other such documentation. They're basically saying that this is almost as bad as the cost to the small businessman to maintain his records relative to the GST. It's becoming cumbersome for them. It impinges on their time when they need to be out there hustling

and making a dollar or two with their truck. So there were some concerns about that area by the commercial truck drivers, the people that haul gravel and things like that. At the same time, they do agree that they look forward to trucks safe on the highway, that operators are qualified and know what they're doing when they're behind one of those big vehicles rather than see some of the situations that exist in some cases.

So by and large I think we can basically say we agree with the Bill. I certainly agree with the Bill, as the Member for West Yellowhead stated, but there are some areas that I thought I should bring to your attention, Mr. Minister, relative to the concerns that I have heard from truckers.

**9:00**

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, while we're on Bill 42, I was looking at the compliance of widths and lengths to trucks and trailers. A question that comes to mind is the new agreement with the Al-Pac mill. Apparently, they want computerized trucks. Weigh scales, of course, are a good thing to have on the trucks. It's, I guess, about \$10,000 for these weigh scales. It's handy to have those on there for hauling logs, because when they get to the mill, they're going to be penalized if they're overweight. They get time off, and they get certain treatment, which is fair because it's hard on our highways and it's not a very good safety factor.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say that many of the truckers in the northern part of the province are quite concerned that the added expense for computerized trucking and trucks that must be no more than one or two years old is going to put some of them in very deep debt or put them out of business. It's their fear that perhaps there are some new trucks outside the province or in fact from the States that are already computerized and ready to roll in, because they're much cheaper south of the border. I would hope that we can find a way of accommodating truckers in Alberta to get the best benefit out of any new forestry development in the province. I would hope that they could in some way accommodate them by the size of the trucks they have now, because to go from an eight-foot roadbed to the eight and a half, which Al-Pac apparently requires, is another added expense for these truckers.

MR. ADAIR: I'll try and respond to the Member for Stony Plain when it comes to the Check Stops. They're joint Check Stops. The one you referred to had motor transport services people, our people, as well as the RCMP involved, and it was on a major highway; in this case, Highway 16. I can appreciate the length of time that it does take. One of the problems you have is the restricted area that you've got to pull these vehicles over to the side and to be safe getting them back on the highway. I'll do everything I can to see if there's some other way we can do that or maybe do it for less time and then do it again in that sense of getting at it. One of the difficulties you have is that you find vehicles – for example, commercial trucks – operating without any brakes, just on the engine retarders. It just scares the pants off you when you get some of those.

It's a good point, certainly, from the standpoint of the kinds of things that have occurred. It's co-operation between the two forces, so we don't end up with the double stops. I think you did mention something about the sticker: if they've got a sticker, why are they stopped? That's a good point: if the sticker's on them and we can move them back onto the road. I'll certainly take a look at that particular one.

Edmonton-Belmont. The inspection qualifications are without question. They are fully qualified inspectors. On occasion we use some of the students, who are then working with the instructor. They're not doing it on their own. The instructor is with them.

I have no hesitation to say that's been going on for some time and is working reasonably well.

The logbook is another one. That's part of the National Safety Code, and the only exemption of that is within a hundred miles of the source. If they live in Edmonton, within a hundred miles they don't have to keep logbooks, but they and everybody else in Canada have to keep logbooks from that point on, particularly if they're moving across a border. If they're going from B.C. to Halifax, logbooks apply at the national level, but we've bought into the national level, as have almost all of the provinces. I might say that we were the leader in that because of the working relationship that we had with the Alberta Trucking Association and their willingness to get into that as quickly as possible so that we in fact had in place a system that had some consistency to it. Basically, that I think is working reasonably well, although I recognize that when you get into keeping logbooks, the reason they're there is to make sure we identify how many hours they drive. The old law was 10 hours, and this one now is 13 and 15, but because it's 13 and 15, it's getting more enforced than the 10 was, and that's where we start to get into a bit of confusion. We actually raised it. We've had some concerns about it, and that was as a result of the fact that we were doing more inspections to cover that.

The hon. member from Edson talked about the log trucks. There are a number of trucks that are hauling now with the portable scales on the unit itself, the axle scales. I'm not sure of the numbers; I would have to check just exactly how many there are. That's one way. The co-operation of the mills is very important in there, because there's a working relationship between the loggers, the mill, and a system that we have in place so that if you are consistently over, you get suspended for 24 hours or 72 hours or possibly longer, but at no time do you get paid for the weight above the legal weight limit. So you're penalized in that sense as well if you're hauling extra weight.

One of the problems you have with that is if you use the scales – for example, at one point just over a year and a half ago we had a thousand pounds tolerance. Everybody loaded to the thousand pounds, so we removed it. Why have it? They were working from that point on, and that's where you got into the problem in the sense of getting the mud. If you're hauling in the spring and your truck goes in and it looks like a load is on within the tolerance, you get there and you're carrying about 1,500 pounds of mud and you get penalized for it. Those are things that have to be worked out to some degree, and we've removed the tolerance to allow everybody to be working from the same rule. You had most of them working up to the thousand, and the other ones that were what we'll call the legitimate ones were being penalized because everybody else was up to that thousand. So that's certainly a concern.

I think your concern, if I followed it, was the fact that there was a requirement for these particular scale models. Did I get that in your question, that there was a requirement in the Al-Pac project to have these scales on it or to have them on it as part of a program? It means that basically what they're saying is: if it's possible to get them, will you get them; it'd be easier for all of us. I'm not aware of any mandatory section that says they have to put those on any of the trucks hauling for the Al-Pac project, but I'll certainly check.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Just a couple more comments or questions. There's one that bothers me, and that's what appears to have happened in the last few years where there apparently is no weight restriction. If you can get a permit, you can get a permit that goes almost limitless. Now, I can recall, and it's within the minister's



time span too, a mere 30 years ago. If you wanted to haul equipment, the requirement at that time, they were called the Department of Highways, I believe, was quite clear that if it was a piece of mobile equipment and you could strip it down reasonably, and I do stress the word "reasonably," – that is say, for example, removing a dozer blade or ripper of some sort – you were not granted a permit. Now, what's happened since then is that the size of the equipment, as the minister can appreciate, has increased, yet you will see not only an overweight but an overwidth and an overheight unit and heaven knows how many wheels under the tractor. So it begs the question of: why do you have a weight limit in the first instance, if you're not going to adhere to it? Certainly what's happening to our roads – I think we would have to have a good look at what we are doing with the ever increasing limits on the highways, and that's the cost of maintenance quickly going up.

The other question that I have in terms of deregulation: some of the configurations of the hauling units are bordering on being ridiculous. I'll make the point that we have a B train or an A train and that's somewhere good. Now we have, for example, gravel haulers that are going with semis with a pup attached to the back of it, and those units are, I guess, not overlength now, but they are certainly over any reasonable length. I'm speaking of a fairly hefty lengthy triaxle semi along with a tandem or triple axle pup behind it. Basically, what concerns me on it: the driver does not have really any good way of knowing what's happening at the back end. I think that should be reviewed as to how many units one can go. You can recall, again within our 30-year time span, that we had the three trailer experiment that went on on Highway 2. That's now being condoned, I guess, and it does create its own set of problems. But that's different; that's running on almost a scheduled run. Here we're having these configurations that are going and hauling material to road jobs and whatnot.

#### 9:10

The logbook situation does not appear to be working as well as the minister seems to think. I've been getting numerous complaints – I'm glad it was raised – with the way we get the truckers and their schedules, say, coming up here from Fresno, California, or whatever, and their time runs out at Calgary, if you will, or whatever. I certainly will not condone having a trucker on the road for such a period of time, any specific time that he's going to be overtired or whatever. I go along with that point, but the part that's been brought to me is that you can run out of accumulated time when you do your trip, to the point where you're almost stuck with a load within a reasonable stretch of getting home. I think that whole logbook issue should be looked at again.

One of the things that I think is quite relevant: a lot of the logbook regulation emanated out of the United States and filtered its way through Canada. If you look at the traffic patterns for trucks, especially in the United States, the cities are spaced out, just by sheer chance I guess, in such a way that you could almost have any sort of hourly configuration, within reason, that you would want, and it would work. The regulations work quite well with most of the scheduled carriers, whether they're going north, south, or primarily along the southern strip through Phoenix, California, and across there. They do in fact set up their depots in such a way that they have driver changes and the process goes through. We take and try to blend that system into what's happening coming north and south, and it doesn't work as well as it should.

The concept behind the logbooks is certainly a valid one. The idea of prescribing a break for a driver – if you will, a forced

break within reason – is a good one, but I do feel that there has to be built in a degree of flexibility. Now, along with the logbook has come an overzealous rate of inspection. I think you will find, Mr. Minister, if you look, that there's a large number, if you will, of cases going to court with truckers who have been caught doing their job. I would like to see, in consultation with truckers – and I'm speaking primarily now of the independents, because they're the ones that are hardest hit; they're the ones who do get that load to California and back, or wherever they might be going, and they do get caught with that piece of time that they're short to make that last little bit of the journey, so they try to run it.

Now, you do have, I understand, a large degree of co-operation between the Montana and Alberta people, and more drivers are getting "caught." I think what it has done more than become effective as a tool of enforcement is become more effective as a tool of identifying a problem that has to be addressed and working out with the truckers perhaps some method where you might have some flexibility in the hours depending upon what they are doing, because it appears that it just doesn't fit on the overall. I'll give you a good example. You could be hauling lumber on a regular haul Barrhead to Edmonton. You're not under the logbook requirement, are you? You're within that limit. Consequently, that driver could be on the road literally an inordinate number of hours driving the same size of unit, or bigger than a lot of them, and he is improperly on the road for too high a period of time, yet you'll find another trucker who is doing the run, and in order to complete it gets caught by the regulations. I would strongly recommend in terms of this particular aspect – and I am quite willing to pass on to the minister, if he's interested, the names of the truckers who have risen their concerns to me – having a private meeting with him to see if there's some sort of solution to the problem.

I do feel very strongly that it is an area that should be looked at. It comes out as a result of particular runs. I think maybe the regulations should be adapted. Just a suggestion off the top of my head. If a trucker, for example, and again I'm speaking of the independent, has got the specific run all the time, you can program or he can program something that would comply with the regulations to a degree yet satisfy the requirements of the trucker and make the whole thing work a lot smoother.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, to the hon. Member for Stony Plain, yes, it is possible to get overweights. I think the biggest overweights are in the wintertime when you're doing what we call winter weights. I'm not sure; I just don't have at my fingertips the exact weights that are allowed. I do know that there are exemptions for service rigs that move around, and they're extremely heavy. We can move them around again by the permit system. What's the best way I can say it? On the permit system a phone call can actually establish a number for you now without the old method of having to go and find one somewhere, particularly if you were moving on weekends or the likes of that.

The logbook is a little bit of a different one, I think. We did not go along with the National Safety Code accumulated hours section. I look up at Carl. I think that's right, is it not? As a result of that, you wouldn't get caught at Indian Cabins and not be able to go any further. You can carry on to finish that one out. They can adjust within that, but it's got to stay with the 13 and 15. If they're beyond that, then they are obligated to stop. Not like some of the others where they have put the accumulated hours: when you hit that level, if it's 67, you have to find a motel wherever you are. Alberta did not agree to the accumulated time. We have the 13 and 15, and that's consistent with the nation.

From that standpoint, I think that should clear up most of them. Now, there's obviously the fact that we're just into it. We're into it about a year and trying to work all the kinks out of it from the standpoint of the assistant deputy ministers that meet right across the country relative to putting in place a mechanism that allows us to have some consistency as to length and width and tire size and whether there are three axles or eight axles between a truck leaving Vancouver and getting to Halifax. The triple units that you see on the highway are restricted to certain highways and with drivers of 10 years' experience or more. They have really an exemplary safety record at this particular point. We haven't had any major problems at all with that.

Where you start to run into the problems, if I read what you are saying, is in the tandem box with a tandem pup behind it or the likes of that, or the triple axles: the different configurations that I assume are being put in place as a result of economics. As long as they're deemed to be within the safety standards, then they're able to operate. I believe the A train is on its way out. It's grandfathered in – and I got the nod the right way – so that if you have an A train right now, you can still operate that A train, but when you get ready to trade it, it's not going to be an A train. That was one that was deemed to be unsafe, at least could be unsafe in the sense of certain types of traveling. It was sort of one they identified and said that as far as we're concerned, it's safe enough for right now, but when you move into the new system where you're getting the consistency, you go with others, whether they be B trains or C trains or whatever the case may be. I hope that answers that for you.

As a matter of fact, the Member for Edmonton-Centre talked about pollution, and just by coincidence – and it is coincidence today – at 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 4 in the province of Alberta at the Leduc vehicle inspection station a free check, a voluntary check will be made involving the clean air strategy for Alberta, co-ordinated by Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Alberta Energy, and Alberta Environment, recognizing that automobiles are a major pollutant containing air pollutants such as hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. Automobile exhaust is recognized as a major contributor to the ground level ozone. So we are putting in place a voluntary check to start with. The standards are set at the national level. We're putting in a voluntary check right now to start that process in co-operation with the other departments – as I said, Environment as well as Alberta Energy – and tied into the clear air strategy, the CASA project that's been out there for some time now.

9:20

MR. WOLOSZYN: One last question, to do with commercial buses. I'm speaking of the individual operators. There were a host of regulations that were adjusted with respect to the commercial operator being able to go out of province. I believe the minister is aware that there was at one time 12 trips. They're suggesting to bring that down to six trips before having to get an interprovincial operating licence. The concern I have is: is the prescribed regulation that was proposed, and I believe it was scrapped, going to be scrapped permanently, whereby the local operator, who may be taking the Boy Scouts or the hockey team or whatever into British Columbia, is going to be required to phone three interprovincial carriers in order to get permission to do that? That was introduced in January of this year. It was withdrawn, and I'm wondering: is that going to be dead?

I would like to know what the basis of the rationale is for taking from the 12 trips down to six trips, simply because these operators that I'm referring to are basically serving local communities, and very frequently they are at rates that are affordable to the groups,

like the local minor hockey team or baseball team or whatever. I certainly would like to see that provision go back to the 12 from the current six and most definitely that you keep the nonsense – and I do mean the term “nonsense” in all sincerity – of having a local single bus operator, if you will, trying to phone three large competitors to get permission to haul a local church group into Cranbrook for a music festival. It just doesn't make any sense, and I would like some assurances from the minister that that whole area is going to be looked at and solidified. Now, I do appreciate the need to protect the runs of the interprovincial people, but I'm speaking of operators who are not trying to chisel in on the scheduled people's area of business, because certainly I do agree that there has to be some regulation consistency there.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I need to just check to see if I've got it right, but I believe it's six that they have now, and it was 12. It was part of a protective mechanism put in also for the charter bus operators in this province, compared to the one that was brought up a little earlier, where you've got the American bus coming in and then taking people, while he is here, to Edmonton or to Jasper or the likes of that, taking away from the local people. There's a bit of a quid pro quo that comes into that particular play. I can't remember what the reason was for us going down to six, but I'll get that for you. I don't have it with me, and rather than get into it, I'll do that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any further speakers? Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 42 agreed to]

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

### Bill 30

#### Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation Act

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Moving on to Bill 30, there is a government amendment and an amendment from Edmonton-Jasper Place. According to the usual procedure, first of all dealing with government amendments A and B to sections 10 and 15, are there any speakers?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Having heard the call for the question . . . [interjection] The Chair will wait. It's the Chair's understanding it was circulated before.

The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The government amendment appears to be in order. It is clarifying the point about the revolving fund in the Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. As far as I see – the minister can correct me if I'm wrong – it puts them both under the same department. It basically brings the revolving fund so that one minister can look after the whole revolving fund rather than the way it was with Recreation and Parks with one and Tourism with the other.

Perhaps the minister could answer that. That's the way I interpret it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the minister could move the amendments.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move the amendment as presented. This amendment is just a housekeeping clarification item, as mentioned. There has been some concern voiced about the interpretation of the old section 10. The revolving funds were in place for both Tourism services and Recreation and Parks services in the previous Acts, and the intent of the new Act is to continue this fund in a combined fashion. This amendment will clarify the continuation and the intent of the revolving fund for the provision of services to the public. So it's just clarification.

Mr. Chairman, while I'm on my feet, there were several questions asked by West Yellowhead on the 18th at our last sitting. I should give him the answers to the questions. On 7(2)(d) he asked if the fee schedules were public; the answer is yes. Sections 12 and 13 he asked why some lands are under tourism and some under forestry. Parks and recreation areas are under my Act in Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and all other lands are in public lands. No, two people are not looking after the same piece of land. Under 13(h) he had a question: is this for selling land? Under that section if a lease is assigned, we can prohibit or approve the assignment of the conditions if we so wish. Under section 14(2) he asked a question. This does not change the name of the Tourism Education Council Act; it only changes the name of the minister that's responsible for it.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask for approval of the amendments.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, are you moving A and B, or do you wish to deal with them separately?

MR. SPARROW: All together.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair understands the minister has moved amendments to section 10 and to section 15(a) and (b), presented June 24, 1992. Are there further speakers?

[Motion on amendments A and B carried]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We then have an amendment to section 12 proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I wish to move the amendment to section 12, which was distributed under my name.

This amendment adds to the section on the acquisition of property. This amendment reflects the fact that having a minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation puts that minister in a unique position to understand the importance of our parks, wilderness and ecological reserves in relation to tourism to establish the value of our natural heritage as a tourism resource and as a tourist attraction to the province of Alberta.

The provisions that are in section 12 at the present time allow the minister to acquire property for the purpose of carrying out an agreement for a tourism program or a tourism development, which might presumably even be in the private sector, and for other purposes but doesn't explicitly deal with the question of ecological reserves, which now fall under the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. I would point out to members of the Assembly that the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane stated in debate last Thursday that what's called for in this amendment is in fact government

policy. He said that on the occasion of the visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, the government announced that it would indeed complete the ecological reserve program. So what we're talking about here is already government policy, if the Member for Banff-Cochrane was speaking with authority when he spoke in the debate last Thursday. So this amendment gives this, the Fourth Session of the 22nd Legislature, a chance to do something unique and special, a chance to provide in legislation for the benefit and use of future generations that there will be at least one representative sample of each of the ecological regions in the province of Alberta set aside for posterity. I think that's a very reasoned and modest proposition. What we're saying, in the way that a librarian might, is that we take one copy of every book that's published and put it away in a library so it's there for future generations to read and enjoy. We're simply saying that we put away one small section of each area of the province so that people can see for now and in the future the way this world was made and the way it was when humanity first entered into the province.

I think this is a great opportunity for all members, and I move the amendment in my name.

9:30

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, speaking to the amendment on behalf of my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place, it's a very worthwhile time to amalgamate this amendment within Bill 30. There's nobody who would be more concerned, I would think, than the minister of tourism that when tourists come to the province, the ecological reserves should be in place. In fact, I would hope that he would care that much about the environment that when the tourists come and see these nice clean places that the minister's looked after very well, they would return many more times and leave many more dollars in the pockets of local businesses and, in fact, in the Treasury of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, the amendment would enable the minister to establish at least one more ecological reserve each year for the next 10 years. In fact, I was hoping that perhaps at another time there may be another Bill I might have to bring forward under the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act, which I reviewed, and it would fit very well within the Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. It would cover all the wilderness areas like White Goat, Ghost River, and Siffleur. It would cover all the wilderness areas we have in the province if we could amalgamate the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act right under the minister of tourism. He could get some advice, if necessary, or some people on the board that they have with some five members, I believe. They now have two employees of the Department of Recreation and Parks, one employee of the Department of Energy, two employees of the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, and an employee of the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism. Six persons who are not employed by the government or government agencies would sit on this advisory committee. It could stay the same as it is, but it would take it away from the minister of forestry, and I think the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation would be very pleased to have total control of wilderness areas and ecological reserves.

So the amendment by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place fits in very well, Mr. Chairman, to make sure that we establish the ecological reserves that are already marked out for this province, and we would hope that the government will accept this amendment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Other speakers on the amendment? The hon. minister.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Chairman, this government has a very good, an excellent record in protecting its natural landscapes. As far as ecological reserves, I believe there are 13 that have reservations applied against them, covering some 271 square kilometres. There are three other ecological reserves that are not legislated as yet and have notations against them. This year we've committed to take them, through due process, into the setup.

Mr. Chairman, I believe this amendment is out of order in the sense that there is an Act covering ecological reserves. The Act's name is the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act. It's a separate Act that has worked very well, and no portion of it should be added to this Act. It's being administered by my staff in conjunction with other departments of government on a committee. The ecological reserves and wilderness areas are under my jurisdiction, and the natural areas are under the able department of public lands and wildlife under the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

Mr. Chairman, I just would like to note that at the last meeting with the Duke of Edinburgh, when he was in Calgary with the World Wildlife Fund, we presented a map of Alberta, which they accepted very well, showing that 13.6 percent of the province has been protected. This is just one minute part, the ecological reserves, just one part of that overall land base that is being protected.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd ask that we vote against the amendment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further speakers? Calling for the question on the amendment then. All those in favour of the amendment to section 12 moved by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It's lost.

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

**9:40**

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Chivers	Gibeault	McInnis
Doyle	Hawkesworth	Roberts
Ewasiuk	Hewes	Woloshyn
Fox	McEachern	

Against the motion:

Ady	Fischer	Oldring
Anderson	Fjordbotten	Paszkowski
Black	Hyland	Severtson
Bogle	Johnston	Shrake
Bradley	Laing, B.	Sparrow
Calahasen	Lund	Tannas
Clegg	McCoy	Thurber
Day	Mirosh	Trynchy
Dinning	Moore	Zarusky
Drobot	Musgrove	

Totals:	For - 11	Against - 29
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[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Other speakers?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 30 as amended agreed to]

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 30 as amended be reported.

[Motion carried]

### Bill 35 Lottery Fund Transfer Act, 1992

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions, amendments, or comments with respect to this Bill?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Chairman, just a brief comment that the title of the Bill really should be: raid the cash under the mattress fund. It just seems that all we get for a fiscal strategy from the Provincial Treasurer is trying to put his hands into all the little nooks and crannies where some money and some cash might be stashed away. He found \$225 million last year in the Lottery Fund in his vain attempt to provide a so-called balanced budget. The problem's still here in terms of dealing with the budget, but the money's virtually gone, because this year he's only able to find \$25 million, apparently, under the Lottery Fund, which only goes to show that if you take the cash out of the system, it solves your problem for one year but government rolls on and on, year after year. Solving a problem one year doesn't do anything more than postpone dealing with it. So instead of a balanced budget, we had a big deficit. This year instead of a big deficit, we've got a bigger deficit, because there's that much less to find in the system to support the kind of fiscal strategy this government's pursuing.

Let this be a lesson to the lone Liberal who is with us tonight, Mr. Chairman, in terms of raiding the Heritage Savings Trust Fund as they wanted to do, trying to find whatever cash there might be in that fund in order to solve our fiscal problems in this province. You can do it one year and avoid the day of decision, but really when it comes right down to it, once the cash is gone, it's gone. Bill 35 in front of us is evidence of that. Instead of \$225 million, which was what the Provincial Treasurer found last year, all he can find this year is \$25 million. Heaven knows whether there'll be anything for him to find next year: maybe another \$25 million, maybe even \$30 million; I don't know. But there's certainly not going to be the money there next year that he had last year or maybe even the money there next year that is equivalent to what he's taking out with Bill 35. So I guess the question is rhetorical - I'm sure the Provincial Treasurer doesn't have the answer - but what happens when all the cash is gone? That's when the problem has to be dealt with - it can't be avoided any longer - that being to come up with a fiscal strategy that makes sense over the long term.

Bill 35 is only a short-term solution. Like most things associated with gambling and lotteries, by and large the chances are for most people who are involved in them - their dreams are flitting and brief and really don't come to much of anything as far as most people are concerned. When it comes to the Alberta government, of course, their use of the lottery funds doesn't extend past

basically one year, and it doesn't have anything, really, to give us this year to solve the fiscal problem, the fiscal mess that this government is in and the fiscal mess that this government has created.

9:50

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bill 35 is moving \$25 million over from the lottery funds into the general revenues, and of course this is the kind of thing that many of us on this side of the House said should have been done with all of the lottery funds some years back when we debated Bill 10, which set up the Lottery Fund as a separate fund for this government to play with. The Auditor General gave the government the choice of either putting the money into the general revenue account and making it part of the general expenditures and therefore the general budget of the province or putting it into a separate fund and giving itself the authority to spend it. They chose the latter, but once they chose the latter, they didn't have to choose the procedure that they use for handing out the funds. To just give the fund to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services as a slush fund was totally unnecessary. They could have set that fund up in the same way as the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund or the Capital Fund, where there is sort of an estimates process for the expenditures under those two funds. They could have done the same thing with the Lottery Fund. Our objection to the way they handle it is that we don't have any preauthorization by this Assembly for the expenditures under the Lottery Fund. I just wanted to put that point back on the record clearly.

I wanted to go a little further and say that because of the analysis and because we said that the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services can handle the fund as if it's a personal slush fund, the members from the other side who spoke last time then leapt to the great conclusion – in fact, they didn't really leap to it. They do this consistently: they set up straw men claiming that we said this or we said that on this side of the House and then beat up on that idea as a bad one as if somehow we had said it. What they implied was that because we were against the process by which these funds are disbursed, we were against all the community leagues and the various cultural and recreational organizations that work very hard to raise money themselves so that they can then share in some of the funds from the lottery moneys through some of the various foundations, and that is not at all what we said, Mr. Chairman.

Because we all have community leagues and recreational organizations in our own constituencies, we know that some of those community organizations are very worth while. They work hard, they raise a certain amount of money, and then they apply for a grant. We've even helped them apply for a grant, and the minister has been quite good, many times, to deal with. Nobody's saying that he's been unfair or anything like that. In some cases I guess some people have claimed that, but I have not particularly. But it's the whole process by which it's set up and the organization of it and the fact that this Assembly does not get a chance to preauthorize the expenditure of some \$100 million that the government spends. It's as much as the government is spending under the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund; \$102 million is approximately the amount that the minister has to hand out each year, and there is no preauthorization by this Assembly. I just want to make it very, very plain that that has been our objection, not the fact that some seniors' group worked very hard, raised a certain amount of money, and then was able to get

matching dollars from that program. I commend the seniors for that. I think it was a good idea and so on.

I resent, in fact, that the government's only defence of our fair criticism that the process is not as good as it should be, that it's not as democratic as it should be, that the expenditures are not authorized by this Assembly before they're made, is to attack us as if somehow we were against seniors and against community leagues. That is such nonsense and so fatuous and so ridiculous that I can't understand why the government doesn't stop, sit back, and say: "Why are we doing it this way? Maybe the opposition is right. Maybe there should be some kind of an estimates process as to the general direction of the expenditures."

I'm not saying every specific one. We're not asking that when a specific Westmount Community League in my riding decides to apply for \$4,000 for some particular grant, it needs to be approved by this Assembly. I'm not saying that at all. But we could at least have some say in how it should be divided up among recreational groups, cultural groups, community league groups, seniors' groups, that sort of thing. There should be some general plan as to how much money is handed out to which different groups and which foundations are going to get some of that money, to control those handouts to the various organizations. That's what we think on this side of the House, and I don't understand why the government totally ignores all those arguments, doesn't try to answer any of them, just sits and carries on conversations about a 101,000 other things, and pays no attention to those legitimate concerns about how the taxpayers' dollars are handled in this province. And make no mistake: these lottery dollars are taxpayers' dollars. The lottery funds are a tax on the poor, and they should be authorized by this Assembly before they're spent. To resort to the defence that they do of saying, "Well, you're against seniors," or, "You're against community leagues," is such sheer nonsense.

Mr. Chairman, sure, we can support the Bill because it's \$25 million in the right direction, but why aren't all of the lottery funds put into the general revenue account? That's what should be done.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any further comments with respect to this Bill?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 35 agreed to]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is there someone who would move that the Bill be reported?

MR. JOHNSTON: I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

### **Bill 36 Spending Control Act**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this Bill?

The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This Act, as I said the other day, is the greatest act of hypocrisy I have ever heard of or seen in this Assembly in six or seven years. How the Treasurer can introduce Bill 37 and ask for an increase of \$4 billion in borrowing power and then turn around a few days later and have the gall to bring in Bill 36 saying that he's going to limit

spending to 2 and a half percent this year, 2.25 percent next year, and 2 percent the year after – no wonder he got laughed out of the Assembly the other day. It's absolutely, totally ridiculous that this Treasurer has the gall to bring in these two Bills in the same session.

Mr. Chairman, I dealt the other day with the sort of political aspects of that and the ridiculousness of it and how the Treasurer in fact is only talking about some 80 percent or so of the budget. There are about 2 to 2 and a half billion dollars of the expenditures of this province every year that are not covered under this Act. So why he thinks anybody in the province of Alberta should give any credence to this Act, I don't know. I mean, for a start, what the Treasurer is really saying is, "You can't trust me, so I'm going to bring in a Bill to say I can't spend more than a certain amount of money each year, or if I do, you can give me a little more political heat than you could give me normally because I'd have to change the legislation." What nonsense. They've got a big enough majority in this Assembly to control the spending of the Assembly year in and year out. If he's done the wonderful job of keeping it to 2.3 percent, as he claims he has, then why does he need this Bill? It's sheer nonsense. He set a ceiling higher than his claim of his expenditure increases.

**10:00**

However, we know, of course, that on the consolidated basis he's not accounting for the dollars of this province and he's not covering them with this Bill, and when he brings in his budget each year, those are the expenditures he's talking about. He's not including in that the Capital Fund and the heritage fund and a whole raft of other expenditures the Auditor General keeps track of and tells us about a year or two later. That part of it I elaborated on the last time around, but I wanted to get the main points on the record again to set a context.

Now, this Bill has a couple of parts to it that are of great concern to me. The one part that I've got an amendment for . . .

#### **Chairman's Ruling Repetition**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. member. The Chair wishes to make a comment. Order please. I would just remind hon. members that we are in committee and there's no need to repeat second reading debate.

Thank you.

MR. McEACHERN: I think I had the right to make a five-minute summary of my half-hour speech. But that's okay. If you want to complain about it, complain about it.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. McEACHERN: The other point I want to get to, which is much more serious, perhaps, than the political ramifications, or at least potentially so, is the section that deals with the right of various ministers to shift money from one vote to another. I will get back to that in a minute, but before I do, I want to make a few comments on section 3(3) on page 3 where the Treasurer starts talking about tax expenditures. I'll just make a few comments on that and then perhaps come back to it later, or perhaps other members will want to speak on it.

On page 3 of the Bill, section 3(3), it says,

If a program, service or benefit that is funded by an expenditure from the General Revenue Fund that is included in the program spending for a fiscal year is changed so that it becomes a tax expenditure, the Provincial Treasurer shall decrease the forecast base so that it reflects the change for the purposes of section 2.

In other words, the spending control part of the Bill. Section 3(4) is the converse of that but also worth taking a look at.

If a tax expenditure is changed so that the method of funding a program, service or benefit becomes part of the program spending for a fiscal year, the Provincial Treasurer shall increase the forecast base so that it reflects the change for the purposes of section 2.

Section 3(5) talks about a new expenditure that might be put as a tax expenditure and how it will also affect the base.

Now, I'm sort of asking the Treasurer exactly how he intends to interpret that, but my understanding would be that that means any changes in tax expenditures or any new tax expenditures will be a part of the tax base and therefore will become part of the Treasurer's accounting for the expenditures of this province in a way tax expenditures were not before. I mean, we've had the Auditor General indicating to us over several years that there's quite a large number of tax expenditures in this province which are never kept track of. I understand they keep track of the royalties from the oil industry, although not adequately, as the Auditor General keeps reminding the Treasurer. But with other tax expenditures where the government just gives somebody a tax break, the cost of that tax break is never kept track of and never recorded, so the people of Alberta don't know how much it's costing us. That has been a problem. If these three points will bring tax expenditure under more specific scrutiny, then that's good. I hope they do, and I hope also the Treasurer will have the good sense then not just to expand the idea of the ones that are changed and the new ones coming in but to look back and say, "What tax expenditures have we given away over the years, and how much have they cost us?" and do a re-evaluation on that and a report to this Assembly. It seems to me that would be in order.

Mr. Chairman, I want to go to the part of this Bill that is so offensive. It's section 5(1) on page 4. It says:

A member of the Executive Council, with the consent of the Treasury Board, may transfer during a controlled fiscal year . . . and of course that's this year, next year, and the year after . . . all or part of the amount authorized by a vote in an Act for general supply for the controlled fiscal year that is administered by the member to another vote that is administered by the member.

Then 5(2) goes on to say:

An amount transferred under subsection (1)

- (a) is deemed not to be included in the vote from which the amount is transferred, and
- (b) is added to and deemed to be part of the vote to which it is transferred.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that is the most antidemocratic piece of legislation I have heard in this Assembly in a long time. I mean, we've had a few. I think the Lottery Fund legislation was antidemocratic. The motion, 24 I believe it was, for setting up a Tory government committee to set the legislative boundaries . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MR. McEACHERN: There's a whole raft of them, but this one, Mr. Chairman, takes the cake. Consequently, I have moved an amendment which I would like to have . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. member. I'm sorry for interrupting. Would hon. members please come to order.

Please proceed.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you. Here's the amendment. Is there no one to pass them out?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has this amendment been to the Table, Edmonton-Kingsway?

MR. McEACHERN: Approved by the Table officer.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I haven't got a copy. Thanks.

MR. McEACHERN: The amendment just says:

Moved by Alex McEachern that Bill 36 on today's Order Paper be amended as follows: by deleting section 5 in its entirety and sections 6 and 7 are renumbered 5 and 6 respectively.

Mr. Chairman, I want to spend some time on this amendment and why it's important. The process of budgeting in this Assembly or any other Assembly of the parliamentary system is in some ways not a very democratic process if a government has a majority and wishes to use it. That's the case, of course, in this Assembly and in many of the Assemblies across the Commonwealth. Nonetheless there is one basic principle that makes it so that ultimately the elected representatives of the people have the final say on how dollars will be spent – except of course in the case of the Lottery Fund; that's a little different, as we said just a few minutes ago, and it should be changed. What this motion does is that it means that . . . [interjections]

Mr. Chairman, could I have some quiet and order, please? I'm finding it very difficult to carry on.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. That applies to all caucuses, with the possible exception of the Liberal caucus.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a serious matter of democracy, and it needs to be considered seriously. It's really hard to make arguments when I can hardly hear myself think. [interjections] It's true. Come on, it's been really bad.

### 10:10

Okay, what we're looking at here is an erosion of the most fundamental democratic right of the citizens of a democracy. The people of this province elected us to this Assembly and we are charged with spending the tax dollars or the dollars raised in one way or another in this province. When we say to the minister of forestry that he can spend \$70 million and \$30 million of it is for one particular program and \$10 million is for another and so on and so on, then he has no right to exceed those limits without using a particular time-honoured method that governments have found, and that is to go to the cabinet to ask for a special warrant. When that special warrant is issued, they must put out an immediate release indicating that that money has been authorized to be spent, and then those expenditures must be okayed by the Assembly the next time they are called to deal with supply. So the limit of \$30 million for that particular program can only be exceeded by that route.

What this Bill is suggesting is that if the minister wanted to increase that \$30 million expenditure, he wouldn't have to come back to the Assembly. He could cut expenditures in several other programs by a few million dollars each, and he could add \$5 million to that by merely going to the Treasury Board, a small committee of the government which can act in secret and often does. They would not have to put out any kind of public statement whatsoever that they had done this, and they could transfer these secondary votes over to that particular vote to increase that \$30 million without ever telling anybody. Now, it's true the Auditor General would find out about it and be told about it eventually and it would come out in the public accounts a year or two later. But there would be no necessity, according to this, to

ever do anything to bring it to the Assembly at the next possible opportunity when we're dealing with budget so the Assembly could agree to those increases in expenditures as they would presently have to do under the order in council route, because this piece of legislation allows the minister to transfer the money from these other votes to that vote with only the authorization of the Treasury Board, with no public announcement, no attempt to say the people of Alberta have a right to know and therefore they should be told.

It's secretive government. It would give an incredible amount of power to the Treasury Board. If he wished, each minister could manipulate his budget in a number of different ways as long as the Treasury Board agreed. There would be no need for public disclosure. There would be no need for them to come back to the Assembly as long as the total expenditures did not exceed the 2.5 percent increase or the 2.25 if it's next year or 2.0 if it's the year after. There would be no need for them to come back to the Assembly at all. So in other words, they would have subverted the right of this Assembly to set limits on the expenditures of cabinet ministers for specific programs within their departments.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that is totally unacceptable. The Treasurer should rethink his position on this and withdraw this motion. Well, what he should do is support my amendment and have 5(1) and 5(2) taken out of the Bill. It is against all democratic principles of how the dollars are spent in a province. I know the Treasurer has been a great wheeler and dealer and he's covered up incredible boondoggles for the province and manipulated all kinds of hearings like the Principal hearings. He found all those processes in the company and covered up. I know he's manipulated budget figures and told people incredible facts that aren't really correct and accurate or don't fairly reflect what goes on in this province, and he's had a field day doing it for the last six or seven years, but this should be illegal in a democracy. It is getting at the fundamental roots of who controls the purse strings. Although the Treasurer has a lot of power and has messed this province around in so many ways and, you know, has the gall to bring in \$4 billion borrowing power at the same time he brings in a Bill purporting to limit expenditures, and nobody believes him anymore, nonetheless this piece of legislation is dangerous, and it's time the Treasurer took his job seriously and took seriously the need for a democratic process in this province.

This is a vicious piece of legislation that should never pass, and the only thing the Treasurer can do to redeem himself at this stage is to accept this amendment and withdraw 5(1) and 5(2). It is absolutely unconscionable that he should include those in a Bill of any kind and subvert the right of the people of Alberta to control democratically the purse strings of the province by having ministers have the right, on the say-so of Treasury Board, four or five people handpicked from the cabinet, to transfer money from one vote to another and not account for that back here in this Assembly. That is totally wrong, so I don't understand how anybody can sit here and not say they're going to support this amendment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway is on to something here, and you should pay close attention to it, members, and look carefully at what is happening here. I've spoken often in this House about our budget process and the fact that I believe it needs serious reform. Hopefully, when the committee gets going on reform, we will do just that and bring about some real change so all members of the

Legislature can be apprised of the real information that goes into the budget process. As it is, it's a bit of a minuet we dance through, and the Treasurer himself has admitted that. Nothing is going to change; it doesn't matter what we say or what we question. So we all know that that process is flawed, and it's bad enough as it is. Let's not make it worse by this.

Mr. Chairman, circumstances change during 12 months, and I can understand that department budgets in some circumstances may be underspent and other department budgets for emergencies may require more money. That happens. But a cardinal rule, as I understand it, of government budgeting is that you do not transfer from one department to another without going back to the original decision. Now, either the budget is made to fit the programs or it isn't. If a budget is underspent and there's money left over, fine, but if a budget requires more money, you go and get an order in council. But giving to the Treasurer and the Treasury Board the capacity to move money from one department to another without coming back to the Legislature I think is quite wrong, and I don't believe it should happen.

Mr. Chairman, while I'm on my feet, perhaps I could just be permitted a couple of comments . . . No, I can't be permitted? I'll get another chance? Yes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On the amendment, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I feel badly debating this particular provision while there are guests in the gallery waiting for Bill 50. I don't know what's wrong with the House leader that he can't move that ahead of this piece of government chicanery or why the member sponsoring the Bill doesn't ask for government colleagues to please bring Bill 50 forward instead of this, but we have to deal with what's called, so we have to debate what's before us.

This Bill is on the face of it a little bit of political fluff imported from south of the border. But my colleague from Edmonton-Kingsway has pointed out that things are a lot more serious than that. I read on the weekend admittedly a humorous account of legislation like this in the United States, and I think perhaps I should share a bit of it with hon. members. This is Dave Barry writing in the *Edmonton Journal* on the weekend.

Let's play a little game: Let's pretend that you readers are elected federal leaders, and you wish to do something about the deficit. Bear in mind that you have the power to balance the budget. You have ALWAYS had the power to balance the budget."

#### Chairman's Ruling Relevance

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. member. [interjections] Order please, hon. member. [interjections] Order please. Would you take your seat, please.

I would ask that you address the amendment which is a very specific amendment. The Chair fails to see what this has to do with the amendment.

10:20

MR. McINNIS: It has absolutely everything to do with the amendment.

#### Debate Continued

MR. JOHNSTON: Do you agree with section 5 or not?

MR. McINNIS: The Treasurer says: do I agree with section 5 or not? I absolutely don't. What section 5 would do is far more than control spending. In fact, it would do exactly the opposite; it would put spending out of control. In reality, if somebody says to you – and this is Dave Barry's comment – "What would you do," if you answered, "Balance the budget," then of course . . . [interjections] Mr. Treasurer, if you don't want this legislations debated, why introduce it in the House?

I'm telling you that this amendment speaks to a very significant flaw within this legislation, the suggestion that members of the Executive Council with the consent of members of the Treasury Board – that's some selected members of cabinet chosen by the Premier who meet in secret and whose minutes are not public in the same sense that even cabinet minutes are – are entitled to transfer money between votes of this Assembly. Now, about the only control this Assembly has over spending is what we vote. Normally the government doesn't spend what it can't get supported through the Assembly. What would happen if this Bill were to pass in the present form is that this entire estimates book would be reduced to one page. That's the dollar figure per department. That's it. That's the only control we would have over this budget: what's on this one page. The rest of it doesn't mean a thing. You might as well throw it in the garbage, because the only figure that would have any significance, as I read the proposed Bill, is the bottom line for each department that

A member of the Executive Council, with the consent of the Treasury Board, may transfer [between votes].

Now, in terms of level of management authority, some rue the day when managers and ministers were given the authority to transfer sub items within votes. You might say that battle's been lost. But this one hasn't been lost, and I think it would be a poor thing for us to do it under the guise of what is essentially political fluff. The idea that some external authority has to come and tell the government and the Assembly when it's time to balance the budget is hogwash.

Our leaders are not balancing the budget. Instead, [in the United States] they spend weeks and weeks debating the Constitutional amendment requiring them to balance the budget at some uncertain point in the future. [The president of the United States, George Bush,] who has never submitted a balanced budget, was all for the plan. So was most of Congress, which this year [submitted] a budget which was the largest deficit ever.

In other words, our leaders are like a doctor who finds a knifing victim lying on the street, bleeding to death, so the doctor opens his medical bag, takes out a scalpel, stabs the victim a few hundred more times, then writes himself a note saying, "Better do something about this . . . By 1997 at the latest!"

That's what this government is like in its proposals.

You always have the authority to limit spending. You just bring in a budget that's limited. That's all you do. So what's the point of this legislation? The point is not simply making the fluff point, but in fact the government has a very deliberate agenda. It's right there in section 5. They want to have the authority to subvert the will of this Legislature. You know, if we vote money for fire fighting, that doesn't mean it can be spent writing more of the forestry department's famous curriculum for children where they teach them about clear-cuts and the like. When we vote money for a special waste management corporation, it doesn't mean it's supposed to be spent in the minister's office. You know, if money is wanted to be spent in the minister's office, it should be put forward for that purpose. You go department by department. Some of these departments are very large and multifaceted; they deal with all kinds of things. We just passed a Bill minutes ago creating a department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation. Now, that covers a pretty broad area. Why is it that money, for



example, which may have been voted by the Assembly for provincial parks could be spent on Kananaskis Country development? Well, those are things that perhaps are connected by some tenuous thread.

You know, already we have very, very limited scrutiny over the budget estimates but at least some degree of confidence that the amount voted is not to be exceeded without new authority from some source, whether it's by special warrant, which has to be backed by the Assembly, or by supplementary appropriation. Now all that's necessary is for some group of ministers chosen by the Premier to meet at the time of their choosing, in secret, and what's been done is undone just like that. We spend 25 sitting days every year going through these budget documents, asking questions, trying to figure out what the money is for, trying to research issues, not getting answers, following up with memoranda and the rest of it, trying to make the government account for what it's spending money on, and then they come along at the end of the process and bring in a Bill that says: "Well, all of that doesn't mean anything anyway. We'll just take the money from wherever we think there may be some and put it somewhere else."

Why is it, Mr. Chairman, that this government never puts forward an honest budget for fire fighting costs? We're how far into the fiscal year? We're only three months into the fiscal year and already the fire fighting budget is gone. Nine months left to go. So that minister is going for a special warrant. Well, you can see what would happen. The government needs money for things it wants to spend money on but doesn't want to account for, so it transfers the money into those items it doesn't want to account for publicly and then runs short in an area which is politically popular, which could be fire fighting, women's shelters, anything. Then they put that forward under the revised procedure and say, "Well, we need extra money because it's for fire fighting," or it's for poor kids or whatever.

In fact, they may have blown all the money on advertising for all we know, more political propaganda advertising, the kind the federal Mulroney Tories foisted on the Alberta population during the last federal election, spending taxpayers' dollars to try to influence the way people voted in the election. They could spend all the money on that even though they told the Assembly it was for some other purpose. It wouldn't matter. If this Bill passes unamended, we won't have any way of predicting what the money is spent on, because they can take it from this vote and move it to that vote; they can take lunch money and spend it on new cars for deputy ministers.

It's just ridiculous to think that the government under the guise of a spending control Bill, which in itself is a farce, can introduce this substantive change in the way money is accounted for. I don't believe anybody in the government has stood up and even acknowledged that's what they're doing. Instead, there's all this talk about the wonderful expenditure control record of this government. Well, it's been pointed out that the Bill doesn't even cover most of the worst excesses of government spending, the so-called nonprogram, accidental spending, the stuff that just happens because deals are made and the taxpayers are on the hook at the end of it. Never once has somebody in the government come forward and explained why it's necessary to make this whole estimates book useless and worthless. You can take just one page off the front of it. You know, that's all that's left of the budget process if this Bill goes through unamended.

I see the Chair shaking his head. I would point out that what this is is one figure for each department, and that's the bottom line with this so-called Spending Control Act. Rather than controlling spending, it allows the Treasurer and the Treasury Board to spend money on any object, any purpose at any time regardless of what

they've told the public and what they've told the Legislative Assembly, regardless of what we voted. Let's suppose we reduced the minister's salary to a dollar. That doesn't make any difference, because they just take it out of another part of the department. It doesn't matter what we do within a department, if this Bill goes through unamended. The only thing that will matter is the one bottom line figure for each department.

So I think the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway has spoken the truth here this evening, and the government had better consider some way to justify its position or face the consequences.

#### **Chairman's Ruling Gestures**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just one comment from the Chair before recognizing Calgary-Mountain View. The Chair would draw the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place's attention to an incident earlier in this session when he raised a point of order when a minister of the Crown tore a document of this Assembly or allegedly did.

Calgary-Mountain View.

10:30

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to put my comments on the record in support of the amendment by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. He's quite rightly zeroed in on a major shortcoming of this Bill. If this Bill is supposed to be something about spending control, section 5 shouldn't be included in it, because what it results in is even less control than currently exists at the present time. I'll just take a couple of examples to highlight here. I know the Provincial Treasurer gets bored with the opposition pointing out his shortcomings, but it's something that has to take place. More often than not, much more often than not, the opposition is correct in the shortcomings they point out, and what we tend to identify tends to come true. I think it's important to take a few minutes here tonight to highlight what the hon. member is doing with his amendment.

According to section 5, if a member of Executive Council has some reason, that member of the Executive Council can take money from one vote to another. Just to give one example of what could be included in such a power, taking the member for Edmonton-Jasper Place's example, let's take a look at the fire suppression budget. In 1990-91 a special warrant was passed: \$40 million. For a \$13 million budget there was a special warrant for almost \$40 million. Now, if you look at the budget book for this year, you can see that in '90-91 \$51 million was spent, in '91-92 that was slashed back to \$13 million, and now this year 12 and a half million dollars. It's the constant, same-base budget each and every year. It's just that each and every year a special warrant has to be implemented or is brought in. If you take section 5 that we find in Bill 36, it means that in the future, in order to pay for cost overruns on fire suppression, the minister may, first of all, go to the other votes that are under his control, which means that in the case of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, it could be the Reforestation budget. Here we have an example where the forestry ministry may go to cut the Reforestation budget in order to find money to pay for fire suppression. Or it may mean that Land Information Services or Public Lands Management would all be cut in order to pay for a lack of budgeting or improper budgeting when it comes to forest fire suppression.

Alternatively, under section 4, special warrants, if there's a lapse in any other spending section, any other vote anywhere within the budget, there could be money taken from any other portion of the budget to supplement the fire suppression budget, just as an

example. In the case of agriculture, you know, there's a drought going on in this province. If the government wants to respond in some way, where's the money going to come from? For example, Farm Income Support is vote 5 under Agriculture. Does that mean that Regional Advisory Services would have to be cut, or Rural Services, or Support for Production, Processing, and Marketing? These are all areas under the control of the Minister of Agriculture where he or she would go to find the money to transfer over to Farm Income Support. So what's the point then, Mr. Chairman, of even bringing forward a vote into the Assembly for Production, Processing, and Marketing? What's the purpose of bringing in a vote for agricultural Field Services if the vote means nothing, that it can be raided in order to move or shift over to another vote or can be raided in order to be used to support a special warrant in an entirely different spending area of government?

In essence, Mr. Chairman, the whole budgeting process means nothing, the whole review going through the Assembly means nothing, the whole budgeting exercise means nothing, because in the final analysis section 5 of this Bill allows a minister to simply transfer money here, there, and everywhere regardless of what the Assembly might have decided. So in essence, there is certainly no control by the Assembly. More and more control is being taken out of the hands of the Assembly and placed within the hands of the cabinet. In fact, what you've got is less control, not more. If a minister or a department head or a member of a department was actually doing a good job and controlling the budget under their area of control, they're going to be penalized here. If a director in field services for the Department of Agriculture is controlling his or her budget and come January 15 the government decides that they need a special payment to support the farmers, they're going to go to the department where the manager has been saving money in order to transfer that money to another vote within the Department of Agriculture in order to make a special payment to farmers. Or if one manager isn't doing a very good job of controlling their budget – you know, the money gets spent – the minister will go to another department where the money hasn't been spent in order to transfer it where it appears to be over-spending.

So where, in effect, we want our bureaucrats to exercise greater spending control, what section 5 does by giving this power to the minister to transfer from vote to vote is remove any responsibility, remove any accountability, remove any good budget management by personnel within the department. That's really what's going to happen. The bureaucrats lose control, the Assembly loses control, and more and more of that control gets centralized into the minister's office. What we know from that process is not that good budgeting is being rewarded, not that good management is being rewarded. Not at all. All it does is give the minister the power to shift money here, there, and everywhere within the department regardless of whether there's good management going on or not. So the effect of section 5 will be to reduce spending control rather than improve it.

The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place was quite correct: the impact of this section will be simply that the only budget page that's relevant to any budget discussion whatsoever is to be found within the overview. Department by department by department the only vote that counts is what is provided to the department itself. The question of votes within a department becomes absolutely and totally meaningless if section 5 is adopted, Mr. Chairman.

So with all due respect to the Provincial Treasurer in his attempts to bring some spending control into the activities of government, he hasn't succeeded after seven years as Provincial Treasurer. This Bill itself isn't going to do one thing to provide any greater control over the fiscal management of the province's

budget. In fact, it's going to remove any meaningful role even further for the Assembly itself, for the members of the Assembly. It's going to remove any particular rewards or incentives for good management from our public service, and in fact, Mr. Chairman, it's counterproductive to the objective that the Provincial Treasurer wants to achieve. It's not going to increase spending control, Mr. Chairman. In fact, it's going to provide less control over the budget and the fiscal affairs of the province.

10:40

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further on the amendment? The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to speak in support of the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. It's a very important amendment, and having had the opportunity to speak briefly in second reading of this Bill, I feel moved on behalf of the people I represent in the Vegreville constituency to get my comments on record with respect to this important amendment.

I do want to observe for people that are paying attention here that the process of debate in this Assembly is very important, that the government determines its legislative agenda, brings Bills forward, and members are obliged to have input on behalf of the people they represent. Now, just because government members don't feel the need to participate in debate or government members assume that whatever cabinet ministers propose is just and right and they're not going to debate it, just let it pass without any comment, that doesn't mean that that's the legitimate legislative process in this Assembly.

For anyone who may be anxious for Bill 50 to come forward, as are members of the Official Opposition, it could have been called before Bill 30. It could have been called before Bill 42. It could have been called before Bill 35 or Bill 36. We could have dealt with it long ago . . .

#### **Chairman's Ruling Relevance**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. [interjection] Order, hon. member. [interjection] Order please. Please take your seat. I've cautioned the members previously on sticking to the amendment, and I would ask this member to do so and also to adhere to the instructions of the Chair.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Properly chastised, I'll return to the debate on the amendment.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. FOX: I would like very much to be able to offer my support to the Provincial Treasurer, as I said to him the other day, because I think, as do members of our caucus, that spending control is not only important but essential in terms of management of government expenditures now and into the future. It pains me as an Albertan in the situation that we're in – \$15 billion in debt and going deeper every day – that when the Provincial Treasurer introduces a Bill like this in the Legislature, he becomes the laughingstock of the province of Alberta. Why is that? Why is it that when the Provincial Treasurer stands up and proposes that we control spending according to the sections in this Act, that all members of the Assembly, even some on his side, laugh uncontrollably at the absurdity of this minister with this record in this government proposing to control spending by the methods proposed in this Bill? Mr. Chairman, you've got to ask yourself why, and it's because of a lack of credibility.

Section 5, if allowed to stand in this Bill, would further erode the credibility of government with respect to expenditure control because it makes a mockery of the budget process in this Legislative Assembly. Goodness knows, we as elected members, sent here by the women and men that we represent in our constituencies, have little enough input into the budgetary process. We have very few tools at our disposal with respect to determining whether or not moneys in the province are being fairly collected and properly spent, and what the minister proposes to do here is limit the opposition even further. When and if he's in the opposition – he might not survive the next vote to be part of the opposition – he's not going to be happy if we as a government follow the dictates of Bill 36. We'll have to change it because it's antidemocratic. What section 5 proposes to do is to give even more discretionary power to a bloated cabinet that enjoys far too much power. In fact, if I could quote my friend from Edmonton-Kingsway: it gives more power to the minister, all power to the minister. In fact, we should call this the Henry VIII clause in Bill 36, because that's what it does. It removes prerogative and scrutiny and authority from the 83 elected members of the Legislative Assembly and drops it in the lap of a handful of arbitrarily chosen, not necessarily qualified people who call themselves the Executive Council of the province of Alberta. I think it's unacceptable.

I think it's important that members stand on principle and vote in favour of the amendment against section 5 in this specious Spending Control Act.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further speakers?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hearing the call for the question, all those in favour of the amendment to section 5 proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The amendment is lost.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

**10:50**

For the motion:

Chivers	Hawkesworth	McInnis
Ewasiuk	Hewes	Roberts
Fox	McEachern	Woloshyn

Against the motion:

Ady	Fjordbotten	Oldring
Black	Gesell	Paszkowski
Bogle	Johnston	Severtson
Bradley	Laing, B.	Shrake
Clegg	Lund	Tannas
Dinning	McCoy	Thurber
Drobot	Mirosh	Trynchy
Elliott	Moore	Zarusky
Fischer		

Totals: For – 9

Against – 25

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further debate with respect to the Bill?

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Point of Order**

**Moving a Motion without Notice**

MR. FOX: A point of order.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A point of order, yes, Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Standing Order 40.

A motion may, in case of urgent and pressing necessity previously explained by the mover, be made by unanimous consent of the Assembly.

I would like to move at this point, given the apparent reluctance of government to proceed with Bill 50 at this time, that the Assembly give unanimous consent to proceed with Bill 50 at this time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair would rule the motion out of order. The motion that would be in order would be a motion to adjourn, of course.

MR. McEACHERN: If the amendment is defeated, then we're back on Bill 36.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

**Debate Continued**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Gold Bar. [interjections] The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, please.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've only got about three sentences. I just wanted to get something on the record.

The spontaneous laughter last week when the Treasurer read this Bill for a first time I think revealed just how we feel about the Treasurer's cavalier attitude. Mr. Chairman, this Bill is kind of ironic. It's kind of sad to me, because we shouldn't have to pass legislation to manage taxpayers' money. That should be a given: that we limit spending. Somehow this Bill is an admission that budgeting is out of control, that the Treasurer is admitting that he's out of control and has to be managed by legislation that he's written himself. I find the Bill gratuitous. It's necessary, I guess, because of promises made and not kept. A balanced budget is presented that never materialized, hoping somehow blindly that he could convince the public that now finally we mean business in the House to restore confidence. What a pious hope that is.

Mr. Chairman, the public knows that money is mismanaged. They see the size of the debt. They see the size of the deficit: seven deficits in a row. They see \$566 million lost in NovAtel. In 1986 this government had everything going for it, and it wasn't just the offshore oil prices that changed situations. It was a profligate government spending taxpayers' money. Well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to get on the record to say the public isn't fooled by this Bill. It's an illusion. Perhaps it will rein him in. Perhaps it will introduce some reality to the process and the functioning of this government.

11:00

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to beg leave to adjourn debate in order that the Committee of the Whole may at this time consider Bill 50, which is on the Order Paper for Committee of the Whole. Such a motion, if approved by the committee, would allow us to continue . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order.

[Motion lost]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Okay, Mr. Chairman. Well, thank you. I guess the government wants us to carry on, then, with Bill 36, the Spending Control Act.

AN HON. MEMBER: So that's their agenda.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: That's their agenda, and that's what's in front of us.

Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to ask the Provincial Treasurer. It's committee; it's a little more informal review of the legislation. You know, when you have a Bill, when you have legislation saying that you have to do something and it's against the law not to do something or to contravene the legislation, there's usually a penalty involved, but I don't see what the penalty is in Bill 36, the Spending Control Act. I wonder if the Provincial Treasurer could enlighten us as to what happens if he or the government or a minister or cabinet for some reason doesn't fulfill what's laid out in Bill 36. I mean, if we have an election between now and March 31, 1993, or even if we have an election between now and March 31, 1994, which is required, and we have a government in place, the prospect of having just been elected, the beginning of a five-year term, what if they decided that notwithstanding Bill 36, whatever the circumstances might be, they would not comply with these requirements? What's the penalty? I mean, is there a fine? Does somebody have to resign? What's the disincentive here for a government that fails to achieve these objectives? You know, the Provincial Treasurer has failed to achieve his financial objectives now seven years in a row. So what? What if we pass Bill 36? What changes? What's different? What's there to compel this government to comply? I don't see any penalties in here if you don't achieve it. I don't see that anything's going to happen to you. So anyway, maybe the Provincial Treasurer could enlighten us. Maybe I'm just not seeing something here.

Now, let's take a look for a minute, Mr. Chairman, at particularly special warrant spending. This is an attempt by the provincial government to bring special warrant spending under control. Well, that's an admirable objective. You know, the lack of control in this area has been one that I've been harping on now for several years, so I'm pleased to see that there's something in the Bill recognizing that the use of special warrants should no longer be abused. If we were to take a look at the special warrants that have just been recently approved by the Assembly to ratify, given the decisions that were taken last year by the cabinet, if we put Bill 36 into particular circumstances, particular contexts, maybe some of these questions will come into relief here, and we can get a clear understanding of what's involved.

Let's say, for example, that \$169 million is to cover an increased welfare caseload. You know, the economy's not doing very well, and a lot of people have lost their jobs over the last couple of years. A lot of families are finding that their unemployment insurance has run out, their savings have run out, all their supports have run out, and now they're appearing at our social services offices. What's going to happen for this fiscal year if more and more of them show up and the government is going to have to come up with another \$170 million or maybe \$200 million? Maybe the economy is going to get real bad. Maybe a lot of people are coming off unemployment insurance who have lost their jobs in the last two years. Maybe it's going to be \$300 million or \$400 million.

Now, under the Spending Control Act what's going to happen? Does it mean that everybody who falls under the supports for independence caseloads is going to have to give up a little bit in order to make what's available extend over more families? Does it mean that the Minister of Family and Social Services is going to have to move money out of day care? Is that what's going to have to happen in order to find money to pay for the caseloads of people coming into supports for independence? What about services to persons with disabilities or child welfare services? Are those the people who are going to have to pay for special warrants in this area? Is that how it's going to be managed? We're talking about people who are victims of an economic recession. How is the government going to handle this? If it's going to be as a result of lapsed expenditures in other departments, does this mean that we're going to dip into the economic development or the tourism departments in order to make up those costs?

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, why is it that valuation adjustments are not included under the provisions of this Bill? We've been spending more time in this Assembly trying to find out where the money went over at Technology, Research and Telecommunications. They've had to make big valuation adjustments over there. They've had to cover losses over in that department because of hundreds of millions of dollars that have ended up in the United States of America. How come that kind of spending doesn't even come under the provisions of this Act? What about special warrants to cover valuation adjustments for NovAtel? You know, according to the Act, the minister doesn't have to find the money under another vote. I understand that these valuation adjustments and obligations of the Crown under guarantees and indemnities are exempt. Section 1(d)(ii):

Valuation and similar adjustments and obligations of the Crown in right of Alberta under guarantees and indemnities for the fiscal year are excluded. Now, why is it that a minister can lose more money in one Crown corporation in the rural United States than the minister of Family and Social Services spends in some of his votes? Yet the one, if he wants a special warrant to pick up the costs of people who are, you know, victims of the recession, he has to come and get the money from another department or from within his department. But if the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications loses control of his budget, no problem; that's exempt from the Spending Control Bill. He doesn't have to go take money out of somebody's pocket in order to cover the losses. Well, what kind of a Bill is that, Mr. Chairman?

11:10

Just to take an example here, the entire budget for Child Welfare Services for the entire province is \$165 million. I mean, they've lost more than that in NovAtel just buying back a losing company from Telus Corporation and all the valuation adjustments on the systems financing in the United States. That's all gone.

You know, there's a double standard contained here in this Act, depending on what government department is involved or what kind of spending is involved as well. What it means, Mr. Chairman, is this. When it comes to necessary programs of support for ordinary Albertans, whether it be in Family and Social Services, whether it be for senior citizens, whether it be in the Labour department, or whether it be in Education or Health, they all fall under this Act. But when it comes to the friends of the government wanting a loan guarantee, they can come through the door and it's business as usual: you know, sign the loan guarantee and go out the other door. Just line after line after line of all the friends of the government who have some business deal that they want to do with the government. They can walk through the door; no problem. Bill 36 has nothing in it to prevent this government from making nonsense kinds of business deals – a double standard.

You look at last year, for example: a \$51 million special warrant in housing. What is that for? To provide funds for previous declines in asset values related to land, real estate, and mortgages under AMHC. You know all those loans that the government made to build housing and to develop this and to develop that, CHIP and MAP and all the special deals for developers in the province? Friends of the government got lots of money under those programs, lots of money. They're sitting out there all over Alberta, some of them here in Edmonton in particular. You know, when those assets get written off, there have to be funds provided – \$51 million in the case of last year in a special warrant – but as I read Bill 36, they're exempt. They're not covered under this.

So we have two kinds of spending by government under Bill 36, spending that's covered by Bill 36 and spending that's not. The decisions that are not covered by Bill 36 are the ones that this government has used to support their friends; the ones that are covered are for programs to help ordinary Albertans. That in my mind is what's inherently wrong with Bill 36, the double standard. I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer if he would explain why this double standard. Why is it that valuations and similar adjustments are not included under this particular legislation? Why is there a double standard?

I'd just like to make this final point because it's an important one, Mr. Chairman. You know, we just had the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications admit publicly that things were out of control, commitments were made, spending was done under NovAtel that he says he had nothing to do with, totally outside the scrutiny of government. You know, that's what a minister of this Crown is saying publicly in this province today. Now we have a Bill that talks about spending control. That's an admirable objective, but why is it that this Bill does not address the problem as admitted to by the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications? He's the one who's publicly admitted that he had no control over spending, at least he said he didn't. You know, he's probably trying to deflect the blame onto others, but that's a problem, a big problem for the people of this province.

Why is it that Bill 36 doesn't even address it? Maybe the Provincial Treasurer would enlighten us on that point. When a minister, his colleague, is telling us that he hadn't any control over spending in Technology, Research and Telecommunications, particularly as it affected NovAtel, if the Provincial Treasurer wants to bring some sort of spending control into this Assembly, how come he exempts the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications from the provisions of Bill 36?

Given the experience of that minister in particular, now we begin to see why there are no penalties for any minister who fails

to comply with Bill 36. There's nothing significant to it. When we see a minister that ought to have had control over his own department and the activities of that department and the spending under that department, there's no penalty. He hasn't been told to resign yet; he hasn't offered his resignation – he again refused today in question period to tender his resignation – because of a lack of spending control in NovAtel.

So Bill 36 on any score you want to come up with, Mr. Chairman, fails to address the problems, and it fails to stand the test of fairness. As far as I'm concerned, with the defeat of the amendment to section 5 earlier this evening, the committee has in essence allowed this Bill to take away any effective spending control from the Assembly itself.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually I rose rather slowly to my feet hoping that the Treasurer might get up and answer some of the questions and some of the points we've made, but obviously the government has decided that they will impose the tyranny of the majority and sit in silence and outvote us on every issue regardless of what we say, regardless of what we ask, regardless of what questions are out there or how good the points we make are. The government puts forward legislation, piles the Order Paper with Bill after Bill after Bill at the end of the year, yet they want out and are upset that anybody should dare to stop and speak on any of the Bills. They think we're just supposed to sit in silence and let them put their agenda through so we can all get out of here and have a summer holiday. Well, the members on this side of the House were elected to represent the people of Alberta, and we will have our say.

This Bill is the height of hypocrisy, as I said earlier. I cannot believe that a Treasurer could possibly bring in Bills 36 and 37 next door to each other. In one moment he's asking for \$4 billion more in borrowing power, twice what he has asked year by year through the previous years – even of course in the year he had supposedly a balanced budget, he needed \$2 billion more – and then he turns around and says that he's trying to control expenditures.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

He's not trying to control expenditures with this Bill, because he's exempting a whole raft of things: the Capital Fund expenditures, some \$336 million; the heritage trust fund, capital projects division, \$102 million; the Lottery Fund, around \$100 million. Valuation adjustments: I love that. If you look at page 2, one of the points that is exempt from this program spending limit is valuation adjustments. Now, isn't that nice? The NovAtels, the MagCans: a whole raft of money that's gone down the tube because this government has invested directly in trying to pick winners.

I remember this minister standing up in the House a number of years ago on the Alberta stock savings plan and saying that the government doesn't know how to pick winners. Boy, is he ever right about this government. It sure doesn't know how to pick winners.

11:20

Besides the specific programs I just named that are exempt from this Bill, there's a whole raft of other things. There's a whole series of expenditures that has in some cases some offsetting revenues that the Auditor General keeps track of, things like the

Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation, things like health insurance – we have to pay premiums to cover some of it but not all of it – utilities, the School Foundation Program Fund, the Hail and Crop Insurance fund, the administrative cost for the farm credit stability program, the administrative cost for the small business term assistance plan, the Alberta medical research foundation under the heritage trust fund program. There's a whole raft of other things, Mr. Chairman, that amounts to around 2 and a half million dollars spent every year outside of what the Treasurer intends to control. So why should anybody give any credibility to this Bill?

It was not intended to control expenditures. Let's be very clear about that. What it was intended to do was to try to hang onto the Reform Party membership vote in this province in face of a stimulative budget which this Treasurer has admitted is going to require \$4 billion of new borrowings on the part of this province. He knew that a lot of the people in this province are going to be very upset about that, as rightly they should be, and he just wanted to say, "Well, but really we are going to try to control expenditures." If he hasn't been able to control them in the past, if we couldn't believe him in the past, we can't believe him now. When he brings in a clause that gives more power to the ministers to manipulate the dollars into whatever vote they want from one vote to the other and then sits there in silence, doesn't even stand up and defend his actions . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: He's reading.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, of course, he's sitting there reading, as this member from over here says. That just shows how arrogant this Treasurer has become, how out of touch he has become. He doesn't think that he has to defend the government position. He doesn't think that he has to answer any questions in this Assembly.

MR. WOLOSHYN: How can he defend the indefensible?

MR. McEACHERN: Of course, it's got to the point where he can't defend the indefensible, so he's given up. He's just going to use the tyranny of his majority to bulldoze things through this Assembly and head off on summer holidays. It'll be the last time he does it, because we're going to get an election before the next budget. Not even this government could possibly bring in a second stimulative budget. There's absolutely no possible way they would have a hope of winning an election if they do. So we will have another election between this budget and the next one, and the Treasurer won't get a chance ever again to do this to the people of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, if you want to talk about fiscal responsibility, let's take a look at the province of Saskatchewan right next door. In the 48 years before 1982 . . . [interjection] You laugh, but here are the numbers. In the 48 years before 1982, thirty-two of those years saw a CCF or a New Democratic government. They ran balanced budgets all the time, and they delivered services in Saskatchewan pretty well equivalent to the services delivered here in Alberta in spite of the incredible wealth we had from the oil in this province. They did it on a very poor resource base of potash and wheat, subject to international variations in price for those kinds of products.

In 1982 when the New Democrat government was defeated by the Devine government, Allan Blakeney had run 11 balanced budgets in a row with 18 civil servants per thousand, delivering social services pretty well equivalent, as I said, to the Alberta social services and with a much gentler attitude, by the way, to the poor recipients that found themselves in trouble and needing

social services. The Devine government came into power, and for nine years they ran deficit budgets. They inherited a \$2 billion surplus from the New Democrat government, and in 9 years they took them to a \$13.9 billion deficit, bankrupted the province. Now the New Democrat Premier, Roy Romanow, is going to have to tighten everybody's belt and get that province back on its feet again, and he'll do it. Now, if you want to talk about fiscal responsibility, you'll see it out of that government, and he'll do it without any silly legislation like this that says: oh, I'm going to limit spending. He knows he's got a majority in the House, he knows that his people are with him, and he knows the people of Saskatchewan are with him, because they're tired of the kind of government that Grant Devine was giving them. So they're prepared to pull together with the Saskatchewan New Democrat government, and they will get that government back on track.

This government has just run up seven deficit budgets in a row, is planning another four deficit budgets in a row, and even then claiming that in order to get out of the pattern of deficit after deficit after deficit, he admits he's going to need a 6 percent growth rate over the next four or five years to get the province out of the deficit situation it's in. It's because he doesn't know how to control the books, and this legislation is nothing more than a sham. It's nothing more. He's been cooking the books, but he sure doesn't know how to control the expenditures of this province, and this paper is nothing more than a sham. I can't believe the Treasurer could introduce it and then sit there in silence and force it through. But so be it.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, it's almost 11:30 in the evening. The Treasurer's been asked serious questions by the last two speakers, and he hasn't moved a muscle in the direction of answering them. I don't know who he thinks he is that he can come here in the Legislative Assembly and propose legislation without answering questions about it.

You know, we in this Legislature hold a certain authority in the community. Partly it's a moral authority, partly it's a legal authority, but the authority such as it is we hold in trust. We hold in trust at least this much: that if we use the legislative power, we must use it for a reason. The Treasurer has yet to name one legal impediment to him doing what needs to be done in this legislation. Let's forget for a moment section 5, which is a bit of monkey business that we've already dealt with. He has yet to name one legal impediment to him or any other Treasurer bringing in expenditures in the next three years that correspond to the 2 and a half, 2 and a quarter, 2 percent. I mean, if that's the fiscal policy of the government, if that's what we're debating, then we should be debating the budget, but it's not that.

He's suggesting that somehow passage of this law is going to achieve something that can't be achieved at the present time, and if that's the proposition, then he's got to stand up at some point in this debate and say what the shackle is that's binding him. What's preventing this government from bringing in budgets of those orders of magnitude, of those figures? Where is it? I mean, he has the authority as Treasurer to ask the ministers to go through their budgets and to come back with budgets at a certain level. He's got the authority of the cabinet table, as do they all, to say no to requests that exceed that level. He has all of that now. So where's the impediment? What is the problem for which this remedy is suggested? What is the problem? Does he have ministers that don't listen to him in cabinet? Is that the problem? Well, you know, if it's not a legal impediment, is it a political impediment? Is it theological? Is it ontological?

MR. FOX: How about gerontological?

MR. McINNIS: Could be gerontological.

Well, I mean, this is a very serious matter. The government has come before this Assembly with government legislation which he pointed out on introduction actually requires new spending. You know, it's kind of ironic that you have an Act to control spending that requires that more money be spent. It's sort of the curve of time. Is it that the Treasurer and the government collectively lack the will and the toughness to actually do the job?

In fact, what they would rather do is debate the matter here in the Assembly. No action, talk only: is that why we have this Bill? I mean, it's much easier to debate spending control than it is to actually do it. Is that the message we're getting from the Treasurer, who refuses to answer that one simple question, that he and his colleagues don't have the guts to go through and decide which of the government departments they need and don't need, because I don't think they need all the government departments they have now. We had a step in the right direction with the amalgamation of Tourism and Recreation and Parks, legislation supported by this House earlier this evening. What about the others? Why does this province of Alberta need a cabinet which is bigger than any other in the country for a province this size? I mean, wouldn't it be a little more realistic if the government were to actually approach that problem and solve it rather than bring forward something like this for debate and then not debate it?

**11:30**

Why will the Treasurer not answer questions put by Calgary-Mountain View and Edmonton-Kingsway? What about rationalizing the administration of the government? How many levels of bureaucracy, Mr. Treasurer, are there between the people who come into the front door of a government office and the cabinet? How many layers are there? I'll bet you it's more than three. I'll bet you it's about seven or eight or nine in a lot of departments. That's something the government could really be doing instead of putting forward the idea that we should be debating this question of what the government might be doing in the next fiscal year or the fiscal year thereafter or the fiscal year after that.

Wouldn't it be a little more useful if the government were to actually spend its time looking at the layers of bureaucracy that exist between the public that is served and those who allegedly make the decisions in the government? Aren't there likely millions and millions of dollars that are spent between – you've got the deputies and the assistant deputies and the directors and so on down.

Somebody informed me recently that the Minister of Family and Social Services streamlined his department recently. He streamlined the department and he created a program that he called supports for independence. Well, correct me if I'm wrong, but in the streamlining the number of assistant deputy ministers and the number of regional directors went up. Now, if you're creating more positions of management authority at the top, how is that streamlining? Correct me if I'm wrong, but after supports for independence the number of people on social assistance actually went up. So maybe there is a problem, but is it a problem that is of the creation of this Legislative Assembly? If it isn't, if it's created by the fact that the government isn't able to do the job of controlling spending, then maybe the problem is the government and not the legislation. Maybe this is just a little bit of a diversion from what's really happening over there: that they just really don't know how to reorganize, they don't know how to face issues, and they don't know how to make decisions. Maybe that's the problem. If so, there's nothing in this Bill that's going

to make the members of the government make better decisions. It doesn't even say in here that they have to make better decisions.

I'm going to leave aside just for the moment the problem that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View pointed out, that there's no penalty whatsoever in this legislation if the terms aren't met. In fact, if the Assembly passes a contrary Bill next year, the way I understand constitutional law, the more recent legislative Act predominates over the earlier one. So this Bill could quite easily be dust within a year. Wouldn't it make more sense to look at all of the spending in the Public Affairs Bureau, where the government uses taxpayers' dollars to try to convince the taxpayers that they should believe something different about themselves, their province, and their government than they do now? Wouldn't that be a way to control spending? Wouldn't that be a worthwhile and useful way? But then you actually have to do it and give up the authority to spend money on advertising instead of just talking about it and presenting it as legislation in this Assembly. They'd actually have to make decisions in order to do that.

There's been a lot of discussion in this Assembly and elsewhere about why the government needs so many foreign offices represented abroad. Now, I know a giant display was made out of the closing of the one office in Los Angeles. What about the rest? Do we need all of those? Are we not duplicating perhaps some of the work that's being done by the foreign service overseas? Isn't there a way that we could perhaps dovetail? Why not review those expenditures rather than bringing in this kind of legislation, which is at best a political promise to the voters that things are going to be different next year and the year after and the year after that?

Political promises are only that. The Treasurer introduced a budget a year ago that he said was balanced. I guess that has to be regarded as a political promise. Well, we know what became of that promise. This legislation at best is a political promise, but at worst, of course, it's something more serious than that. It's an effort to undermine the authority of the Assembly, in fact, to control the spending of the government.

What about the use of government aircraft? You know, why does the province of Alberta have such a large fleet of executive aircraft at its disposal? The argument of the fire fighting operation doesn't hold a lot of water because, as we discussed earlier this evening, so much of that is financed by special warrant anyway and is not part of the ongoing government aircraft fleet. There are concerns that have been expressed by opposition members over spending on the Grain Commission, the home now of the former Member for Stettler, the Crow offset benefit, red meat stabilization, hosting and entertainment.

Come talk about controlling government spending: what about the Oldman River dam in southern Alberta, where the government borrowed \$500 million of a future generation's money presumably and put up this dam without ever bothering to ask people whether it was needed?

AN HON. MEMBER: People like to drink water.

MR. McINNIS: Yes, people like to drink water, but if you're trying to tell me that you need a \$500 million dam on the Oldman River so that people can drink water, you're saying something which is not in accord with fact. The facts are that that structure is not needed for domestic water supplies anywhere in southern Alberta. If it has any justification at all, it's for further expansion of irrigation agriculture. It's a project that will not be paid for in the lifetime of any member of this Assembly. It's a project for which the operating costs exceed the total benefits, assuming the cost of the dam is zero, which in fact is what the value of it is

now. It can't be sold. According to the recently concluded environmental impact assessment by the environmental assessment review panel, treating the capital cost of the dam as zero still produces a negative benefit cost analysis. So it's a project that doesn't just transfer money from taxpayers to beneficiaries, but it loses a lot of those dollars along the way.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Of course, there's been discussion of the fact that NovAtel and anything like it or any other business venture entered into by cabinet is totally exempt from this legislation. Wouldn't it make more sense to clean up that area? Clean up the ad hoc business loans, business investments, business decisions, picking of winners and losers by the government, not to mention the regulatory failures which have been, by my account, responsible for probably \$2 billion in losses just within the lifetime of the present administration? We have things like government ministers going out leasing office space in downtown Edmonton without tendering those bids and paying a surplus of as much as \$50 million over the duration of the lease. We have the special waste management facility in Swan Hills, which appears to burn money as much as waste. We have a looming situation with some of the northern forestry developments where the taxpayers are on the hook for \$1.2 billion at least financially, which is potentially at risk. What about that kind of arrangement?

What about the way the government unfairly subsidizes some industries in our province? What about the fact that every company that obtains a permit to pollute the environment doesn't have to pay for it even though it costs the taxpayers millions of dollars to review and process the applications, and it costs us money eventually to clean up the messes from these corporations? What about the fact that the government doesn't have any cost recovery on that whatsoever? What about the fact that environmental impact assessments are conducted, such as they are, free of charge by Alberta Environment without charging back to the project proponent, who indeed stands to profit from a decision, any of the costs of that?

11:40

Wouldn't it make more sense if the government reviewed those situations and tried to correct them rather than bringing in this kind of declaratory legislation for which there is no legal justification provided by the Provincial Treasurer. What about the low level of stumpage that's collected in the forestry department, where we have a forest service that fails to recover the cost of processing timber sales, let alone provide any return to the owners of the resource? What about reviewing that regime to try to make it more useful? What about putting some real pressure on the federal government to live up to its obligations under federal/provincial agreements? Wouldn't that make more sense than this kind of legislation that's before the committee this evening? What about finding new and more effective ways to deliver health care in our province, which admittedly is a very tough, very difficult job, but you know it's one that requires actual doing and actual decision-making as opposed to, I guess, a kind of an IOU that in the future we will make some tough decisions later but only if the Assembly passes this legislation.

I want to know what's stopping the government from making these tough decisions right now. Where's the impediment? Where's the gun that's held to the head of the Treasurer? Why is the Treasurer incapable of doing his job today under the existing Financial Administration Act? If he can't answer that question, then I think he's inviting the conclusion that the legislation has no

purpose other than to try to fool people into thinking that the Assembly has done something to make the future different from the past, because in the past there have been announcements of grants guidelines, of percentage figures one level or the other. These announcements have been made with great solemnity and a sense of occasion, often held at Government House with all the trappings of power. Similarly, when we have budget night here, it's a very special occasion. People come from the community, sit in the galleries. They try to obtain the documents as quickly as they can, read through them, analyze them, understand them. Hours and hours are spent in the public media on commentary and analysis. That's the kind of thing that's supposed to mean something as well. How is that any different from this? How was the Treasurer introducing a budget last year which was a balanced budget? How is that any different from this? Is this not just more of the same?

Is this not an empty gesture at bottom? Empty rhetoric? The Treasurer has yet to explain why he's incapable of doing the job before him with the tools he has at the present time. How is this an effective tool to help him? If the Treasurer could stand up and say: "Well, I've got a problem. I'm trying to do this job here, but all these guys around me are preventing me from doing it, so you've got to pass a law to protect me." If that's what he's saying, then I think he should explain what the legal or the interpersonal difficulties that he has in meeting these targets are. If he can explain them, maybe we can help him to find some ways around them. But setting it out like this as a target in legislation which doesn't even have any penalty if you don't meet it, it's wide of the mark. It really just doesn't inspire any confidence that the government has learned that in fact government is all about details. It's all about what happens in this town and that town and this block and that block. It's about individuals, about small groups. It's not about making these big declarations of policy, which prove in the transpiration of time to be just more positioning, more rhetoric.

I think all we've gotten so far from the Treasurer about this Bill is rhetoric, and rather empty rhetoric at that, so I think it's time here, at 11:45 p.m. on June 29, that the Treasurer did start to answer some of these questions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 36 agreed to]

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills and reports the following: Bills 42, 35, and 36. The committee reports the following with some amendments: Bill 30. I wish to table copies of all amendments



considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the report by the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.  
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, when the House sits once again on Thursday, it's intended that we deal with Bills and orders on the Order Paper. I move that we do now adjourn, pursuant to the motion passed previously.

[At 11:49 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

