

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, September 21, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/09/21

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our prayer is the one as used at the Mother of Parliaments since the year 1659.

We, Thine unworthy servants here gathered together in Thy name, do humbly beseech Thee to send down Thy heavenly wisdom from above to direct and guide us in all our considerations.

Amen.

head: **Presentation to the Assembly of  
Mr. Gary Dickson, Member for Calgary-  
Buffalo**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Would the leader of the Liberal Party together with the House leader for the Liberal Party proceed to the bar of the House, please. Sergeant-at-Arms, open the doors for the new member.

Hon. members, I have received from the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta, pursuant to the Election Act, a report containing the results of the by-election conducted on July 21, 1992, which states that a by-election was conducted in the constituency of Calgary-Buffalo, and the said report further shows that Robert Gary Dickson was duly elected as the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

[Mr. Decore and Mrs. Hewes escorted Mr. Dickson to the Mace]

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Robert Gary Dickson, who has won his seat in Calgary-Buffalo. Mr. Dickson has taken the oath of this House, inscribed his name to the roll, and now wishes to take his seat as the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Let the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo take his seat. [applause]

MR. SPEAKER: As is our tradition in this House, since the House last sat we take note of the fact and offer our memorials with respect to former members who have died.

On June 13, 1992, the death occurred of Edward Leslie Gray. Mr. Gray represented the constituency of Edmonton for the Liberal Party, was first elected in the October 7, 1937, by-election, and served this House until 1940.

On August 25, 1992, Neil Stanley Crawford died. Neil represented the constituency of Edmonton-Parkallen for the Progressive Conservative Party, was first elected in the general election of August 30, 1971, re-elected in the 1975, '79, '82, and '86 general elections, and served this House faithfully until 1989.

I would ask that we bow our heads in a moment of silent prayer as we remember these former members of this House.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Amen.

The Minister of Transportation and Utilities, please.

**Neil Stanley Crawford, Member for Edmonton-Parkallen  
May 26, 1931, to August 25, 1992**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to stand in my place to say a few words on behalf of my colleagues in caucus and cabinet, both past and present, about our friend Neil Crawford.

Neil was the ultimate politician, a family man, a former executive assistant to the Rt. Hon. John Diefenbaker, a city of Edmonton alderman, a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Edmonton-Parkallen, and he served with distinction as Alberta's Minister of Health and Social Development, of Labour, of Municipal Affairs, Attorney General, Government House Leader, and lastly responsible for Special Projects. He was hardworking and serious, both with a great sense of humour. This Assembly is richer today because of Neil Crawford.

I look back, and question period was certainly a challenge for the opposition because of his ability to answer in a manner that generally left little room for supplementary questions, and if a supplementary came, it was generally on his terms. I remember and recall vividly another time. He got a question; he stood up and thanked the questioner and went on and on and on and on and then sat down. No supplementary. Complete quiet. Premier Lougheed leaned over and asked Lou Hyndman: what did he say? Lou responded: I don't know. However, he did have a tremendous amount of respect for the parliamentary system.

In addition, Neil was an outstanding trumpet player, including being a member of the Jazz Society of Edmonton. I look back on our annual MLA breakfast led by Neil Crawford and the Tory Blue Notes. It was always, always the highlight of those breakfast sessions.

Many members of the press will recall his December 1986 press conference where he indicated his illness as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or more commonly, Lou Gehrig's disease. He was upbeat and used that special sense of humour to indicate that he was a fighter and would fight. This was followed by Neil telling his colleagues in caucus that he had Lou Gehrig's disease. He said that it was a good disease because it only attacked the left side, and "Besides they will find a cure in 50 years, and I'll only be 105." That was our Neil.

Death came as a welcome relief for Neil. Neil has moved to the highest parliament of mankind, and I'm sure Neil is watching over this Assembly today.

To you, Neil, thanks for serving Canada, Alberta, and specifically the constituency of Edmonton-Parkallen. You, sir, served with distinction. To you, Cathie and family, thank you for sharing this great man with us for the past 25 years. We will miss this man, a great man, and we will not forget his service, his dedication, his love for people, and particularly that great sense of humour.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

2:40

MR. MARTIN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that we were all sad when we heard that Neil had lost his valiant fight with Lou Gehrig's disease. I certainly want to confirm, after being in the opposition and sitting opposite him, that he indeed was a man of stature and certainly a great Albertan.

Obviously the time I got to know Neil well was when there were two of us in the Official Opposition in the Legislature. Grant Notley was the leader, and I was the caucus. As a result of that, I was second in command, so I had to deal with Neil a

lot. At the time, of course, he was the House leader. My impressions of course grew up at that particular time. I know – and the minister of transportation alluded to it – that we often think today that “politician” is a bad word, but I want to say that Neil was a politician and a proud politician and he was a politician in the best sense. I’ve seen him and I’m sure all of us here have seen him handle difficult issues in a calm, rational, dignified manner. He was honest and straightforward, and that was important to us when we were dealing as a very small opposition. To deal with him as House leader, you knew that when you had his word, that’s the way it was going to be. There were going to be no games played. I can’t tell you how important that was to us at that particular time.

The minister of transportation alluded to his sense of humour, and we used to see it often across the way. As a result of that, I always knew that Neil was a genuine person who didn’t take himself too seriously. He could laugh at himself, and he could laugh at politics generally.

I want to come back to what the minister of transportation talked about, question period, because I was the one often asking the questions of Neil, and it was very difficult. I’ve never seen a person who could put together so many articulate words and not tell you anything in the end. I remember one time in question period asking something, and I actually had to turn to Grant Notley and say: what did I ask? We all know that that was a skill. He never did get into trouble in question period; I can assure you of that.

Mr. Speaker, I think the other thing that we all admired, again alluded to by the minister of transportation, was the absolute courage that he showed in fighting this debilitating disease. Many people would have given up. He lasted a lot longer than other people would have under the circumstances because he was a fighter. Talking to Mr. Scrimshaw, he always thought that he was going to win this particular battle, and he never gave up. I think that said a lot about the man.

I want to express our sympathy to the family. You indeed have lost a great Albertan; you’ve lost your husband and father. I want to assure you that we feel your loss because Alberta has lost a statesman and a great Albertan. The good part about it, the optimistic part about it is that his memory and accomplishments will live forever in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s an honour for me on behalf of all of the members of the Liberal caucus to say a few words to members of the Legislature and to the family of Neil Crawford.

I first came to know Neil when we were lawyers practising law together in Edmonton, and if I walked down the street – it didn’t matter how difficult a file we might have had – Neil always had a moment to spend with me to talk about politics, law, or whatever. When he became an alderman, he always had time to talk to me about things that would make things better for Edmonton and Alberta and Canada, and that same kindness and that same way of dealing with people occurred when he became a minister and a Member of this Legislative Assembly. He truly was a man who was comfortable with people. It could have been a queen or it could have been somebody from any part of our society.

As a person who has had some difficulty with his health himself, I watched Neil Crawford deal with the most brutal of diseases, Lou Gehrig’s disease. I remember being with him and his wife and other friends one evening, and I shed a tear because

of what I was watching, what I was experiencing. It was and is a brutal, disabling disease. Most people thought that Neil Crawford wouldn’t be able to stem off and fight off that disease for very long, but it showed something of the mettle of the man that he did. He went a long, long time, and he was able to live with his family and with his friends for a long, long time. That’s deserving of mention and note.

Mr. Speaker, there are things about Neil Crawford that some Albertans need to be reminded about. During the 1970s Mr. Crawford as a Member of this Legislative Assembly was the Minister of Health and Social Development. These were critical times in the development of our province. It’s my belief that that man of wiseness, a wise senator somebody called him, that man of sober second thought, and that man who had a strength that is uncommon amongst men and women – the ability to have common sense, project common sense, and provide common sense – allowed Albertans to create a framework in health and social services that lives with us today. That’s how I remember him, that’s how the members of our caucus remember him, and that’s the way the people of Alberta should remember him.

Thank you.

head:

### Presenting Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I’d like to table a petition from 4,334 concerned Albertans from Edson, Peers, and Whitecourt calling on the Minister of the Environment to stop putting raw sewage into the McLeod River and to put a stop order on the permit for Pine Shadows trailer court for performing such an act.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to submit a petition from 3,004 Albertans regarding cleft palate. The petition urges the government to afford clefted children full access to proper dental care so these children may grow to be healthy, functioning parts of Alberta’s future.

head:

### Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices I’d like to table the report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Calgary-Buffalo by-election held July 21, 1992, which is submitted pursuant to section 4(3) of the Election Act.

head:

### Notices of Motions

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice of the following government motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta approves the text of the question to be asked of Albertans on the referendum under the Referendum Act, Canada, which reads: “Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?”

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice of the following government motion:

Be it resolved that the Assembly waive Standing Order 8(2) to allow consideration of government business on Tuesday afternoon, September 22, 1992.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have three motions to deal with, I believe. I give notice of the following motions. First, I

wish to give notice that I will move first reading of Bill 54, the Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 1992.

Secondly, I wish to give notice of the following government motion:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 73(2), Bill 54, the Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 1992, may be advanced two or more stages in one day.

Finally, I also wish to give notice of the following government motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 12 of the Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 1992, approves the substitution of a referendum to be held under the Referendum Act, Canada, and, further, approves the question on the referendum under the Referendum Act, Canada, which reads: "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?"

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for those three separate notices.  
The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

2:50

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, under section 30 of the Standing Orders I wish to give oral notice of a matter of urgent importance, the question of the farmers and the problem we have in the farm sector. Your office, I believe, had been given written notice at least two hours before the sitting of the Assembly.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly a report entitled The Impact of NovAtel on the Alberta Economy released today by Wright Mansell Research Ltd.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table with the Assembly today the following financial statements for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1992: the Glenrose rehabilitation hospital, Alberta Hospital Ponoka, Alberta Cancer Board, Alberta Hospital Edmonton, Alberta Children's provincial general hospital, Charles Camsell provincial general hospital, and Foothills provincial general hospital.

I'm also tabling the annual report of the Alberta Association of Optometrists for the year ended December 31, 1991, a copy of which will be distributed to all members, and the vital statistics annual report for 1991, which was previously forwarded to all MLAs.

Finally, I'm pleased to table the response to Written Question 355.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to file in the House today the ninth annual report of the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves for the period April 1, '91, to March 31, '92.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly today copies of materials that have been shared with school trustees, parents, administrators, and taxpayers generally on the subject of the financing of education. It is the purpose of these documents to be a catalyst for some creative debate to ensure the quality of education in our province.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of documents showing the Provincial Treasurer providing a \$12.2 million unsecured loan to Golden Gate Fresh Foods.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, pursuant to the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act I table with the Assembly the 15th annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Pursuant to Standing Order III I table with the Assembly certain matters of correspondence, pursuant to the Legislative Assembly Act I table with the Assembly Members' Services Committee amendment order 6, and pursuant to the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act I table with the Assembly the 1991 federal census data as submitted to the Speaker by the Chief Electoral Officer.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, in both the members' gallery and the public gallery are some 80 high school students from Lorne Jenken senior high school in Barrhead. They're here today accompanied by three distinguished teachers – Mr. Marvin Sheets, Mr. Merlin Flock, Mr. Allan Shipton – as well as assistant co-ordinator, Mrs. Myrtle Wegner. I'm really pleased and proud of these students and the staff for wanting to be here today. They made arrangements several weeks ago to be here on September 21 so that they could observe the debate with respect to constitutional renewal, and I'm very proud of them. I'd ask all members of the Assembly to extend the warmest welcome, please.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly two very, very close friends of mine who have traveled across Canada from Long Island, New York. They're seated in the members' gallery. I'd like Mr. and Mrs. Akina to rise and receive a warm welcome from all the members here.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly my wife, Arlene, and my daughter Lynn, both of whom are seated in the Speaker's gallery. I'd ask the two of them to rise and be greeted by the House.

head: **Premier's Retirement**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, we have a special variation in our procedure at this stage. The Chair recognizes first the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since we last sat, the Premier has of course announced that he will be resigning from his job as Premier of the province and leader of the Conservative Party. Now, I know that the Premier had talked about a cabinet shuffle, but we really didn't expect this. This is some cabinet shuffle. As the Leader of the Opposition I would like to publicly thank him for 20 years of service to Albertans and, of course, seven very gruelling years, I'm sure, as Premier.

While the Premier and I didn't always agree and perhaps we didn't often agree, I have never ever doubted his dedication to the people of the province of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, I think all of us in public life understand that public life is tough, and I'm sure it's even tougher in the top job in the province. I know that the Premier, after having made that decision, probably feels some relief. I know that he's looking forward to other endeavours.

Mr. Speaker, there's been some speculation, but I want to say from the Official Opposition that I hope health is not a problem and that this was not one of the reasons why the Premier had to step down. We hope that is not the case.

We're going to be debating the Constitution. I want to say to the Premier that we respect the dedication that he put into that

process, going back before Meech Lake. I thought we'd be on the Constitution forever, and I'm sure he did. I remember being at Meech Lake, and I said before that I thought I was a captive there during that time. Then to have to deal with it after you've played an extremely positive role in terms of the constitutional debate – while the triple E perhaps wasn't my most important part of the document, it certainly would not have been there if it hadn't been for the efforts of the Premier. We can argue later whether it is effective, Mr. Speaker. It's as effective as you're going to get. That's the point.

Margaret, I'm sure, will be glad to have her husband back, and his children will be glad to have their father back, and I'm sure the grandchildren will be glad to have their grandfather back. I know that the Premier is looking forward to spending some time with them.

I just want to again thank the Premier publicly here in the Legislature and wish him our sincere best wishes in his endeavours in the future.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I too wish to stand in my place and pay my respects and my tributes to the Premier. I think there's one thing that the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party and the leader of the Conservative Party would all agree on, and that is that being a leader is one of the hardest jobs you can take on. When mistakes are made, it doesn't matter that you weren't part of the making of those mistakes. The focus always comes back to the leader. You live in a fishbowl, and every zig and every zag, every turn is always recorded by somebody looking for some way of showing you in a different light or embarrassing or whatever. Mr. Premier, I have respect for that, acknowledge that and respect and acknowledge the fact that for seven years you've put hard work into the leadership of your party.

3:00

Mr. Speaker, it was with great zeal and excitement that I cheered on the quarterback of the Edmonton Eskimos on more than one occasion. It is true that sometimes I didn't cheer and have that same zeal on some issues that the Premier and I found ourselves at odds on, but I, too, share the observation of the Leader of the Opposition. That is that nobody could quarrel with the commitment that the Premier has shown towards the people of Alberta, towards Albertans, and probably in no better way than what the Premier said and did in working through this difficult task of the Constitution. I'm not happy with all the aspects of that deal, and a lot of people will have their negative observations on the deal, but again the commitment, the strength, the perseverance, the sticking to the position that made it better for Albertans has to be acknowledged by me and every Albertan. For that, Mr. Premier, I and the members of our caucus thank you and wish you the best in your new life.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have been associated with the Premier now for over 25 years in the political life of Alberta. We were both candidates in the general election in 1967. He was elected; I was not. It took me a couple of elections to catch up with him in the Assembly and to have the honour to serve with him in my first term, when I was not a member of cabinet and he was. We made interesting observations about the role he played in working with the members of the caucus who were not in Executive Council, and I can tell the members of the Assembly who were not in that role that it was always a great experience to work with him in his capacity as a member of Executive Council.

He decided to seek some respite from political life and go into the real world to carry out the practice of business to make some

money, which is an honourable tradition and I heartily endorse it. I hope he does that again because you certainly don't make a lot of money in this job; I think we can all agree with that. He decided with some persuasion from some of us, including myself, to re-enter the public arena. So just over seven years ago in October, with those of us who were enthusiastic about his candidacy supporting him, he became the leader of our party, and as a result and after a by-election he became a member once again of this Assembly. He has led our Progressive Conservative Party to two successive victories, and he should, I believe, receive a great deal of credit for that from the members of this Assembly but perhaps, I know, not with the same amount of enthusiasm from the members of the Liberal and New Democratic Party caucuses. Nonetheless it is a fact.

Having served as his Deputy Premier since the last general election and having on some occasions served as Acting Premier and during his illness for a longer period than I'd ever anticipated being in that role, I have to wonder why it is that the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party and perhaps others in this Assembly aspire to the job, because it is one of demand on his time, on his family, and on his intellectual and physical abilities that is really quite remarkable. I think Albertans and Canadians just do not appreciate how much demand is placed upon their leaders today.

I want to pay tribute to his wife, Margaret, who I'm pleased to see is in the gallery today and who has been his constant friend, adviser, and confidante during his political career.

Mr. Premier, I know that you're looking forward to some more relaxing times and perhaps some hunting. I would have to say that I hope you actually do get out onto the golf course now and then, because your much reported golfing holidays have been few and far between. I know that to be the case.

On behalf of the government members I want to extend to you, sir, our heartfelt thanks for all you have done for every Albertan you have helped to serve and for every Canadian you've helped to lead through this constitutional process from which hopefully we will emerge on October 26. Sir, it's with some considerable emotion that we bid you farewell, in a sense, from the job that you now hold and will hold until a new leader takes your place and becomes the next Premier of this province. Your mark has been made on Alberta and on Canada, and all of us are tremendously indebted for your years of service. Thank you, sir. [applause]

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think I should say a word of thank you, thanks on behalf of my family and myself to the members. I listened closely to the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party. Their arguments were well placed, but I can assure them that I am not giving any second thoughts to my decision.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Deputy Premier mentioned that first we ran together and I was elected in 1967. I always appreciate, I guess is the right word for it, the fact that I did spend four years in opposition, and with the years in opposition and then many years on the government side I think I have an appreciation for this Legislature that leads me to have great respect for it and for its traditions. I hope that members will always treat this House with respect and conduct themselves with dignity while they're here.

I would only say one other thing, Mr. Speaker, and that is that I admire people who run for this Legislature, all members of this Assembly. You have taken of your time to represent people and present the ideas and policies that you believe in. While many people can agitate or complain or be fund-raisers or organize for political parties, only some place themselves before the people

publicly, and I admire people who do that. I respect the Legislature, I admire the people here, and I thank you all for your recognition and thoughtfulness today. [applause]

MR. SPEAKER: There's a fine tradition of Parliament that Speakers are not supposed to speak, but on behalf of the Table officers and in particular on behalf of myself, Mr. Premier, we thank you for your obvious care and concern for Parliament as an institution, for your diligent attendance upon the House, and for your support for parliamentary democracy in this province as well as in Canada.

head:

### Oral Question Period

3:10

#### NovAtel Communications Ltd.

MR. MARTIN: I hesitate to stand and change the tone here, Mr. Speaker, but when we talk about the real world, I'd like to bring us back to the real world of NovAtel bungling. Today I would like to table a U.S. court document which shows that NovAtel has yet another bad loan of \$7.7 million Canadian plus interest from a company called General Cellular International (Peru). Now, what is amazing about this is that the court document from NovAtel alleges that GCI (Peru) operated without regular direct or shareholder meetings and without even minutes of meetings. It appears that this company was not a serious company; it was just set up for the personal gains of its owners. My question is to the government and to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, because they're all responsible. It's beyond me why these things weren't checked out. How could this government lend money to such a company? My question is simply this: why didn't this government check out who it was lending money to?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, the whole matter of the systems financing area of NovAtel has been widely discussed in this House. The reasons for it were determined by the NovAtel management at the time, which entered into a number of financing arrangements which were typical of the type of financing arrangements by the competition that was developing markets particularly in the United States. It's interesting to note that this particular area of NovAtel operations was in fact the only area that was making money. Nevertheless, there were certain accounts, certain decisions made by NovAtel managers, by the NovAtel board. Those are under review by the Auditor General. He's got a full file on all of these accounts. He's examining them. We expect his report in a couple of weeks. No doubt he will deal with all aspects, and we hope that he will tell the full story with respect to all these loans.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought that over the summer they would have had a twinge of conscience and would start to tell us what went on. It's the same old tired story: the Auditor General, the Auditor General; it wasn't our fault. But the taxpayers took a bath, and people are sick and tired of it. We want some answers from the government.

He says that this is one of the areas that made money. I'm talking about this company in Peru that lost \$7.7 million. My question to the minister is simply this: will the minister now admit to this Assembly that it's highly unlikely that we'll get this \$7.7 million back, that it's gone like the rest of the bad loans?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, insofar as pointing fingers and finding fault, as the hon. leader suggests, I would suggest that we await the Auditor General's report. It will be out presumably

within the next two to three weeks. All of the information will be there. The hon. member will be able to make his judgment. Others will be able to make their judgment. I'm sure that he will be satisfied with the in-depth investigation of the Auditor General.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, may I remind him of the great traditions of the Legislature that the Premier talked about. This is where we're supposed to be debating these issues. I would remind this minister that they've already admitted that they've lost \$566 million, and it's growing. This is where we should be discussing it. My question to the minister is simply this: can the minister now tell this Assembly why Albertans have to find out what is going on with their own money through court cases and through the Freedom of Information Act in the United States and we can't get them to come clean in the Legislature and debate it here? Can he tell us that?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. leader would like to lend heat to the whole situation. Quite frankly, our attitude was to shed light on the whole circumstance, and that's what we're doing. We've appointed the Auditor General through the instigation of our Premier. He will be able to tell the full story. He has been able to review all of the documents and information with respect to NovAtel, and we look forward to that report as much as anyone else.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I guess not much has changed over the holidays: still the same hidden bunch.

### Employment Statistics

MR. MARTIN: My second question goes to the minister of career development, Mr. Speaker. While the government may be preoccupied with all the pretenders to the throne over there, they still have to govern this province in the next short period of time. I want to go back to what the Provincial Treasurer said during his budget last spring. He said that 15,000 new jobs would be created in Alberta this year, and it's in the budget if people want to check. Well, if we use the minister's own documents and Stats Canada, we find that we not only have not gained any jobs, we've lost 3,000 jobs in the first eight months of this year. My question to the minister of career development is simply this: where are the 15,000 jobs?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'm honoured that the member of the opposition would ask me that question of such relative importance. It is important; jobs to anybody are important. I'd also like to ask him to look back at the overall position that Alberta is in in relation to all other provinces: the second best in Canada and as well the only province sharing with B.C. a positive net gain in overall jobs for this year. I won't say that we'll attain the level of 15,000 perhaps by the end of the fiscal period of March 31, 1993, but I will stand on record as saying that we'll probably be in the top two provinces in Canada in leading the goal to employment.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that means a lot. It means a lot that we're beating Newfoundland in terms of unemployment. That sort of answer means a lot to the unemployed of this province. Who cares? What we're talking about is what was said in this Legislature in the budget speech: 15,000 new jobs. Now the minister's saying: no, we're not going to have that. I want to ask the minister: rather than comparing us to Newfoundland, what specifically is this government going to do? It's going to get

worse. We've got the Canadian Airlines/Air Canada merger, which could knock out even thousands more jobs here. What is the government going to do about jobs in this immediate time, not next year, not two years from now?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish we had more time to address exactly what we are doing and the exact goals and objectives of the Department of Career Development and Employment, specifically the programs that we have in place, that are there. We recognize that Skills Alberta is helping a lot of small businesses in Alberta. We recognize that our summer temporary employment programs led the industry across Canada with perhaps the most positive gain of any other province. Our programs are numerous, and we stand by them. We'll see what record we obtain by March 31, 1993.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I just pointed it out to the minister. This cheap rhetoric is not helping the unemployed. The reality is that they've lost 3,000 jobs since they talked about it in the Legislature. They won't acknowledge it.

I want to come back to the minister. I'm not talking about what's been done in the past or comparing us to Newfoundland. I want to ask him this: now that we're in the Legislature, what specific new initiatives is the government prepared to announce right here to get the thousands of people back to work? Give us some concrete action.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the member's been in the past, but I'm sure he's listened as well to many programs that were announced within our department, as well as the overall economic diversification strategy outlined by our Premier, such projects in the forestry industry as \$2.3 billion Al-Pac. This goes on and on and on. I can go on to Grande Prairie, other areas, in my own constituency the increased direction that we're hopefully going to gain in the energy sector and others.

Mr. Speaker, I think he's a little misleading when he says that I am making statements comparing us to Newfoundland. I've not made that. He makes that comparison.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Glenarry on behalf of the Liberal Party.

### Health Care Reform

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, all Albertans respect the fact that the Conservative Party will require time to choose a new leader, but that shouldn't be an excuse to defer or to suspend urgent issues or matters that affect Albertans. My questions are to the Premier. Mr. Premier, in June of this year the Minister of Health told Albertans that economic reform in the health care area was a matter of great urgency. In September – and I'd like to file that letter – the same minister says that because of the leadership contest, this issue of economic reform will have to be deferred. I'd like to ask the Premier: is this economic matter of looking at health care costs now a matter of lesser priority to the leadership contest?

MR. GETTY: No, it is not, Mr. Speaker.

3:20

### Royalties

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the energy sector we have a most serious economic problem affecting people in the oil and gas industry. We have the winter drilling season coming on, and even though government has made certain promises with respect

to royalty simplification and reconfiguration of those royalty regimes, nothing has happened. My question to the Premier, then, is this: will the Premier give us the time lines on when this Legislature can start dealing with that important issue of the royalty regime?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy has conducted a very exhaustive consultation process with the various components of the oil and gas energy industry in this province. He's pulling together all of the information. It will be proceeding to the government's priorities committee of cabinet and then would proceed to caucus, and when a decision is made, it would be announced.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not very comforting for people in the oil industry. Give us some time lines.

### Freedom of Information Legislation

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my last question to the Premier then. The Premier of our province promised in the spring that we would have freedom of information legislation. We've gone through the whole NovAtel fiasco and the situation where Albertans had to go to other jurisdictions to get information because they had freedom of information and we did not. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would give us the time lines and the assurance of when we can start dealing with the legislation that deals with freedom of information.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the leader of the Liberal Party, as he sometimes does, ends up asking a question based on false facts. It was not necessary to go to some other country to get information on the NovAtel matter. As a matter of fact, a servant of this Legislature, the Provincial Auditor, who is not selected by the government but is selected by this Legislature, is conducting an exhaustive review with all the facts. He advises me that he has been able to get all the facts and that all the facts will be made public. Now, how the leader of the Liberal Party can say that you have to go somewhere else to get this information, I don't know. I think that's a distortion, and I think he falls into that from time to time. I wouldn't want to spoil the atmosphere or his record, for that matter, of distorting things.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it's the intention of the government to have a fall session, when I would certainly see the legislation that is on the Order Paper proceed, and that is the case with the access to information legislation. I don't know why the leader of the Liberal Party would think there's any problem with doing that.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River, followed by Stony Plain.

### Agricultural Assistance

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. With the terrible harvest conditions that we have had up until now, which is mid-September, basically throughout the entire province of Alberta we've obviously had a difficult fall, and the harvesting has not been as suitable as it normally is in north, south, and central Alberta. Can the minister please tell the Assembly what programs have or will be put in place to assist farmers facing this most difficult situation?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would have to agree with the hon. Member for Smoky River that our farmers this year have indeed faced some difficult and unusual weather conditions, not that we haven't experienced them all before in parts of the province. It's

become very widespread, starting with drought in the northeast, the northwest, part of the Peace, moving into snowed-under crops in the northeast, followed immediately by snowed-under crops in the deep south, and Jack Frost hasn't left the farmer alone either.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that under the leadership of Premier Getty and the commitment that he and this government made to the industry in 1986, we have developed a very comprehensive set of safety net programs. Both the revised form of crop insurance and the gross revenue insurance program proved last year in the drought areas that they could respond to drought conditions. I think the judge is out as to whether they can respond to snowed-under crops, frost, and other weather damages, but I think those programs will pass the test of these difficult times. I would also point out that we have a revised forage insurance program for our livestock producers and a pasture insurance program. I would also remind the Assembly that we are standing here in the month of September and, at least in the northern half of this province, there are usually more crops harvested in October than there are in September. Three weeks of good weather could make . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. [interjection] Thank you.

Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is also to the Minister of Agriculture. Since water is such an important ingredient to successful agricultural operations and since we've had a drought throughout many parts of the province, including the northeast region, the south region early in the growing season, then later on in the Peace River country, would the minister explain which special programs have been implemented to deal with the severe water shortages that are taking place throughout the province?

MR. ISLEY: Recognizing, Mr. Speaker, that there are no programs that a farmer can use to insure himself against loss of water supply, we did announce early last week that across the province we would be implementing the water hauling assistance program and the water pumping assistance program similar to what was conducted in northeast Alberta last year with respect to their drought. We also announced in the drought areas in the northeast and northwest the reinstallation of the emergency dugout assistance program. We are currently assessing whether there should be any further responses with respect to water well drilling and conventional dugout programs in conjunction with PFRA.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain, followed by Calgary-North West.

#### Education Funding

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education's recent information sessions have sent tremors of anxiety and concern throughout the educational community. Today we have an education system struggling to meet the needs of students in a society of the future. School boards are continually having to adapt to demands from the minister to implement more programs, to become more accountable, while at the same time they are suffering from realistic decreases in funding support. Given that the minister claims to operate under the principle of accountability, is he prepared to assume responsibility for higher class loads, teacher burnout, increased local taxes, deleted programs, and young people being shortchanged as a result of his so-called funding options?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's exactly that kind of outdated thinking that school trustees and parents across this province are trying to fight, and it's quite proper that the hon. member would stay on the other side of the House, because he is obviously not interested in being a catalyst for making changes to improve the quality of children's education in this province. The process of consultation that we are going through right now with taxpayers, with parents, with trustees, and the like is designed especially to prevent the kind of erosion that the hon. member across the way is advocating. If we don't take a different approach and look very carefully at how we do the business of education today, just as all businesses across this province are looking at the way they do business, then we place in jeopardy the very quality of the education system in Alberta that we have come to be known for.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, we have now entered into the creative debate portion he referred to in his tabling.

His record as Education minister is about as good as this government's with respect to fiscal mismanagement and wasteful spending. The government should cut waste and not education. Instead of continually blaming and downloading, what measure is the minister prepared to take to guarantee students and their parents that adequate funding for education will be provided so students' futures and the future of this province are not jeopardized while he's running around talking rhetoric?

3:30

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the great part of the process that we're going through is the creativity of Albertans, which the hon. NDP member across the way has no faith in. Frankly, what has come out of this series of at least the first eight meetings is to show that Albertans are ready to tackle the issue because they have their minds set on improving the quality of education in this province. They've come up with suggestions such as better use of technology, especially interactive video technology, amalgamating existing school boards so that there is a more efficient operation and delivery of education in this province. Some have suggested that we use our capital facilities more efficiently by going to year-round education. The whole suggestion of linking government taxpayer funding to achieving results is something that school trustees and parents have strongly advocated. The whole notion of co-ordination of services between and among social agencies, health agencies, and boards of education is something that school trustees and parents have said "you've got to do, Mr. Minister of Education." The member across the way doesn't believe in the creativity of Albertans, but we on this side of the House do, and we're working with Albertans with the one primary objective in mind; that is, to maintain and enhance the quality of our children's education.

#### Golden Gate Fresh Foods Inc.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the minister responsible for Economic Development and Trade. After the government permitted NovAtel to do a little California dreaming with a cellular company there, they've indulged in a little more California dreaming with another meat packing plant. The documents I tabled today show that the government provided a \$12.2 million unsecured guarantee to Golden Gate Fresh Foods. My question to the minister is: why on earth would this government in Alberta offer a \$12 million loan guarantee to a California company?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has indicated, it is true that this government has been very supportive of our

agricultural sector, whereby we have been involved in the development of further markets and the development of further food processing sector outlets. The proof of the pudding rests whereby now our primary production is below the value-added production within the agricultural sector. We have within the agricultural community a value-added sector of some \$4.5 billion plus, which exceeds primary agricultural production within the province of Alberta, and it is because of the direct action and support of this government, as my colleague the Minister of Agriculture has said, for those within our agricultural community.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm fully supportive of supporting our agriculture industry. This is California that we're talking about. I didn't know that we annexed it.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question: since Fletcher's have written off their investment in this particular corporation that's in difficulty, will the minister now admit that our \$12.2 million is in fact also in jeopardy and that we're going to take another bath for the Alberta taxpayers?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the hon. member does not have a sense for the agricultural community but sense that he would recognize that the majority of the agricultural production within this province goes outside our own borders, whereby we export the vast majority of all that is produced within the agricultural community. Whether it be pork, beef, wheat, oats, barley, we rely very heavily on markets outside of our own, and because of that we have been proactive in working to establish those markets so that our primary agricultural producers will have markets other than our own so that we can maintain what we consider a very stable base within the agricultural community.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Glenmore.

**NovAtel Communications Ltd.**  
(continued)

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, as we have recessed for the summer NovAtel has been a subject of concern to all taxpayers in Alberta. The taxpayers have expressed a concern as to why this government went into the investment with NovAtel that we did. Today there has been a report released about the potential economic impact that NovAtel would have had on this province. To the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications: I'd like to know and so would the taxpayers what the impact of this study is at this time, when we're still concerned about these losses.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt about this minister and this government being very, very concerned about the \$566 million ticket as well. That's why the Auditor General is there: to investigate every aspect of this particular story. The results of the study done by Dr. Mansell in Calgary are indeed very significant, and I think quite frankly one of the ways in which they are very significant is the fact that they show and confirm that we were right in the decision from the standpoint of preserving jobs for Alberta, keeping that technology here, and building upon the foundation that NovAtel had established in telecommunications. [interjections]

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the members opposite are not paying attention, and maybe they should wake up and pay attention to the news releases that are coming out.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the minister. We are having an Auditor General's report, hopefully to be released soon. Why would you authorize your department to go to this kind of an expense to have a report done by Dr. Robert Mansell of the University of Calgary?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, members will recall that when the Premier sent a letter to the Auditor General asking the Auditor General to undertake this exhaustive review of NovAtel, he asked the Auditor General to specifically identify the economic impact on Albertans of NovAtel. The Auditor General early in the investigation determined that in fact he could not do a full economic impact although he would do the financial impact of NovAtel, so it was determined that we should get a third-party independent consultant to in fact bring forward that sort of information. It was without influence from the government. Dr. Mansell did his report. It's there, and it's interesting to see some of the results of it because they're very significant insofar as employment: the increase in jobs, an increase of 19,000 person-years of employment to date with projections to go four to five times that over a 20-year period; increase in the gross domestic product of \$1.7 billion to date and projected to increase on an accumulated basis over 20 years to over \$7.5 billion; increase in personal income of Albertans of \$1.5 billion; the accumulated projection increase of \$6.4 billion; and an increase in the government of Alberta revenues of \$180 million. The fact is that in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there have been significant contributions towards the infrastructure of our province that have attracted companies from all over. [interjections] Now, the hon. members may not like to hear . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**Canmore Alpine Development Company Ltd.**

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of the Environment was heard in the last several days waxing eloquent about how his leadership of the Conservative Party will bring forth a new pride in Alberta. My question concerns his decision to accept support and backing from Mr. Hal Walker, who is president of Canmore Alpine Development Company Ltd., a company which has already benefited from the . . .

**Speaker's Ruling**  
**Questions about Party Activity**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order. The leadership of a political party, any kind of race is not part of this question period, and the way that you've been introducing this, hon. member, makes it very suspect as a question.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I think you misinterpreted the drift of my question.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. member. Then straighten out the drift of your question.

**Canmore Alpine Development Company Ltd.**  
(continued)

MR. McINNIS: The decision ignores a Parks Canada study published earlier this year. The CADCO project includes some

of the best wildlife range in the Bow Valley. I would like to simply ask this minister why he has failed to exclude from his campaign committee people who have an ongoing and substantial relationship . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Order please.  
West Yellowhead, please.

#### **Pine Shadows Estates Ltd.**

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I tabled a petition which more than 4,300 people from the Edson-Whitecourt-Peers area signed demanding that the Minister of the Environment revoke permission to Pine Shadows Estates mobile-home park to drain a sewage lagoon into the McLeod River. The river is at historically low levels, and any such sewage dumping could have serious consequences on the whitefish and pickerel stocks as well as persons drawing vegetable irrigation downstream and the town of Whitecourt drawing its drinking water. I'd like to ask the Minister of the Environment: given this public concern, will the minister agree in the Assembly to simply prohibit Pine Shadows Estates draining its sewage lagoon into the McLeod River by revoking its licence to operate its wastewater stabilization pond?

3:40

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member for West Yellowhead well knows, I have instructed my department to put a stop to this until there can be a full and complete review of the situation.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, that particular document said: until early this week. The fact is the sewage lagoon was adequate for the trailer court a few years ago when it only had some 40 trailers, but now it has a capacity that has increased by 60 percent. It was not required by the government to set up a dual lagoon system; that is now required under provincial law. Given that the minister has to make a decision between allowing sewage to be pumped into the river or ordering a polluter to spend some \$15,000 to \$25,000 to construct a second lagoon, will the minister tell the Assembly that he will in fact order the park owners to immediately begin construction of a second lagoon? If not, why not?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that my department officials will be in Edson reviewing the situation, and indeed the answer may be a second cell. If that is what is required, then that's what will be done.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

#### **Education Funding** (continued)

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, threatened cuts in education are causing dismay and anger throughout the province. I can tell you that is certainly the case in Calgary, but today I want to talk about adult upgrading. This government is urging adults to upgrade so that they can better themselves, and many adults want to take advantage of that. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order.

MRS. GAGNON: These Albertans therefore do go and try to register in adult upgrading class, but when they get there, they are turned away because of lack of space due to funding. Witness the Viscount Bennett situation in Calgary. My question to the

Minister of Education today is: what is the minister saying to these adults?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, one thing we are saying is that we are providing close to \$10 million to school boards across this province to deliver quality education for students who are over the age of 20. You'll recall that the primary mandate of the Department of Education is to provide education to students from the ages of five through to 19, but we are providing additional funding to assist those school boards with continuing education programs. My colleague the Minister of Advanced Education is doing the same thing through funding that he provides to Alberta vocational colleges, to the likes of SAIT and NAIT, and to the colleges throughout this province as well as the various education consortia across this province. Let it be clear that this government has a commitment to education of all of our citizens, and we will continue to do so.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, my information is that some of the cuts in the Viscount Bennett situation, for instance, are direct cuts by the department. The minister says he is consulting in order to have more efficient delivery of services, but it looks to me as if his mind is clearly made up about upgrading. I'd like to ask the minister: how are adults desiring upgrading supposed to trust this minister?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'd suggest the hon. member simply get her facts straight. This provincial government provides from the Department of Education approximately \$10 million in funding for continuing adult education. The Minister of Advanced Education provides funding for the likes of Alberta vocational colleges and SAIT and NAIT and the various colleges around the province. So let's be clear; the funding is there. It's in place, and we will continue to make sure it is.

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

#### **Royalties** (continued)

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Several days ago the Minister of Energy announced to Alberta's coal industry a new royalty structure, which I'm sure was very well received by that industry. I think it's fair to say that the tens of thousands of people in the oil patch in Calgary and throughout the province feel that their industry is every bit as much in need of a royalty review. Following up on the preliminary question raised by the leader of the Liberal Party today, can the Minister of Energy confirm that one focus or objective of his department's review is to make the administration of royalties less onerous and less complicated for our industry operators?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, clearly the primary intent of the royalty review is twofold. The first is to make sure that a system that was designed in the early '70s, which was in response to anticipated high oil and gas prices, is contemporary today in an environment where gas prices are relatively low and oil prices are relatively flat. At the same time, we had a great deal of light, sweet, medium-weight crude oil in this province, and the royalty was pretty much based around that. Today, of course, we have a heavier slate of crude oil, and the light, sweet crude oil is not being replaced at its level of production. It therefore becomes incumbent upon the government, in consultation with the industry,

to review the manner in which the royalty is contemporary with the current circumstances today. We've taken a couple of years to do that. It is completed, and as the hon. Premier mentioned earlier in question period, it is proceeding through the process in our government.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier in his response to the leader of the Liberal Party's earlier question quite properly alluded to the comprehensive and detailed and significant nature of this royalty review, and therefore time parameters are difficult to specify for the members. Acknowledging that reality, I wonder if the Minister of Energy could at least indicate to the House when his work will be finished, 1992 or 1993?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows as a member of our caucus, it is hazardous to your health to anticipate the decision-making process of a caucus such as ours because there are a number of views. Many times what is proposed by ministers is not the end result, and many times caucus and cabinet send back to committee or back to respective ministers the proposal for modification to match up with the wishes and desires of the caucus, and appropriately so. Therefore, I cannot anticipate the movement of the proposal that is before committee and will then move through the process, but I'm reminded of the hon. Deputy Premier's comment: after due consideration and in the fullness of time.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

#### **Federal Family Allowance**

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sadly, the federal Conservatives have put an end to the universal family allowance program that has been in this country for nearly 50 years. Not only will families on social assistance not be receiving more money under this new program; they may not even be allowed to keep the money that they will be eligible for under this new child benefit program. I'd like to ask the Minister of Family and Social Services: given that families receiving social assistance are currently allowed to keep their family allowance, will the minister now ensure that these families will be able to keep the money that they will receive under this new federal program?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that the federal government just put through the appropriate legislation approximately a week ago now. I can assure the member that we are having a very detailed assessment of the impact that will have on our social allowance recipients, and once we've had a chance to compute that analysis, we'll take the appropriate action.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. There are a lot of families that are very distressed over this particular issue. Given that one mum said to me that it's making a difference to her whether or not she'll be able to pay her rent or perhaps buy her child new boots for the winter, I would ask the minister: will he immediately make an announcement as to what he intends to do with this particular program?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, again it wouldn't be appropriate to make an immediate announcement until we've had an opportunity of evaluating the full impact. I appreciate the concern that the Member for Edmonton-Calder has brought forward, and certainly those are the things that we're going to have to evaluate before we make a final decision. I will say that I am in consultation as well

with colleagues from right across Canada. None have determined at this time whether they're going to be passing it through or not.

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

3:50

#### **Prescription Drugs**

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current contract between Alberta Blue Cross and Alberta pharmacists will expire at the end of October of this year. Despite this imminent deadline negotiations between the two parties have reached a stalemate. This is a situation that's going to have a very harmful impact on Albertans, particularly seniors. My questions are to the Minister of Health. Will the minister intervene to bring some results here in this stalemate between the parties?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'll be meeting with the Pharmaceutical Association within the next several weeks on this topic.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question. Seniors are now being told that if there's no new contract, they're going to be forced to pay the full amount of their prescription drugs up front and then apply for their subsidy. Will the minister guarantee for seniors that their access to prescription drugs will not be restricted?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, this province pays the full premium for senior citizens in this province with respect to Blue Cross benefits. It's a very important part of the health package that we provide across the province, but it's also important to note that we spend about \$145 million dollars on drug costs in this province, and the cost has been gradually increasing at a rate averaging about 15 percent per year. We simply can't continue at that rate of increase, and we know that, and that is part of the purpose of the negotiation.

Alberta has the most pharmacists per capita across Canada, and in Alberta we also have the highest dispensing fee given to pharmacists versus any other province in the country. The issue is management; the issue is ensuring that we provide access to service but always be aware and cognizant of the importance of cost and what we can manage. It is in that context that I will be meeting with the Pharmaceutical Association and discussing the ways that we can work through the solution in order to manage the pharmacy issues appropriately in this province given the fiscal context.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

#### **Administration of Justice**

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Solicitor General. A recent meeting of public police chiefs from across Canada resulted in a list of recommendations to politicians that really was an indictment of the abysmal failure of 25 years of philosophically liberal policies of crime management. These police chiefs represent the thousands of men and women who daily literally put their lives on the line for the protection of our public . . .

MR. DECORE: String 'em up, Stockwell.

MR. DAY: . . . which is being ridiculed by the leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. DAY: These chiefs are on the side of the public debate which opposes ridiculously light jail terms, soft surroundings, unnecessarily early parole, and the excess focus on prisoner rights over victim rights. Can the Solicitor General please tell us: in public forums he's recently held in Calgary and other places in the province, has he had any public response to recent initiatives from his own department in the area of criminal and crime management?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I did hold some meetings recently in Calgary and had a tremendous outpouring by parents, by public interest groups, as well as professionals and those involved in the criminal justice system as to some of the problems that we have today. There is a concern that the criminal justice system as it exists is not working due to the fact of rising crime rates and high recidivism by those that have entered into the system.

The concentration of the meetings was mainly on the Young Offenders Act, and many of the individuals there were concerned with the process and the direction that the Young Offenders Act had taken in legislation in 1984. Their concerns were that it had directed the criminal justice system in a more rights-orientated direction rather than social responsibility. They were looking for a better direction in the future as it may apply to their youth, in the parents' role, in alternative measures as directed by the court, and a stronger message being sent in dispositions to the young offender earlier in their age so that they wouldn't show the high repeats that they do. They also wanted new direction in taking the age of the Young Offenders Act to go between 12 and 16 rather than up to 18 as it is today.

MR. DAY: To the Solicitor General. The tragedy of youth crime is something which requires preventative and corrective measures. I wonder if the Solicitor General can tell us: in his capacity in dealing with corrective measures, can he give us an update on the development of the young offenders centre?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the Department of the Solicitor General, corrections, is working at the present time on developing a young offenders work skill and wilderness camp experience. We hope to have it up and running this fall, and we are at the present time looking at the location as well as selection of personnel that will be working with these young offenders. We will be targeting a camp size of approximately 25 that will be taking high-recidivist young offenders from the ages of 16 to 18. This camp will focus on reintroducing into their lives a structure that will perhaps give them skills as they go out into the world after their sentence is completed: skills of getting up in the morning, looking at life as a balance between work and leisure time, as well as contribution back to society. We'll be working strongly with Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and other various organizations in society to bring meaningful labour skills back to a troubled-youth program. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order during question period.

#### Point of Order

#### Explanation of Speaker's Ruling

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, each member of this Assembly has a public capacity and a private capacity. We have our capacity as MLAs, ministers, and as private citizens. I attempted to question

the Minister of the Environment about the overlap between his private decision to run for leadership of the Conservative Party and his public capacity as the Minister of the Environment. The fact is that this company, Canmore Alpine Development Company Ltd., has received specific concessions from the Department of the Environment involving the waiving of an environmental impact assessment which benefited that company by a substantial amount of money. That same company . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order. [interjection] Order please. We're not here to argue your case with respect to what you were attempting to do. What is your citation where you've been violated under Standing Orders, please?

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I cite *Beauchesne* 409(6), which is one of those few sections that specify what you can ask about. Most of them tell you what you can't ask about. Also 410(5), which states, "The primary purpose of the Question Period is the seeking of information and calling the Government to account," and by way of supplementary information subsection (6) stating, "The greatest possible freedom should be given to Members consistent with the other rules and practices."

The reality is that we have an individual and a company with ongoing substantial negotiations in progress not just with this department but with several other departments of government. We have passed in this Assembly a conflict of interest statute, which unfortunately is not yet proclaimed, but I state that the letter and the spirit of laws and rules are the essence of democratic leadership. I was trying to ask the minister if he would in fact honour the letter and spirit of laws and rules, in this case the Conflicts of Interest Act, by excluding from his campaign committee persons who have a substantial and ongoing relationship which may be a negotiating relationship with him and other members of the Executive Council. I think this point needs to be extended to other members who may be entering the campaign later on and find themselves in similar circumstances. I believe that to be well within the administrative competence of the government to establish those rules for its members - in fact, we've done just that in the Legislative Assembly - and to ask the democratic leadership over there if they will follow the letter and spirit of the law and the rules insofar as it applies to the leadership race in the Conservative Party vis-à-vis the administration of government.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, with respect to the citations, hon. member, 409(6) says, "A question must be within the administrative competence of the Government." I have before me the Blues. Really the direction of your preambles in both instances was not so much the government; it was with specificity directed at the Minister of the Environment. The question was with regard to the political aspirations of a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, not the administrative competence of the government.

4:00

With respect to *Beauchesne* 410(5), yes, indeed, "The primary purpose of the Question Period is the seeking of information and calling the Government to account." The Chair intervened and requested yourself to be able to rephrase your question. The Chair is well apprised of the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place's ability to be able to ask the appropriate questions. Again the opportunity was given to you after the interjection by the Chair.

With respect to 410(6), "The greatest possible freedom should be given to Members consistent with the other rules and practices," I think that with respect to the past seven years the Chair has indeed given a fair amount of latitude.

Again, hon. member, the real operative phrase comes out of *Beauchesne*, and it's 410(17): "Ministers may not be questioned with respect to party responsibilities." It was the decision of the Chair that both of your attempts at a question violated that provision.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon with regard to a Standing Order 30 request.

head: **Request for Emergency Debate**  
**Agricultural Assistance**

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me an opportunity to outline the urgency and why we on this side of the House feel the debate is necessary. I have in the last two weeks toured Alberta's rural areas, from Pincher Creek to Bow Island in the south as far as High Level and Fort Vermilion in the north. I'm sure any rural MLA - many of them are grinning because I think many of them have seen their newspapers' reports of me dropping in on their community - or anyone that's had any business at all to do with the local community knows that there is a tremendous shortage of money in the farmers' hands at this time, when in many areas they are expected to put out extra costs due to the type of harvest they will have, particularly in the south - pickup reels and the money that goes into investing in that - plus the fact of the added fuel bills. In addition to this, the cash shortage comes up for a second reason in that the federal government is no longer approving cash advances on farm-stored grain.

We heard it here today. The Member for Smoky River asked the Minister of Agriculture. If you listened closely, Mr. Speaker, that answer is the whole answer in itself why there's an emergency. He says that we're looking at it; we have to wait for this; we have to wait for that. Well, the point is yes, we have insurance schemes in place, but that does not put money in the hands of the farmer for anywhere from six months to up to a year and a half from now. The point is that the small-town businesses who want to get some payment in order to advance further credit to the farmers do not have any access to the cash. If given time to outline later in debate, I can show how this money can be put into the stream early without any cost to the taxpayer; in fact, a saving.

What we have is an emergency out here, because the Alberta Wheat Pool has said that for the first time in history there is only 14 percent of the harvest in. This was 10 days ago. Well, you know what the weather's been like in the last 10 days. We've done hardly any harvesting. All that's in is 14 percent, and it used to be 60 to 70 percent. Obviously, we're not getting in the crop. The crop that we're getting in they cannot get cash advances on, and they have to put forward extra money. Admittedly there's insurance, and we'll give all governments credit for that, but the insurance isn't going to pay off for a while. What they need is cash in hand now, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's an emergency debate. I know we have the Constitution hanging over our head, but the Constitution is very thin gruel indeed for the farmers that are trying to make ends meet and particularly for our small-town businessmen who depend on some sort of cash in the farmers' hands in order to pay their bills.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ISLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of points and then I'd like to address the urgency of the debate. As was pointed out earlier in the House, there is a set of safety net programs in place, and I can assure the members of the House that

it does not take six months for crop insurance, forage insurance, and revenue insurance payments to flow. In some cases that money is already flowing. The program showed most of the payouts prior to Christmas in the drought area of the northeast last year. I would also correct the misinformation that the federal government's cash advance program is still in place. If farmers have grains in the bin, they can access the program.

I think the key argument I would make, Mr. Speaker, why this is not an urgent debate at this time, although I recognize the difficult weather conditions, is related to the comment that I made in response to the Member for Smoky River. You know, we're only getting into the harvest season. As I stated, in the northern half of this province there's normally more grain harvested in October than there is in September, and a few weeks of good weather without the showers will change the whole situation.

So I would say that because of the timing and because of the programs in place, Mr. Speaker, we are not dealing with a matter of urgency.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister's comments just underscore the need for an emergency debate. He is totally out of touch with reality. The northeast of Alberta has been suffering such a drought that the recent weather changes haven't had any impact on them. They are suffering from the prospect of having to sell off their herds. Now, I can't for one minute appreciate that the minister will sit there and say of a dried out area with no crops that we have to wait another month to see what they harvest. If he saw what was growing, he'd know what they'll harvest: nothing. Further, suggestions have been made to him, very good suggestions from my colleague from Vegreville, that perhaps an inventory should be taken on what feeds are available. Perhaps some of the recently damaged crops that are no longer suitable for cereal grains could be made into green feed and some sort of arrangement made to bank these and provisions made to have them accessed by the northeast farmers. I haven't heard any announcements with respect to that. To hide behind flimsy possible, maybe, how come, I hope so's while the farmers are going down is certainly irresponsible and underscores the need for a debate here. This whole province, unfortunately, has suffered from sporadic weather problems from one end to the other. Some are very isolated and local, and others in the northeast area are more general.

On that basis, Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support my colleague from Westlock-Sturgeon and ask for an emergency debate. It really is important.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon indeed gave appropriate notice under Standing Order 30. While the Chair and indeed the whole House are sympathetic to the farming community with respect to the recent losses suffered, the Chair is very cognizant of the fact that this special sitting was called to deal specifically with the future of this great country. Hon. members today had ample opportunity during question period to raise various matters with the government, and at least one member did raise the issue. The issue was certainly there for other members to raise as well.

MR. TAYLOR: You can't do it when 30 is on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. member. [interjections] Order.

MR. TAYLOR: You're out of order, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. member. I know your wish to be moved, but button your lip, please.

MR. TAYLOR: Section 30 says you can't ask a question.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Consistent with last year.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. member. Stop making a fool of yourself.

Having listened also to the various comments made to the effect that indeed programs are in place and are under review, the Chair finds that this motion has not met the test of urgency and therefore will not allow debate to proceed under Standing Order 30.

#### **Point of Order Anticipation**

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

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

MR. TAYLOR: The point of order is that under section 30 last year we were not supposed to ask a question that was on the Order Paper for special debate. You ruled that last year, Mr. Speaker. I'm not questioning your right to rule that there should not be an emergency debate. That was your thing. Although I disagree with it, that was your right. But to come up and say that nobody asked a question on it when you declared them out of order last year, something is haywire.

MR. SPEAKER: I'll be only too happy to check the Blues to see if you were making sense, hon. member.

#### head: **Orders of the Day 4:10**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I would request that the Assembly give unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 38 to allow consideration of government business without the required notice having been given.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I would request that the routine be altered to Introduction of Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a request that we revert to Introduction of Bills. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

#### head: **Introduction of Bills**

##### **Bill 54 Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 1992**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 1992.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide that the Referendum Act, Canada carried out by the federal government will permit the federal government to act as the agent for Alberta in the carrying out of a referendum on the Constitution of Canada.

[Leave granted; Bill 54 read a first time]

#### head: **Government Motions**

29. Moved by Mr. Stewart:  
Be it resolved that the Assembly waive Standing Order 8(2) to allow consideration of government business on Tuesday afternoon, September 22, 1992.

[Motion carried]

30. Moved by Mr. Horsman:  
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 73(2), Bill 54, the Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 1992, may be advanced two or more stages in one day.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, is there a call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously.

#### **Constitutional Referendum**

28. Moved by Mr. Getty:  
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta approves the text of the question to be asked of Albertans on the referendum under the Referendum Act, Canada, which reads: "Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?"

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, what we are referring to in that resolution and in that question is the Charlottetown agreement, which members I'm sure have all received copies of. If they haven't, my office or the office of the Deputy Premier will be pleased to provide them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party and their caucuses for allowing us to deal with this matter in an efficient way in the Legislature as we are commencing today. I think we are dealing with something that is extremely important to the future of our country, and I appreciate them co-operating in the way that they are.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, in talking about the constitutional agreement, a little bit of background from a first minister's perspective might be helpful to the members. I remember when I was first appointed Premier on November 1, 1985. That month, the last week of November, I went to a First Ministers' Conference, and on the agenda was constitutional reform. I recall that we talked about the fact that in 1982 the constitutional reform had excluded Quebec and how that left a flaw in our constitutional family and how we should work to try and correct it. The reason I raise that meeting now is that not one of the Premiers who were

in office in November of '85 was still there for this constitutional round which we commenced late last year.

I make that point because the stability of the Premiers and having them together, the same ones to work with, is extremely important, and I think it indicates to hon. members that they change constantly. It is very difficult to have a period of time when the same people operating as first ministers can negotiate together representing their Legislatures or the Parliament of Canada in order to conclude an agreement as we did in Charlottetown. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, those who say that we can merely delay this process, that we can put it aside for now, that we can turn it down because we can just do it again I think are just badly out of touch with reality. It is very seldom that you are able to get the right dynamics, the right personalities working together in the spirit of nation building and be able to bring about an accord as we did in Charlottetown.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, I remember the Premiers' meeting in Edmonton in 1986, which I chaired in my first full year as Premier. At that meeting we again recognized the importance of correcting the constitutional flaw which Canada has lived with since 1982, and we agreed that the Edmonton declaration would be supported by all Premiers and would lay the groundwork for proceeding on to constitutional reform. Well, it led to the Meech Lake discussions in 1987, in '88, and '89, and then finally the Meech Lake failure in 1990.

That failure, Mr. Speaker, I think was caused by a lack of effective communication, perhaps a lack of effective timing, a lack of providing information to the people of Canada, but in any event, we failed. When we failed, we brought once again to the fore in this country this sense of unease, a lack of confidence, a lack of belief in our future as a nation. That seeped not only through our country, but it also spread throughout the world, so that those who are looking at Canada as a place to invest, as a nation to enter into agreements and treaties with, look at Canada the way Canadians have looked at Canada over the last several years, and that is without a real sense of confidence in the future, knowing that we do not have the constitutional foundation on which to build with confidence in the future.

4:20

So, Mr. Speaker, after the failure of Meech everybody stopped for a while and tried to learn from what had happened, and we recognized that even though it would be difficult, we would have to try again. I think it's fair to say that all members of this Assembly felt that it was a noble thing to try and come to a new reform of our Constitution, and they participated with enthusiasm in our select committee. The difference this time, which I think was supported by all Canadians, was the fact it would be a Canada round rather than a Quebec round, as the Meech Lake accord constitutional package was known as.

The Canada round, learning from our past mistakes, would start with the most exhaustive consultation with Canadian people that we have ever conducted in this country. Members know of all the commissions, all of the meetings that went on, and then, as I just mentioned, our own select committee. This select committee of our Legislature consulted with the people of Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Alberta were able to give us the foundation for our negotiating position. I was pleased that the committee gave to this Assembly a unanimous report.

Mr. Speaker, this Canada round, after the consultation, has taken us through one of the most exhausting, difficult series of meetings I think any group of governments in the history of Canada has gone through. I was looking back to see the meetings just this year that ministers or myself as Premier have participated

in in order to try and reach an agreement after all the consultation. I'll just read the meetings to the members: March 12, Ottawa; April 8 and 9, Halifax; April 14, Ottawa; April 29 and 30, Edmonton; May 6 and 7, Saint John; May 11, 12, and 13, Vancouver; May 13, 14, and 15, British Columbia, the Western Premiers' Conference; May 20, 21, and 22, Montreal; May 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, Toronto; June 9, 10, and 11, Ottawa; June 28 and 29, Ottawa; July 3, Toronto; July 6 and 7, Ottawa; August 4, Harrington Lake; August 10, Harrington Lake; August 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22, Ottawa; and August 27 and 28, Charlottetown.

During those meetings while we tried to put together the varying interests of all Canadians as represented by their governments, there were often times when I despaired, and I think there were often times when other first ministers looked on the meetings as being on the verge of failure. I can tell you that in the most recent days of the discussion I think we were on the verge of failure every day, sometimes on an hour-to-hour basis, but we cared so deeply about our country and we cared so deeply about trying to lay the constitutional foundation for the future so that we would have a nation once again with confidence, once again building, once again moving ahead to the magnificent potential that we have, that we kept trying to find a solution, which we finally were able to get.

At this point, I should express my thanks and I'm sure the thanks of all Albertans to our Deputy Premier and Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs as well as our Minister of Municipal Affairs, responsible for native affairs, and the team that served them and served me. We had a constitutional team which planned well, prepared well, and was able in the end to obtain the package we place before the people today. There's no question that at so many of these meetings that I've just referred to, day in, day out our Deputy Premier was leading opinion throughout Canada as we tried to find the right mix and match of policies and positions for the future of our country.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at the package that we were able to put together. I know that members will have some strong feelings about one part of it and perhaps some problems with other parts of it, but it must be looked on as a package, because it is the result of honourable compromise and I think remarkable achievement. I don't say that as a sense of personal achievement but as satisfaction that we've been able to strike this agreement for our country.

Mr. Speaker, the package is made up of, first, parliamentary reform, and that involves Senate reform and the makeup of the House of Commons. I'd like to complete the package in terms of its components, and others will want to speak about various parts of it, but I'd like to come back to the Senate part because we've discussed it so often here in this Legislature. That is the parliamentary reform package, Senate and the House of Commons makeup.

The second part of the package is the matter of aboriginal self-government. I'm very pleased that we've been able to strike agreement on the matter of aboriginal self-government. I remember going through federal/provincial meetings on aboriginal self-government, and we constantly failed in those meetings. We were never able to put the package together that all of us across the country could support, but Alberta, resulting from the frustration I think, did come home and say we were going to provide aboriginal self-government for those aboriginal peoples for which we are responsible. We made a breakthrough, the breakthrough with our Metis people, who have achieved self-government and through a transition process will soon be able to fully participate in all the tremendous opportunities that this province provides.

There are some people who are quite apprehensive about the aboriginal package. They say it's risky, they say it isn't fully defined, and they're right. But for me, Mr. Speaker, there's one thing I know for sure. For 125 years we have definitely not done it right, and while it may be risky in the future to follow the agreement that the first ministers have laid out here, it can't be as bad as it has been in the past. I say that if we work together with our aboriginal people with the guidelines that we have laid out, I think we are going to allow them to participate with dignity and honour in the future development of our country.

4:30

The next part of the package is the division of responsibilities and spending powers. When we were developing the Senate reform package, I think all members know that Alberta and Quebec were more or less eyeball to eyeball in an intense way because we had the deep division between us of Alberta's belief and dream of 10 equal provinces and the Quebec government's belief of two founding nations, and the idea of equal provinces did not fit their concept. We were able to resolve that. The reason I raise the fact that the negotiations were so intense there between Alberta and Quebec is that in this matter of division of responsibilities and spending powers it was exactly the opposite: Alberta and Quebec stood side by side, shoulder to shoulder. We had traditionally worked to try and achieve this. What this is is establishing responsibilities under the Constitution and having the financial resources to fulfill those responsibilities without bumping into another government trying to also do the same job. This division of responsibilities and spending powers is really a modernizing of government. It's working together with the federal government and saying: "All right. These are our responsibilities; these are yours." This is the disentangling of governments that I have talked about in the past, that our Provincial Treasurer has talked about in the past, and having disentangled the responsibilities, making sure the government that takes on the job has the financial resources to provide those services.

As well as the division of powers, which, by the way, are clearly spelled out here, first of all in the areas of housing, recreation, forestry, mining, tourism, urban affairs, and manpower training – in all those areas the federal government is currently spending money and Alberta is currently spending money, and in other parts of Canada obviously the federal government and other provinces. There is duplication and there is overlap, and the taxpayer is paying for it. So this area of division of responsibilities and spending powers I think is a win/win situation for the taxpayers of Canada. It's a modernizing of government.

The spending powers in the provision itself is one that was in Meech Lake. That is, it says to the federal government: "You can no longer use your spending power to end run the Constitution. In areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction you can no longer put in place national programs to get around the Constitution in areas of provincial jurisdiction and force provincial governments to support them." What we will be able to do now is opt out. The federal government must give us the compensation, and as long as we meet general national objectives, we will no longer have the federal government getting involved in provincial jurisdiction. We also agreed under this provision to start negotiating agreements immediately in the areas I've talked about in order to work the federal government out of the responsibilities and also to allow the provinces to have a greater role in, as I said earlier, housing, recreation, forestry, mining, tourism, urban affairs, and manpower training, but also to provide an agreement in the areas of culture, immigration, regional development, and labour market development. I think this is really a breakthrough, and I think it will

establish the kinds of rules governments will use in the future to provide services to their citizens and to make sure they are done as efficiently as possible.

The next part of the package is called the Social and Economic Union. This part essentially attempts to express the broad social and economic objectives that governments have committed themselves to in Canada. They are such things as the maintenance of our health care system, the providing of basic social services and benefits, quality education, preservation of the environment. Of course, those are things that we believe strongly in here, in Alberta. Also, we were fighting for the free flow of goods, services, and capital across our nation, for the removing of interprovincial barriers, and we have agreed on the way we'll do that. We have left for the future – and members would understand this perhaps – a very difficult dispute resolution mechanism, because while we were able to identify the objectives we would live by, how we would remove trade barriers, and how we would ensure the free flow of goods, services, and capital, there was a deep division over how to penalize a government who broke the rules, to what extent a government could give up its legislative integrity to a larger body or an independent body. That hurdle still lies ahead of us.

The next item of this package, Mr. Speaker, is the Canada clause. The Canada clause is really an introduction to the Constitution, and it tries to express the fundamental values and characteristics of our nation. It's sort of trying to put on paper in one part of the Constitution our dream of what our country is all about and will be all about in the future. It's to provide for such matters as the principle of parliamentary democracy that we enjoy here, the respect for human rights, racial/sexual equality, equality of provinces – something, as you know, that we fought for so hard here – and recognition of aboriginal peoples' rights as well. All of that is placed within the Canada clause. I can tell members that this is so controversial that probably a third of our time throughout all these meetings and hours and days was taken up trying to frame something as fundamental as a Canada clause in our Constitution.

The remaining part of the package is the amending formula, and that is the right of each of us to stop changes to the Senate and other federal institutions without our approval. Although, I must say, there are many parts of the Constitution that will remain the same as in the past, they can be amended by the seven provinces and 50 percent rule.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to quickly go through the package before coming back to the matter of Senate reform. I know that our Deputy Premier and other members will talk in detail about other parts of the package and our minister responsible for native affairs on the area of aboriginal self-government.

Senate reform became, perhaps along with the Canada clause, the most difficult matter for us to deal with. In the end, it was this Alberta dream, or vision if you like, of 10 equal provinces coming together to build a stronger country. The concept held in Quebec and supported by others was that Canada was the coming together of two founding nations and that that carried with it certain rights which could never be subjugated to equal treatment. I believe we were able to work out that division between us in a remarkable way and still obtain what the people of Alberta asked us to do, and that is to have a united country, a country with Quebec in it – in it – and to have Senate reform based on triple E principles.

4:40

I remember when I first stood in this Legislature when we were moving the legislation to provide for the election of a Senator, and

I told the members, I told Albertans, and I told Canadians that if we elected a Senator, we would put in process a momentum that would never be stopped again. I recall that many members did not believe me and I know many Canadians didn't, but we were able to get that momentum going. It took courage on the part of the people of this Legislature to have that election. It was the breakthrough as far as I'm concerned, and we are now moving, everybody clearly in support of an elected Senate.

I told Albertans, as well, members of this Legislature, Canadians that we could have an equal Senate. I must say that again they didn't believe us. Many Albertans, friends of mine, sometimes supporters, and members of this Legislature believed that would be impossible: we would never be able to get an equal Senate. We have. We have made a breakthrough that many would say was never possible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am telling Albertans and Canadians and members of this Legislature that we also have achieved an effective Senate. I want to just deal with that "effective" for a moment. I think, except for those who would make trivial arguments, almost everyone will agree that we have an elected Senate and an equal Senate. So what about the third E, the effective part of the Senate? Well, some say it is not effective at all. That's the position I heard the Reform Party taking. I've heard others say that it's a double E Senate, not a triple E. By any reasonable judgment, if this Senate were not effective, it would have to have no powers. If it has powers, then obviously it must be effective. You may argue the degrees of effectiveness, but clearly it must be effective if it has powers.

I'd like to talk about what I consider to be six of the effective powers of the Senate. When I challenge the people who say it is not effective and I say, "Well, here are the powers of the Senate, so it has to be effective," they say, "It isn't effective the way we wanted it or 'I' wanted it." So I ask them: what did they want? Did they want a Senate that somehow would just stop a democratically elected government from governing? I suggest to all members of this Legislature that you challenge people when they say this isn't effective. Challenge them: what effective powers did they feel they wanted a Senate to have? Surely a government that's democratically elected in the parliamentary system in Canada should be able to govern. Under this system we have built in the checks and balances with the Senate, but a government can still govern. I might point out that in our select committee report Albertans never asked for a Senate that would merely blockade the House of Commons and bring the government to a halt. Albertans never asked for that or wanted it. They did want the present Senate replaced, and they wanted it replaced by a new Senate based on the principles of equal, elected, and effective. Now, when you ask for an equal Senate, you have to accept, and I think most people do, that on the other side of Parliament the House of Commons must be where the large population centres are represented. Therefore, the representation by population will in fact be in the House of Commons.

So consider these six effective powers. The Senate by a simple majority vote – that is, 50 percent of Senators plus one – can veto, kill outright any House of Commons legislation that changes taxation affecting natural resources. Now, that's not oil and gas; that's not just a national energy program. That is natural resources, and that is the lifeblood of this province. That would mean that if you had 337 members of the House of Commons, the whole House of Commons if you happened to have unanimous consent, and the government of Canada proposing legislation affecting natural resources, 32 Senators – 50 percent plus one – could veto and overrule the government of Canada and the entire House of Commons, all 337 of them. Now, that is very effective

power. That is tremendous power. Anybody who says that that is not effective would be foolish.

Now, there are five more powers. The Senate by a simple majority vote – again, 50 percent plus one – can veto major government of Canada appointments to national institutions. The governor of the Bank of Canada, the Canadian transportation board chairman, the Canadian Wheat Board chairman, the CRTC: those are all examples where again 31 plus one – in other words, 32 Senators – can decide to either ratify or kill appointments by the government of Canada. That is effective power, because remember now, 80 percent of the Senators do not come from Ontario or Quebec. That's a dramatic difference.

The third power is that the Senate by a simple majority – again, 50 percent plus one – can stop any House of Commons legislation from proceeding, any ordinary legislation from proceeding, without a very painful delay. The delay would be like this. They would vote down the House of Commons legislation. The House of Commons would have to go through a period of reconciliation with them, the government and the House, of reconciliation with the Senate, to see if the Senators would take certain changes. If they wouldn't, there would then be forced an unprecedented joint session of the Senate and the House of Commons, something that has never happened before. I think it would be a tremendous way for Senators to blow the whistle on the House of Commons or the government of Canada if they were trying to do something that looked like it was going to move into provincial jurisdiction or perhaps take advantage of smaller provinces. That is very effective power, because then in the joint session there would again be a debate about the merits of the legislation. Finally, the House of Commons would have to again overrule the Senate, but that would be a period of painful scrutiny and delay on legislation, although as we said earlier, a democratically elected government should be able to govern.

#### 4:50

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about delay and blocking and obstruction, but let's look at this Senate on a more positive basis, because I would think that the Senate will have some of the best men and women available in this province elected to it. When I first was minister of intergovernmental affairs in 1971, I went to Ottawa, and I remember the ministers I met. There had not been a department of intergovernmental affairs in Alberta. I tried to establish certain relationships with ministers of the then Trudeau government. It was made very clear to me by both elected and nonelected people in Ottawa that the agenda of the House of Commons was controlled by Ontario and Quebec. What they wanted on the agenda of the House of Commons would be on, and the decisions would go that way as well.

Well, that isn't going to be possible anymore because now – and some people have overlooked this – the Senate can initiate its own legislation. The government of Canada or the House of Commons may not want to deal with something, may not like the idea of it coming up in front of them at all for a variety of reasons – people in political life can certainly understand some of them – but the Senate can initiate legislation such as the Young Offenders Act. The Senate can bring amendments, changes. They can pass it, and then it goes to the House of Commons whether they want to deal with it or the government of Canada wants to deal with it or not. The House of Commons has to vote it down, and if they do, then the parallel process starts to work, as when the Senate votes down the House of Commons legislation. There is again a period for reconciliation. There is again a period of a joint session. During this time, if the people of Canada wanted legislation to proceed that the Senate was bringing because they

were responding to the people's needs, I would say that all the people who were interested in the country would be phoning their Member of Parliament, their member of the House of Commons, and saying: "Why are you voting against this legislation of the Senate? They are representing us. We want that to happen." I think it would be a very effective - very effective - power to bring legislation, have the House of Commons first defeat it, then have to once again debate it in a joint session, and then have to defeat it again or else it would become law. I don't care what people say; that is effective power on the part of the Senate.

Then a fifth power. Members of this Assembly, if you're elected, you know that we have a very effective committee system in our Legislature. The committee system in the current Senate is not very effective because they aren't credible. They are appointed. They are overweighted in terms of Ontario and Quebec, and they control the Senate. But this Senate, with elected people, would have a very credible committee system because they would be able to have investigations, hearings, meetings, public meetings on any national issue that they felt needed discussion. They could bring witnesses, they'd get testimony, and then they could make recommendations. They'd be very credible; these are elected people representing their voters. Even better, I think, for future decision-making in Canada is that again 80 percent of the Senators on these committees would not come from Ontario or Quebec, and it would bring a balance that we've never had before anywhere in our Parliament. So again, Mr. Speaker, I argue that that's a fifth effective power.

Finally, in the event of a minority government or in the event of a small majority government in Canada, the Senate, when a joint session was held, would have immense, enormous power. They would in fact call the shots, because legislation might come to the Senate with a small majority of the House of Commons, obviously; the government's got a small majority. Who would decide? The Senate would decide. The Senate would have enormous, effective powers. As a matter of fact, I recall that when the Reform Party was first building and starting, they said: "We're not trying to be a government. We're just going to work in the west. The one thing we would like to do is have power in a minority government situation, where we could maybe be the swing vote to represent the west, or if not in a minority government, then a small majority government, because again we would have the votes that would be able to swing things." Well, that's exactly what this Senate would do in the case of a minority or a small majority government. It would be tremendously, enormously powerful, and that, I submit, is effective.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude on this matter just to say that this new Senate is a breakthrough for our country. It changes national decision-making for all time. Think of Prince Edward Island equal to Ontario or Quebec. I think it must be obvious to everybody that this is Senate reform based on the principles that Albertans believe in and that this Legislature also believes in. Now, no thoughtful Albertan would reject this model and, by rejecting it, opt to keep the current Senate. I would hope that members of this Assembly and all Albertans understand the breakthrough we've made here. The choice is clear that this is the kind of Senate reform Albertans have been looking for and these are the kinds of effective powers that will change national decision-making for all time.

I have emphasized Senate reform because members have wanted to discuss it and I feel so strongly about it, but I come back again to the package. The package was difficult to get. I'd say it was almost a miracle that we were able to put it together. I don't believe that it could ever in a short period of time, perhaps our lifetimes, be done again, and if we can support this, we will lay

the foundation for the future strength of our country, take this uncertainty away. We can all debate in this Legislature budgets and estimates, roads, buildings, potholes, and NovAtel. Yes, we can all debate those things, but sometimes we have a chance to do something finer, something better, something higher than that, and that is to work together to lay the foundation for a better country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

5:00

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege to rise at this historic moment to debate on the constitutional renewal. As the Premier said and I read what's going out in the referendum on October 26,

Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

Mr. Speaker, our caucus, the New Democratic caucus, the Official Opposition caucus, says yes, we do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to allude to the process the Premier talked about. You know, it's always ironic to me that people think they have all the answers and somehow, by sheer will, you can get everything you want in the constitutional debate. My friends, the real world does not operate that way. As the Premier pointed out, if you'll take a look at it, there were natives sitting there, people from the territories, first ministers representing three political parties. The Premier called it a miracle. It may well be, to think that eventually you could come back with a document like this. I want to say to those people that say, "Well, no, we can't accept it unless we get everything we want," grow up, the world doesn't work that way. This is the best you're going to get after a process like that.

Nobody would say that this document is perfect. I don't think the Premier or other first ministers or natives have said this. But, Mr. Speaker, it is the best that can be achieved at this particular time. It's what I call almost the great Canadian compromise. I want to say right here that it's not just because we're tired of the Constitution, the Official Opposition leader of my party; it's not just that we're constitutioned out and we're going to hold our nose and support it. I'm going to support this enthusiastically, because I think it's a good document generally for the people of Canada.

There are some quick reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I think this is a good document. If I may, I'd like to put my spin on it. I've already alluded to it. When in Canadian history are you going to have all the first ministers including the province of Quebec, natives sitting there, and territorial leaders coming together in agreement? If you think that's easy, it's not easy. And I have to respect the people that were there. These are the people that were elected to serve the people of the country. They have the constitutional right to do it. I think we all have to respect that members from three political parties and the natives and the territorial leaders came to this agreement and could sign it. I think we should respect that.

The second thing I want to allude to, though, is some other reasons why I think it is a good package, Mr. Speaker. One has been important to our party, and that has to deal with the social and economic charter, the social charter. Now, I suggest to you that one of the reasons Canadians believe they're Canadians and, if you like, have their identity is when you ask them: what does it mean to be Canadian; how are you somehow separate from the United States? What will they talk about? They'll inevitably talk about their social programs such as medicare and be very proud of them. There are so few things that give us a Canadian identity. I believe this is one of them.

Mr. Speaker, people also said the social charter – this is a triple E Senate – would never come about. It is there. Now, what we're saying as a country is very clear if we support the constitutional package arrived at by the first ministers. Just let me indicate a couple. It says, and I quote:

- providing throughout Canada a health care system that is comprehensive, universal, portable, publicly administered and accessible,

language taken straight out of the Canada Health Act. We've laid that out in the Constitution as being important, and that's important at least from my party's perspective. It also says, and I quote:

- providing adequate social services and benefits to ensure that all individuals resident in Canada have reasonable access to housing, food and other basic necessities.

Mr. Speaker, to me that's extremely important. It says, to go on:

- providing high quality primary and secondary education to all individuals resident in Canada and ensuring reasonable access to post-secondary education.

It goes on to something that again is very important:

- protecting the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively; and,
- protecting, preserving and sustaining the integrity of the environment for present and future generations.

"The goal of full employment" and "ensuring all Canadians have a reasonable standard of living." Mr. Speaker, again some people would argue, "Well, yeah, but you can't take this to the courts." Nor would we want to take it to the courts. But it is a fundamental fact of law that if it's in the Constitution, it means something. That doesn't mean they're going to set figures and goals of full employment and the rest of it, but it means the Canadian nation collectively, including all provincial governments, including the elected Senate, including the federal government, has to work toward these goals. If they don't and if it's in the Constitution, the Supreme Court will notice that and have some powers under that. Certainly the Canadian people will know that they're not living up to the social charter, and that, I suggest, would make it very difficult for any government.

Mr. Speaker, the other point, and the Premier alluded to it, that's been extremely important for our party – as the Premier said, 125 years; we have to get on with it – is something we've argued for our party for many years, and that has to deal with the inherent right to self-government for natives. Yes, it's going to be difficult to come to some resolution of these issues; nobody says it's going to be easy. But the alternative – and I think the Premier said this well – is that we're going to continue the way we're going. It's not working, just not working, and it's time we turned our attention to this whole matter of natives and their rights in our society. They were here with governments long before we were, and that's all we're recognizing. Now, there's going to be some serious debate about what self-government means, but just because it's difficult doesn't mean we should shy away from it, and the fact that it's here in this charter forces all governments, federal and provincial, to deal with this issue. It's one that I hope we can come up with, to deal with the justice system or to safeguard and develop languages, cultures, economies, identities, institutions, and traditions. Again, I think a very important point. We've finally said yes to natives in our Constitution, and I think that's important.

Mr. Speaker, the fourth area, which the Premier didn't allude to but I think is a matter of fairness, too, and is important, is that we've said yes to the territories also. If you notice, the people that were in great difficulty, I believe, from Meech Lake were the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, where they would have had to get unanimity to become a province. I think that was unfair; I said that here in the Legislature at the time. I thought that was one of the things we should look to change, and I notice we've done that. The federal government now will make that decision about when and how they should become provinces the same as

they did for the rest of us, and I think that's an important part of this particular document.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to spend a lot of time with the Senate. It was important to the government, and I want to say that anything we achieved would be better than what we had. Frankly, an appointed Senate has no place at all in a democratic society. When they didn't do anything but bleed the taxpayers, I guess we didn't think about it too much. Then we found out that this appointed Senate actually had some power. That was pretty scary, as we know what happened when we had two different parties, one running the House of Commons and one the Senate. So this is a vast improvement.

I want to say to the Premier that I could have lived with the triple A – the abolish, abolish, abolish – but this certainly is a much, much better Senate than we had, and I agree with the Premier that it is effective. All those people that thought you would have some sort of Senate that was just going to block the House of Commons every time we didn't like it and said it isn't effective – and the Premier laid it out well – are just dreaming in technicolour. It's about as effective as we want if we still want the federal government to have any power to continue with legislation. You can't have two at loggerheads; you're going to have a deadlock all the time. This just gives us some sober second thought. That's what the Senate was always supposed to do. I think it's even beyond this, but certainly it gives sober second thought. In terms of natural resources which fall under the provinces, it gives the Senate by a simple majority absolute power. I certainly agree with the Premier that it is effective. The point I would make that's important is that it's not a body that can really overturn the House of Commons, only in special circumstances. It would lead to that sober second thought and certainly is something I can support.

#### 5:10

Mr. Speaker, the other reason I think we should support this, a couple more reasons, if I may say so – and members opposite can rest assured that I'm not going to go on long and we're going to be out of here by 5:30. I want to deal with the social programs. Now, there are two different thoughts to this, and I'd like to put my spin on it, if I may. We've always felt it important that the federal government be allowed to initiate social programs for the well-being of all Canadians. Whether you live in a wealthy part of Canada or a province that's not so wealthy, there should be minimum standards within . . . The federal government should absolutely have those powers or we wouldn't have the programs we're so proud of that I talked about, like medicare, for example.

I think there is the point, though, that there has to be some flexibility in this. A program that's being debated, whether it will come in the future or not, is the possibility of a national day care program, for example. Someday if we have money, they might look at it. I have no problems with what they're saying here. If I may quote, it says that we can opt out, as the Premier alluded to:

- . . . provide reasonable compensation to the government of a province that chooses not to participate in a new Canada-wide shared-cost program . . . if that province carries on a program or initiative that is compatible with the national objectives.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me use an example. What might make sense for child care in rural Alberta might not be the same in downtown Toronto. That's just the common sense of dealing with this country. As some people see it, it erodes national standards. It doesn't say that because it's a national day care program you can go out and build roads with it or spend it on all sorts of other things. It has to be compatible with the program that's being

offered. I think that's the kind of flexibility we need in terms of future programs, and I would argue this does that very well and for that reason is worthy of support.

The eighth reason for supporting the Constitution is that frankly people are constitutioned out. I don't think this country can take any more debate at all about the Constitution. As I travel around the province, Mr. Speaker, the message that comes to me is that we wish governments would stop spending so much time on the Constitution, a piece of paper, and, if they would, get down to the realities of life. I'm worried about my job. I'm worried in rural Alberta about my farm. I'm worried about education. I'm worried about all these things. They think and I think we all agree that this has taken too much time lately, and that's another reason to get this on. Perhaps there will always be constitutional debates, but it takes it from the front burner to the back burner so we can begin to concentrate on some of the other things that have to be done.

Let me just conclude, if I may, Mr. Speaker, by talking a bit about the alternative. Now, I was amused when some in society suggested, "Well, if we say no, we can just continue the status quo; nothing will change." Well, I'd just ask people: what is the alternative? Do they really believe this? What is the alternative after all this process we've gone through? You have, historically, all the first ministers from three different political parties, you have native leaders, and you have territorial leaders. They've come together with a package after some very, very difficult negotiations. What is the alternative? Do people really believe that if this fails, there will be business as usual? I just say to people, and I've said to others, that that's naive in the extreme. It's naive in the extreme if anybody knows anything about this country.

Now, let's say that a no vote carries in one of the provinces or whatever, that there's not a unified yes right across the country, which, as you know, I hope there is. You think you've seen constitutional negotiations? What you're really going to be negotiating is the breakup of Canada. You're going to have the toughest constitutional negotiations you ever saw at that point, because if people don't believe that if this is turned down the sovereigntists will take over in the next election in Quebec and be pushing right away for separatism, they just don't know the reality of this country. You want to talk about negotiations? You're then going to be negotiating the breakup of the country, and it's going to be vicious and tough. You're going to be talking about splitting up assets. You're going to be talking about who owns what, who owns the debt, and all the rest of it. You haven't seen anything in terms of constitutional talks till you start to deal with that, my friends. That is the reality of what's going to happen. I believe it firmly, Mr. Speaker. That is the reality.

You know, I've heard people say too, "Well, let them go; we'll be better off." Nonsense. I think all of us are going to be a lot worse off economically. This is a country that's in debt federally and in most provinces, and we have to depend on the money markets. We see what happens in the world when countries start to break up, what that does. The money markets look for stability, Mr. Speaker. They look for a place to invest in the future, and all of a sudden you're negotiating the breakup of the country. If they think that doesn't have economic impact, in Quebec certainly but for the rest of us, they're frankly dreaming in technicolour. That will be the new reality. How are you going to go around and request investment for some of our infrastructure? What investor is going to want to come into a country that's talking about breaking up? They're just not going to do it. That's the reality.

I wish we could get that through the separatists' heads too, that it's not going to be easy there. But it certainly will be true in the rest of the country that we'll all pay, I believe, serious economic consequences if that happens.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go on much longer. I want to conclude simply by saying, to go back, that I believe this is a good package for the people of Canada, not a perfect package but a good package. On October 26 when this historic vote occurs, I know that I and I hope the people of Alberta and the people of Canada will say yes to Quebec, will say yes to the natives, will say yes to the territories, and will say yes to the west, as the Premier alluded. Most of all, I hope they say yes to Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I won't be long. If I take just a few more minutes after 5:30, I hope I can beg the indulgence of the Assembly to allow me to conclude.

I want to start, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I listened to a speech given by the Premier of Alberta that I consider one of the best speeches I've ever heard the Premier make, particularly the explanation of the triple E. I also want to say something that I said in July, and that is that I am glad the Deputy Premier was our representative for these constitutional talks. I think there was a slow start on the government side in determining the direction and the themes and objectives that needed to be pursued, but in the end I think our Deputy Premier clearly established the position that we should have a strong Alberta in a strong Canada.

Mr. Horsman, again, from our caucus I thank you for the work, the many hours and evenings and the frustrations you've gone through in dealing with this most difficult matter. We respect that and acknowledge that.

5:20

Mr. Speaker, more than a year ago our party asked that members be allowed to vote freely and debate freely with respect to the constitutional package. Our caucus continues to maintain that position. I hope no Albertan or no Canadian would say it is un-Canadian or that somehow an Albertan who wishes to criticize this package is somehow un-Canadian or an enemy of Canada. I think every Canadian, no matter where he or she may be, has the right to say I don't like this and I don't like that and maybe I have to reserve judgment or maybe I'm going to vote no on the package. We shouldn't have a country where people bully their position through or accuse others of being somehow treasonous or unpatriotic if they don't see the way things should go or at least the way somebody hopes they should go. I respect the arguments people on the no side make. I don't agree with many of those arguments, but they are entitled to make those arguments.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to reflect on ourselves with respect to this package. I look back on my own family. I remind myself that in 1898 my great-grandfather and my grandfather came and they couldn't read and couldn't write. They were invited to this country and were given free land to establish themselves, to work hard, and they did that. This is something I think you have to reflect upon and all Canadians have to remember when they acknowledge that they were immigrants to this country. This country gave them an advantage probably no other country in the world would give them. There's something worth fighting for; there's something worth preserving; there's something worth cherishing. I certainly cherish my country. As a small country, our country has gone through exceedingly difficult times, through

two world wars, but we did so as a united country. My own military service allowed me to meet other Canadians and work with other Canadians to ensure that what we cherished would be preserved.

Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the Premier explain the triple E, I wished that same explanation had come forward after the last round was concluded. Because when I saw this triple E package and compared it to the July 7th package, I saw a very different triple E, a less effective triple E. I wish Albertans had had the opportunity of hearing the explanation the Premier gave today talking about a miracle, talking about the kind of despair the Premier and others had over the conclusion of triple E. I've had the opportunity of discussing this matter with another Premier who experienced the same kind of despair. That Premier said that for triple E there were two alternatives. One alternative, as he saw it, was a much weakened triple E, because one of the provinces that heretofore was giving support to the triple E the Premier was arguing for was starting to abandon that cause. So this Premier saw a much weakened alternative or the possibility of the breakup of our country. Now, he said that in his own mind he didn't believe that could happen, but he certainly acknowledged that other Premiers came to that conclusion.

Mr. Speaker, this is better than the breakup of our country. It isn't as good as I would have hoped when I compared the July 7 package, but having had the explanation given to me by one Premier and then having listened to the explanation now given by our own Premier, I think this is something Albertans can be proud of.

In the original British North America Act, "Parliament" is defined as the House of Commons and the Senate and the Queen or the representative of the Queen. That means that when laws are initiated, they can be initiated in the House of Commons; they must then go to the Senate for approval and then to the Queen or the Queen's representative for final approval. What most Canadians don't know is that in that original BNA provision in 1867, the Senate did have the right to initiate legislation. In fact, until the mid-1940s on many occasions the Senate did initiate legislation. Then Canadians started to say of the Senate: "Who are you people? You aren't properly elected. You aren't properly accountable to the people of Canada. What right do you have to initiate legislation?" Senators in the mid-1940s stopped initiating legislation.

Now, I think this is an important part of a strong, effective Senate. The Premier has alluded to this, and he has used a couple of examples. I think of the example of capital punishment. I don't agree that we should have capital punishment, but I do agree that somebody has the right in our democratic country to initiate it, to have it debated, and to have it tested.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Young Offenders Act was raised today. That issue and other issues would be entitled in terms of a Senator from Alberta going into the Senate of Canada and starting something going and putting pressure on other Canadians to have some wrong made right or something made better for our society. That's an important part of this new, reformed Senate.

Mr. Speaker, my last comment. We can go on and talk about aboriginals, and I remind myself . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. member. Would you be good enough to make your request to the House for a time extension.

MR. DECORE: I make a request, Mr. Speaker, to go no more than 10 more minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, which requires unanimous consent, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

5:30

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, with respect to aboriginals, much has been said about that. I took a tour of Wabasca, Desmarais, Trout Lake, Peerless Lake, Loon Lake, Whitefish, and Gift Lake, visiting Metis settlements and reserves, talking with status and nonstatus Indians. I was appalled how governments are falling all over governments and service isn't being provided to our aboriginal people. I was appalled that 125 years later we continue to not solve the issue of land claims with our aboriginal people. On that tour I reminded myself of my great-grandfather and my grandfather who got free lands when they came to this country, and we're still arguing about how many acres of land the Metis and the Indian people of our country are entitled to. I think it's shameful and appalling, and this process allows us to make that wrong right.

Mr. Speaker, my last comment relates to the economic calamity that likely would befall Canada if this package isn't accepted. I debated the president of the Reform Party in one of the constituencies, in fact the constituency the hon. Member for Highwood represents, just a few days ago, and that lady took me to task for agreeing to vote for the yes package. I said to the president of the Reform Party that as I drove around the constituency of Highwood, I noticed cattle were a big part of the industry of the area. I reminded myself of a visit people from the cattle industry made to our caucus just a few months ago. Those cattle ranchers in Alberta informed our caucus that some 40 percent of the production of beef in Alberta goes to and is sold in the province of Quebec. I was told by those cattle ranchers that Quebec has tinkered and toyed with the idea of buying cheaper Irish beef that's highly subsidized by the EEC. We have a countervail against that cheap Irish beef. But the cattlemen said, "Mr. Decore and members of the Liberal caucus, think what would happen if 40 percent of the beef production was taken and removed out of the province of Alberta." I said to that lady in Highwood: "Think what would happen in the Highwood area and the Okotoks area if you simply took all that industry away knowing that the receipts from the sale of beef are very big, perhaps now even bigger than the total sales of grains in Alberta. What would that do to Alberta? There would be a lot of people in grave economic difficulty."

Then I started to look around at some of the comments financial analysts and others made on the situation, and I think it's worth making note of some of those comments. The chairman and the chief executive officer of the Royal Bank, Mr. Taylor, said:

Political separation . . .

and this is what I see as the alternative

. . . would see the emergence of two weaker regional currencies from the rubble of one of the world's strongest currencies. And this . . . terrible step toward folly would provoke a host of other economic problems.

The new Canadian dollar would be underpinned by a very different and greatly weakened economy . . . everyone would lose. Canada and Quebec would have less ability to finance growth, development, jobs, environmental initiatives and social needs.

Mr. Barrett, the president of the Bank of Montreal, said that regionally based economies as a result of the breakup of the country would substantially increase the interest rates various governments would have to pay for their massive provincial debts. He said this will force higher taxes or severe cutbacks in service.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I respect the argument and see merit in the argument of the Reformers and this lady from Okotoks who

engaged me, but if she and the Reform Party are wrong – and I think they are wrong because this is the eleventh hour; I don't think there is a tomorrow. I don't think there is another year or three years or five years for more debate on the Constitution. We have debated it thoroughly and extensively. We have uncovered every stone. There is no more to debate. If she's wrong and they're wrong and the people who say they're going to vote no are wrong, then the calamity that will befall our province and our country will be too great, and I'm not prepared to allow that calamity to happen. That's why I'm voting yes.

Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:35 p.m.]

