

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, January 26, 1993**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 93/01/26

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: After our opening prayer I invite all members to remain standing as we have the memorials to members who have died since the House last sat.

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

There are two persons to be remembered on this day. The first is Mr. Carl Muller, who passed away December 21, 1991. Unfortunately the House was not apprised of his passing at that time. Mr. Muller represented the constituency of Pembina for the Social Credit Party. He was first elected in the May 23, 1967, general election and served until 1971. I'm pleased that his son and daughter-in-law are present in my gallery on this day.

The second member was known to many of us on a very personal basis. Dr. Donald James "Doc" McCrimmon passed away November 8, 1992. Doc represented the constituency of Ponoka for the Progressive Conservative Party. He was first elected in the August 30, 1971, general election. He was re-elected in the 1975 and '79 general elections and served this House and his constituents until 1982.

In a moment of silent prayer let us remember these individuals and their families.

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

Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, in your gallery today is the distinguished consul general from the government of the United Kingdom, Mr. Tony Joy. While Mr. Joy is located with his offices in the city of Vancouver, Mr. Joy is no stranger to the province of Alberta and makes frequent visits to this province. Today I had the pleasure of having an update with him. Would all members kindly welcome him once again.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MS CALAHASEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice pursuant to Standing Order 40 of my intention to seek the unanimous consent of the Assembly to propose the following motion after question period:

Be it resolved that this Assembly congratulate Yvon Dumont from Manitoba on being appointed on January 22, 1993, the first Metis Lieutenant Governor in Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table with the Assembly today the annual report of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities for the year ended March 31, 1992. A copy of course will be distributed to each member of the Assembly.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'm filing with the Assembly today two documents: the 1991-92 financial statements that were released by the government just prior to Christmas as well as information including the terms of reference on the Financial Review Commission announced last Thursday.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to file two years, hand running, of annual reports for Alberta Municipal Affairs and for the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. That brings us right up to date.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I table with the Assembly the report of the Auditor General on NovAtel Communications as received by the Speaker on September 25, 1992, and distributed to all members on September 25, 1992.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, in both the members' gallery and the public gallery is the second wave of grade 6 students from the community of Barrhead. Yesterday some 80 attended. Today some 85 are present in both galleries and are accompanied by three teachers, Mrs. Marita Dauk, Mr. Laurin Lamothe, and Mrs. Janis Klenke, as well as two parents who have come along as supervisors, Mr. Raymond Hillman and Mr. John Kalan. That makes about 160, 170 grade 6 students in this one little community, and that's really prolific production. Would you please join me, hon. members, in welcoming them all here to the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Gainers Inc.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this government has become absolutely famous across Canada as a government that has put in more waste and mismanagement than any government in the history of Canada. We could go on with the NovAtels, the MagCans, the Myriases, and so forth, but one of the memorable bamboozles is when they started to do business with Peter Pocklington. It seems that this government still hasn't learned its lesson, though. We notice that just a month after taking office the new Premier had a secret meeting with Mr. Pocklington. I think that they should watch these secret meetings with Mr. Pocklington; they end up costing the taxpayers a lot of money. My question to the Premier is simply a very straightforward one that Albertans want answered. Why is the Premier meeting secretly with Mr. Pocklington, talking about taxpayers' money?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, it wasn't a secret meeting; it was a private meeting. I would like to know what the hon. Leader of the Opposition means by secret. If you sit down in a person's office and have a discussion, is that a secret meeting or is that a private meeting or is that just a meeting? I had a meeting. I had a meeting with Mr. Pocklington because he wanted to put to the government a proposal to have his differences with the government mediated. We simply said to him: give us a proposal, and we'll talk about it. It's as simple as that. You have meetings in your office, and I'm not invited to those meetings.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, he says he wanted to put it to the government; he's already put it to the government.

Mr. Speaker, we tried to get information about this secret deal before. We couldn't get it from the government. Finally, we got the master agreement through the court, and I'd like to file that with the Assembly here today. That's the only way we could get it. Now, the point that I make is that it shows clearly that \$38 million was bled from the company at that particular time with the knowledge of the government. We've made all those mistakes before, and when I see the Premier and the Treasurer sitting down with Mr. Pocklington again, I have to wonder, as Albertans are wondering: how much is it going to cost us this time? If it's not a secret meeting, my question to the Premier is simply this: how much are these negotiations going to cost us? Can he tell us right here in the Assembly?

2:40

MR. KLEIN: I have no idea, nor do we know if in fact we're going to go into negotiations. There is a court action currently under way. There was a proposal put forward by Mr. Pocklington to have the matter settled out of court through arbitration or some kind of mediation. We simply said: give us a proposal.

AN HON. MEMBER: How much?

MR. KLEIN: I don't know.

MR. MARTIN: Well, I find that rather amusing. He just came over for a spot of tea, just to talk, but he didn't want to talk about how much. That's why we get into these problems.

My question is to the Treasurer, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't end there. The government through the Treasury Branches is also involved to the tune of, I think, \$42 million in debentures to the Edmonton Oilers hockey corporation. Because that is ultimately our responsibility as taxpayers, could the Treasurer just update this Assembly and give us a report on the status of the loan that the Treasury Branches have made to the Edmonton Oilers?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, as the Provincial Treasurer it is not my responsibility, nor should it be, to interfere with the banking arrangements between a client of the Treasury Branches and the Treasury Branches, just as the hon. member across the way would not want the Provincial Treasurer to reveal any information about any dealings that he has or that any member of the general public has with the Treasury Branches.

Mr. Speaker, on the previous question it should be clear that the government has said that if Mr. Pocklington wishes to make a proposed settlement, we would consider it. We would take that to a third-party mediator and have it openly and publicly reviewed before any kind of decision was made. In the absence of any kind of proposed settlement from Mr. Pocklington our legal proceedings against Mr. Pocklington will continue with the full force of the courts.

MR. MARTIN: Well, the full force of the courts shows that we've got holes, and the minister knows it. We're not going to get anywhere.

Economic Policy

MR. MARTIN: My question, then, is back to the Premier. We talked about this briefly yesterday. There is a malaise, a despair out there within the public right now, Mr. Speaker. The result is that the economy is worse than it's been in this province for

many, many years. Unemployment is high; there are over 130,000 people out of work. Our welfare budget is probably going to be over a billion dollars. We have some very serious problems, and we see the government basically doing nothing yet. I just want to ask the Premier to give us an idea, because people are looking for some direction: what is the government going to do to give people some hope and put people back to work? What are they going to do?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the question is a legitimate question relative to the preparation of an economic plan for this province. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows, two significant undertakings were completed; that is, the public portion: *Toward 2000 Together* and *Creating Tomorrow*, one relative to economic development generally and the public input required to prepare a proper and well-thought-out economic development plan to ensure economic growth and prosperity in this province, and one more specific to agriculture and the role that that industry will continue to play as really the backbone of our economy. When the recommendations come forward, they will be consolidated. There will be a document prepared. As a result of those two exercises recommendations will be forthcoming to provide Albertans with a direction for economic growth in the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: When?

MR. KLEIN: I suspect sometime in June or July.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Premier that he was a cabinet minister. This is the same old government. They've been in power for it seems like a hundred years, and the Premier is telling us that we'll have to wait and have plans. The unemployed can't eat those plans. What is he going to do now? That's the point. What is he going to do right now?

MR. KLEIN: There are many things already taking place. We fulfilled our commitment to the oil and gas sector by doing a revision to the royalty regime. We prop up agriculture when it's ailing. We've supported the forestry industry. We're doing all these things, but in terms of a comprehensive plan, it doesn't happen overnight. The NDP opposition participated in that process. Those responsible now for consolidating and bringing together the recommendations are working and working hard. I've asked Mr. Wyatt, who's the chairman of that committee, to bring the recommendations forward with all dispatch, and the same is going to be done with *Creating Tomorrow*, but we can't ignore that public input. Those were two tremendous exercises involving the public relative to where this province should be going in ensuring economic growth and prosperity, and we can't ignore it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sick and tired of excuses coming from this government. This Premier doesn't have the luxury of saying that this is a brand new government. He sat in cabinet across that way. There are 130,000 people unemployed, and he's talking about plans. Where's the winter works project that was promised? Where are all the promises that the former minister of career development talked about? May and June is too late. What are you going to do now? Forget about these plans.

MR. KLEIN: We are doing whatever we can to stimulate a strong and vibrant economy by keeping it free enterprise. That's what we're doing.

Ethics in Government

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, during the Conservative leadership contest the Canadian Manufacturers' Association asked each of the candidates to respond in writing to a series of questions. I'm told that all of the responses except one appear to have been done by each of the candidates. The Premier's response is the exception. On the back page of the document that the Premier submitted, it states that the document was "Prepared By: Alberta Economic Development & Trade, Policy Development & Coordination Branch." The Premier's campaign manager was the minister of that department. I'm filing copies of the document. I'd like to ask the Premier and have him explain why a government department was used for his own personal benefit in his leadership bid.

MR. KLEIN: I really don't know. I've never seen the document, but if you'd kindly pass it over, I'll have a look at it.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the Premier I'm prepared to allow him to see the document that has his signature on it. It has his signature with his answers to the questions that the CMA put to him, and on the back of that document it says "Prepared By: Alberta Economic Development & Trade." My question is: what authority did you have to use a government department to do your personal business for your leadership bid? Look at the back page, Mr. Premier. Do you remember it now?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You've asked your question; you can sit down. Let's wait for an answer.

MR. KLEIN: You know, a lot of this came through during the campaign. I would suspect that it was simply adhering to what was established government policy, and that indeed would be my policy.

MR. DECORE: Is it the policy of the government, Mr. Premier, to use civil servants for your personal benefit? Explain that to the people of Alberta.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important that we put the record straight for the hon. member. Since he implied a certain question in my direction, I should share with him that what we do on a regular basis, as we do with the hon. member opposite, is forward papers that we have done within our government, and those individual members of this Legislative Assembly can use them as they see fit. I've seen the hon. member opposite use papers that have been produced by individual departments, and he's used them as he has seen fit, just as he has done in this Legislative Assembly. So there is totally nothing wrong with the Premier using well-evidenced papers that have been developed by those excellent people within our civil service.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue. I've seen four of the documents . . .

MS CALAHASEN: He's asked his four questions.

Speaker's Ruling Supplementary Questions

MR. SPEAKER: He's had his fourth? Well, that's the way it goes some days. Hon. member, you've had your allotment. It's interesting that both of us lost contact let alone count.

All right. Smoky-River, followed by Calgary-Forest Lawn.

2:50

Honey Industry

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of agriculture. Basically, for many years now the honey producers of Alberta have been seeking a solution to the honeybee . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. [interjections]

MR. DECORE: This is a serious matter, a very serious matter. This is an abuse of the political system and the parliamentary system.

Speaker's Ruling Supplementary Questions

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I don't know what you might have had for lunch, some of you down in that corner. I'm sorry it caused you great indigestion. We've checked at the Table. The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry asked his main question and had two supplementaries. It has nothing to do with respect to the seriousness of the issue or not. Indeed justice has been done, and I ask you to be quiet so the other members can continue.

Smoky River. This way, hon. member, through the Chair. Don't bother looking down there.

Honey Industry (continued)

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of agriculture. For some years now the Alberta honey producers have been seeking a solution to the border closure that was imposed upon the honey industry back in about 1987 with the outbreak of Varroa mite. This basically has eliminated the Alberta honey producers from restocking and replenishing their bee stock, which had been depleted through winterkill or through problems that have arisen during the winter. For many years now I know firsthand that our minister has lobbied very hard his federal counterpart – and it is in part federal legislation that has created this dilemma – without apparent success. The beekeepers have basically not been able to access additional honeybee stocks. Would the minister share with the beekeepers of Alberta and with this House the status of the border closure as it stands today?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Smoky River has summed up the background rather accurately. I'm pleased to say that after years of lobbying and negotiating, we finally have a protocol signed between the government of Canada and the state of Hawaii which will allow the importation of queen bees for the spring of 1993.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you. I'm sure all the beekeepers will be very pleased with that news, Mr. Minister.

What role, if any, will the Alberta government play in determining that the bee stocks that will be coming in from Hawaii indeed are clean and free of parasites?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the protocol requires that the province of Alberta provide an observer in Hawaii on behalf of Canada to supervise the inspection and the testing that is being carried out over there. I've pondered for some time whether that was a two-week project that should require personal ministerial attention or whether it shouldn't but finally delegated the responsibility to our provincial apiarist.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Advanced Education Access

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday students started to line up at 5 o'clock in the morning to enroll for fall programs at Mount Royal College. Last year three times as many students applied as were accepted at that institution, and the situation is the same at most of our other postsecondary institutions. At Grant MacEwan they've already cut off enrollments for the fall in nursing, and they've received some 300 applications for 60 positions in their social work program. My question is to the minister of advanced education. Given that the government projects increased demand for university and college graduates, what action has the minister taken to address this serious access problem?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, let me respond first of all to some of the information that the hon. member has which probably isn't entirely accurate. He moves to paint a picture that all of these numbers are excess when in actual fact many, many students put in duplicate applications to various institutions. It gives a wrong indication when you accumulate all of them that there are that many students left out of the system, which in fact is not true. Last year after an extensive program done by the universities, it was found that there were really not that many, less than a thousand students, that were really left out of the system when it came time for them to gain entrance.

I would like to say, though, that it is the government's priority to increase access to the universities, and we've been successful in doing that. Last year our postsecondary institutions received an increase in their grant. In fact, they were able to increase access to the institutions. Consequently, I believe we are endeavouring to address the problem. Certainly we would like to be able to give more funding to it, but in the fiscal circumstance that's not always available. So we're asking institutions to act in a responsible manner in an effort to give as much access as possible with the funding available.

MR. PASHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, whereas I disagree with his comments with respect to the access problem, I could agree that there is need for more accurate information.

The minister's predecessor set up a secret committee to get information from the institutes, but they established guidelines for getting this information that were impossible to meet. My question to the minister is: does he have any intention of converting this secret committee into an open and public committee, a committee that would meet in the open and with public participation?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, in fact there is no such thing as a secret committee. The committee was struck by the department of advanced education in an effort to gather some information from the private sector and the other stakeholders. The committee subsequently presented the information to the department. The membership of the committee has been made public. I don't know how you can call a committee that's made public a secret committee. I certainly want to be forthcoming about what their objective and goal were, and certainly this minister is preparing a format for continued discussions on the direction that advanced education should take in the future.

Tire Disposal

MR. MacDONALD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier admitted that a \$400,000 payment was made to the Ice Age Company to

compensate them for broken promises. Similarly, the town of Trochu, having been led to believe by this government that they would receive a contract for a tire project, invested substantial amounts of time and money. My question is to the Premier. Can we assume that the Premier will be willing to compensate the town of Trochu for breaking promises related to their tire project?

MR. KLEIN: Well, perhaps the hon. Minister of Environmental Protection can supplement my answer. First of all, there was no promise to the town of Trochu. Indeed there was a letter of support that was contained in a number of documents that went back and forth, but Trochu was part of a proposal call that involved some 39 proponents to dispose of tires. So I just don't see the comparison in any way, shape, or form. There was no deal, no contractual arrangement whatsoever with the town of Trochu. Never was.

MR. MacDONALD: Mr. Speaker, since no promises were made, why is the minister of the environment planning to meet with the town of Trochu in the near future? Are they still being considered for a contract, or will they get compensation?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I'll deal with the meeting with the mayor of Trochu. I'm very delighted to have the opportunity to meet with the mayor of Trochu and the mayors of every other community in this great province of Alberta. I would think that the hon. member across would be happy that I would make that commitment. The mayor of Trochu, Mr. May, contacted me just after the swearing in, Mr. Speaker, and asked if we could arrange a meeting to discuss the initiative for tire burning, their recycling project, in relation to his new term as the incoming mayor of the town of Trochu. I said, "Certainly." We had, as the Premier indicated, initially about 39 different proposals for tire recycling. We currently have about a hundred. Certainly none of those are being pushed aside; they're all on the table. I would welcome an opportunity – in fact, my office is trying to arrange an opportunity – to meet with Mr. May to discuss that proposal from Trochu. We seem to have some commitment of our time while we are in session, however, so that meeting may occur when session adjourns.

MR. SPEAKER: Jasper Place, followed by Calgary-Fish Creek.

3:00 Public Lands Management

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier launched a spirited debate last month when he announced that the public lands branch would be transferred from what was forestry, lands and wildlife to agriculture, that signaling an end to responsible multiple use administration, which has the potential to serve all Albertans, agricultural and nonagricultural interests. Last week the debate took a bit of a comedy turn when the cabinet passed this order in council rescinding this order in council from the week before which had affected the transfer of lands. Now, I've heard perhaps quite a bit lately about thinking out loud. Is the government now order-in-counciling out loud? Will the Premier clarify where we stand?

MR. KLEIN: Where we stand is in accordance with the last OC.

MR. McINNIS: For the time being, I presume.

Well, I wonder if whichever minister is today responsible for public lands could advise me about an issue that's arisen. Private leaseholders in the past have been compensated for the cost of

clearing land in the rent that they pay to the government. Today with the stranglehold that pulp mill operations have on timber, timber is more valuable, and the timber can be sold. I would like to ask the minister responsible whether these new grazing leases will be an excuse for more logging in the province, that that pertains.

MR. EVANS: Well, I am responsible for public lands in the province of Alberta until there's a change made. [interjection] We'll discuss that later; we certainly will.

Certainly with respect to public lands, we have a policy to deal with the sale of timber. Those rules are clearly known to the hon. member across. We haven't made any changes to our rules and regulations on that in the short term, hon. member. I'm sorry; I fail to understand what you're getting at in your question.

Liquor Sales

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, as many members of the Assembly are aware, Canada Safeway recently released public opinion polling data regarding Safeway's interest in selling beer and wine in their stores. Safeway's release of this data and subsequent public comments by a member of the Alberta Liquor Control Board have triggered a number of calls and letters to my office seeking clarification of the government's response to Canada Safeway's publication of their survey research data. Can the minister responsible for the Alberta Liquor Control Board respond to these inquiries?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I did get a copy of a brief made by the Canada Safeway corporation. I was very interested in the stats that they had from their own poll. They have made no formal introduction to me of this trial balloon that they put out at one of the conferences in Calgary. I'll await any business or any group that wants to bring forth ideas, but at the present time I haven't had an official presentation.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, in my view this type of corporate kite-flying isn't particularly helpful in the development of public policy. I'm wondering what advice the minister responsible would be prepared to offer Canada Safeway with respect to their beer and wine sales marketing initiative.

DR. WEST: At the present time we have restructured many of the committees in government, and it's a very refreshing type of restructuring. I would recommend to Canada Safeway that if they want to make a presentation, they make it to the standing committee on community services, which is an open committee that they can come to with their brief. They will have full representation there along with any public that want to make their representation. Following that, we can look at what they're talking about.

Social Assistance

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family and Social Services says that he has a plan when it comes to people on social assistance and that he will release this plan sometime in the future only if it's accepted by this government, which to me is a very vague commitment. In the meantime, people on social assistance are being denied opportunities. I'd like to ask the minister: given that people on social assistance who actually find employment are forced to go back on social assistance because they cannot afford such things as prescription drugs and other coverage, will this minister make a commitment today to imple-

ment the transitional benefit program which was promised in the support for independence and which is almost one year overdue?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, again I want to stress to this House that as the Minister of Family and Social Services I want to set out my priorities. My priority for this department is to make sure that we provide a high quality of service for the children, the handicapped, the elderly, and the needy, who can't fend for themselves. That's my number one priority and the number one priority of our government. On the other hand, most of our employables, single people and single couples, in fact, that are employable, want to get back into the work force, and we'll do everything we can to facilitate that process.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue with the reforms, and I am confident as a new minister that my plan will be accepted by our government and will be implemented in the near future.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that's been ongoing. The women's advisory council last year identified this as a major barrier to employment, and this government promised almost a year ago to implement this program. As long as he's stalling people are being forced to stay on social assistance, and I would ask him one more time to make a commitment to this particular program.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that I am not proud to have over 88,000 people in Alberta on social assistance, and the people that are on social assistance are not proud to be on social assistance either. As a new minister I've been here only two months, and I've already initiated major reforms that will look after the concerns that the opposition member has stressed. These reforms will come forward in the near future.

If the opposition ND Party is so concerned about employment, I have here *Hansard* dated March 15, 1990, where the leader of the NDs indicates putting a moratorium on all forestry developments in northern Alberta, which today is creating thousands of jobs: Alberta-Pacific alone, 3,000 jobs pumping \$1 million a day into the Alberta economy.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Heavy Oil Upgrader

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1992 the government funded an \$88 million overrun on the Husky Oil upgrader, not out of the general revenue fund after proper legislature review but by diverting income from the heritage savings trust fund. My question is to the chairman of the standing policy committee on financial planning. Will the chairman tell us whether he supports this kind of surreptitious accounting policy? [interjections]

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'll take it under advisement. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Supplementary.

MR. MITCHELL: Due to the commotion I didn't hear the answer, Mr. Speaker. Could he repeat the answer?

MR. SPEAKER: Well, my goodness. You mean there's commotion in this place on occasion? I hadn't noticed.

Hon. member, the reply was that the chairman would take it under advisement.

Supplementary?

MR. MITCHELL: I wonder whether I could . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. members. Please don't interrupt your own caucus trying to ask a question.

MR. MITCHELL: I'll switch to a member of cabinet who I hope will be listening this time. To the Treasurer: what steps is the Treasurer going to take to reverse this accounting booga-booga, to use his words, and to ensure that it won't happen again?

3:10

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will appreciate that the provincial government in partnership with several others, including the New Democratic government of Saskatchewan, made an investment in the Husky Lloydminster upgrader project. Under Husky's management the construction of the upgrader took an overrun. The provincial government as a partner in the project was obliged, not by choice, to fund that overrun, would rather it had not happened at all, but given that we were partners, we were partners to the end. Rather than forfeit, as regrettably the New Democratic government of Saskatchewan chose to do, part of its overrun responsibility, we did not. The heritage fund chose that as a wise investment for the long term for the people of Alberta. The dollars flowed from the heritage fund to fund the overrun on the project. The reason why it's shown as a write-down, Mr. Speaker, is that on the advice of the Auditor and others we wrote down the cost of that project to a more realistic value so that it's placed on our books at a proper value. What it is is forgone revenue that normally would have flowed from the heritage fund to the general revenue fund, and that is why the \$88 million write-down has occurred.

MR. SPEAKER: West Yellowhead.

Community Recreation/Cultural Grants

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last November the former minister of tourism, recreation, and parks told Alberta municipalities that the government was canceling the community recreation/cultural grant, or CRC, program effective March 31 of this year. The CRC grants were an effective use of taxpayers' dollars based on yearly votes of the Legislature and left the decision of which recreation/cultural initiatives should be funded where they belong: at the local community level. I'd like to ask the Premier: given that the new community facility enhancement program is a totally inadequate substitute for the CRC program, will the Premier take the political slush fund, otherwise known as CFEP 2, out of the hands of his friend the minister of lotteries and instead reinstate the CRC program? If not, why not?

MR. KLEIN: Will I take it out of the hands of the minister responsible for lotteries? In answer to the question: no, he's doing a great job.

MR. DOYLE: The fact remains, Mr. Speaker, that the decisions about who receives the funding of the community facility enhancement program 2 will be made with the minister of lotteries' office, whereas decisions about CRC grants were made at local community levels. I wonder how the Premier, on one hand, can talk about a new style of governing but, on the other hand, sanction a new political slush fund run by his friend the minister of lotteries.

MR. KLEIN: It's not new. It's enhanced to become far more flexible and to provide communities with much more in the way

of benefits. I think that if you will allow the program to work you'll find it will be very effective, as indeed was the former CFEP program. It's just marvelous to go around this province to see all the new facilities that have been created and those that have been upgraded. It was a very popular program. Now, it has been enhanced under the capable chairmanship and the authority of the hon. minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Calgary-Northwest.

Pay Equity

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the minister responsible for women's issues. The most recent statistics comparing earnings of men and women in Alberta show that the wage gap between men and women is growing rather than narrowing. In 1991 Alberta women earned only 64.5 cents for every dollar earned by men, down from 67 cents a year earlier. Will the minister now recognize that there is a need for pay equity legislation and commit to such legislation to ensure that women are paid more fairly?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I have been speaking to women on this issue. I've been working with the advisory council and the Women's Secretariat with regards to this issue. Women have told me that they prefer to work this issue through with their own consultation process rather than force legislation. People in this province are sick and tired of constant legislation forcing issues. I know that this is a very important issue for women, and many women's groups are dealing with this and with this minister.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find this information from the minister very interesting inasmuch as the population lab at the university found in a recent survey that 94 percent of Alberta women support pay equity legislation as do 84 percent of Alberta men.

Recently this minister indicated her opposition to the protection of gays and lesbians from discrimination on the basis that the majority of Albertans were not in favour. Given the results of the research lab's information, will she now come forward on her commitment to honour the wishes of Albertans, including Alberta women, and bring in pay equity legislation at the earliest possible moment?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, the survey of the University of Alberta is only one sample of many. It is our job as politicians and Members of the Legislative Assembly to speak with all groups throughout Alberta, and that's my intention: to deal with these concerns through the advisory council we have in place, which is very effective.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

NovAtel Communications Ltd.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. NovAtel stands out as the biggest single financial disaster of any government in this country. The former Attorney General promised that he would investigate, and if there was any criminal activity, he would hang them on high. Now that it's been eight months, my question to the Justice minister is: who's he hung on high?

MR. FOWLER: This minister, Mr. Speaker, has not made any indication of hanging anybody on high at any time.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess we can interpret that as nothing's happening.

I'll put my next question to the Premier. Since this government is under new management – sign outside, I hear – and committed to freedom of information, will the Premier commit to tabling the documents showing what kind of criminal investigation, if any, has occurred on the NovAtel fiasco?

MR. KLEIN: I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Provincial Treasurer has indicated that he's going to make an attempt to get out all the information possible on the NovAtel situation. I wrote the Auditor General yesterday and have indicated to him that we're willing to abide by the recommendations and implement those recommendations. I'll be very happy to table that letter with the Assembly today.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Taber-Warner.

Supports for Independence Program

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears from the Minister of Family and Social Services' answers yesterday that the future of the supports for independence program is in limbo. My question to the minister is: if the minister is going to trash this expensive program, would he please tell us what evidence he has that it is or is not working?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I have not indicated in this House that any of the programs in Family and Social Services are not working. All I indicated to Albertans was that our priority again is to look after the needy. On the other hand, the people on social assistance want to get off the welfare rolls, and as a government I think we should be brave enough, innovative enough to move forward with new plans. This does not mean that the existing programs do not work. The Liberals are so concerned about people getting off welfare. The leader of the Liberals on October 22, 1990, indicated putting on hold a \$20 million Lakeland park, a 200 square mile park which will create hundreds of jobs in northern Alberta, where they're really needed.

3:20

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order.

Supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's just have that one recorded so we don't have to hear it every time.

Mr. Speaker, two months should have been plenty of time to assess this program. Surely the minister now can tell us how many unemployed people in this province have found permanent jobs as a result of supports for independence.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I don't have those updated stats, but I would just like to indicate that out of 88,700 cases we have over 50 percent that are single and couples without children that are employable. I will provide that information to the hon. member in this House in the near future. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member

MR. SPEAKER: Order. There's no need for this business of nit-picking back and forth at the minister just because you're conveniently located at that end of the Chamber. You've asked your question, hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, so please listen

to what the whole answer is. It would be very helpful. [interjections] Thank you. Order please.

Calgary-Millican.

Social Assistance (continued)

MR. SHRAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently there have been editorials and quite the discussion regarding residents from other provinces migrating to Alberta, but I found out that some people arriving in this province were on social assistance in their own province. Their social worker purchased them a one-way ticket to Alberta, to come to this province. I wonder if the Minister of Family and Social Services could please advise if these are some isolated incidents, or is this a very widespread practice? This could be very deadly expensive for this province.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, I know Alberta is probably one of the best provinces in North America in which to live. We have the highest standard of living. We have jobs and training programs in Alberta. It is no doubt attractive to other jurisdictions, but we do have over 140,000 people unemployed and looking for work in Alberta. I don't have the stats to show how many people are coming to Alberta that were on welfare in their provinces and end up on the welfare rolls here, but what I would like to indicate to people in other jurisdictions who are looking at coming to Alberta is: make sure they do proper research before they leave their province to come and search for employment in Alberta. If they do end up here employed, that's fine. If they do end up here not employed and on social assistance, we'll do everything within our means to assist them, make sure they're comfortable in finding their way back or staying here comfortably.

MR. SHRAKE: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It seems that some of the members of the opposition think this is something humorous. I just wonder if the minister could advise us: are we obligated to immediately start paying social assistance to everyone who is given a one-way ticket to this province? If they were on social assistance in their own province and they arrive here, do we have to automatically start paying? We are at this point approaching a billion dollars a year in social assistance payments. That's a lot of money.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I believe this province is very sensitive to needy Albertans and Canadians, and we will look after the people that require looking after. On the other hand, I believe we should also assist people if they do want to look at other alternatives such as going back to their provinces and families, where their support systems are.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

Speaker's Ruling Supplementary Questions

MR. SPEAKER: I realize that it's early in session. Just a reminder that when we're asking questions, it's one question and one supplementary for most of the members. It would be useful from a style point of view as well as from the answering point of view that when you're asking your supplementary, you only ask one question rather than make it into two parts, three parts with subsections. I think it will be much better in the next number of days.

First, might we revert to the introduction of visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Introduction of Visitors
(reversion)**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I was going to introduce a Member of Parliament, but he's left the gallery, sir. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps you could give the name anyway, please.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Alex Kindy.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: A Standing Order 40 request.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a Metis it gives me great pleasure to propose this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: We take that as an argument for urgency. All those in favour that the matter proceed, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously. Does the member now wish to speak additionally to the motion or just have the motion put?

Appointment of Manitoba's Lieutenant Governor

Moved by Ms Calahasen:

Be it resolved that this Assembly congratulate Yvon Dumont from Manitoba on being appointed on Friday January 22, 1993, the first Metis Lieutenant Governor in Canada, and be it further resolved that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly convey to the Lieutenant Governor this congratulatory message in his usual manner.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion before the House, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously. Thank you. The message will be indeed conveyed.

head: **Election of Deputy Chairman of Committees**

MR. SPEAKER: A number of other procedural items. First, with respect to the election that is to be carried out. The question must first be resolved unanimously if the election is to proceed. Is this House prepared to give unanimous consent that the election of the Deputy Chairman of Committees proceed on this day?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Point of Order Procedure

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: I was not sure just when I would be able to introduce it, but I think we're embarking on something that is flawed in the process. The procedure of electing Speakers either in the Mother of Parliaments or under the Standing Orders of the House of Commons is common to any system where we're trying to establish somebody that's first amongst equals. Really everybody's nominated so that the Speaker, he or she, does not owe their election to any person or any group. It was developed by the Greeks many years ago of course and is used by the College of Cardinals to elect a Pope. It's used by the House of Commons to elect a Speaker. Everybody is nominated.

I certainly intend supporting this as a small step for the parliamentary process and maybe a giant step for the Conservative Party. Nevertheless, it is not the proper way to run an election for somebody we want to rule over us. That person should not have to be beholden to any particular group or person for having the nomination. It should be run according to *Beauchesne* 182 and 146 or under Standing Order 2 of the House of Commons.

We're embarking on a process, Mr. Speaker. I'll admit it's splitting hairs, and the press won't even report it tomorrow, but it could make us a laughing stock of other parliaments. I know you're a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and other areas. You do not elect Speakers by nominating; you elect Speakers by voting and dropping off the ballot.

After all, if it's through, it's through, but I thought that it's worth while making that point, Mr. Speaker. I know you're a lover of the Commonwealth parliamentary process, and this is not the process that's used.

MR. SPEAKER: With respect to the point of order, the Chair is prepared to hear from each of the parties.

Edmonton-Gold Bar as House leader, so we will have two people from this one party in this case.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few added comments. I believe this is an important procedure to begin to elect these officers of this Assembly. As I understand it, today in the procedure to elect the Deputy Chairman of Committees we are in effect having a kind of dry run to begin to get the notion in this Assembly about electing other officers, including the office of Speaker.

Speaker's Ruling Clarification

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. member. The Speaker of this House has always been elected. You yourself were present on two occasions. So let us be quite clear what we're doing here. It is a new form of dealing with the Deputy Chairman of Committees, yes. It is hoped that other things might follow, that perhaps that process might be in place for a Deputy Speaker. If we want to go further after the Parliamentary Reform Committee has met, so be it, but then it will be a new form of election of Speaker. So let's be crystal clear in our definition.

Point of Order Procedure

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I did not in any way mean to infer that the Speaker is not elected here, simply that we are beginning a new process.

3:30

Mr. Speaker, the intent of the process is that the selection of such officers be placed directly in the hands of members of the

House, and I agree with that. In this process today the goal is to elect a Deputy Chairman of Committees through an open process, a secret ballot to elect a fair and nonpartisan person to conduct the business of the committees, someone who has the confidence of the majority of the House.

The deputy Chair in the House of Commons is elected by motion, not by a secret ballot, while the Speaker of the House is elected by a secret ballot. Now, we seem in our process here today, Mr. Speaker, to have reversed that system, and we've confused it somehow further by having nominations from various parties in the House. I see this as being somehow contrary to or not compatible with the goals and objects of this whole motion; that is, to elect persons who are not beholden to anyone.

Mr. Speaker, I do submit that the motives of the government in bringing this forward today are right, and I'll support it, but I believe the process needs to be carefully examined. It does, in fact, in my mind leave a great deal to be desired as to how we are going about it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, for clarification on this point of order, consultation did occur with the House leader of the Official Opposition and the House leader of the third party in the House, and there was agreement among all three House leaders as to the process that should be followed in the selection of the Deputy Chairman of Committees. I'm pleased to hear that the House leader of the third party has agreed to that.

One thing, though, needs to be clarified in terms of the procedure. There has been a document circulated to all members' desks today making it very, very clear that under the rules

the Speaker will call for nominations from the floor for the position of Deputy Chairman of Committees. After each candidate is nominated, the Speaker shall ask if the individual wishes to accept the nomination. After all nominations are proposed, the Speaker will declare the nominations closed.

There's never been any intent and there was never any agreement nor was there any statement that each party would nominate one person. The nominations are open at the call of the Chair, and I think we have to clarify that and make sure that is very, very clear.

I welcome the input from the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. Being of the Roman Catholic tradition, both he and I understand the process used to elect a Pope, but such is not the case today. We are simply going after the Deputy Chairman of Committees.

I want to make it very clear that if there is knowledge that we will gather from this procedure today, Mr. Speaker, hopefully in the ensuing weeks House leaders and indeed all members of the Assembly might want to consult further about a process, should there ever be a question or a call for another election of a Deputy Chairman of Committees in the future. I hope that's helpful.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, to address this situation, we did as a matter of fact spend quite a bit of time, the three House leaders, last Thursday in your presence. We discussed this in your office, and we had an agreement. I should add that the Government House Leader said: okay, we'll go with this if I don't hear from you.

Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me for just half a moment. Hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, you raised this point of order.

Would you be courteous enough to listen to what's occurring, please? [interjections] Well, no, thank you.

Edmonton-Highlands.

Point of Order Procedure

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we had a pretty comprehensive meeting, and the Government House Leader said, "Look, I'm open to any changes. If you want to make them, you phone me. You've got, you know, a day, and in fact you've really got until not long before we put the information on the members' desks." We all had the responsibility to look at this and decide, so I think the point of order is not really a point of order.

Secondly, I would not look forward to a delay in the process. Quite frankly, with the economy the way it is, I mean, we've got business to talk about. There are jobs to be talked about. I think we should get on with the business. If the third party has a problem communicating with their House leader, then maybe that's a problem they could sort out internally before bringing it to the floor.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, as has been pointed out by the last two speakers and by implication by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, indeed last week when the Chair had its usual meeting with House leaders prior to the commencement of the House, this matter did indeed receive a lot of attention, because I believe all parts of the House are indeed interested in having this particular election take place. It was the understanding of the Chair that there was unanimous agreement between all three parties.

However, having said that, this is a very good example in the parliamentary system where one or another caucus may decide something collectively and then when you come into the House a member has indeed the individual right to stand up and state the case for whatever his or her position may be on any particular issue.

So Westlock-Sturgeon, you have indeed raised a point of order. The Chair really rejects it, but it has allowed a forum for a certain amount of sharing of information.

Debate Continued

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the question before the House is this: is this House in favour of giving unanimous consent that this matter be dealt with, that this election take place on this day? All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Thank you. Unanimous consent has been received.

Now, the next step is this. It's the understanding of the Chair that all members have in their possession a copy of what the process will be. It is also the understanding of the Chair that this has been examined by each individual member of this House, either collectively within their caucus or individually. The next requirement, then, is that a motion be received to follow this set of guidelines which are before you now. The Chair also points out that this motion is capable of amendment. In light of the discussion in the last number of moments, the Chair feels constrained to have to make that clarification to the House.

Now, does anyone wish to speak to the motion that unanimous consent be given that the guidelines as circulated be in effect for the proposed election for this afternoon?

Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: This is one last effort, Mr. Speaker. I know, as the House leader of the NDs said, we have other things to do, but I think my system would be just as fast as the other system, which is wrong. It's not my system. I'd like to amend the procedure so that the nomination procedure is exactly the same as section 5 of the House of Commons May 1991 which says:

The election of a Speaker shall be conducted by secret ballot as follows:

(a) any Member who does not wish to be considered for election to the Office of Speaker shall, not later than 6.00 o'clock p.m. on the day preceding the day on which the election of a Speaker is expected to take place, in writing, so inform the Clerk of the House who shall prepare a list of such Members' names together with a list of the names of all Ministers of the Crown and party leaders, and shall provide the same to the Member presiding prior to the taking of the first ballot.

Well, obviously they didn't have a chance to do it so that means everybody in this House is nominated then. Consequently, the first ballot will be circulated, and everybody can put on that everyone has been nominated, and then we go from there.

3:40

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The Chair looks forward to seeing immediately the receipt of 83 copies of your amendment right here.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, if you wish to wait, I can run 83 as fast as the machine allots.

Speaker's Ruling Admissibility of Amendment

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. Please take your seat. On many occasions and on most of those occasions the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has been present – this House will not consider a motion or an amendment or a subamendment that has not been prepared with sufficient copies circulated to the House. We're not just going to run this place on the spur of the moment. Now, I will go one step further, and it's this: I will put it to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House to take a five-minute recess to allow the member to prepare this document and bring it forth to the House? Now, this will require unanimous consent. Those in favour of giving unanimous consent, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails. The Chair, therefore, on the advice of the House rejects the presentation of this amendment.

Point of Order Amendments

MS BARRETT: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands, on a point of order.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'll keep this brief. I think the reason the last point of order has failed and the vote has failed is because there was no prior notice. If we'd had oral notice at the beginning of question period, which is the common practice of this House, as all members know, we might have been able to resolve this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Debate Continued

MR. SPEAKER: On the main motion, which the Chair has decided as being proposed by the Deputy Premier, the Government House Leader, the request for unanimous consent that the voting for the Deputy Chairman of Committees proceed on the basis of the document supplied, we require unanimous consent for this to proceed. I'll put the question. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Thank you, hon. members.

Now we can proceed to the next item, which is to call the election. We are now going to proceed to nominations, but the Chair wants to point out that the process that is in place is one on which the Table officers consulted across Canada to find out what the practice was. The advice of the Chair: it's the practice and forum which was put in place in both Ontario and to some extent Saskatchewan. So we have consulted with other jurisdictions.

All hon. members are aware of trying to deal with this issue, because we've also had the other issue before this House to be resolved, which was that all of our votes must be public. So by passing the last motion, we now can have a secret ballot.

All right; the Chair is now willing to receive nominations for the position of Deputy Chairman of Committees.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to place a nomination – the name is Mr. Doug Main, MLA for Edmonton-Parkallen – for the position of Deputy Chairman of Committees.

MR. SPEAKER: By the procedure, hon. leader, I must indeed ask the member individually. Member for Edmonton-Parkallen, are you willing to allow your name to stand?

MR. MAIN: Yes, I am with pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to put forward the name of Stan Woloshyn, member of the Assembly for Stony Plain, to stand as Deputy Chairman of Committees.

In so nominating, I would like to just make one procedural observation. It is a tradition throughout the system of the Commons that the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee is a member of the Official Opposition, and it seems to me and to my colleagues that it would be appropriate that the chairman of the committee that oversees the budget estimates would be also appropriately from the Official Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Stony Plain, are you willing to allow your name to stand?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also with pleasure.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I nominate the Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Calgary-Currie, will you allow your name to stand?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the honour which the leader has asked me to accept; however, due to other responsibilities, I'll have to decline this nomination.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to nominate the Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Member for Lethbridge-West, will you allow your name to stand in nomination?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured by the courtesy of the hon. member, but I would respectfully decline.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to nominate the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, Mr. Bill Payne.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, will you let your name stand in nomination?

MR. PAYNE: Despite my long-standing interest in creative responses to creative suggestions, Mr. Speaker, I regret I must decline.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to nominate Mr. Taylor from Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: I would accept with pleasure, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair certainly gets the message that you accept with pleasure since I didn't even get a chance to ask you, so that's good.

The Member for Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to nominate Dr. Bob Elliott, the MLA for Grande Prairie.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the confidence or whatever it is that's promoting this, but I must decline. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Transportation and Utilities.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to nominate the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark for the position.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured by the nomination, and I would accept.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Additional? Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to nominate the Member for Highwood, Mr. Don Tannas.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Highwood, is it your pleasure to allow your name to stand?

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the spirit in which this nomination is made. I regretfully decline.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Additional nominations? Are there additional nominations? Are there additional nominations? That's three times, but we'll go beyond the system. For the fourth and final time: are there additional nominations? Failing to hear any, I declare the nomination process closed. Obviously, we shall now have an election.

Now, hon. members, in terms of carrying out the election, ballot papers have been prepared. There is indeed the possibility there might be more than one vote. For the purposes of the vote the doors of the Chamber will be closed. I would remind hon. members of the Standing Orders of this Assembly in which all members present must vote. We do not have allowance for abstentions. If you would grant us just a few moments to bring in the table, the ballot box, the voting stations, and the ballot papers, we'll proceed in just about two minutes' time.

3:50

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I notice that the staff hasn't supplied the stove for the white smoke to go up after we burn the ballots.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the point of order obviously does not exist. The Chair is only too willing to try to encourage support for the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon to run for the vacancy, if it ever does occur, with respect to the office of Pope.

Hon. members, would you take your places, please. Let the doors be closed. No one else enters; no one leaves. Thank you.

The process will be this: first, we're going have the front row on each side come by, then the second row, then the third. In the case of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, the Clerk will deliver the ballot to that member as soon as the balloting commences. I realize that there's a bit of a tightness with respect to the chairs and so forth, but if I could ask the front rows to please stand and move the chairs forward, then we'll have people come forward this way. You'll receive the ballots from either of Parliamentary Counsel here. The voting stations are there. The names of all four candidates are listed inside your place of polling. The Sergeant-at-Arms will be at the ballot box and supervise that. At the conclusion of the vote the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Clerk, and the Assistant Clerk will retire from the Chamber to count the ballots, and we will await with pleasure the results.

Front row on either side, if you'd be good enough to stand, please. Mr. Jonson, if you'd be good enough to come forward, and Mr. Schumacher, please.

4:00

Order please. Would the second row on either side please proceed from the section closest to the dias.

Would the third row on either side please come forward.

The doors are still closed.

Order. Have all members present voted?

HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Anyone else wish to vote? Thank you.

Sergeant-at-Arms, would you pick up the ballot box, please? The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk, proceed.

Now the doors will be opened, and we will be recessed until such time as the result comes back. I hope you won't travel too far, but we will ring the bell and then immediately come back, no eight-minute time lapse.

[The House adjourned from 4:08 p.m. to 4:19 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: I've just asked the Associate Sergeant-at-Arms to check both lobbies to make sure all members are in so that no one gets disenfranchised. Thank you.

Would you have the doors closed, please. No entrance or exiting. Thank you.

Clerk, would you report the results, please.

CLERK: Mr. Speaker, the results of the first ballot for the election of the Deputy Chairman of Committees are as follows: the number of ballots cast, 73; the number of spoiled ballots, 1; the number of eligible votes cast, 72; therefore the number of votes necessary for election, 37. There being no clear majority of votes, the candidate receiving the least number of votes was Mr. Taylor. Therefore, Mr. Taylor's name will be removed from the list of candidates for the second ballot.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, for the second ballot you'll get a different coloured ballot, so that's how we can tell the difference. The same procedure will apply in terms of the balloting. The Chair would point out that when you're doing your ballot, obviously you're printing the name of your candidate, and the Chair hopes that on the next occasion there would be no spoiled ballots.

Hon. members, just a moment. [interjections] No, just a moment. The Chair had ordered the doors closed, but the balloting had not commenced on this ballot. Would you allow Edmonton-Whitemud to come through, please.

4:20

MR. MARTIN: Come on in, Percy.

MR. FOX: You won, Percy.

MR. SPEAKER: The best news of all is that you're the Speaker. Just checking the lapel of certain members to make sure there wasn't any election propaganda being displayed.

All right. The second ballot takes place. The ballots are now being brought in. Would the first row on either side arise. Beginning with Dr. West, if you'd be good enough to come forward. Mr. Schumacher. The Clerk will deliver the ballot to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. Come on, Butch.

Would the second rows please come forward.

Have all members present in the House cast their vote?

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any others outstanding? No? Thank you.

Sergeant-at-Arms, take the ballot box. Accompanied by the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant, retire to do the count of the second ballot, please and thank you.

The House is in recess until such time as the bell rings. The bell will ring for one minute only, not the usual eight minutes.

[The House adjourned from 4:28 p.m. to 4:35 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Clerk, would you please report the results of the balloting.

CLERK: Mr. Speaker, the results of the second ballot for the election of the Deputy Chairman of Committees are as follows: number of ballots cast, 71; number of spoiled ballots, zero; number of eligible votes cast, 71; number of votes necessary for election, 36. The candidate receiving the majority of votes was Mr. Doug Main.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will refrain from inviting the Deputy Chairman of Committees to have to look after question period tomorrow.

Hon. members, what is your pleasure with respect to the ballots?

MS BARRETT: Move to destroy, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Moved to destroy the ballots.

Was there a procedural issue, Lethbridge-East, perhaps on this?

MR. JOHNSTON: Not right now.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, no. Thank you. That's all right.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members.

Perhaps we could just pause for half a moment so that some of you who have other appointments might leave before we have to deal with one more procedural issue.

Speaker's Ruling Order Paper Revisions

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Hon. members, since the last sitting of this Assembly a number of private members have been appointed by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to Executive Council. Certain items now standing on the Order Paper under private members' business were put on notice or moved by those members when they still had the status of private member. Parliamentary authorities provide that a minister cannot be the sponsor of private members' business, which means those Bills sponsored by members of the Executive Council and which appear under Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders are no longer in order. *Beauchesne* citations 636 and 644(3) provide that Bills which are out of order cannot proceed. *Erskine May* at page 468 gives the Speaker authority to remove from the Order Paper any item on which the question cannot be put to the House.

The Chair further understands that there is a request to change sponsors on Bill 216, Children's Access Rights Enforcement Act, now to be sponsored, if the House agrees, by the Member for Lethbridge-West.

First, are there any other requests for transference of Bills? Secondly, Member for Lethbridge-West, are you indeed prepared to sponsor Bill 216?

4:40

MR. GOGO: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would request unanimous consent of hon. members to transfer the sponsorship of Bill 216 to the Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to that matter, is the House prepared for the question? Are you all in favour of granting that permission to the member?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Let the record show unanimously.

Further, if the House has no objection, all of this which has proceeded will serve as notice that the following items will be removed from the Order Paper under Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders: specifically, Bills . . .

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Thank you. There was also a similar request coming from a member on another of those Bills, if that would be permitted.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for now informing the Chair. What is that?

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for being slow in rising. I wish to sponsor Bill 218, Vulnerable Persons' Protection Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Your request to the House is for unanimous consent? All those in favour of Bill 218, Vulnerable Persons' Protection Act, being now sponsored by the Member for Highwood, please signify.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried unanimously.

The Chair did ask previously if there were other requests, so the Chair will now revert. Are there additional requests?

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, would it be in order to withdraw private member's Bills at this time? Are you speaking only about ordering?

MR. SPEAKER: I will come to your request in a moment. Thank you.

All right. If the House has no further objection, this will serve as notice that the following items will be removed: 209, Hospitals Amendment Act; 266, Business Corporations Amendment Act. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried unanimously. Thank you. That item is now dealt with.

The Member for Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the unanimous consent of the Assembly to withdraw Bill 215 and replace it with Bill 217.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, hon. member; you can do this one Bill at a time. If you wish to withdraw, that's one thing. It's not a matter of shifting the orders here. I take it that your motion is to withdraw the Bill as sponsored by yourself?

MRS. GAGNON: Yes, standing on the Order Paper under my name.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. This also requires unanimous consent to withdraw.

AN HON. MEMBER: What number?

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 215.

The request from the Member for Calgary-McKnight to have that Bill withdrawn: those willing to agree to the request, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. That is indeed agreed to by the House unanimously.

Now, the second issue is a bit more complicated. The request, as the Chair understands it, is to now have another Bill come into the slot which the member's Bill previously occupied. Perhaps the hon. member would rise and tell me which Bill we're now talking about, please.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I would ask unanimous consent that Bill 217, standing on the Order Paper in the name of Mr. Decore, become Bill 215.

MR. SPEAKER: The problem is the space was previously occupied by Bill 215. Well, all hon. members would then understand that this change of procedure would then allow this particular Bill 217 to, if you'll forgive the use of the word, leapfrog ahead of Bill 216 on the paper. All right. Having understood what we're about here, all those in favour of granting leave to the request by Calgary-McKnight, please indicate by saying aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails.

I believe we have now set a new record for calling Orders of the Day at 4:48.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

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

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. DAY: Again, Mr. Speaker, given the time taken today already, for today only I am suggesting and moving that the motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places.

MR. McEACHERN: Is that a debatable motion?

MR. SPEAKER: No, this is nondebatable.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, most of these things have been on here for over half the year and up to a year. It's scandalous that the government can't get . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We have determined that in terms of these procedural motions they are not debatable.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

Point of Order

Time for Private Member's Motion

MR. FOX: According to our Standing Orders, any motion that comes forward on a Tuesday dies on the Order Paper if it's not resolved as of 5:30. If it is resolved before 10 after 5, I believe it comes forward on the following Thursday. I just wonder if the Assembly would entertain the notion that because we've devoted a significant amount of private members' day today to the business of the House and because the normal proceedings will be interrupted for another special event at quarter after 5, if hon. members would give unanimous consent to allow this motion on the Order Paper that we will now be debating to carry over to Thursday's agenda if the issue is not resolved one way or the other by the end of today's proceedings at 5:15.

4:50

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order, I as a member would be interested to know, sir, just how much time has been spent in debating this Motion 223 before we agree to the request by the hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the sponsor of the motion wishing to speak to answer that question? Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The *Hansard* record of July 2, 1992, indicates that virtually one column of one page was taken up with opening comments. I would presume that that would be a total of somewhere between five and 10 minutes.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, recognizing that a fair amount of private members' days have already been allocated to other matters today and recognizing as well that there is an event that all members would want to participate in at 5:15 this afternoon, I would think the point of order is very much in order, and I'd think the hon. member should be allocated, recognized the amount of time required for him to proceed with the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair's understanding is that the request that's being made would be that the motion would carry on on the Order Paper with respect to Thursday. This requires unanimous consent. All those in favour of allowing that procedure to take place, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Calgary-Mountain View.

Provincial Tax Regime

223. Moved by Mr. Hawkesworth:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to restructure Alberta's tax system to make it more fair, progressive, and open and that these changes should include requiring profitable corporations and the wealthy to pay their fair share of taxes, fully reporting the annual amount of unreported provincial corporate tax expenditures as recommended by the Auditor General, thoroughly reviewing the value of all provincial corporate tax expenditures and eliminating those which only serve to allow tax avoidance, replacing the regressive flat tax and

ineffectual high income surtax with a fair and progressive graduated income surtax that would see taxpayers who earn more pay a greater percentage of their income as tax than lower income earners, and establishing an income based child tax credit to offset the disproportionate impact of the goods and services tax.

[Adjourned debate July 2: Mr. Hawkesworth]

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I begin by expressing my thanks to all members of the House from all political parties for agreeing to the further adjournment of this item to Thursday in light of the circumstances of today. I would say that I personally very much appreciate it. Also, I think we serve the people of Alberta in doing so because the question has to do with proposed changes to our tax system here in the province, and that's a matter that of course concerns all Albertans and all members of this Assembly. We have differing opinions of how the tax system ought to be changed, and I think it's important that we have that kind of debate here in the Assembly. So I'd like to begin by thanking the members for allowing me and this particular issue to get a full hearing. Thank you very much for that.

The question in front of us, Mr. Speaker, is how we can make Alberta's tax system more fair, progressive, and open. In light of that objective I am putting forward a number of proposals that I think will achieve that end. Those take the form of making those in our province who are fortunate enough to have high incomes, the well-to-do, pay according to their ability to pay the costs of supporting essential public services and programs.

As well, I think we need to look at favourable treatment that certain profitable corporations and individuals have received over the years by way of what are traditionally called tax expenditures; that is, where people are allowed to reduce their taxes if they undertake certain behaviour or certain actions. In keeping with that, these tax expenditures are not reported, and we believe that a review of that ought to take place. We're very concerned about what we see as a form of regressive taxation here in our province whereby people pay the same amount regardless of their income, and those sorts of taxes hit people of low income hardest of all.

We also would like to see some form of child tax credit, Mr. Speaker, to offset the disproportionate impact of the goods and services tax. Also, I think it's important in view of stated government policy, and certainly a policy supported by the opposition New Democrats, that we should be doing all we can to support children in our society and use a tax system not to punish people for having children but to ensure that children are protected and supported in ways that we can in our tax system.

[Mr. Main in the Chair]

I must say that it's essential that the primary principle that should underline any tax system anywhere, Mr. Speaker, is that it should be fair and progressive: fair in that no group is unfairly singled out to pay more than they ought to pay and progressive in that we should be asking those to be paying on the basis of what they can afford so that those whose incomes are meagre or small and who have to spend their incomes in meeting the basic needs of their families should not be unfairly burdened, then, by taxes which they can ill afford to pay. But those whose basic needs can be taken care of with their income should on a proportionate basis and their ability to meet their collective obligations be asked to pay according to their ability to pay. That is a progressive system that has evolved over most of the 20th century until, of course, we hit the early '80s and on. Since that time we've seen the erosion of the principle that our taxation system should be progressive.

We see governments in Ottawa, Liberal and Conservative, as well as the Conservative government here in Alberta looking to taxes that are regressive in nature and that erode the principle of progressivity.

Now, we in the New Democratic Party believe that that is the wrong direction to be taking, that it increases an unfair burden on middle- and low-income families, and that it lets people off obligations who can afford their obligations and places it on the backs and shoulders of those who can't. So we disagree with the trend that has evolved over the years, and we would like to see changes made in the tax system to restore progressivity and that those who earn more, pay more.

Now, I know that there will be some across the way who might say that this is sheer rhetoric, that this proposal being put forward by the New Democrats is really not based in fact, is not based in reality, and that the complaint or the problem I've identified really does not exist. Well, Mr. Speaker, since we first started debate on this motion back in July, two reports have been made public which only underscore the points I made then and I'm making here today.

A report in November of 1992 was released, a study was published in the inaugural issue of *Canadian Business Economics*, a journal of the Canadian Association for Business Economics. It was undertaken by an economist by the name of Patrick Grady of Global Economics Ltd. It's interesting, the conclusions this study reaches. The changes since 1984 for the average Canadian family are that in the year 1992 that family will pay close to \$1,900 more in federal taxes than it would have without the increases introduced by the Conservative government since 1984. The tax increases since 1984, says this study, have been of unprecedented magnitude, and the brunt has fallen heavily on Canadian households. In fact, it was interesting that of all the G-7 countries it was largest in Canada, surpassing even that of Italy, so that these kinds of taxes this Conservative government in Ottawa has implemented have hit families hard.

What is most alarming, Mr. Speaker, is that of all families, it's middle-income families with children that have borne the brunt of tax increases since 1984. They are very regressive, and illustrating that, the study indicates that families earning more than \$150,000 have been hit proportionately less by federal tax increases than Canadians with lower incomes. In fact, if you look at an average family with two children, earning approximately \$68,000 per year, their tax burden will go up nearly \$3,000, something like 6.6 percent of their consumable income. But for families earning more than \$150,000, the added federal tax is about \$3,800 or only 3 percent of their consumable income. You can see how those changes have had less of an effect on high-income families than they have had on middle-income families, and this is across the board across Canada. As we know, a considerable portion of the tax payable by families in Alberta is based on the income tax payable. Albertans simply pay a certain percentage or proportion of the federal income tax to the provincial government. So when changes are made to the federal income tax system, it has an impact on Alberta families and what they pay here so that Alberta families with high income get by with a lower tax burden than families with lower income.

5:00

Then, Mr. Speaker, that study was followed by taxation statistics that were released in December of 1992. This is interesting as well because it again reinforces the point I've made that higher income Albertans, higher income Canadians are seeing their income tax bill decreased in relation to those of low income. The average income tax bill according to 1990 taxation statistics

increased by \$250 to slightly over \$6,000 even though average family income dropped by almost 2 percent. In Canada there were 250 people making over \$250,000 a year who didn't pay a single cent in tax. That was an increase of 39 percent in the number of people over the year previous and was the fourth year in a row that the number of tax dodgers increased. Now, the federal minister indicated that the changes being made in federal tax law were to make it more fair, yet we see that the result of tax reform federally is that the number of tax dodgers has increased. Not too many Canadians make \$250,000 a year. A few more make \$50,000 a year. Of those, almost 8,300 people avoided tax altogether, again an increase over the previous year's total of 7,000 individuals.

I also found it interesting that in these statistics the federal personal income tax revenues increased 11 percent in 1990-91 to over \$57 billion, almost \$58 billion, while corporate income tax revenues dropped 10 percent to less than \$12 billion. Mr. Speaker, every statistic that's been made available and studies that have been made available indicate that the revenues governments are raising are becoming more and more regressive as years go on, that people of high income, people with wealth are escaping taxation while more and more of the burden is being focused on low- and middle-income Canadians, Albertans, families and particularly families with children. Our tax system is crying out for reform and reform in a progressive way.

Mr. Speaker, we've also looked a little more closely at the Alberta situation. We note that between 1975 and 1985 per capita personal income tax in Alberta tripled while per capita corporate income tax only doubled. For example, if we go through the public accounts for 1985 through 1990 and the 1991 provincial budget, we see that personal income tax increased by 95 percent, and in those particular years income tax from corporate sources on a per capita basis increased only 8.3 percent. Then there's also revenue from sales taxes such as gasoline and tobacco; those went up by 74 percent. Health care taxes, vehicle registration, land titles fees, and so on jumped 63 percent. So what we see, particularly with health care premiums, is that if you're a family or if you're an individual you pay the same amount regardless of what your income might be. Those are regressive forms of taxes, and we see that in every case those have gone up over the years. So it's important that we re-establish a progressive system for taxation.

What really frosts people, Mr. Speaker, is when they see they have to be forced to pay taxes and somebody is getting off scot-free without paying taxes at all. They say that is an unfair system, and I have to agree with them. So we must first of all ensure that people of high income who can afford it, who are wealthy pay their fair share. That means changing our tax system.

Mr. Speaker, as well, government has introduced over the years a variety of programs that allow people to deduct certain expenditures from their tax payable in order to achieve certain objectives, and we see this in the corporate tax system. Now, some of those tax expenditures – that is, taxes people would otherwise have to pay except for these loopholes – in some cases are quite legitimate and achieve an important and needed public policy. Let's assess what those are and ensure that those that are achieving an objective might be retained but those that are being used simply to allow for tax avoidance so people don't have to pay their fair taxes – those kinds of tax expenditures ought to be eliminated.

The first step, of course, is to report what those tax expenditures are. This is something that has been recommended in the past by the Auditor General, and it's a recommendation that I believe this government ought to implement. Now, Alberta has a flat tax, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't work on a progressive basis, but it's a flat tax

across the board. This is a report from the previous federal Auditor General who had some concerns about its legality. He made an interesting point that in 1987 that particular tax raised an estimated \$205 million or 11 percent of the total personal income tax of \$1.88 billion. That was a significant take given the low rate of .5 percent of taxable income which we've had. So what the estimate from the federal Auditor General indicates is that what appears to be a relatively innocuous flat tax in fact generates a significant amount of money on a regressive basis, and it's our recommendation that such a tax ought to be eliminated and replaced with a more progressive system.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, an income based child tax credit ought to also be looked at as a way of compensating for the situation I alluded to earlier. Over the years families with children have been hit hardest by the changes in our tax system. For a government that wants to encourage family life and support children and support families with children, what's crying out for attention is a tax system that appears to be punishing those same families instead. If there's one area where this government ought to be moving and moving quickly it's to ensure that families with children receive tax benefits and tax reductions to recognize the costs of raising children and to ensure that the children of today are not being raised in an atmosphere and a climate of poverty but, rather, all the resources families need to properly look after their children are accounted for and recognized in our tax system.

5:10

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, in summary, we need to create a tax system based on the ability to pay. We need to ensure that those who are using the tax system to avoid paying any tax at all no longer are able to misuse the tax system for tax avoidance. We need to ensure that the system is fair, that it's progressive, based on the ability to pay, and that it's targeted to assist families and ordinary Albertans, particularly those who are trying to raise children.

With those opening comments, Mr. Speaker, I just want to assure the people of this Assembly and all Albertans that it's not necessary for us to look to a regressive provincial sales tax, as some in this Assembly might want to advocate. We do not need any more regressive taxation. The biggest impact for families with children since 1984 – the increase in federal tax, the bulk of it – has come from the introduction of the goods and services tax, a national sales tax, and increases in other sales taxes such as gasoline, alcohol, tobacco, and commodity taxes, those being the areas that have hit families in this country hardest and made our tax system unacceptably regressive.

Mr. Speaker, a provincial sales tax is not required. We do not need to buy into the same regressive system the federal government has implemented. I believe the options I've talked about in general terms today will generate the kinds of revenue required for the province to support its essential public services. We do not need a regressive provincial sales tax.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I want to take an opportunity to speak on this motion brought forward by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. In this new position, I might be a little more far ranging in some of my comments, perhaps a touch more supportive of what the Member for Calgary-Mountain View has recommended than I have been in other manifestations.

Mr. Speaker, I think I want to present my position today in three different responses. I want to outline in my comments today and, I suppose, on Thursday the following framework. First of all, I want to talk about the kinds of problems we should anticipate here

in Alberta and in Canada under the current tax system, how the personal income tax system articulates as an important revenue source both for the provinces and for the federal government and some of the implicit problems that are reflected in the current tax system, mostly as to the ability of provinces to pay the bills, given that revenue source.

Secondly, I want to talk about the way in which the tax system is now structured and pick up some of the thoughts provided by my hon. friend across the way and, in fact, perhaps take a slightly different interpretation of the article he cited and refer to other articles which have been put forward recently as well, and finally, talk about what I see to be the need for changes in the future, talking about ways in which the personal income tax system can be more readily adapted and made a more useful instrument of both economic policy and social policy.

That would be the framework of my comments, and I wait for your advice: whether or not I should start. Accordingly, I would accept your direction and wait until Thursday to continue my arguments.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair interprets that as a motion to adjourn debate. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Thank you hon. members.

Oscar J. Lacombe, Honorary Sergeant-at-Arms

MR. SPEAKER: Associate Sergeant-at-Arms, would you have our ex-Sergeant-at-Arms attend upon the Chamber.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure today that I stand and put forward a motion. I will enter in the record the motion, and then I would like to make a few comments with respect to it.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta confers upon Oscar J. Lacombe for his lifetime the title of honorary Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. Speaker, the very distinguished former Sergeant-at-Arms, who hopefully will now become the honorary Sergeant-at-Arms for life in this particular Legislative Assembly, has indeed had a very, very distinguished career. I know that all members of the Assembly received a biographical sketch of Oscar J. Lacombe a little earlier this afternoon, but I do believe it's important as well and I think it's worthy that we take a moment or two to perhaps reflect upon the lifetime of public service that this gentleman has made to the people of his country.

I say "to the people of his country" because Mr. Lacombe has come to us with a military background and a participation in the military of Canada. All hon. members will know the distinguished involvement that Canadians have made in the 20th century, not only in wartime but in peacetime again. We look at the distinctions that Mr. Lacombe has received: the Korean Medal and Clasp; the NATO Special Service Medal; the Korean Voluntary Service Medal; the United Nations medals for service in Korea, Egypt, and Cyprus. For his service in this country: the Canada 125 Medal; the Canadian Decoration and Clasp; the Royal Life Saving Society of Canada, a distinction; the Royal Life Saving Society Diamond Jubilee, Alberta, Northwest Territories Branch distinction; and the Ambassador for Peace Medal as a Korean veteran, for service in South Korea.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lacombe has been involved in this Assembly in this building for some 18 years; 1974 was the year he arrived for service in this Legislature Building and this Legislative

Assembly. Coincidentally, it was also the year that I arrived in this particular Assembly, and one of the first individuals I had an opportunity to meet was Mr. Lacombe. I think he'll always be noted for his wit, his humour, his joke of the day. Some of these jokes, of course, can be used in public; others are held in private with the odd little snicker, snicker, snicker. Through it all, Mr. Lacombe has certainly provided a sense of humour and a sense of balance, I think, in a very nonpartisan way.

5:20

To all members of the Legislative Assembly he was a friend. He was always there to help and always available. I've taken great pride as well that when young students have come to this Assembly I've been able to ask Mr. Lacombe to come. I said to my young students, "Do you know that this gentleman is a direct descendant of Father Lacombe, that great missionary to Western Canada?" Every time I said that I would of course chuckle, and I'd say, "Not directly; I mean there was a relative, Father Lacombe's sister, and Mr. Lacombe comes that way." There is a blood relationship and a very important one.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years, in addition to the service Mr. Lacombe has provided as Sergeant-at-Arms of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, I also would like to point out that Mr. Lacombe, along with one very distinguished member of our Legislative Assembly, the Member for Lethbridge-West, Mr. John Gogo, had been very, very active in ensuring that Korean veterans and the service they provided in the Korean conflict in the early 1950s were recognized. In the last year a memorial has been assembled here on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly as a lasting tribute to these individuals in Canada who provided great service to this country in a time of international conflict.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that I'm not alone in saying this, and I would say it on behalf of the government as the Government House Leader: we want to extend very, very best wishes to Mr. Lacombe. We want to thank him for his service not only to this Legislative Assembly and to the people of Alberta, but we also want to thank him very publicly for his service to the people of Canada as a member of the military of the country of Canada.

I'm just really, really pleased to put forward this motion asking the Assembly to confer upon Oscar J. Lacombe the title of honorary Sergeant-at-Arms.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: The last time I had to speak about Oscar Lacombe was at a roast, and I'm feeling it was more appropriate then.

Mr. Speaker, as Leader of the Official Opposition, we in the Official Opposition would also certainly second this nomination. It won't seem the same around here without Oscar and his sword. How many times have we jumped out of our seats when he yelled at somebody – it just won't be the same. I don't know if we'll miss his jokes every day or not, but he'll probably be around anyhow, just to bring them forward. The last honour like this I can think of was what they gave Stanley Knowles for life, and he's still sitting there at the Table. I don't know how long Oscar's going to be around with the sword as honorary Sergeant-at-Arms. As honorary Sergeant-at-Arms, does he still get to throw people out? I want to know what the rules are.

MR. SPEAKER: No.

MR. MARTIN: He's going to be honourable.

Let me just say that indeed decorum is important in a Legislature. It's an important job, and it's not always the easiest job.

We on this side of the House certainly appreciate the efforts and congratulate you and certainly support your being the honorary Sergeant-at-Arms, and yes, we will listen to your jokes the odd time when you come around. Congratulations.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I add on behalf of the Liberal caucus our support for this motion to appoint Oscar Lacombe an honorary Sergeant-at-Arms of this Legislature. We do so with respect and affection. Mr. Lacombe has at all times carried out his duties with integrity and certainly with sensitivity: not an easy task and one that we have appreciated. He has, of course, a distinguished career in service to his country long in advance of his career in service to this Assembly. We have wished him well already in his retirement. May I add my congratulations on this most recent honour and best wishes for his future with the hope that he will continue to speak out to Albertans about this House, about its safety, its traditions, and its members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, thank you. In support of the motion moved by the hon. Government House Leader, I'd like to make a very brief comment both to members of the House and to the very honourable gentleman, Mr. Lacombe. As a Korean war veteran along with the hon. Member for Lloydminster, Mr. Doug Cherry, I want Mr. Lacombe and members of this House to know how proud I am of what he's done for the many veterans of the Korean war. Mr. Speaker, you will recall that we had the support of this House in a unanimous way to provide the Voluntary Service Medal for veterans of Korea, sir, thanks mainly to you and certainly to Mr. Lacombe who, I think, went beyond the normal bounds of duty to round up public support for that. As the hon. Government House Leader has indicated, Oscar to a very good extent participated in seeing that we had a suitable memorial erected on the Legislative Assembly grounds.

So I'd just like to add my comment to those I've already heard, Mr. Speaker. As a member who served along with Mr. Lacombe in Korea, along with the hon. Member for Lloydminster, Mr. Doug Cherry, we Korean veterans are very proud of what Mr. Oscar Lacombe has brought not only to Alberta but to this Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Lacombe, would you like to address your colleagues?

MR. LACOMBE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Premier, Mr. Martin, Mrs. Hewes, I normally have quite a lot to say. Tonight I will say: many fond memories, and many, many good friends. For that, thank you very much. [applause]

MR. SPEAKER: As mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, we did have a roast for Oscar some time back. It was indeed a quiet, subdued affair. It was a very pleasant evening.

Oscar, you know how much your fellow Members of the Legislative Assembly care for you, how much we hold you in respect, and how much we appreciate the work you have done. The Table officers in particular, as well as the staff in my office who are represented here, have found a very special place in their hearts for you. I know that all the feelings of gratitude and good wishes are echoed by the security staff of the Sergeant-at-Arms

department, if you will, and also by all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

You have brought great honour to your people. You are very proud, and rightly so, of your Metis heritage. We together have appreciated your time. Even the executive assistant joins me in wishing you well.

It's the end of an era in many respects. As Speaker, it's very important and very marvelous for me to be able to say that I've been blessed by the quality of staff that I have had and the staff that I have as we share our responsibilities of work on behalf of the Legislative Assembly. More than that, I've been especially blessed to be able to count you as friend. [applause]

Now, hon. members, listen closely to the question. Is it the wish of this House that you want to have a secret ballot for this next motion?

HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: I take it that in accord with Standing Orders of the Assembly, this will be indeed a public representation as we

come to the balloting. All those in favour of the motion before us as proposed by the Deputy Premier, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Let the record show the motion carried unanimously.

Let us welcome the honorary Sergeant-At-Arms – a lifetime sentence – Oscar J. Lacombe. [applause]

Signify the formal record that this motion was duly passed unanimously by this House, and to show you the alacrity with which we are able to come forth and do the business of the House, here is the official scroll to know that it did take place.

MR. LACOMBE: Thank you, chief.

MR. SPEAKER: Honorary Sergeant-at-Arms, would you march off the Table officers.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 p.m.]