

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, February 9, 1993**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 93/02/09

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

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 both our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the government gives oral notice of the following motion:

Be it resolved that further consideration of any or all of the resolutions, clauses, sections, or titles now before the committee shall be the first business of the committee and shall not be further postponed.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 1991-92 annual report of the Alberta Electric Energy Marketing Agency. I would like to ensure that members are clear on the fact that I am tabling this report of the electric marketing agency. On July 2, 1991, the agency itself was abolished, and its responsibilities were absorbed by the Department of Energy. The Electric Energy Marketing Act is still in effect. The elimination of the agency is consistent with our government's commitment to streamline our operations, to use our taxpayer dollars as effectively as possible.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased this afternoon to table with you the annual report for 1991-92 of the Society of Management Accountants of Alberta and the 1991 annual report of the Alberta Registered Professional Foresters Association.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I file for the information of the members of this Assembly an ad from the *Calgary Herald* of Sunday, February 7, with 1,100 names in support of the Human Rights Commission and a strong commitment of this government for human rights in Alberta.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the Legislature today three good constituents from the constituency of Drayton Valley. One is His Honour Tom McGee, the mayor of the town of Drayton Valley. He's accompanied today by Ed Lambert, the reeve of the MD of Brazeau. With them is Manny Deol, the manager of the town of Drayton Valley. I would ask that they rise and be accorded the welcome of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to the House a very special guest from the Smoky River constituency. He's a person who is not only a leader in his local community but a leader in the entire province. I refer to the president of the United Farmers of Alberta, Mr. Orval Sorken. I

would at this time ask Mr. Sorken, who's seated in the members' gallery, to rise and receive the usual recognition of the House.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the House Mr. Isaac Klassen, who, although his address is RR 4, Sherwood Park, comes from the Camrose constituency. He's seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that he rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

International Trade Mission

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, under the new-management government some things haven't changed. They have not lost their taste for travel. In these tough economic times, when we're having to lay off provincial employees, when we're having to cut health care workers' jobs, when we have no money for this, that, and everything else, we can find thousands of dollars to send former cabinet ministers over to Asia. Now, apparently one of things they're going to do is study whether we need our Asian patronage offices. Well, let me save them some money. We don't need them, and we don't need the MLAs going over there to find out. My question to the Premier is simply this: in these tough economic times how can the Premier justify spending thousands of Alberta taxpayers' dollars to send MLAs on a trip to visit old Tory hacks in these offices?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I take it that what the hon. leader of the ND opposition is saying is that we don't want to attract foreign investment to this province. Is that what he's saying? We don't want to attract foreign investment and bring new dollars, new job opportunities to this province: is that what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying? The hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that we should willy-nilly just shut down those foreign offices. I'm saying let's take a reasonable approach to this situation: find out how effective they're being, what needs to be done to improve them. If indeed they need to be shut down, then let's get a good honest assessment of the situation. That is exactly what is taking place.

MR. MARTIN: They send two Tory MLAs who know nothing about international trade. That's reasonable, Mr. Speaker? He talks about foreign investment. Look what Joe Dutton did over there. Yeah, that's the way to attract foreign investment, isn't it? What nonsense.

My question to the Premier. I understand this is just the beginning, though. It's not bad enough that they're going to toot all over Asia for thousands of dollars. I'm told, Mr. Speaker, and I'd ask the Premier to confirm, that this is just the beginning, that these two MLAs will also be visiting New York and London at taxpayers' expense.

MR. KLEIN: I'm sorry. Was there a question?

MR. MARTIN: I asked you to confirm it.

MR. KLEIN: Well, I can confirm that one MLA is over there. The other one happens to be sitting right here.

I can confirm that that's under consideration. We're going to do a review in the context of our overall budget process and our financial plan. We're going to do a review of all the foreign offices, Mr. Speaker. The only way you can do a review is to have people examine the effectiveness of these offices.

MR. MARTIN: With all due respect to these two ex-cabinet ministers, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what they know about it to begin with.

I want to make a positive suggestion to the Premier here in these tough economic times. We don't need these offices. There are Tory hacks running them. We could save at least \$5 million by shutting them down and also save on this trip over there. Would the Premier do that and save \$5 million dollars for the taxpayers of Alberta.

MR. KLEIN: Well, I beg to differ, and I think many people in the business community would beg to differ, because I've heard reports that these offices can be very effective. What we want to know in terms of our overall global financial planning is how effective they are. Do some of these offices need to be closed down? Can we get better participation with the federal government in the use of their embassies? All these things are being looked at, Mr. Speaker. We want to do things in a reasonable and rational way rather than the knee-jerk kind of way the NDP would suggest we carry out our business.

MR. MARTIN: What they want to do is send Tory MLAs traveling around the world. They find that very reasonable, Mr. Speaker.

2:40 Premier's Trip to Eastern Canada

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the other day the Premier, if I may go back to his little discussion with his very good friend Brian Mulroney, said that they had some discussions about some very important issues. Well, I want to follow up on some very important issues that should have been discussed now that he loves Brian Mulroney and loves all the things that the federal government has done to Alberta. The Premier himself acknowledges that the cap on the Canada assistance plan is going to cost Alberta \$300 million. When we add on the other transfer payments for advanced education and health, that would cost us millions of dollars more. This is what his good buddy Brian is doing to Alberta. My question to the Premier: did he push Brian Mulroney on these particular issues of downloading onto the provinces, and what was the result of that discussion?

MR. KLEIN: The whole issue of the Canada assistance plan was discussed. Indeed we had a conversation with Mr. Mazankowski relative to this. As I indicated to the Legislature, the federal government has agreed to participate with the province of Alberta to hold a conference sometime down the road in the not-too-distant future to discuss these and other issues affecting our province.

MR. MARTIN: Oh, boy, you really got a lot out of them; you're going to hold a conference. He must be shaking in his boots from that hard negotiation. Obviously they're going to continue their downloading onto the provinces.

Let's look at another federal policy from his good buddy Brian Mulroney that's going to cost Albertans millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. When he was asked about this on a TV show, the Premier didn't seem to be aware of it. It's the proposed changes to unemployment insurance. These changes are going to cost us probably \$120 million a year as people go from UIC onto welfare. That's the reality of it. My question to the Premier is simply this: what discussions did the Premier have with Brian Mulroney over the UI changes, specifically their impact on Alberta's Treasury?

MR. KLEIN: In the course of a 45-minute meeting, we just can't roll in everything, but there will be ample opportunity to carry on these discussions.

As I indicated to the hon. leader of the NDP opposition sometime ago, if he has some good ideas and he has some positive input, share them with us. They'll never be able to use those ideas. So share them with us, and we'll be glad to bring them up.

MR. MARTIN: If I may say so, Ralphie, that was raised with you in the Legislature. Why didn't . . .

Speaker's Ruling Referring to a Member by Name

MR. SPEAKER: Order. In this House we address hon. members by their proper names. Thank you.

Final.

MR. MARTIN: Hon. Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Premier's Trip to Eastern Canada (continued)

MR. MARTIN: What did you discuss with the Prime Minister other than that you're both going to campaign with each other? Obviously you didn't discuss anything of significance to Alberta. What of significance did you get from the Prime Minister to help Alberta in these tough economic times?

MR. KLEIN: We discussed a number of significant issues that will contribute to Alberta's economic growth and prosperity. We talked about issues that will lead to the creation of jobs, job retraining. We talked about issues that relate to the Young Offenders Act. We talked about issues that would allow us to participate in a more meaningful way with respect to the North American free trade agreement. We talked about a number of things, and I'll be glad to talk about the things that the hon. Leader of the Opposition just talked about. I have no problems discussing these issues.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West, on behalf of the Liberal Party.

MR. WEISS: On a point of order after, Mr. Speaker, please.

International Trade Mission (continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism said this latest junket is very important, and the Premier tells us today it's to review the trade offices. Last year the government told us that they already did a review, so maybe you should check your own notes before you spend money sending people overseas. An itinerary, curiously, was never released until this morning, four days after at least part of the group had already left and only after this member raised the question in the Legislature yesterday. So my question today to the Premier: can the Premier indicate why a detailed itinerary saying where these two members of the Legislature are going was not released in advance of them actually leaving?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to defer to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague asked for information yesterday on this issue, and immediately I called my office and told them to lay out the itinerary. No one asked previous to that, so you can be credited, hon. member, for having it released. It wasn't released this morning; it was released about an hour after question period, as soon as it was put on the Table.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's very, very important. There's misinformation about this trip. This trip had been well planned when I became the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. It was one of the first things in my briefing that they brought forward. There's been a lot of planning over the last year to make this a very successful trade mission to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. There's a long list of people and companies that are going on it: representatives from my department, Alberta Environment, the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority, the Special Waste Management Corporation, Economic Development Edmonton, and eight other companies. There's been a lot of planning. They're taking part in the third international environmental control and protection technology exhibition and conference in Taiwan. In Taiwan alone there's a \$20 billion opportunity for Alberta companies to participate in this massive growth in this new industry.

I'd like to talk about the creation of jobs and not listen to the wrangling the opposition gives us about someone going someplace.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister did in fact provide a copy of the itinerary, and I'd like to talk about that, because he's talked about some certain points. I'd like to ask a question. This itinerary curiously shows that the two members involved disappear for 10 days apparently, from February 21 with a large 10-day gap till March 3, 1993. My question is: where is the Premier, where is the government sending these two members for 10 days of taxpayers' paid vacation?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the itinerary that I gave out yesterday primarily was tied to the trade mission. If you need additional information on which offices and when they're in Seoul and when they're in Hong Kong and what other offices they're looking at, I'm glad to give it to you.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we review the external offices and try to make sure that we're co-ordinating with the federal government on the use of their offices. I'm looking forward to the report of the two MLAs when they get back to this House so we can make some intelligent decisions on how to integrate it into an opportunity to do more with less money in the international market.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all Albertans are waiting for this government to make some intelligent decisions. Too bad it hasn't happened so far.

My supplementary question. The Premier admitted that the former Minister of Family and Social Services doesn't have any particular expertise for this kind of trade mission, yet he's sending him off. Will the Premier admit today in the Legislature that the trade mission, on which he's sending one former cabinet minister and another former cabinet minister, is nothing more than on-the-job training to allow these two members to make some contacts so they have some career opportunities after the next election?

MR. KLEIN: That assumption is typical Liberal nonsense. I mean, that is indicative of their paranoia.

Relative to making intelligent decisions, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the polls show that the people think we're making some very intelligent decisions indeed.

Economic Strategy

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier and relates to the upcoming federal/provincial conference on Alberta's economy. Will this conference in any way pre-empt or interfere with the Toward 2000 process, which has been progressing so positively?

MR. KLEIN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, there are two processes in the works: the compilation of recommendations as a result of the Toward 2000 conference and, also, the recommendations that are about to come forward as a result of a series of public meetings, forums, and workshops called Creating Tomorrow as it relates to agriculture. Indeed we hope to bring those recommendations forward as part of the agenda for our meeting with the federal government.

2:50

MR. SCHUMACHER: Can the hon. Premier say when he expects to be able to announce to the people of Alberta an economic plan resulting from these initiatives?

MR. KLEIN: All these exercises will culminate in an economic plan for Alberta, and hopefully we'll be in a position to table that plan probably in two to three months.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Three Sisters Golf Resorts Inc.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta government recently gave the green light to part of the proposed Three Sisters project at Canmore. Part of the proposal was turned down by the Natural Resources Conservation Board because it was proposed on critical wildlife lands. The Minister of Environmental Protection has said that this refusal amounted to expropriation and that Three Sisters were entitled to compensation. In fact, the company owns freehold wilderness lands in Wind Valley, and they continue to own freehold wilderness lands. Nothing has changed as a result of these decisions. To the Premier: could he explain why his government believes that expropriation has taken place and that compensation is required?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that question under notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I certainly agree that the critical wildlife land should be purchased but at a fair price based on its present use. To pay an inflated price based on some speculative value for some unapproved development is simply a way of shoveling public money to subsidize this company through the back door. To the Premier: would he commit to the Assembly that any purchase of Three Sisters land for public purposes will be on the basis of current zoning and land uses and not on the basis of the company lobbying for special treatment?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know and I'm not aware of any company lobbying relative to this particular issue, nor have I been briefed on the issue. Therefore, I will take the second question under notice as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Ethics in Government

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because the Conflicts of Interest Act has not yet been proclaimed by this government, the Ethics Commissioner can investigate only if the member concerned consents. The Ethics Commissioner has informed me that he cannot investigate the Premier's use of public servants during his leadership campaign to respond to a CMA questionnaire. My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier tell us why he said in the House that the investigation was fine by him but then obviously later refused to allow the commissioner to proceed?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I haven't the authority to instruct the Ethics Commissioner to do anything. I just said that if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark wants to pursue an investigation, I've got no problems. It's now in the hands of the Ethics Commissioner. I can't instruct the Ethics Commissioner to do one thing or the other. It's entirely up to him.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the Ethics Commissioner has said that he cannot proceed, and he cannot proceed because he has to have the consent of that member to proceed until the Act is proclaimed. The Act hasn't been proclaimed. This member has said that it can't proceed. Will the Premier please tell us what exactly he is afraid of that he would stoop in this way to muzzling the Ethics Commissioner?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I will apologize on this member's behalf to the Ethics Commissioner in advance, because I'm sure that he won't have the courtesy to do the same thing.

I have not talked to the Ethics Commissioner relative to this matter. I have said publicly that I have nothing to fear relative to an investigation by the Ethics Commissioner, but it is entirely up to him whether he wants to investigate or not.

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

Grey Cup

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, Albertans, sports fans and others, will be pleased to know that the Grey Cup game is coming back to Alberta, but they may not be so excited to know that the government is being asked to fund this thing. Edmontonians and I expect others are wondering how appropriate it is that the taxpayers stage football games. I'd like to know from the Premier today what his position is on that.

MR. KLEIN: Basically what I've said, Mr. Speaker, is that we will consider some form of participation with the city of Calgary relative to the Grey Cup festival, but in no way will this government be giving money to Mr. Ryckman or the Stampeders Football Club to accommodate additional seats. We will consider participation in the festival, understanding that this event, if the figures from Winnipeg are indeed factual, will generate about \$21 million to the local economy.

MR. MAIN: Supplementary to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the issue of taxpayer funds, whether they be general revenue, tax-generated funds or lottery funds, is of grave concern to all Albertans these days given the diminishing resources available. I want to make sure and I would ask the Premier to provide assurances today that any discussions which seem to be ongoing will involve not a private enterprise – i.e., the Calgary Stampeders – but only elected officials.

MR. KLEIN: Basically, Mr. Speaker, our participation will be with the mayor and the council of the city of Calgary to see how possibly we might participate with the city with respect to the Grey Cup festival.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

Police Chases

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fatality in Sherwood Park this past weekend shows once again that the motor vehicle pursuit guidelines the province set up in 1990 are ineffective. In this case the guidelines appear to have been violated in a number of regards: the police knew the identity of the suspect; more than two cars were involved in the chase; pursuing police cruisers were videotaped exchanging positions; and there are questions about the seriousness of the incident precipitating the chase and the likelihood of other vehicles on the road. To the Minister of Justice: is the minister satisfied that his voluntary pursuit guidelines in conjunction with the internal police policy are sufficient to prevent tragic deaths from ill-advised, high-speed police chases in Alberta?

MR. FOWLER: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, whenever anybody suffers serious injury and particularly death as a result of a high-speed chase or any other action in respect to the enforcement of law in this province, the government has considerable regret. Personally, as Justice minister my sympathy is with the family who suffered this tragic loss at the conclusion of this tragic event.

The question is: am I satisfied as Justice minister that the policy guidelines are sufficient to preclude this type of thing? Mr. Speaker, any type of guidelines we put in cannot in all probability stop each and every event any more than all the gun laws we put in prevent gun accidents or any speed laws we put in prevent speeding on the highway. In respect to this particular matter, I of course will be reviewing it, as I have every high-speed chase which has resulted in death or injury and many which have not in fact resulted in death and injury. This will be reviewed with the appropriate Royal Canadian Mounted Police people. I already have a preliminary report and will await their final inquiry so that I can get the final report.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we all share the minister's concerns about the tragic death.

The problem isn't the guidelines themselves; the problem is the absence of a mechanism to compel adherence to the guidelines. I suggest that one method to ensure effective enforcement may be amendments to the motor vehicle Act and regulations. Will the minister tell the Assembly what concrete steps he intends to take to make sure that comprehensive public safety guidelines are followed in all high-speed chases in Alberta?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the insinuation here of course is that the guidelines were not followed and as a result of that the death came about. I'm not convinced that is the case at all. As I say, I have no indication at this point that the guidelines were not in fact followed, and an accident resulted notwithstanding that, of course notwithstanding also my personal sympathy for the family and that of all the House, I'm sure. The still simple answer to all Albertans not to become involved in injury or death as a result of a high-speed chase is stop. Stop. The police cars are well lit; they have flashing lights. Nobody has come to any great harm yet by stopping and meeting the police either on the road or anywhere else, other than concluding a chase in this manner.

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

3:00

Sexual Assault

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the minister of advanced education. The threat of sexual assault is a barrier to women who are trying to take their place in society by pursuing a university education. The first national study of sexual assault on campuses reports that 29 percent of women have been sexually abused within the past year. Furthermore, the sociologists who conducted the study said that their numbers probably did not reveal the full extent of the problem. Will this minister now commit to addressing this problem by encouraging postsecondary educations to define sexual assault and to put in place a code of conduct which spells out the procedures to deal with allegations, as well as consequences for students found guilty?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, certainly all of us have to share that concern that the hon. member brings forward. It's a coincidence that I just recently read the policy by one of our institutions covering this very type of activity. It seemed that it was quite a comprehensive policy they had in place to prevent this sort of thing. Certainly we have to be concerned with the occurrence of such incidents, and I will discuss it with the appropriate people to do what we can to prohibit it.

MS M. LAING: Thank you for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, not only are codes of conduct needed in our postsecondary education but so are services for victims of sexual assault. Inasmuch as there are long waiting lists for services at our sexual assault centres, six to 18 months, will this minister now recognize the urgency of this issue and commit to funding sexual assault centres at postsecondary campuses?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm not sure what services we presently have and whether they're adequate or not, but if this appears to be something that needs to be addressed and the incidence is as high as the hon. member indicates it is, certainly people need to have access to some service to assist them through such a traumatic circumstance, and I'll review the request of the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

Administration of Justice

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans demand more action on crime in our communities, yet what we see is more delay, more bottlenecks in our courts. My question to the Minister of Justice: why has the government not implemented the Calgary court strategy that was developed a number of years ago to consolidate court facilities?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I have to acknowledge that in the one month that I've had this ministry, I have not received a full briefing on all things involved in what was previously two ministries. Rather than fumble through an answer to the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, I will accept the question as notice.

MR. DICKSON: I appreciate the minister's candour, Mr. Speaker, but I will ask the minister to share with this House details of the dates and specifics of the plan to upgrade facilities, specifically in Calgary, to improve the efficiency of our justice system.

MR. FOWLER: That's an entirely reasonable request, Mr. Speaker, and I will table with this House a response.

MR. SPEAKER: Wainwright, followed by Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Farm Income

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of agriculture. Many Alberta agriculture producers have said that this is next year country. This phrase is used mostly after a year of difficult weather conditions and low yields. It is true that a farmer begins planning next year's crop right after harvest. It is important to take advantage of the low prices in seed, chemicals, and fertilizers, and it's more important, I guess, to have a proposed balance sheet that will satisfy the bankers. Could the minister indicate when the GRIP support prices will be coming out?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the prices should be out within the next few days. The hail and crop corporation currently has the grain bureau's forecast on most of the major crops. There are still some specialty crops to get onto the list, and then it will be available to producers.

MR. FISCHER: My supplementary: will the GRIP program be picking up the federal government western grain transportation 10 percent reduction?

MR. ISLEY: The simple answer is no.

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

Calgary Stampede

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Calgary Stampede board is involved in a nasty dispute with the residents of adjoining residential communities over the development of a parking lot on lands adjacent to the Elbow River. Residents want the land to be turned into public green space, not a parking lot. My question is to the Provincial Treasurer, who, to the best of my knowledge, represents the province on the Stampede board. What position is the province taking on whether this site should be used as a parking lot or as a natural park site?

Speaker's Ruling Questions outside Ministerial Responsibility

MR. SPEAKER: The minister will respond in his capacity as Provincial Treasurer, not in the other capacity.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, you've limited my ability to respond, so I would suggest that I have . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. minister. You're here in your capacity as Provincial Treasurer, not as a director of the Stampede board.

Calgary Stampede (continued)

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I will take the question under advisement and seek out counsel from the appropriate minister in response to that question.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. PASHAK: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Stampede board's relationship with nearby residential communities can best be described as no give and all take. My question to the Provincial Treasurer – and perhaps he can redirect it to the right minister – is: given that the government has considerable leverage with the Stampede both through representation on its board as well as providing millions of dollars per year in lottery funding, what action does the government plan to take to ensure that residents will have a fair hearing by the Stampede board in this critical question?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, primarily as Provincial Treasurer but also as an important part of my responsibility as an MLA in Calgary, the provincial government is supportive of the kind of development and progress that the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede is promoting in the city of Calgary. We believe in that tremendous volunteer organization, which is an engine of activity certainly in Calgary and throughout southern Alberta. For us to trample on the autonomy which all members of this Assembly believe is of value to something like the Stampede – we will be sensitive to that. All the same, we would want to ensure that the residents of Victoria Park are treated with care and treated sensitively so that there can be peaceful coexistence in any kind of development that would take place in Victoria Park.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Three Hills.

Child Welfare

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over a year ago a number of concerned citizens in the Calgary area submitted a proposal regarding child welfare services. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. What is the minister's position on the proposal developed by the Communities for Children group?

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I am very familiar with this proposal. It's a proposal that I'm going to be sitting down and meeting with the interest group on. It's also a proposal that we are proposing go through our standing policy committees for review, and we are dealing with it.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, this proposal developed because the community of Calgary is deeply concerned. Has the minister reviewed the circumstances that led to the development, since the needs of Alberta children are so demonstrable and are clearly not being met?

MR. CARDINAL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have reviewed the report in detail, and I commend the group from Calgary for taking the time and the interest to put forward a proposal of this nature. The member can be assured that we will be dealing with the issue as soon as possible.

3:10 Community Development Bonds

MR. MacDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the population base of rural Alberta continues to decline. In 1990 the government's local development initiative recommended community bonds to create pools of investment capital, thus helping to stabilize population. It's now two years later and two ministers later, but we've heard little more about community bonds. To the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: when will we see action on community development bonds?

MR. ISLEY: In due course, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MacDONALD: Obviously no one has a corner on good ideas. Again to the minister: will you adopt the Liberal proposal of community development bonds with municipal and provincial government backing?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had the opportunity to look at the Liberal proposal, but we are working on a Conservative proposal.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Calder.

Child Welfare

(continued)

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just moments ago the Minister of Family and Social Services talked about considering the proposal put forth by the Calgary-based Communities for Children. I'm quite concerned that he's even considering this proposal. I'd like to ask the minister: does he not realize that it's crucial that the well-being of these vulnerable children remain a government responsibility? How can he even consider turning the system over to a group that would not be accountable to the government?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry if I misinformed the House and the member questioning this. I never did say that I am considering this proposal. I just indicated that I am reviewing it, and I know that there are people from that region also who do not support this proposal. We are going to continue meeting with the groups and continue reviewing the proposal.

MS MJOLSNESS: A supplementary to the minister, then, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister guarantee that before any changes are made to the administration of the Child Welfare Act, he will proceed with full public debate?

MR. CARDINAL: Of course this minister will guarantee that we'll take the children as the first priority in any changes we're going to make. We definitely will keep that as a top priority.

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

MLA Pensions

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Premier. The Premier, responding yesterday, according to *Hansard* in reference to that practice of drawing extra money while sitting as an MLA, stated that this problem will be dealt with "after the next election". In a letter to the Member for West Yellowhead he states, "It's a tough issue to address and until the rules change, after the next election, we are all bound by the current rules." That's dated January 28. Yet, on January 29, a day later, in a letter to me he states: I can certainly appreciate your suggestions that this practice be stopped immediately and can assure you that the matter is under consideration. Now, would the Premier please advise this Assembly: where does he stand on this practice?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I've made up my mind. I know where I stand. You've got the letter. That's where I stand on this issue. The simple fact is that we can't do anything until after the next

election. You're on Members' Services. You voted to put in place the process. So what's your beef with me?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the record will show very, very clearly that I opposed that part-way practice in the Members' Services Committee.

I remind the Premier of the letter he sent to me: that it is under consideration at this time. To the Premier: is the Premier prepared to table in this Assembly the total cost of allowing this 'snorking at the torf' - at the trough. [laughter]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. Premier. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Is that parliamentary?

MR. SPEAKER: It's not parliamentary. Oink, oink. [interjections] Thank you. For the purposes of *Hansard*, we'll just say: dot, dot, dot.

Hon. Premier, in reply.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't a very well-framed question. It's very hard to deliver an intelligent answer to a question that is presented in that manner, so I'll have to take it under advisement.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

Liquor Sales

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The success of the hotel industry in securing a monopoly on cold beer sales and permission to sell hard liquor off-sales has led grocery retailers to start lobbying to be permitted to sell beer and wine. Since the Alberta Liquor Control Board contributes over \$400 million to the provincial coffers each year and since the private retailers get discounts of up to 39 percent on all ALCB products, it's easy to see why the industry is seeking this lucrative market but difficult to see how such a move makes any financial benefit to the taxpayers of the province of Alberta. My question is to the minister responsible for the Liquor Control Board. Given that serious doubts remain about the wisdom and motivation of the government's decision to cut hotels into this lucrative source of provincial revenue, how does the government expect the people to respond to the latest proposal to transfer tax dollars to businesses that have the ear of this new, improved government administration?

DR. WEST: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess there's a question in there of some detail. What I say is that the Alberta Liquor Control Board is charged with the delivery of alcoholic beverages throughout the province through various policies. Those policies are always under review, and there are various organizations and people in the private sector that keep coming to the government and challenging us to look at those policies so that they might partake in the delivery of alcoholic beverages to the public. That doesn't mean that we change the policy in any one day or any one year, but we are willing to look at them.

I would suggest that if the member has any individuals that are concerned about it, they have the same right to come forward and discuss the proposals made by the private sector. We have four committees that have been set up: one on community service and the other on financial matters as they address the province. I

would suggest that the hon. member bring anybody with concerns to those committees.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a broad range of concerns with this government's slow but steady plan to privatize liquor sales in Alberta. In addition to potential loss of revenue, there are questions about replacing quality jobs with minimum wage jobs, about the potential of key decisions being based on patronage, as was the case in the awarding of the wine store licences, and about the impact increased access will have on alcoholism, other drinking, and impaired driving. My question, then, to the minister is this. The Premier has said that no decision will be made until the matter is studied by a government standing committee, but people have no confidence in such a superficial, behind-closed-doors review. Given the social and economic significance of the issue, will the minister agree to hold public hearings into the question before any decisions are made?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I answered in some detail that exact question, in response to his first question. I would like to say that there's one thing in the member's statement that I would like to bring forth. Since 1982 in Canada and in the province of Alberta sales of alcoholic beverages have dropped on average close to 26 to 30 percent. In some areas, it's been more dramatic than that. Let me give an example. For every 10 bottles of hard liquor that were sold in 1982, now there are six bottles of hard liquor sold, yet there are over 350,000 more people in the province of Alberta. If you relate that to beer, for every 10 bottles of beer sold in 1982, nine bottles are sold now, and we have 350,000 more people. If you relate that to wine, it's close to three bottles out of 10 less now.

So the idea that access increases utilization of alcohol is indeed a myth, because in those provinces that have had corner stores delivering beer and wine since 1918, such as Quebec, those statistics are the same. Let's say that in B.C., where alcohol outlets are double what they are here in the province of Alberta, the impaired driving charges and numbers are the same or less. Therefore, I would say that some of the innuendos . . .

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

The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism would like to supplement information supplied to a question earlier in question period.

3:20

International Trade Mission

(continued)

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period the Member for Calgary-North asked for information about an itinerary for the Alberta representation review. I would like to table that information along with the itinerary for the Alberta environmental trade mission to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China.

MR. SPEAKER: Is this in response to a question by Calgary-North West?

MR. SPARROW: Yes, it is.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West, further supplementary.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to see that he's tabling that.

My supplementary question, though, is dealing again with the gap between Sunday, February 21, and Wednesday, March 3, a 10-day gap. What are the members involved going to be doing over those 10 days? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If you want the answer, let's give the minister a chance.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, that information is in detail on the tabling I just made. It shows very clearly that they have some 12 meetings during that time frame over and above the review we're asking them to do of the offices in Seoul, Hong Kong, and Tokyo. So they will be fairly busy, sir. When you see the itinerary that I've just tabled, your information is there.

MR. SPEAKER: During question period there were two purported points of order. Fort McMurray, first. Edmonton-Meadowlark, second.

Point of Order Reflections on Nonmembers

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising to the point of order, I'd ask you to refer to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, sixth edition, page 151, in reference to section 493(3) and (4). To all hon. members, in (3) it refers to:

The Speaker has traditionally protected from attack a group of individuals commonly referred to as "those of high official station".

The extent of this group has never been defined. Over the years it has covered senior public servants, ranking officers of the armed services, diplomatic representatives

and so forth and so forth. I won't go on to read it in full. It also says in (4) that

the Speaker has cautioned Members to exercise great care in making statements about persons who are outside the House and unable to reply.

Well, Mr. Speaker, during question period the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred in what I refer to as a blasphemous and defamatory manner in making statements about an individual not in the House, in reference to Mr. Joe Dutton. I would like to inform all hon. members of the Assembly and particularly the Leader of the Opposition that while under the employ of the Alberta government, Mr. Dutton represented the government with the highest integrity and without any impropriety. I repeat: without any impropriety.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Mr. Dutton I would request, then, an apology by the hon. member.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if this member will remember, we had a big discussion in question period about some improprieties. A lot of foreign dignitaries lost their shirts because of Mr. Dutton. That was the point I was trying to make, and I have no intention of apologizing about that.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will examine the Blues. [interjections] Order please.

Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Order 23(h) and *Beauchesne* 494. Earlier today in the House the Premier said that I had misled the House when I pointed out that the Ethics Commissioner can proceed to investigate the Premier's use of public servants to prepare some of his leadership campaign material only with the express authorization of the Premier. That

is to say that the Ethics Commissioner can proceed to investigate only if the member concerned gives his consent, because this government has not yet given him the authority to do so of his own accord. This government has not yet allowed the Bill to be proclaimed. The Premier inferred that I was misleading the House when I made that statement.

I would like to table four copies of a letter I received from the Ethics Commissioner today, Mr. Speaker. In it the Ethics Commissioner very clearly points out that under section 41 of his Act he can advise a member after a member requests his advice. That advice now, because the Act is yet to be proclaimed, would be confidential between the member and the commissioner, but the member can release that advice.

It is very clear under that section that the commissioner can proceed to investigate this Premier's purported use of public servants in preparing leadership campaign material if the Premier gives his consent to do so. In fact, the Premier gave his consent on January 27 in here, and then withdrew his consent or somehow that consent was withdrawn because the commissioner has not been allowed to proceed. If we accept, and of course we would, that the Premier doesn't know anything about this, that he didn't tell the commissioner not to proceed, as he indicated earlier today, then clearly his office staff must have directed the commissioner not to proceed. At best it is that the Premier is ill informed. At worst it is that his office is out of control. Mr. Speaker, my question is: is this the Premier's version of hands-off management?

MR. SPEAKER: Before going on, Edmonton-Meadowlark, what is your point of order?

MR. MITCHELL: The point of order is that he said that I misled the House by saying that the commissioner can proceed with or without his consent. The fact is that the commissioner very clearly cannot proceed without his consent. His consent given in the House was later withdrawn. He's either flip-flopped, he's either ill informed by . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order. Order [interjections] Order. Take your place, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: He was trying to explain it to you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair did ask for an explanation. The Chair received an explanation in the first sentence. There was no need to return to the diatribe and to continue to stand up while the Chair was calling the member to order.

MR. TAYLOR: It didn't look like . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, Westlock-Sturgeon. [interjection] Order, Westlock-Sturgeon.

Government House Leader, it's very unusual for you to appear. I'm sure that the Premier can answer for himself, so please take your place.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the point of order had nothing to do with the diatribe and the nonsense that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has been spouting off about. The issue that I raised was the accusation that somehow I was "muzzling" the Ethics Commissioner. He made that statement, that somehow

I'm trying to tie the hands of the Ethics Commissioner. That statement was misleading and is misleading. [interjection] Order.

MR. MITCHELL: The proof is in the pudding.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. MITCHELL: Keep it in mind.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Thank you, hon. Deputy Premier. The Chair probably agrees with your sign language, but it's still not quite the way to go.

First, hon. Deputy Government House Leader, the reason for my intervention is that in time past I've had to give the same direction to the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, the leader of the Liberal Party, who at that time was quite anxious to have another member of his caucus with legal training stand up and sort of plead his case. All hon. members in the House dealing with a point of order really have to deal with it themselves. I apologize for my shortness.

The Chair will obviously take the Blues and this matter under consideration as well.

The Chair would also point out that *Hansard* recorders have a difficulty from time to time in hearing, and it's often been mentioned that the noise level gets a little bit out of control. Oftentimes they cannot hear the exact words that are happening in here. That makes it very difficult for us when we then have to refer back to the Blues to try to bring the sweet voice of reason or absolute justice to this place.

3:30

As in question period, hon. members, and in this case the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, there's really no need for this shouting back and forth after you've made your point. We trust that you all have great vocabularies and great use of the English language so that you can state your case and then sit there so the rest of us can hear what's going on.

Speaker's Ruling Notice of Motion

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we have some other procedural matters to deal with. First, for clarification of the House the notice of motion as given earlier in the day by the Minister of Labour in his capacity of Deputy Government House Leader was partially defective in the sense that it did not refer to the exact Bill under consideration. The Chair has the authority to rectify that. The resolution as given as oral notice indeed referred to Bill 55 in Committee of the Whole.

Speaker's Ruling Different Versions of a Bill

MR. SPEAKER: Also, last week we had difficulty. The Member for Calgary-North West was kind enough to bring it to the attention of the House. The Chair was prepared to make this statement to the House last Thursday, but the Member for Edmonton-Belmont was unavoidably detained elsewhere. The Member for Edmonton-Belmont has agreed to the first portion of this statement as being an accurate representation of what indeed happened to that member's Bill. The Bill that had been distributed at the time was defective, and therefore we have to make this statement into the record of the House.

On January 28, 1993, Bill 213, the Labour Relations Code Amendment Act, introduced by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, was being debated. The Member for Calgary-North

West suggested that there was a discrepancy between the Bill which the Member for Edmonton-Belmont was debating and the Bill which had previously been distributed in the House. After reviewing the matter with the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, it has been determined that a discrepancy does indeed exist. Bill 213 went through a number of drafts. At one point the Member for Edmonton-Belmont put an early draft of the Bill on notice for introduction while changes were still being made. As a result, the earlier draft was introduced, and the later draft was printed and distributed. The matter has been discussed with the Member for Edmonton-Belmont and resolved to that member's satisfaction. Last week Bill 213, R for revised, was distributed to the House in its correct form.

Now, this is the change which must now be necessitated. For the protection of all members in the future only Bills which have been signed off on the introduction slip and the body of the Bill itself by Parliamentary Counsel will be accepted for introduction. Now, hon. members, oftentimes the Table has to respond sort of at the last moment before coming in here to question period, and this will necessitate a better clarity of practice for all involved.

Thank you for your patience.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

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

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motions for returns appearing on the Order Paper stand and retain their places except for 201, 238, 251, and 340.

[Motion carried]

Alberta Stock Savings Plan

201. Mr. McEachern moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a document which contains a listing of all corporations which have received benefits under the Alberta stock savings plan, ASSP, over the duration of this program and details by company of

- (1) the dollar amount of ASSP benefits received,
- (2) how the ASSP benefits received were invested within and outside of Alberta, and
- (3) the number of new jobs created by the ASSP benefits and in what proportion those jobs were created in or outside Alberta.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, so as to assist the hon. member and provide him with the maximum amount of information that I have in my hands, I would respectfully move an amendment to the motion and would move that the motion be changed so as to strike out the words "have received benefits under" and replace it with "participated in" - I'll just stop for a minute; copies of the amendment have been circulated and passed by the Clerk's Table - and secondly, by striking out all words after "duration of" and replacing them with

the program and details, by corporation, of the maximum tax credits available had all eligible shares been sold to individual Alberta taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, with this amendment the government would recommend that the Assembly pass the motion.

I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that under the Alberta stock savings plan the participating corporations did not receive any direct monetary benefits themselves under the program. What the program did was allow corporations to certify certain shares that they issued from their treasury, that they could deem those as eligible shares. Individuals who'd purchased those shares, if they were residents of Alberta, could receive a certain percentage tax credit. What this did was create an incentive for Albertans to invest in Alberta companies thereby creating Alberta wealth, thereby creating jobs, which is certainly something the hon. member – I've heard him speak in this Assembly before – agrees with. He sought other information about job creation, and I'd suggest that that kind of information is available directly from the corporations.

Mr. Speaker, with those amendments I would recommend acceptance of this motion by the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: On the amendment, Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I had already indicated to the Treasurer that I would accept his amendment. I would however just say that when the Alberta stock savings plan was first introduced and over the first year and a half of that three-year program, the Treasurer of that day did give us detailed information about which companies were participating and in what way and how many jobs were created and those kinds of things. His amendments to the motion make it so that I'm not quite sure what we are going to get. What I really would like to see the government do – and I don't know that the Treasurer has time in his new capacity and under such short notice – is have some kind of comprehensive set of statistics that would at least give us a chance to evaluate then the efficacy of that program. That was really the reason for the question in the first place.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there a call for the question on the amendment?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. SPEAKER: Is there a call for the question on the motion for a return as amended?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion as amended carried]

Financial Statements

238. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all audited and unaudited financial statements, both year-end and quarterly, for S C Properties Ltd., S C Financial Limited, N.A. Properties Ltd., and 354713 Alberta Ltd., Softco, for the years 1988 through 1991 inclusive.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, again so as to provide the maximum amount of information that is useful to the hon. member, I would respectfully move an amendment to the motion, that it be changed so as to read:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all audited financial statements for 354713 Alberta Ltd., Softco, for the years 1988 through 1991 inclusive.

With that amendment I would recommend acceptance of the motion by the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The amendment on 238, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

3:40

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, yes. Thank you. The amendment is satisfactory.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The call for the question is on the amendment with respect to Motion for a Return 238 as proposed by the Provincial Treasurer.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. SPEAKER: The motion as amended. Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion as amended carried]

West Edmonton Village

251. Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all agreements, including the operating agreement, between Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation and West Edmonton Village up to February 28, 1992.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I'll reject Motion 251 on the grounds that Mortgage Properties Inc. has been dealing with some 11,000 individual units of property throughout the province. There are many deals that are pending or have gone into much negotiation and therefore as such should not be dealt with at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Speaking to the motion for a return. Others?
Edmonton-Whitemud, in summation.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not talking in terms of 45,000 various agreements that may be there that involve MPI. I'm talking about one specific one. I'm talking about an agreement that relates specifically to Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation and West Edmonton Village up to the date of February 28, 1992.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that this type of information get on the table. There is concern as to what losses may be occurring in this particular agreement with the takeover of West Edmonton Village. We have talked in this Assembly, particularly in this particular caucus here, in terms of open government. We hear the new Premier talk about under new management, openness, accountability. Well, there are opportunities to exercise that accountability, that openness, and this is one of those opportunities. Normally, if one is not embarrassed to release information, there's a tendency to release it. It's only when one fears the consequences of releasing that information being detrimental that they hesitate to do so. So this simply adds to any whispers that may be out there as to what losses may be occurring, the costs, particularly the projected end costs, to the taxpayers of Alberta, and if it was laid on the table we would know.

[Motion lost]

Federal Transfer Payments

340. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of any Treasury Department analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the motion for a return asks for copies of any Treasury Department analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy.

MR. ORMAN: That's ridiculous.

MR. DINNING: It is, isn't it? My colleague the Member for Calgary-Montrose says, "That's ridiculous." He's absolutely right.

Mr. Speaker, I would reply in the following manner. I'd refer hon. members to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, sixth edition, page 129, section 446(2) which suggests the following:

The following criteria are to be applied in determining if the government papers or documents should be exempt from production. Then in subsection (o) it cites:

Internal departmental memoranda.

AN HON. MEMBER: What page is that again?

MR. DINNING: That's on pages 129 and 130.

Mr. Speaker, on that ground alone I would caution hon. members to vote to reject this motion.

Perhaps what I would debate with the hon. member is less that we should focus on the Treasury Department analyses as to the actions or the statements that have been made by the provincial government on this matter. Mr. Speaker, our opposition to the federal government's reduction in transfer payments is very clear. It's on the record, and we have been consistent in our opposition, in our criticism of the federal government for unfairly dealing with the province of Alberta in its reduction of transfer payments. What our biggest concern is is that effectively contracts have been broken and that they've been broken to the detriment of Albertans, certainly to the Alberta government, but it's Albertans and Alberta taxpayers who in fact end up footing the bill.

I would refer hon. members to at least two statements of note, at least one of note that is on the public record, both statements read into the *Hansard* of this Assembly. I refer back to the Provincial Treasurer's Budget Address of Monday, April 13, 1992, on page 20 of that document, where it was made clear what our government's position is. I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, to read that into the record when we debate this motion.

Over the past decade the federal government has off-loaded part of its deficit problem onto the provinces. Ottawa has unilaterally cut federal cash transfers for health and advanced education on numerous occasions and has discriminated against provinces like Alberta on social assistance payments. In 1992-93 alone these federal actions will cost the Alberta government over \$850 million in lost revenue. Nearly \$1 billion.

This severe erosion of federal support for Canada's most important programs is unacceptable. Statement, very clear.

Clearly, new arrangements for fiscal federalism are required. Provinces must have the means to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities. The federal government has ignored provincial demands for reforms.

The Provincial Treasurer of the day said:

I will continue to press hard for a transfer of additional tax room from the federal government to the provinces in exchange for a reduction in cash transfers. This would place our essential programs on a more secure and stable financial basis.

So on that occasion and on several occasions before and since the government has made its position very, very clear.

In going back to the hon. member's motion that we provide "analyses of the effects of . . . budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy," Mr. Speaker, in the budget update that I provided to the Assembly some 13 days ago, I made it clear just what impact the federal action is having on the Alberta government and effectively on the economy. I said at that time:

In November the federal government advised the provinces that it had significantly overestimated national tax revenue for the '91, '92, and '93 calendar years.

And what it meant was:

The lower federal estimates mean that personal income tax payments to Alberta for 1992 and '93 will be [far] lower than budgeted. In total . . . this year's personal income tax revenue is [expected] to be about \$475 million less than was estimated.

When I was speaking at the time of our need for additional program spending authority by the Assembly I said then that "the largest increase" that was being requested from the Assembly, "some \$85 million,"

is for social assistance caseloads, which have climbed to about 89,000. None of the increase will be covered by federal cost sharing. The federal government has put a discriminatory ceiling on its support for social assistance in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

So, Mr. Speaker, what is regrettable is that the federal government's actions, while recognizing their own fiscal and financial plight, which this government does and which all Canadians recognize and would encourage the federal government to get its financial house in order . . . When it comes to breaking contracts and not being able to fulfill contracts, that is when I believe that Albertans would stand up and say: "That's not fair; that's not what had been negotiated; that's not what had been agreed to previously, and basically it is unfair and it is discriminatory."

3:50

We've made that clear, Mr. Speaker, in several comments in this Assembly as well as outside of this Assembly. The proof is in the pudding. The proof is in the action that we've taken, the comments that we've made. While the government and the Treasurer have been informed by Treasury Department analyses, I think it inappropriate for those analyses to be made public simply because of *Beauchesne*, but we have made it clear what the provincial government's position is as a result of our own deliberations.

So I would recommend to hon. members that this motion not be accepted by the Assembly.

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

Point of Order Closing Debate

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West on a point of order.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is rising to attract your attention, presumably to speak to this

motion for a return. As the hon. member moved the motion on behalf of Edmonton-Meadowlark, this member is interested in speaking to this motion for a return. I'd ask your view, sir, whether the hon. member is speaking as the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar or on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, in which case the debate would be closed. So I draw that to your attention as I wish to speak to this.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair was just in the process of going to ask the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar whether she intended to close debate or whether she is speaking on her own behalf.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, it was my intention to close debate, and I will certainly yield to the Member for Lethbridge-West.

Debate Continued

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the courtesy of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, incognito for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this motion for a return, I would agree with the government, certainly the Provincial Treasurer, in objecting to this for a variety of reasons. First of all, there's the whole question of precedent. When the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark put this on the Order Paper, I'm sure it was with the best of intentions, but in reading the motion for a return, the operative word is "any" Treasury document. Presumably, that's the Alberta Treasury.

I would hope that the hon. Provincial Treasurer would see to it that people in his department would do a whole host of studies on possible effects of any proposed action by a government on which we negotiated. It comes to mind, for example, established programs financing, 1976, where a system was put in place certainly for health care and certainly for postsecondary education. There was an arrangement made between transfer of funds and tax points. The government of Canada has substantially altered that without permission, without negotiation, without discussion to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker. Secondly, through Mr. de Cotret, Canada student loans have been dramatically altered. It certainly impacts on Albertans and students in our system. Following the comment by the Provincial Treasurer whereby they have in effect capped the Canada assistance plan at 5 percent, I would assume that there are all kinds of studies going on.

I guess the primary reason for objecting to this, Mr. Speaker, is to get back to the comments made at one time by the member's hon. leader, the leader of the Liberal Party, about wheelbarrows, because it seems to me that there would be a tremendous amount of material – much of it, I'm sure, already done by the research capacity of the Liberal Party – if the federal government did the following: i.e., if they capped the social allowance payments under the Canada assistance plan at 2 percent, 3 percent, up to 8 percent. I would assume that's all been done by their own research staff. To ask the government through the Provincial Treasurer to provide this tremendous amount of information I think would put undue costs on the government to do something which, frankly, is perhaps already done by their own research staff.

The primary reason, Mr. Speaker, comes back to the second line of the motion for a return, the word "any." I know I as an MLA have done this many times, looked at various scenarios, so there could literally be hundreds and hundreds of them. I don't think it

would be fair to the taxpayers to put this load onto the government to provide this information.

Now, if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark would like to come back to the House – and I'm not speaking for the government but as a member of the Assembly – with an amendment to that naming specific dates, naming specific statements by Ottawa, naming a specific federal budget by a date, I would think the government response would be perhaps different. But until that may happen, I don't think it would be meaningful to anybody simply to bring in wheelbarrows and wheelbarrows of information to provide the various analyses that may indeed have been done in the past. So on that basis, Mr. Speaker, I would speak against the motion for a return.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, addressing this motion, I think it should be abundantly plain and obvious that the Treasurer in rejecting this particular one is by no means indicating any type or form of being closed in terms of giving out information. As a matter of fact, I think the record will clearly show that since this Treasurer has been in place, he's had a policy of being very open, not ducking questions, not hiding any information but as a matter of fact following the lead of the former Treasurer and probably having learned from him has been quite open in this whole process. I want to get that on the record in terms of the record he's already establishing. I think that should be clearly noted.

As a matter of fact, that particular record has been demonstrated in this very process of written questions and motions for returns. We've seen since the beginning of this session a willingness and a readiness on behalf of the Treasurer to dig right into these different written questions and also these motions for returns. He's been quite forthright and, I believe, has started off at a good pace in our first session as the new Treasurer in demonstrating that the government should be open, the government should be responsive, and the government should not be hiding details or keeping things from people. As a matter of fact, that happens to coincide quite well with the management style of the new Premier. It's reflective of that. The Treasurer has taken that on personally as a management style, just as the new Premier has: openness to questions, be they oral or written, and doing their level best to get information out to people.

In fact, if you were to look at the guidelines of most freedom of information Acts that can be found in the country, I think you would see that the Treasurer, not only with questions like this one but in fact with all questions that have come to him, probably goes even beyond requirements that are normally found in freedom of information Acts. A freedom of information Act is a good thing to have. A freedom of information Act is a necessary thing. There should be, I believe, legislative placements within any Assembly that allow for information to flow and to flow freely, be it called a freedom of information Act or whether it's the ability with motions like this one, like 340, to give information out. Clearly on our Order Paper and in our various legislative Acts we have requirements for information to be brought out in a forthright manner. If that could be better brought under one heading of a freedom of information Act, then I think we should take a look at that, because the public does have a right to know. So I want to just clarify that in agreeing with the Treasurer that this particular question should be rejected, I only make that comment by prefacing it with these other comments about openness and the willingness to have everything legislatively in place that would allow for such openness to happen. If at any time opposition

members have some suggestions on how to be even more open, then certainly I for one know, speaking on behalf of this government, we'd want to look at and entertain such suggestions.

4:00

In the actual return here, 340, it's asking for "copies of any Treasury Department analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy." Now, I'm not suggesting for a minute that there is anything at all underhanded being intended here by the member proposing this, but the fact of the matter remains that by using the word "any" and saying "copies of" and talking about "the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy," well, that could go back to 1905 for us here in Alberta. That's just in terms of the date let alone the actual copies of any analyses. Then if the Treasurer was to go to the expense, I would suggest the considerable expense, of hiring who knows how many people and paying them, of course, in an equitable way, hiring legions, possibly, of researchers to go back how far - it's not indicated here. There's no indication, no time limit. Can you begin to imagine? Just the other night we heard from provincial archivists in a meeting which you were chairing, Mr. Speaker, and quite ably I might add, about the extent of research that's involved just with archivists alone. Request 340 here, "any Treasury Department analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy": I don't even know if we could tabulate the cost of that let alone the time.

Now, members opposite might think this is some kind of moot point, but what if we spent the possibly millions of dollars to do this research, and in the process, even hiring the best researchers and the most up-to-date computerized aids in doing that, we left out or forgot or overlooked inadvertently just one copy of one Treasury Department analysis done at one time on one federal government budget transfer? What if we overlooked just one? Well, I don't want to suggest that the member would do this, but then we would be open to a member opposite should they be so Machiavellian in their approach to stand and to say: "We asked the Treasurer for all copies. We asked for all copies, and what do we find?" They would dust out some obscure document and flick the accumulated refuse of who knows how many decades of it sitting on a shelf and say, "Look what they were trying to hide." We actually expose ourselves to that type of accusation if we are to succumb - and I'm speaking as any minister - to a requirement saying "any Treasury Department analyses." There seems to be no limit on this, and that's the point in question.

The other thing to consider is that certainly in the time in which I have been in this Assembly there have been a number of federal government budgets and transfer payments, reductions of transfer payments. As provincial governments we have to learn to live with that and to deal with that. That has happened on an annual basis. Could we guess how many analyses have been done even in those few short years? Even just over a few years? Could we even conjecture? Could we even wildly stab at what that figure would be? Members opposite think it would be ridiculous to go back to 1905, yet we could be accused of not doing that. Even over the last few years there could be one that was missed.

"Treasury Department analyses." Does that mean by one person in the department of Treasury? Does that mean by a team of people specifically dedicated to that task? Does that mean a group of Treasury Department officials sitting around having coffee and commenting on and therefore not recording it? What on earth are we talking about here in terms of the depth and the breadth of this request? There seems to be no limit, and we seem to be opening ourselves up to the accusation of trying to hide something if we

missed even one of these. The implications of this are very far reaching.

The Treasurer referred to *Beauchesne*, and I cite 446. It's on page 129 for those of you who are rushing to refer to it. In here it talks about the principles of notices of motions requiring the government to produce paper. It says:

For Production of Papers:

(1) To enable Members . . . to secure factual information about the operations of Government to carry out their parliamentary duties and to make public as much factual information as possible . . .

Here's the key phrase:

. . . consistent with effective administration.

Again we open ourselves up to the accusation, because if every single copy wasn't trotted out, if one turned up that was unfortunately overlooked, then in my wildest nightmares I can imagine members opposite rising and riding on 446 saying, "*Beauchesne* 446 requires as much factual information as possible, yet the minister has failed to produce it," and they would wave the document in our face. Or they would say something else to that effect.

The phrase here, "consistent with effective administration" is so key because we're at a time right now where we ourselves as government are trying to impress upon people and impress upon the opposition the necessity of maximizing our existing resources. The members opposite have huge, huge dollars assigned to research. [interjections] Is your hand itchy there, member? I see you stabbing at it. Okay.

The members opposite have huge resources of research. I forget the actual dollar amount, but when the member rises to close debate, possibly only seconds from now, unless I am harassed and feel compelled to continue, I'm sure the member opposite could talk about the dollars that are already assigned to that caucus for research. Yet we're talking here, right in *Beauchesne* 446, "consistent with effective administration."

MR. DINNING: Did Alex change sides?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

"Consistent with effective administration." Now, this is not a laughing matter. The fact of the matter is that we are challenged with reducing a fairly significant deficit. The ministers, all members of this government, all caucus members, are fixed on that task. We are focused on it. As we move diligently to that, what is thrown in the path of our endeavours? Obstacles and roadblocks like Motion 340. As we move to address the burning financial issues, we get asked to produce everything about everything.

Now, there's an exercise that could be pursued, though frankly I don't have the time to pursue it; maybe members opposite do. If members were to look through here and total up the number of projected hours of research required to bring forth documents that have been released over the years . . .

Point of Order Relevance

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods is rising on a point of order.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to refer members to *Beauchesne* 459 on relevance here. The motion that is before us

is "analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy," not the cost of producing documents, not who's having coffee in the Treasury Department, not every other excuse under the sun that this member is talking about. So I would appreciate it if he would come to order and address the motion at hand.

4:10

MR. DAY: Well, I was just about to conclude remarks. This point of order has now come up so I must address it, and that will probably take a couple of minutes.

As quoted by the member opposite, 459(1) begins by saying: Relevance is not easy to define.

Hence your reluctance to rise, Mr. Speaker.

In borderline cases the Member should be given the benefit of the doubt, although the Speaker has frequently admonished Members who have strayed in debate.

I'm humbly proud to say that I don't think there has been one time in which I have been speaking in which you have had to bring me to focus on the debate, and I think you recognize I have been focusing directly on Motion 340 and the effects of a government trying to respond to such a motion.

Since the member quoted it, part 2 says:

The presiding officers are directed by Standing Order II(2) to call to order members who indulge in persistent repetition.

Mr. Speaker, I have not been involved in persistent repetition. I have gone clearly and logically from one point to another. I have not backtracked. I am proceeding in a logical fashion. I realize that's difficult. Members opposite aren't used to directing themselves in that particular fashion. As a matter of fact, on days where there are motions for returns they have quite a habit of standing up and rambling for hours and hours and hours. So I think in fairness to that point of order there is indeed no point of order.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, are you going to rule on my point of order? How about a ruling?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair's ruling on the point of order is that it is very difficult to accede to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Wood's request because of the very loose way in which Motion 340 has been drawn. I think just reading Motion 340 indicates that it is very difficult to rein people in who are talking about it because it is very, very widely drawn.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As usual I concur with the incisive manner in which you have dissected the issue and zeroed in to a ruling.

Debate Continued

MR. DAY: To continue and to try to conclude, I will go on to say that this present administration under this Premier is focused on reducing and in fact eliminating the budget. In that process we are . . .

MR. FOX: Eliminating the budget?

MR. DAY: Did I say "eliminating the budget"?

MR. FOX: That's what you said.

MR. DAY: Well, I'll have to pause to clarify that. I thank you for bringing it to my attention. I did not mean to say "eliminate the budget," Mr. Speaker, but rather "eliminate the deficit." I

appreciate the member shouting across the floor to correct me on that.

So continuing, and hopefully concluding, in this process, I'm trying to impress on the minds of the members opposite what happens when a request like this comes to a minister, in this case the Treasurer, who is dealing with the area of looking at a number of departments and looking at reduction. Now, what happens when a request like this comes across the floor to him or to her? He must stop being focused in that particular direction - in this case on deficit reduction, because that's what the people of Alberta want. He must stop that task, he must call together some of her officials, and she must sit down with them and say: "What's involved here? What's the process here?" In fact, those officials who have also been assigned to the task of pulling together the collective academic resources of the department to focus on deficit reduction, they too are then distracted from the task, and they have to analyze first what the possibilities are of getting the information; what's going to be involved in that process; what's going to be involved if they don't bring it forward; what the Treasurer will be accused of doing or not doing.

I wonder if members opposite have any realization of the amount of work that is required not even to get the information but in fact just to reject the information. It's not something a minister stands up and does in a casual fashion. As I've already said, the Treasurer has demonstrated a desire to be open and to come forward with all information. So even saying the word "reject" requires study, requires the considerable efforts of departmental officials, and it requires a considerable amount of time and allotment of resources.

Mr. Speaker, that's just one motion: 340. Look at how many are on here. I believe it's proper and right for every minister to look at every motion for a return. Going back to *Beauchesne* 446, "consistent with effective administration" is the key here. Any minister wants to get this information out. I think members opposite will notice, and if they followed the record since the beginning of this particular session, we have had information being brought out almost every day that written questions and motions for returns have come up. Every day we've come forward with the information, but we look at what's before us here, and at the risk of appearing to be noncompliant, we have to look at some of these motions and say, "I'm sorry; we have to reject it on the grounds that it is completely and totally open ended."

If I can make one quick reference to *Erskine May*, it's on page 326. It talks about motions here, it talks about business, and it talks about the notice paper, even the one containing the Orders of the Day and notices of motions relating to private business and other things. It goes on to say that the Speaker can rule whether a motion in fact is even in order. There was no ruling that this motion was out of order because, Mr. Speaker, as you've already pointed out, it is so wide ranging it's very difficult to even rule on. That's the difficulty as far as the clarity.

I'm asking that members opposite give due consideration when they are coming up with written questions and also motions for returns. I'm asking that they would give some due diligence. I'm asking that they would consider the effect on ministers and on their departments. But saying all that, I'm not saying that there's an unwillingness to produce the information, but the cost, the redundancy - we hear a lot about redundancy. The Treasurers over the years, the present Treasurer and the past one, have been quite studious in releasing reports publicly, not hidden ones, about this very request: "analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts." These have been released constantly, and it's not done in a private way just to government MLAs, but in fact it's done very publicly time after time after time. The

question here is a redundancy: asking a Treasurer, asking a minister in a redundant fashion to try and gather up all of those. Efficiency comes up. All of these things which we need to be fixed on as individual members of this Assembly, we need to be focusing on that. That's all I'm asking, Mr. Speaker.

I hope I've made myself clear, and I trust the Treasurer has made himself clear. The reason we've taken some time on this is to hopefully avoid some of the political posturing that happens when we say the word "reject." That's not a personal attack on the member bringing forward their motion. We're not saying that member is a reject. It's not an attack on their self-esteem. When we sometimes use the word "reject," members opposite interpret it that way, and then they will politically posture to try to make it look like we're hiding information.

Mr. Speaker, on this particular order there has been much information, almost to the point of an infinite amount. Now, I won't say "infinite" because that word has no end. I know there's been a finite amount of information released, but how it could ever be tracked down that we have released every copy because here – and you can struggle with this, member, if you like, you can be upset with it, but in fact the operative word here is "any." If you get the dictionary – and I won't ask the page to bring it to me right now because that would make the Speaker nervous. "Any" is an all-inclusive word. [interjection] Yeah, feel free to send that over if you'd like, member.

All I ask as I conclude my comments is that consideration be given when they are drafting these motions and written questions to the cost, to the time, to the deployment of staff. Please give that consideration, because the effects of this can be very far reaching and in fact can deter us from what we are effectively doing in terms of reducing the cost of government, which this Premier has already done by reducing the size of cabinet, of caucus committees, of deputy ministers. It will continue. Help us with that task. Help us. Please don't deflect us from that task.

4:20

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

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, since the original presenter of the motion is here, may I speak as the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar and allow him to close debate?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may speak as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't take more than a minute and a half. What we've heard certainly isn't worth even that. So much for freedom of information and open government. So much for all of that. At least in his response the Treasurer responded to the motion in the fashion in which it was written. I thought his answer was if not acceptable at least made to the motion itself and not what we've heard in the last 15 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of all of the arguments, I submit that the Member for Red Deer-North felt it necessary to become very defensive about not giving this kind of information. There was that element in his comments. We're not fooled by that kind of thing. The fact of the matter is that we've got a very difficult situation in this province, and the Treasurer alluded to it. We don't know what the consequences of these cuts are. If the Member for Red Deer-North had read the motion carefully and read all of it, he would see that it is a contemporary motion. It isn't speaking about the past, and the Treasurer responded in that fashion.

Mr. Speaker, we need to know what the options are from these analyses in education, in social services, in health care. Further, the Treasurer said that they have done them. So what is all this nonsense about research and about millions of dollars? He admitted that they've done it. He said that they had done them. All we want is to see them. Albertans, I suggest, need to know what the consequences are. The situation is that the federal government is off-loading on the provinces, and the provinces are off-loading on the municipalities and on the citizens of this province. The citizens of Alberta are quite capable of understanding these analyses. They're quite capable of understanding them. They need to know the size and the shape of the problem.

The Treasurer says that he objected to the transfer payments being cut. Of course, objection is one thing, but we need to find out what is going to happen in this province as a result of them. The Treasurer admitted that the reports are there. All we're asking, Mr. Speaker, is that if the government has done them, which he says they have, then share them. If the government has not done them, which they should have done, then say so. Tell us they are not there. Tell us they don't know the consequences. Don't hide behind this nonsense of open government anymore. This government is no more open than they were a year ago.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark to close debate.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for allowing me to close debate. I would like to address the arguments – and I use that word loosely – put forward by the Member for Red Deer-North, the rhetoric, and support my colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar in making this case. The argument that is utilized by the Member for Red Deer-North is that somehow our request for information would require unreasonable effort to fulfill, that this unreasonable effort would be costly and inefficient. A corollary of his argument is that somehow this government elsewhere is more efficient and therefore demonstrates its righteousness in making this particular argument.

Mr. Speaker, either they have this information, they have prepared this information, in which case it would be extremely easy for them to provide it – I would think that in fact the new Treasurer in particular would want to see information and analysis of what the implications of federal funding are for his budgetary process, his very first budget. It would seem to me that the Treasurer is a busy person and that he wouldn't receive in this analysis pages and pages and pages and pages of documentation, that he would probably receive a summarized three- or four- or five-page document. It would seem to me that to provide us with a copy of that three- or four-page document would not be an onerous task, would not utilize a great depth of public resources, would not be inefficient. On the other hand, it may be that if that document isn't already available, the Treasurer hasn't requested it. That is even a more startling admission by the Member for Red Deer-North, because if the Treasurer hasn't requested information about an analysis of the impact of federal funding changes on his budget, then clearly he should have.

I don't believe that this Treasurer is incompetent by any means, because incompetence would of course indicate that he wouldn't have asked for that information. So in fact I want to give him the benefit of the doubt. I expect he has asked for and received that information. If that information is available – back to the first part of my argument – then it is not difficult, onerous, inefficient, expensive; it could only be embarrassing, I suppose, to this government to provide it. An embarrassment is exactly the wrong argument, because clearly accountability requires that a govern-

ment gives people information regardless of the consequences for that government itself.

Why this is so startling, Mr. Speaker, is because while this government wants to claim that it's new management, that it's a different kind of government, and that it has several new, fresh faces, one of which is this Red Deer-North MLA who is now a minister, clearly we hear the same old, tired arguments: arguments that are not based on logic, arguments that are not based on analysis, arguments that are largely indefensible. The member talked about efficiency, and he talked about how his government was bringing in a series of efficiencies. Well, it's interesting to note that they've claimed the cut of \$2.4 million in the consolidation of ministerial offices, but of course they haven't demonstrated to anybody how that's going to occur. In fact, they haven't demonstrated that there are fewer staff really. There are a few fewer ministers, but they've pretty well offset that advantage by their appointments of quasi-ministers and so on and so forth.

If he's talking about efficiency, I wonder what position he took in caucus when it was announced that the Member for Calgary-Currie and the other Red Deer member were taking a visit to the Far East and elsewhere. Is that efficient? I would argue that it's not efficient, Mr. Speaker, given that in fact they did this study. The former Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs stood up last spring and said: we have done a study, and that's why we are closing the Los Angeles office. They've already done a cost/benefit analysis, so why do they have to do another one and another one and another one?

If he's going to argue efficiency, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that he should argue it consistently. Clearly, we haven't seen that. I would like to say that it is indicative of the tiredness of this government, the lack of change in this government that we are not receiving this information, but in fact we are receiving the same tired old arguments that are not logical and are not based on any kind of analysis. I would argue that this strikes at the heart of their contention that they are somehow a new government. They are not. They are the same old gang with the same old, tired arguments and the same old lack of initiative to open up this process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion lost]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

4:30 **Employment Equity**

229. Moved by Mr. Gibeault:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to conduct a work force analysis of the Alberta public service to give a breakdown of women and men employed in that service who are disabled, aboriginal, or belonging to a visible minority and enter into discussions with concerned citizens, organizations, and employee groups aimed at developing employment equity policies and programs to correct any imbalances.

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

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly am pleased to have the opportunity to bring forward this resolution to the Assembly this afternoon.

Now, I'm hopeful that I'll be able to convince the members on the government side about the value and importance of employee

policies in terms of employment equity within the provincial government service and also in the broader public service and the private sector. I'm glad to see that the Minister of Community Development is here, because we know that she has already said that she is not in support of pay equity, which is the idea of equal pay for work of equal value. That's regrettable, Mr. Speaker. It makes us a laughingstock across the country. We're the only province that doesn't have that.

Employment equity is a related concept. What is employment equity? Well, let's come right to the nub of the issue. Some people seem to think that it's about hiring unqualified people to meet quotas, but clearly it is not about that. It's about making the workplace fair in our province. Just to quote from the Employment Equity Act of Canada that was assented to June 27, 1986, Mr. Speaker – and for the benefit of the members opposite, at that time Canada, unfortunately, was not being governed by a New Democratic Party government. It was governed by a Progressive Conservative Party government led by this government's new-found friend Brian Mulroney, and they passed an Employment Equity Act for this country. Now, we can debate the shortcomings of such a piece of legislation, but I will give them some credit in at least trying to bring forward some legislation to deal with an important social issue that is of concern to many, many Canadians. We haven't seen anything comparable to this coming forward from this government in terms of serving the people of Alberta.

Right in the preamble in terms of the purpose of the Employment Equity Act of Canada it says:

Employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

So, Mr. Speaker, this idea of employment equity is not some very strange, radical idea. It's already been adopted by a Conservative government of Canada. So why is it that in Alberta once again we have to be embarrassed in the national forum to have to admit that our government has done nothing on employment equity, nothing whatsoever? In fact, when the former minister of culture and multiculturalism was asked about employment equity before in this House, he repeatedly indicated that he was totally and consistently and unalterably opposed to such a measure. How a minister could stand in the Assembly and be so negative about a basic principle of fairness in the workplace is difficult for me to understand. I'm looking forward to the Minister of Community Development's remarks. I'm hoping that we might have better prospects with a new minister, but as I said, with her comments on pay equity I'm not holding my breath.

Who else supports employment equity besides Brian Mulroney and the federal Conservative Party and other members of the House of Commons of Ottawa? Well, the government of Ontario supports it. That might not be an inspiring reference for some of the members opposite, but who else supports employment equity in Alberta? Well, how about the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, an agency of the government of Alberta, Mr. Speaker. They put out a document back in May of 1990 on this very issue of employment equity. They pointed out that it's required by federally regulated corporations, including Crown corporations, and they point out that the employment equity legislation that was originally introduced applied to four designated groups, those being "women, aboriginal people, persons with disabilities," and members of "visible minorities."

They went on, Mr. Speaker, in this very good leaflet that they put out now going back almost three years, about some of the barriers that are faced by people in the labour market these days in these designated groups which inhibit their ability to participate meaningfully and on a level playing field with other persons in

accessing employment opportunities. For example, some of the barriers that they referred to include inappropriate or insufficient training or education, inadequate information systems about training and employment opportunities, limited financial and personal support systems, insensitive and shortsighted employment counselors, restrictive recruitment hiring and promotion practices, or discriminating assumptions: the idea that before we even talk to people about employment opportunities, we have an idea in our mind about who can do it and who can't do it without making sure that everyone has an opportunity to be considered for a particular employment opportunity, and that we have an opportunity for people to look at any modifications in our workplace that might be required to enable them to access those employment opportunities so that we as a society can take advantage of those skills in a productive and positive way and that people of all backgrounds, particularly from these designated groups that have been identified as facing these employment barriers, can take advantage of their skills, their education, their energy, their desire to be part of the productive work force of our province. That's what employment equity is all about in a nutshell.

There are just so many examples that we could give in terms of employment equity and how it works and so on. Not two years ago the Certified General Accountants' Association in their magazine put out an article called "Aiming High." It was about employment and pay equity laws and how they "seek to create an equitable working environment for all, and to attract the labor force of the future." Mr. Speaker, if you walk down the streets of Edmonton and, I would suggest, most of the cities in our province, you can't help but observe the diversity of our population: people from all kinds of visible minority backgrounds that have come to our country, many of whom have been here for many generations. We have people who have various disabilities whom we're able to see participating in our day-to-day life more and more because of various adaptations that have been made available to them. Yet in our work force we have not been able to get progress at the provincial level because we haven't had the political commitment from this government.

Who else supports the idea of employment equity in our province, Mr. Speaker? Well, the Calgary Multicultural Centre does. It's an umbrella organization of many multicultural and ethnocultural groups in the city of Calgary. They have been working with more progressively minded jurisdictions such as the city of Calgary, the University of Calgary, and other private-sector employers in Calgary who understand how important it is to have a policy of hiring that reflects the work force and the marketplace that employers have to deal with and that they are working for. Yet the Alberta government has as yet done nothing to try to advance this concept here in the province of Alberta. They could show leadership as other provinces have done – as I said, Ontario – and also at the federal level in terms of trying to ensure that employment opportunities in those jurisdictions are available on a very equitable basis to ensure that all members of our society have an opportunity to access those positions.

Another employer that believes in the principle of employment equity is Sun Microsystems, one of the biggest microcomputer companies in the world, Mr. Speaker. They had an advertisement just a few months ago in the *Edmonton Journal* and indicated right in there, "Sun Microsystems is committed to employment equity."

Mr. Speaker, a lot of people in the private sector don't adopt these policies because they have nothing better to do. They adopt hiring policies because they know it's good for business. In fact, who said that? Well, in the publication called *Dialogue of the Public Service Commission of Canada*, back in 1989 – and I remind my friends across the way that that was at a time when our

country was still under the administration of Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government – Monique Vézina, the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration at the time, wrote an article. She said, "Employment equity is good business." So we're not doing anybody a favour here.

We're not trying to give people jobs who don't deserve them. What we're trying to say – and most progressively-minded, forward-thinking businesses who understand the market realities and the economic realities of the 1990s are doing this already. They're making sure that their employment policies are equitable and that all groups, particularly those who have had disadvantages in the past, are given every possible opportunity to compete on an equitable basis with others for employment opportunities.

4:40

As I said, Progressive Conservatives have adopted this policy at the federal level and in other jurisdictions. So I suggest to my friends across the way that I am going to be very interested to hear why it is that in the province of Alberta we cannot seem to come to terms with a policy for equity in the workplace. I just don't understand why we have to continue to be embarrassed in Alberta, to be so far behind other jurisdictions.

In terms of other organizations, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council supported this, and a number of sectors are actively involved in implementing employment equity policies: the banks, various media outlets, national transportation organizations, Canadian Airlines, Air Canada and many others. These are the businesses that understand the way our society is changing and how the cultural makeup is changing. Businesses that want to be able to serve the entire marketplace – and certainly every enterprise has got to be interested in serving as much of a broad and wide marketplace as possible because they want to make the greatest revenues, do the best business, and be the most profitable.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's only companies that are out of tune with the realities of the contemporary cultural diversity of our society and the global marketplace, the globalization of the entire international economy, that have not adopted policies like this. Yet, as I said, we still haven't got any leadership coming forward from the provincial government.

Who else supports employment equity in Alberta? The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Now, I want to remind the government members that it wasn't that long ago that the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities put out their action plan. It was actually in the spring of 1990, so we're now going to almost three years ago. In that action plan this is what the Council said at that time. They indicated that the

Personnel Administration Office [should] develop a provincial employment equity policy by April 1991 . . .

That's two years ago, Mr. Speaker; we're still waiting.

. . . that will remove barriers to employment of persons with disabilities within the Alberta Government. This policy must be developed in consultation with the various stakeholders [groups].

It goes on to give some additional detail there. So why is it that we're still waiting? Mr. Speaker, you may have noticed, as perhaps other members did, that there was an article in the *Edmonton Journal* just a few days ago about the disenchantment of members of the Premier's council about the lack of political will of this government to move on the action that was identified in the council's action plan of almost three years ago.

I guess the question we have to ask repeatedly is: why is there stalling, stalling, stalling? Why is this government not responding to the requests of individuals and organizations in Alberta: the Alberta Human Rights Commission, the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, the Premier's Council on the Status of

Persons with Disabilities? We could go on with the great number of examples.

As I mentioned, even within the province of Alberta we have a great number of private-sector forward-thinking employers who are on board on employment equity. I was at a conference myself just a few months ago called Bridges '92, in which that was the main theme: how we can advance employment equity in the province of Alberta. There were presentations from a variety of employers in the private and public sectors, from the trade union movement, and so on: all people who are concerned about this important issue and how we can enhance equity in the labour market in Alberta. There are even professional associations now in several of our cities, Mr. Speaker, in Calgary and Edmonton at least and I believe in some of the smaller cities, of people who work in personnel and human resources who have formed citywide committees of employment equity practitioners to exchange ideas and experiences on what works in employment equity and what doesn't. So there is a great resource out there that the government could be tapping that could be promoting this idea of equity in the labour force, and as I said, we still have nothing.

This is such a waste of talent, Mr. Speaker, because without employment equity policies what you have is people who traditionally are in positions of power, and in hiring decisions it is just so easy for them to simply hire people like themselves. I mean, it's just an understandable human reaction that we tend to hire people like us. So when we look at our economy and how it's dominated by white men, for example, it's easy to understand, I suppose, if you think about it, why white men tend to hire white men and a lot of people who don't fit that description are just shut out of the labour market. There's no incentive, no thinking ahead about how it would be very useful in the enterprise to have people who speak different languages, people who understand different cultural backgrounds, people with various disabilities who would be able to assist the enterprise in adapting the workplace to make it available to people who have various disabilities, people from aboriginal backgrounds.

For example, when I was in St. Paul not too long ago, I had a chance to meet with some of the native representatives in the area. One of the things they pointed out to me was that they were very concerned that although many of the local businesses there, not to mention government offices and agencies and so on, were glad to have the business of the native community, at the same time they hired virtually none of the members of the native community in the surrounding area.

So this is what we're talking about. The idea that any progressive agency – and we want to start with the government. The provincial government can show leadership, and then its associated agencies, the broader public sector such as schools, universities, the municipalities, and so on, and then the private sector as well. Everyone in our society, Mr. Speaker, has a stake in making sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate fully in the labour market.

As I said, those companies and enterprises, whether they're in the public sector or the broader public sector or the private sector, that are progressive, thinking ahead, and looking forward to the future have already implemented these kinds of policies. So it's really not that much farther along the road, if we had some leadership from the provincial government to set an example themselves, to show other business enterprises who have not yet adopted employment equity policies how much there is to gain from it, what an investment it is in the future profitability, viability, and survivability of enterprises in the global economy of which we are now a part.

Mr. Speaker, employment equity is a policy that has been advocated by so many individuals and groups in the province. It's been implemented, as I've said, trying to be nonpartisan about it, by a Conservative federal government. In eight years they have not changed their minds about it. They still support the policy. Perhaps it should even be extended in some ways to make it even more effective. But in Alberta we have nothing. So I urge the government sincerely to not be partisan about this issue, to recognize that it has been implemented by the cousins of our friends across the way in Ottawa. I'm not being partisan about it. I'm trying to ask this government to look at doing the right thing. What we're talking about here is a basic question of fairness in the workplace.

I urge all members of the Assembly to support my motion.

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

4:50

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been anticipating this day, the opportunity to engage in debate on Motion 229, for some considerable period of time because of the eloquent arguments put forward by the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods not only today but in previous questions he put to me in my previous role as the minister of culture and multiculturalism in this Assembly. He mentioned that in his remarks earlier today, and I'm glad of the opportunity to participate.

There are some things about this motion that cause me some concern, and I hope to delineate them in the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker, for your edification and for those who will ultimately read this debate and ultimately be forced to reckon whether the decision of the government to either move or not move, or the decision of the Legislature to accept or not accept, is the right one.

When I look at the motion, words just jump off the page at me here: "work force analysis," "breakdown of women and men," "disabled," "aboriginal," "visible minority," "concerned citizens," "employment equity policies and programs," both of those words plural. The first thing that comes to my mind is not the intent, which I believe the hon. member brings forward with some honesty and some definite interest in a better world. That's not what I'm struck by. The first image I get is a large, newly created bureaucracy that is checking off whether you are white or black, pink or green or plaid, man, woman, whatever, and lining you up on a form and categorizing you not on how you do your job, not on the qualifications you've got, not on the intelligence, the expertise, the experience, the skills you bring to your work force and the task at hand that you've been assigned, but what do you look like, are you a man or a woman, what else is with you about your physical makeup: not your integrity, not your character, not your skills. That kind of a thing – creating a bureaucracy to develop those kinds of statistics and that kind of information – in the vernacular, Mr. Speaker, gives me the willies.

What we have to do, I guess, to do a careful examination of this motion and its implications for our society is ask ourselves a number of questions: what is it that we're trying to accomplish here; what are we trying to do? Then if we sort that out, we have to figure out: is it possible for that to be done? We would like, for example, to have housing on Mars. That's a lofty goal. But is it possible? Well, today no, it's not. So we have to ask ourselves these questions: what are we trying to accomplish; is it possible for it to be done; is it worth while doing? It may be possible, but maybe it doesn't make any sense to do it. Can it be done fairly, easily, cheaply, in the normal course of events, or will it require some large new bureaucracy and some large new entity

of government that we haven't contemplated? If we can answer yes to most of these questions, then we have to ask ourselves: is the government the mechanism to take this thing on? Because that presupposes, of course, that the government is the most efficient agent of doing anything, whether it be building roads or making the work force look perfect or a variety of things.

These are some of the questions I have, and I've been contemplating them in my mind as I've anticipated this day in the Legislature. I should say near the outset that I can agree with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods in his thrust here, what he's trying to do. He looks around at his world, and he perceives some level of unfairness. This in fact seems to be the goal of the entire ND Party provincially: perceiving unfairness wherever they may find it and then urging government to hire more people and set up new bureaucracies and new rules and regulations to address that. That seems to be very, very consistent with other motions we've seen from the Official Opposition.

So I believe the hon. member is sincere in his belief, and I can buy a few of his arguments. I sketched some of them down as he was speaking. "Making the workplace fair." He said that very early in the going, and I agree with that. I think that's an important aspect of what we would all like to see: a fair workplace. Nobody wants people to be thrown out of their jobs or denied employment for any of a variety of reasons that are unfair. But what do we have to do to make the workplace fair? In this member's estimation, in my mind, the cure is worse than the disease, because I ask myself the overriding question that I ask myself on all of these questions: does this make any sense?

As I listened to his arguments – and he dredges up a number of organizations that are very sincere, lofty organizations. Many of them I'm familiar with; one of them is the federal government. These organizations do have credibility. They have examined these issues, and in his mind that gives his argument credence. In my mind, they don't, because I can find any of a number of organizations that would argue against the position that he takes just as strenuously as he argues for it. The reason he has found organizations that support aspects of his motion – I'm sure they do exist. But I go back to the motion and the words near the last line, "employment equity policies and programs." This, Mr. Speaker, is an open-ended motion that provides the venue for government to do everything. Not a narrow aspect of it: equal pay for equal work. I don't have a problem with that. As a matter of fact, we have equal pay for equal work in a whole variety of areas. The Member for Edmonton-Avonmore gets paid the same as the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods: equal pay for equal work. Police officers, fire fighters, army officers: a whole variety of individuals, male and female, get paid the same for the same amount of work. Teachers, professors, you name it. In that whole area they get equal pay for equal work. We're not arguing that here. We're talking about the broad policies. And what else are we talking about? I am mystified because I know that the quest here is not just for something that simple. It's for something much broader. So we've got to go look around and see if we can find any examples of where this has been implemented and see if these kinds of policies – plural – are doing any good.

Well, I guess the most classic example, of course, that we've seen in recent memory is in the United States: the affirmative action program where the push was on to have more blacks and Hispanics in the work force. After a period of decades and generations being involved in that exercise, we do in fact see now, Mr. Speaker, that this has produced a whole litany of reverse discrimination cases where people get carved out because they're white. So they are discriminated against. We find that the white male – somebody else that the hon. member mentioned in his

address – is now being discriminated against, so the ultimate objective of having a fair workplace has not been achieved. That test has not been met. We have replaced one unfairness with another, but of course white males aren't allowed to say that that's unfair. Their complaints are discounted because white males have run the world since the dawn of civilization and, of course, we're all discounted. That in essence proves that it's unfair to have that kind of a notion.

We don't have to look at history for the last couple of decades in the United States. We can look very closely at three Canadian provinces. I don't raise these three Canadian provinces because their current governments happen to be of the NDP persuasion. It just happens to be that they've had some experience there. I'll just relate what has been found in those provinces with those administrations who have gone along this route of trying to manufacture fairness by creating a new bureaucracy.

Let's go to Saskatchewan. A survey in Saskatchewan checked to see if everybody would fill in those forms and say, "Yes, I am a disabled aboriginal woman" or "I am a blind Hispanic male" or whatever the qualification. All the criteria, all the ethnicity and all the characteristics, had to be listed on the form. So what happens when you do that? Well, in Saskatchewan they found that there was a significant underreporting by employees who didn't put down on their forms, "Well, yeah, I am in a wheelchair" or "I am disabled in some other factor" or "I am a woman" or "I am a visible minority." They didn't put that down on the form because they didn't see the fact that they were pink, black, green, brown, plaid, disabled, blind, whatever, having anything to do with getting their jobs. They all felt, in and of themselves, that they got their jobs because they were good at what they were doing; they had the skills and the qualifications to do it. So they underreported. They did not meet the demands of the bureaucracy to have everybody categorized according to these characteristics. That's what happened in Saskatchewan. I think most people want to get a job because they're good and they're qualified and they deserve to get the job, not because they're the next visible minority in line to get that job no matter what their qualifications are.

In British Columbia – this happens to be another Canadian province with a government of the socialist bent – they've got a Minister of Women's Equality. Mr. Speaker, a Minister of Women's Equality. This is the classic military intelligence, government efficiency, Captain and Tennille's greatest hits non sequitur. How can he have a Minister of Women's Equality? If it's equal, there shouldn't be a special minister for that. That proves that it's unequal. That's what they've got in British Columbia. It doesn't make any sense, but it's slavish devotion to the socialist desire to manufacture the utopian society. So they've set up a ridiculous situation where they've got an unequal minister to prove equality. It doesn't make any sense to me.

5:00

What else can we find as we do research on this issue? Let's go to Ontario. Now, they've got an employment equity proposal there, but some analysts there find that that thing is potentially divisive. Here's an historian from the University of Toronto, and I'll sort of quote generally so I don't have to file all this documentation. I can tell you, if you want to look it up, it's in *Reader's Digest* of February 1993. Is that the one that I had my little story in? I don't remember. Anyway, he says people are being defined by race and gender, not by their education or their experience or their skills. In a good society, when you think about people in terms of their character, not the colour of their skin, that's what creates a good society. "You're a good person because you do good things," and not "You're a worthwhile person because you

are of this skin colour or of that gender or of this physical capacity."

The government says it's trying to stop racism and sexism. That's what the member over here was saying: the essence, trying to stop all these kinds of things. But what it actually does is put a spotlight on it and has everybody fixated on race and gender and disability as opposed to qualifications, experience, and the like. As a matter of fact, it will be interesting to note how this member and his caucus, who I expect will support him, will be able to deal with their union friends who support them so diligently, when in fact the union mentality is based on length of service, how many tickets you've got, and all of that. "I've been in the union for 20 years; therefore I should get more money than the guy that's been in there for 10 years." What happens when that notion, which supports the New Democrats from coast to coast with tax dollars and checkoffs on unions, comes face to face with this manufactured, perfect society that he is talking about? I think he is going to have problems internally that he hasn't contemplated. Union leaders, many of them, don't like this, Mr. Speaker, nor do I.

I want to give you two examples from my own life. We talked about my previous role as a minister and what did we do to create a fair workplace. I met with businesses, talked to many business leaders. Some of them had employment equity managers, managers of diversity, vice-presidents of diversity and pluralism, if you can believe it. What they said to me: "Doug, don't regulate it. Don't legislate it. Don't put in a bureaucracy. We know that it's the right thing to do and we'll do it, because if we don't do it, we'll go broke."

This is my old blue jeans story. If I'm selling blue jeans and I want to sell blue jeans to all the people in Edmonton and all I do is talk to 45-year-old white guys, I'll go broke, because the city of Edmonton is not just 45-year-old white guys; it is everything. I must know in my marketing, in my sales, in my customer follow-up, in my design, in my advertising, in everything, that I've got to appeal to a broad range of the population or I will not be able to market my product successfully. They all knew that. They were all doing it because it was what society demanded, reflected not only in their product but in the company internally, in the way they hired and managed and promoted people, because they knew what was right. One experience.

Another experience. Before I came to this Legislature, I was involved in broadcasting. I worked for a local television station, regulated by federal statute. The federal government – he cited the federal government – determined that there should be a quota system, that you should have reflected in your staff a certain number of visible minorities, a certain number of women, a certain number of disabled people. This was regulated and mandated.

What was the reaction to that? Well, I guess anybody standing by watching this would see that soon there were people, quote, of colour appearing on the television screen. Many of them are eminently qualified, are fine journalists and excellent broadcasters, but the people who worked in the industry felt that perhaps they weren't getting the best person available for the job at that particular time. They were getting the best visible minority available at the time, not the most qualified, not the most experienced. The station manager might say in one small station in Ontario, British Columbia, or Alberta: "Well, we'd better hire somebody from India. The feds are going to be on our case, so go find somebody." Whoever popped up first would get the job. That was the perception amongst those people who were working in the industry: that we weren't getting the best people; we were getting the best person on that list of qualifications. Unfair, Mr. Speaker, because well-qualified people were passed over because they didn't meet those criteria: women, men, disabled, aboriginal, visible minority, as quoted from Motion 229.

I'll give you one other example. Last summer on vacation I was golfing at D'Arcy Ranch golf course in the beautiful constituency of High River, having visited with my colleague the Member for Highwood just a few days previously. We were at Okotoks, and I was golfing with my wife. We met a young man on the first tee. He was a young man from the Brooks area, a fourth or fifth generation Japanese, and he said to me, "I'm thinking about getting out of the farming business, and I'm going to join one of the police forces." He was Japanese. These were his words: "Because I've got a good tan and my eyes don't open all the way, I can get a job like that." Those were his words to me.

An individual who has been here in this nation for four or five generations whose last name is Japanese, who if walking down the streets of Tokyo you couldn't pick out of a crowd, knows what game is being played by the feds because of these kinds of rules and regulations and knows that he has an advantage. He knew that he could get a job with one of the police forces, be it a city police force or a federal police force, like that; not based on his qualifications, not based on his skill, not based on his experience, but because he was a member of a visible minority. If he walked up with somebody else who was equally qualified, equally educated, equally determined, and equally dedicated who was a guy from Saskatchewan who was not a fifth generation Japanese, whose last name was Anderson or Schmidt, that person wouldn't get the job, and this person would. Why? Because of these kinds of regulations produced by this kind of motion aimed at creating a fair workplace and, Mr. Speaker, doing exactly the opposite.

I submit to the House that it is impossible to manufacture fairness. It's impossible to hire people to socially engineer our society in such a way that would be pleasing to the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. If we do agree to do it, we are going down a path to folly. That has been proven historically. We see it in other jurisdictions that have had the experience of generations of this type of action, and we see it in other jurisdictions, in our own Canadian provinces, where they have been trying to do it. I submit, Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to define a list of characteristics and criteria so that people would be able to say, "Yes, I'm that, I'm that, I'm that," have it all controlled by a central bureaucracy, and create fairness from that.

A couple of jurisdictions, if we look at world history, have taken that sort of an approach. The Soviet Union kept detailed records on all its people so they knew what everybody was doing, what everybody looked like, and all of that. Why? South Africa does that as well, or did, and you've seen the pain and the suffering and the unfairness it produced there. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if we were to follow the spirit of Motion 229, we'd wind up with the same thing here.

So that's me on the NDP. I am also anxious to hear what the Liberals have to say about this motion, because I have a notion that they may like this kind of thing. There is a Liberal penchant for creation of bureaucracy to meet every need. When there's a problem, let's get a tax, hire a bunch of people, and fix it: that seems to be Liberal philosophy, and I'm anxious to see what they have to say on it. I'm specifically hoping that the Member for Three Hills engages in this debate because . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Calgary-*Buffalo*.

MR. MAIN: I'm hoping the Member for Three Hills engages in the debate. I don't much care what the Member for Calgary-*Buffalo* does, because his predecessor was a male. But I would draw to the attention of the House that the Member for Three Hills' predecessor was a woman, and if the Liberals support Motion 229, they will be facing charges of the H word, because it should have been the determination on their part to manufacture

a woman candidate so that we would not alter the balance of gender in this House. They didn't do it, so I'm going to be very anxious to see where they stand on Motion 229.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear where I stand. I would urge members to say nay.

5:10

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, after having had the opportunity of listening to these comments from the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen, I'm particularly anxious to join debate, sir.

I think, with respect, there's some misapprehension by the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen as to the motion before the House. As I read it, it puts forward simply two elements, two things required. The first one is that in this jurisdiction, in this province, we take stock of the extent to which certain groups are represented in our public civil service. It's a pretty basic starting point, a pretty simple proposition. It's a question of looking to determine the extent to which the disabled, aboriginals, and people who belong to a visible minority group are represented in the civil service. The second thing required by Motion 229 is to get public input to this government in terms of strategies or a strategy to make sure that the Alberta civil service is more reflective of the community it serves. Now, one might have thought after listening to the latest speaker's remarks that there was something quite revolutionary proposed and put before the House. I can think of scarcely anything more innocuous or more basic.

I think the two-step process that's being advanced in this motion is logical, is appropriate, and I fully support it. I think one of my concerns, Mr. Speaker, is that when I listen to the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen, obviously there is some misapprehension of what's before us. There's some confusion between the concepts of pay equity, on one hand, and employment equity on the other. The only thing that I read in Motion 229 deals with employment equity, not pay equity. With all due respect to the member opposite, I think he's rolled two concepts together and understands neither one adequately.

One might have thought, Mr. Speaker, that in the I assume three and a half years that the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen was the minister for multiculturalism, he would have developed some greater sensitivity, some greater awareness of the kinds of issues that the disabled, minority groups, aboriginal peoples encounter on a day-to-day basis. I can assure the member opposite that his research is going to have to be somewhat more extensive than chatting with other people on the tee box at D'Arcy Ranch golf course.

The Albertans that would benefit from the two-step process proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods – it is, I think, a very basic and a fair kind of process. Sir, the underlying goal behind this particular Motion 229 is one that I think Albertans generally accept. I think reasonable men and women may disagree and differ over exactly how you get to that point of some fairness in the workplace, but I think most Albertans think that there should be that kind of fair treatment of all workers.

I think that the motion before us admits sufficient latitude, sufficient flexibility that alternate strategies can be considered. Albertans, I acknowledge, sometimes appear to be ambivalent, sir, on the question of employment equity. There are certainly some Albertans that are apprehensive or suspicious of employment equity, but I think if we look at the problem, there's no denying the extent to which a large number of Albertans can't access the opportunities that many of us take for granted.

Canadian statistics for 1991, Mr. Speaker, reflect that 15.5 percent of Canadians are disabled; that's 4.2 million Canadians. In 1991, 17 percent of our population had a disability; that's 424,595 Albertans. Almost 95 percent of those Albertans who have disabilities are not in institutions; they're living in the community. We know, sir, that these Albertans are having difficulties securing employment, and it was confirmed, as the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods pointed out, in the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities 1991-1992 annual report. At page 3 of that report the Premier's council asserts that this group, and I quote, "forms the most underprivileged, impoverished, dependent minority in Alberta." The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods has talked about the action plan objective, but that came from the Premier's council, sir, a source that I would think would be of at least some persuasive importance and value to the members opposite. Motion 229 is nothing if not complementary to the recommendations from the Premier's council.

I note also, sir, that Canada, that this nation, has shown considerable leadership in the question of dealing with disabled. For example, Canada in 1992 in Montreal held the first ever International Conference of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. What we had then, in the fall of 1992 in this country, were 75 ministers from all over the world who represented departments and agencies dealing with the disabled.

If we want to continue, Mr. Speaker, being leaders in this area, we have to strive to find new ways to integrate the disabled into our work force. In terms of aboriginals and members of visible minorities, sir, clearly there's a gross underrepresentation in our work force. We need look no further than the 1991-1992 report from the Alberta Human Rights Commission. I think it landed on every member's desk within the last day or so. Simply refer, members, to the summary of complaints by prohibited areas of discrimination. What we find is that in 1990-1991, 63.3 percent of the complaints related to employment. In 1991-1992, 71.9 percent of the complaints related to employment. Sir, I respectfully submit that instead of talking to golfers at D'Arcy Ranch, we need look no further than the report of our own Alberta Human Rights Commission to find out that there's an extensive problem.

I know this, sir, that in my constituency of Calgary-Buffalo there's a very large number of aboriginal people. There's a large number of members of visible minorities and a very high rate of unemployment, so I can tell you firsthand that the problem is a real problem. This isn't imaginary, it's not mythical, and it exists. If any members in this Assembly don't recognize or appreciate that fact, I'd be happy to take them on a guided tour of portions of my constituency, sir.

There are obvious reasons why we have to include these groups in the Alberta work force. They're the obvious reasons in terms of ensuring that these Albertans are able to experience a sense of dignity, a sense of participation, the self-respect that comes from being a contributing member in our society. If there are any members – and it appears there's at least one – in this Assembly who don't appreciate those positive reasons for supporting this kind of motion, let me put it in more mercenary terms. When a disabled Albertan, an aboriginal, or a member of a visible minority is employed, there's revenue for this province by way of income tax: money saved, substantial money saved, that might otherwise be expended from the social services budget or some other portion of provincial government spending. The benefit to taxpayers in Alberta can be hundreds of thousands of dollars for an individual Albertan who otherwise isn't part of the work force. These numbers come from, once again, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities 1992 annual report. I refer

the members to I think a very useful analysis of this issue at page 8 of that report.

5:20

Now, some members may assume, and obviously the last speaker did, that the only way to achieve employment is through quotas, through affirmative action. In the city of Calgary, sir, we have a different model. It's a merit-based employment equity. It's a model which warrants closer examination by the province and by members of this Legislature. It's something that's possible, something that can be examined with Motion 229. Calgary started its program in 1978. The program didn't become proactive until I think 1986. A work force advisory committee was established in that municipality, undertook a survey much like what is contemplated by Motion 229. Parenthetically I should say, sir, that you can't canvass prospective employees because then you run afoul of the Individual's Rights Protection Act, so the survey has to be of those persons currently employed.

I think it's of interest that when they did this in the city of Calgary, the initial survey response was some 49 percent. What happened is that this matter of employment equity in fact became part of what we'll call the corporate culture in the municipal corporation of Calgary, and the next time they did a survey to determine the extent to which there was employment equity in the city of Calgary, the response rate was 94 percent.

Statistics can readily be compared. We're not talking about an enormous bureaucracy, Mr. Speaker. One need only look at the experience of the city of Calgary to find it can be done quite economically. A large organization like the province of Alberta already has tremendous resources to be able to produce the statistics and the information, and it's not an enormous task to then do a comparison and contrast with Employment and Immigration statistics of the general work population. Most importantly, over the last three years there's been a steady increase in the number of visible minority members, disabled, and aboriginal people that now are working for the city of Calgary. So I simply encourage members on both sides of the House: let's look at the Calgary model. Motion 229 gives us a vehicle and an opportunity to look at that model and see if we can't come up with an answer to this vexing question. It doesn't necessitate a large bureaucracy.

The Member for Edmonton-Parkallen said: does it make any sense to do it? Well, Mr. Speaker, I can only submit that to ask the question means that there just isn't the kind of awareness that I think all members have to have of the extent to which there are Albertans who can't participate in our work force.

I'd indicated before, Mr. Speaker, that some Albertans have ambivalence with respect to the issue of employment equity, and I think that's partly because Albertans often treat that as being synonymous with affirmative action and mandatory quotas. With respect to that, sir, I remind members that section 15(2) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms expressly provides for

any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

I guess to those who say that this is discriminatory, I say that of course it's discriminatory.

One of the things we've done in Canada, in keeping with the long tradition we have of pragmatic solution-based approaches to problems, is that we've recognized that if we say that the evil we want to deal with is a fact of having an open and an inclusive society, that's the most important objective. That's what we're trying to strive for. It may be, sir, that we'll accept some short-term programs that are indeed discriminatory if we're able to

achieve the more important end. I think there's also the issue, Mr. Speaker, that now, in 1993, the definition of "disability" has expanded considerably, and that's something that would have to be addressed. This is a vehicle that could effectively look at the definition of "disability."

The proposal focuses exclusively on the public civil service, and I think that's appropriate. That's where the leadership has to come from, sir.

Motion 229, if adopted, will allow us to identify the extent of the problem in Alberta, and it will allow us further to consider strategies to decide whether the merit-based program that's employed successfully now in the city of Calgary is the best route to follow in this province. Whether we look at a quota system or an aggressive affirmative action system, we have that opportunity then.

So I'd just say, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, that I think the objective of full participation in the Alberta work force is important, and I think Motion 229 is one significant step towards that objective.

Thank you very much.

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

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this resolution, and I therefore move the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

MR. DAY: No, I didn't.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question has been called.

MR. DAY: There are two of us up. I'll defer to the Member for Highwood.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the hon. Member for Highwood rising to participate in this debate?

MR. TANNAS: Yes, I would like to, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Calling the Question

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. It isn't up to the Chamber to decide when the question is called; the Chair puts the question after debate is concluded. If there are other people who wish to participate in the debate, they're entitled to do so.

The Chair has received further advice that the motion has been called for the question on Motion 229, so therefore the Chair is obliged to put the motion. All those in favour of the motion will please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed will please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion fails.

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

5:30

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair was somewhat unclear in the question to the House before the call for the division. The question the Chair should have enunciated at that time, and the question that you are now being asked to divide upon, is whether the question be put as to Motion 229.

For the motion:

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Barrett | Gibeault | Mitchell |
| Bruseker | Laing, M. | Mjolsness |
| Doyle | McEachern | Pashak |
| Ewasiuk | McInnis | Sigurdson |
| Fox | | |

Against the motion:

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Adair | Evans | Moore |
| Ady | Fjordbotten | Nelson |
| Betkowski | Fowler | Orman |
| Bogle | Gesell | Paszkowski |
| Bradley | Horsman | Payne |
| Brassard | Hyland | Sparrow |
| Cherry | Johnston | Stewart |
| Clegg | Jonson | Tannas |
| Day | Laing, B. | Thurber |
| Dinning | Lund | Weiss |
| Elliott | Main | Zarusky |
| Elzinga | Mirosh | |

| | | |
|---------|----------|--------------|
| Totals: | For – 13 | Against – 35 |
|---------|----------|--------------|

[Motion lost]

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:40 p.m.]

