

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, February 10, 1993**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 93/02/10

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and to enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me take the pleasure of introducing to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly Mr. William Witting, the consul general of the United States for Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories. Mr. Witting was appointed consul general in 1991. Although he lives in Calgary, we've been fortunate to have him visit the city of Edmonton on many, many occasions, but this is Mr. Witting's first occasion to be with us in the Alberta Legislature. Mr. Witting has had a distinguished career in the foreign service of the United States. Recognizing that the United States is Alberta's leading trading partner, we are delighted that he is here visiting with us again. The significance of these ties with the United States makes us particularly value our strong relationship with the U.S. consulate in Calgary. I would ask Mr. Witting if he would give us a wave and we could all indicate to him our warm welcome to this Legislative Assembly.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, immediately after question period today I'd like to ask that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to deal with the following motion of urgent and pressing necessity under Standing Order 40:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly direct the Public Accounts Committee to hold such further meetings as are required to conduct a full and complete examination of the reasons for the financial losses of NovAtel Communications Ltd. after this session adjourns.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice of the following motion:

Be it resolved that when the Assembly adjourns to recess the Fourth Session of the 22nd Legislature, it shall stand adjourned until a time and date prior to the announcement of the Fifth Session of the Legislature as is determined by the Speaker after consultation with the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

Bill 348

Employment Standards Code Amendment Act, 1993

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave today to introduce Bill 348, the Employment Standards Code Amendment Act, 1993.

This Bill would ensure that rights and protection afforded workers under the Employment Standards Code are made appli-

cable to dependent contractors. Dependent contractors are distinguished from independent contractors in that their relationship to the employer more closely resembles that of an employee than it does an independent contractor. This Bill is particularly important given the forecast of increased use of contracting out.

[Leave granted; Bill 348 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to file with the Legislative Assembly responses to written questions 173, 348, and 373, as well as responses to motions for returns 202, 234, 272, 313, and 362.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table in the Assembly today the 1990-91 annual report of the Alberta Association of Registered Occupational Therapists and the annual report for 1991 of the College of Chiropractors of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a copy of a report – and I have four copies – which shows that student aid has dropped 38 percent, or \$192 a month, in Alberta in the last 10 years. The sources of this information are the consumer price index for Alberta from Statistics Canada, the student living allowance from the Students Finance Board, and the average housing costs for Calgary from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the list of strong points and bright spots related to Red Deer College is too long to number, but one of those numbers is here today, its chairman. I'm happy to introduce the chairman of the board of Red Deer College, Mr. Paul Meyette.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly a group of students from the Kiwanis Puyallup, Washington, student exchange. Becky Walker and Cheryl Rowe are from Washington, and Jadie Jensen and Erin Royal are from their twin city of Wetaskiwin. They are accompanied by Jim Pelehos, a member of the Kiwanis Club in Wetaskiwin. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The minister of advanced education.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly Mr. Ibrahim Mohsen and Mr. Ali Al Jahazi. They're seated in the members' gallery. These two gentlemen have just completed their technical training in a special international apprenticeship training initiative between Alberta and the United Arab Emirates. I'd ask that Ibrahim and Ali rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Zeidler Labour Dispute

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the labour laws in Alberta are the most unfair, reprehensible labour laws anywhere in Canada. In

fact, we're called the Alabama of Canada. I expect that their laws are a little more progressive than ours. The latest insult of course followed a decertification vote during a legal strike – and I stress legal strike – at Zeidler and allowing strikebreakers to vote to decertify the union. Only in Alberta would that happen; it wouldn't happen anywhere else in Canada. My question to the Minister of Labour is simply this: what does he plan to do to plug this loophole which allowed strikebreakers to vote on the future of the union at Zeidler?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm first of all pleased to correct some of the disinformation that we've just heard. First of all, there was a vote taken on the question of whether to decertify the union or not, and there was some discussion and some debate on who would be allowed to make up the voting block on that particular vote. In fact, there were 54 union members who had crossed the picket line at the start of the strike who were deemed to be part of that voting unit. There was also a number of individuals who were hired because of expansion at the plant. That plant has expanded in the last four years and 11 months. They were deemed to be part of the unit. Some members who were working inside the plant were not allowed to vote because there were still 40 people striking outside. So the board ruled that the 40 people outside who were still legitimately picketing would be allowed to vote and that would then exclude 40 of the workers inside. That was ruled by the Labour Relations Board.

I think the record stands very clear that when you look at work stoppages in this province in the last year, we are consistently below the national average. With some 680 collective agreements being settled last year with only five work stoppages, I think it's not too bad a record.

2:40

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, with labour laws like these, who would go out on strike? You'd lose your job. That's the whole point. It's totally and absolutely unfair. The Minister of Labour should go around and see what's happening in other provinces. Even in the United States it's not this bad.

One thing it has done is unify the trade union movement, very much like the Gainers situation did. Today the Premier got a letter from trade unions representing over 200,000 working people in the province of Alberta, Mr. Speaker. I think the question that I want to ask the Premier is: how can he as the Premier, the leader of the government – it's under new management now – justify allowing strikebreakers and union busting in the province? That's precisely what happened here.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the letter might have been received in my office. I haven't read the letter. Once I've had a chance to review it, I'll be discussing it with the hon. minister.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, maybe I can read the Premier's messages for him. They've asked the Premier and the Minister of Labour for a public meeting to discuss this outrage. That's what they've asked for. My question to the Premier: knowing that – and he will see it in the letter – will he commit to a public meeting with representatives from the union movement in Alberta over this very important issue?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, it's strange that the hon. Leader of the Opposition would get my mail before I do.

Aside from that, I will review the letter, Mr. Speaker. I'll discuss it with the hon. minister and decide at that time what course of action to take.

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

MR. MARTIN: I thought this was a new open person who wanted public meetings, to meet with the people, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why he'd have to think about it. [interjection] I hear the minister of economic development. They'd like you out there too. You go ahead too.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

Parole System

MR. MARTIN: My question is to the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker. Edmontonians learned today that a dangerous killer has been missing from a halfway house for over a month. Obviously this is a very frightening situation for people in Alberta and certainly in Edmonton. My understanding, if it's correct, is that apparently the Minister of Justice was not even aware of this particular fact. If the Minister of Justice is unaware, no wonder Albertans are worried about our criminal justice system. I'm sure he's had some time to look into this matter. My question is simply this: why was the province not informed about this escape a month ago?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure; I suspect what the hon. Leader of the Opposition means by "why was the province not informed?" is the people of the province. The minister was not informed about it because apparently up to now it has not been part of our policy that the minister is automatically informed of everybody that walks. I am glad to see that the opposition has raised this concern to the level where the leader in fact asked the question. I don't recall being asked a question in question period by the Leader of the Opposition.

I am coming close to outrage on this overall matter of parole, where a man with this particular record, who has been in a prison 24 years on many, many, many charges, would be released to a halfway house in the first instance. A halfway house is not even a minimum security operation, because a halfway house is utilized for purposes of looking for employment or in fact actual employment. So they're not under any type of constant guard at all. That this person walked over one month ago and that I as minister was not advised gives me very great concern, and it's a concern that I have addressed this morning and in fact resolved. It will not occur again that the minister, in fact, will not be informed. The degree to which the public will be informed of course will depend in each and every case on the individual case, the seriousness of the matter, which means the possible danger involved in the person being on the loose.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can understand the minister's outrage. I think we all are. Especially if the Minister of Justice doesn't know what's going on in the province, it is frightening. [interjections] It's what he said. I'm not blaming him. He said he didn't know. He should know. God, take a Valium, over there.

Mr. Speaker, this person was convicted of murder, assault, armed robbery, a history of prison escapes. Now, the minister alluded to why he was in the halfway house. Obviously he's done some checking into it. Has the minister been able to determine why this person with a record like this was in the halfway house, and can he share it with us here publicly?

MR. FOWLER: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, no problem at all in sharing that with the public, because the Parole Board is

a federally appointed board, and in all instances it's the federally appointed board that deals with applications for parole. This prisoner obviously made an application for parole. The federal Parole Board decided that after 25 years of serving that sentence he was, in their view, eligible for a type of parole and released him on parole with conditions that it be served in a halfway house. Once that decision was made, the man then came under the jurisdiction of Alberta government people, who, through an agreement with the federal government, are the ones who operate the program insofar as parole supervision goes. Nobody in the Alberta government had anything to do with the decision that the person would be placed on parole, nor do we have any say on whether we accept that person or not once the agreement has been entered into that we will service the agreement for paroled people.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I understand how the parole system works. I was asking about this specific question.

The minister seems to be saying, Mr. Speaker, that at least somebody in his department was aware of this particular individual and that somehow that didn't come to the minister's attention, which I think is a very serious lapse. The minister should be aware of it. He alluded to the fact that they're going to do some things to tighten it up. That's my question. What is the minister going to do to ensure that this sort of lapse does not occur again so he's at least aware of what's going on?

MR. FOWLER: Thank you. I'm very pleased to respond to that question, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice, and prior to the combination of the ministries, the solicitor general, receives incident reports, not on a daily basis by any means but not infrequently either, as to what is occurring in the prisons and in our institutes. What I have done is set a date when we will review the policy of incident reports. I can advise this House and the people of Alberta that part of that policy will definitely include that the Minister of Justice be advised, that it is the type of incident that I shall in fact be advised of immediately, as is the case in most other instances. This was merely a policy which hadn't been developed into the future. I had been advised through an incident report when a parolee became involved in another offence, but merely somebody walking from one of our halfway houses was not an incident that was reported on a regular basis to the minister.

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

Sales Tax

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night in a public meeting the Treasurer released this ministry overview which clearly deals with various sales tax scenarios. He also openly discussed what his government could raise with sales tax rates of 6, of 8, and of 11 percent. To the Premier, who has done more dancing on this issue than Fred Astaire: how can he continue to say that his government will never bring in a sales tax when his very own Treasurer is openly considering three different sales tax scenarios?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat it one more time: no sales tax. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order in the Liberal caucus so I can hear your member, please.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Treasurer, who told the House two weeks ago that no sales tax studies have been done by this government: how can anyone believe that no such studies have been done by his government when the results of these studies have been openly published in his very own ministry overview?

2:50

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I can't believe that the hon. member, who has a research budget of some \$600,000 – and they did go over budget too – would suggest that any research has been done when a mere hand calculator calculation, which even the Liberal research caucus could do on their own, would suggest that this is research. Clearly, what we were pointing out to Albertans is that if this government were to be so irresponsible as to tax as a Liberal government in New Brunswick taxes, taxpayers would be out \$3.2 billion. That's \$3.2 billion that's taken out of New Brunswick taxpayers' pockets but is in the pockets of Albertans. If it were in the case of Ontario or in the case of British Columbia, the numbers would not be dissimilar; this government would wrongly be taking \$3 billion more out of taxpayers' pockets. We have not, and we will not.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: why should anyone believe that the Premier's sales tax denials, after all this discussion, after document after document in which his studies appear, are anything other than an effort to avoid the political fallout from this embarrassing issue pending the upcoming election?

MR. KLEIN: You know, Mr. Speaker, if anyone is campaigning for a sales tax it's the Liberal Party. As a matter of fact, when we're speaking about reports that have been prepared, I understand their nominated candidate in Edmonton-Centre has prepared a very exhaustive report on the advantages and the pleasures and the niceties of a sales tax. So that tells you where the Liberals are coming from relative to this particular issue.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I must second the comments, because I have in front of me a document dated June 10, 1992, an opposition news release by the Liberals, to introduce a sales tax on energy-efficient vehicles. This is a June 10, 1992, document issued by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, which calls for up to a \$4,400 sales tax on new vehicles. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Repetition

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the Chair could bring to the attention of everyone's researcher *Beauchesne* 409(8), "A question that has previously been answered ought not to be asked again."

The Chair is getting somewhat bored by the repetition of this particular line of questioning. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order. The question has been asked on a very repetitious basis. I trust I don't have to repeat myself three times.

Calgary-Fish Creek, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

Gas Exports

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, last month the Minister of Energy authorized some gas removal permits for the southern California natural gas market, while at the same time Nova Corporation is before the Energy Resources Conservation Board requesting approval for 1993 facilities expansion. I have the impression that some of our constituents think that there's some connection between the gas permit removals granted and Nova's application

for facilities expansion. With that background, can the Minister of Energy advise the Assembly when the ERCB plan to release their findings?

MR. SPEAKER: Madam Minister.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed the ERCB was hearing discussions and examining the merits of a \$120 million expansion on the Nova system to accommodate ANG, PGT, and PG and E expansion projects to California. The hearing actually concluded about two weeks ago, and I'm not expecting the results of that hearing for at least another two weeks.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's one form of uncertainty, and add to that the continuing regulatory and market uncertainty in California. Will the minister and, for that matter, the ERCB take this uncertainty into account before making any further decisions on removal permits and taking action on facilities applications?

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, the Energy Resources Conservation Board's mandate is to serve the public interest. This body operates in an arm's-length capacity from government. As the member knows, the public interest encompasses many things. The ERCB has three options related to Nova's facility application. The first is to approve it entirely. The second is to disapprove it. The third is to approve it in part. I will not as the Minister of Energy interfere with the ERCB's ability to make its own decisions.

Mr. Speaker, as to the regulatory uncertainty in the California market, there has been this uncertainty for about four years. Producers and buyers have executed a variety of contracts to support the PGT expansion. All of the shippers have executed 30-year, irrevocable contracts. I will not attempt to undermine the arrangements that our producers have executed.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Calgary-Buffalo if there's time.

Senior Citizens Programs

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Since seniors learned of this government's plan to cut back their programs in a leaked cabinet document in 1991, the government embarked on a consultation process with seniors. One of the messages the government received loud and clear was the need to maintain the principle of universality. It now appears that the government is ignoring the advice and abandoning the principle. In view of the minister's recent statements in regard to changes to rent and tax programs for seniors, would the Minister of Municipal Affairs now tell us whether the consultation program will be respected or whether this government is simply continuing its agenda of implementing means tests?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is alluding to some of the information that came out of one of the open cabinet consultation meetings, cabinet committee meetings, that we had the other night in which the budget of Municipal Affairs was open and before the public process. We had members of various seniors organizations there. There were questions brought out not only by them but by members of the Legislature who asked pointed questions on the universality of certain programs and whether everything was on the table during the restructuring and budget reviews. The issue of universality will be discussed

at length as it goes across all programs for all levels of Albertans in the government process.

Might I just say – and I just answered outside the House when I was asked my opinion on universality – that when I was a veterinarian working in the private sector, I was receiving a baby bonus for my four children. I felt that it was wrong, that it was a process that needn't be. They should have income tested me and not sent the baby bonus through to me. I still believe strongly that those who can pay their way in a free, democratic society that's built on a free enterprise system should; and those who need and can be tested against their income and show that need should be helped in the strongest of ways.

3:00

MS M. LAING: Well, so much for a consultation program and listening to what people say to them.

Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Premier, in view of his commitment to listening to the people. Seniors have also called for an end to the discriminatory criteria in the widows' pension, which basically holds that some people are more worthy than others based on their marital status. Given that significant numbers of people between the ages of 55 and 64 live in poverty, will the Premier now commit to ending the discriminatory nature of this program?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I really don't know if the program is discriminatory. I think that is an opinion on the part of the hon. member. But I'd be glad to consider any suggestions she might want to offer.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

Violent Crime

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciated the statement a moment ago from the Minister of Justice relative to the escape of a convicted murderer from an Edmonton halfway house, but the issue is much bigger than that isolated case. Albertans continue to be anxious and concerned about crime in their neighbourhoods. My question to the Minister of Justice: what does this government intend to do so that all Albertans can feel safe from violent crime?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo is quite aware . . .

MR. MARTIN: In 50 words or less.

MR. FOWLER: Fifty words or less to complex questions cannot be accomplished, hon. member.

. . . that in all probability there is not the answer within any government to bring about a complete feeling of safety for its citizens. The question is so complex. We are, of course, concerned with it. There is a national conference in the month of March in Toronto, which is a very important conference called by the hon. Minister of Justice from Ottawa and which will be attended by people from my department, and we will be taking part in that particular conference because it is a national issue and not a local issue. We will continue to work with those groups that we work with at the time in order to ease and bring about greater peace of mind if it's at all possible.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, of course the issue is a very complex one, but I note that there have been major initiatives in

the cities of Edmonton and Calgary in terms of strategies to promote safer cities. My supplementary question is: would the minister give us the detailed response of his government to these two substantial initiatives from those cities?

MR. FOWLER: Again, Mr. Speaker, it is such a critical and important issue. I will give an undertaking to this House to table a document on our response to that question. However, I want the House and all Albertans to know that the Department of Justice has been involved all along with both city task forces that have been looking into this area. I think we play an important role with those cities, and I commend the city mayors and their councils who have brought these studies about and view it and see it in the serious nature that it is. By working together, I hope we can bring about some answers which will assist people in becoming less worried about the crime that's on the street. We're certainly aware of it, and we will continue to work with the cities.

Coyote Population

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Last fall on a tour of my constituency, if there was one common denominator that came up at all meetings, it was concern over the population of coyotes. Now, at that time, they were just going into the hunting season, and they felt that the problem might be corrected by hunting. Now it's the end of the hunting season and there's no noticeable reduction in the population of coyotes. Cattlemen and sheepmen in particular are very concerned about what's going to happen now. Some of them are asking for a bounty on coyotes. Others are saying that if we'd just get rid of the restrictions on hunting, they'll get rid of them themselves. Now, what's the minister's policy on how we're going to deal with the coyote problem?

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member. I think that if you look at the history of coyotes in Alberta, when the price of the pelt goes down, hon. member, the trappers become less interested in trapping the coyotes and the coyote population goes up. We expect about 22,000 pelts or something in that neighbourhood from trappers. What we've been trying to do is identify areas where there is a specific problem. Granted, the population is increasing all over the province. We've tried to increase the length of the hunting season. We have tried to be as amenable to the trappers as possible in terms of the methods allowed to them to hunt and trap, such as snares. We don't have any restrictions in terms of licence for residents on private lands. We know that there's a mange problem out there, and that is reducing the population perhaps by as much as 30 percent, but we may have to do other things, such as expanding that hunting season, if these populations continue to rise.

MR. MUSGROVE: Well, maybe my next question should be directed to the minister of agriculture in that we have a predator's program that pays sheepmen and cattlemen for the loss of livestock by predators. However, most of my constituents maintain that going through the hoops to collect money out of this program is not worth the trouble. So my question to the minister of agriculture: would he consider transferring those dollars to the Department of Environmental Protection so that they can do something about getting rid of the coyotes?

MR. ISLEY: I most certainly would, Mr. Speaker.

Grande Alberta Paper Ltd.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, on November 30, 1992, four Alberta cabinet ministers, only one of whom is now a member of Executive Council, signed an agreement with the Grande Alberta Paper company. I'd like to file copies of that agreement in the Assembly. The agreement purports to guarantee up to 1.4 million cubic metres a year timber supply for the project despite the fact that there are numerous other developers interested in bidding on the timber. But it gets worse. The agreement also purports to guarantee compensation to Grande Alberta in the event – and I quote – that there are

any legislative, regulatory or departmental policy changes that have a negative material impact on GAP from a financial or economic . . . impact.

My question for the Premier is very simple. Is the province under new management, or is he going to honour this outrageous agreement?

MR. KLEIN: I'm not so sure that the agreement is outrageous, Mr. Speaker. If I recall, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place was up in Grande Prairie and round and about in Edmonton promoting this project as being a good project for Alberta, so I don't know what he's talking about.

MR. McINNIS: The Premier's recollection on this is not much better than on other things. I guess I shouldn't be surprised that he doesn't think it's outrageous. This would be the third new polluting pulp mill that would be licensed under his tenure.

The issue is financial. The same agreement, in addition to compensation for changes in government policy, provides generous infrastructure grants and an income debenture – that's an interest free loan – in the event that there are any cost escalations. Now, I would like the Premier to say in this Assembly: if he's going to honour these kinds of commitments from the taxpayers, will he at least bring them to the Legislature so we can debate them first?

MR. KLEIN: Well, obviously the hon. member has some hard copy relative to this agreement, so that indicates that we aren't hiding much, and it indicates that we're open and we're honest about these things and that we're providing the opportunity for debate on these issues. I go back to the point that I made; that is, this member, if I recall correctly, was out there saying how good this project was and how nonpolluting it was and how this was the right way to go about things. Now it appears that he's changing his tune.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly, followed by Calgary-McKnight.

3:10

Labour Relations Code

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As noted in the Assembly last week, it is ironic that most of the time when Canadian workers are gaining better protection for their rights, the rights of workers in Alberta are eroding. At Alberta Hospital some 120 food service workers, some of whom have 25 years of service at that hospital, are about to lose their jobs at an institution that's shifting its food services from one contractor to another. To the Minister of Labour: given that contracting out is likely to increase over the next decade and that long-term employees will be bearing most of the suffering as they will probably be left jobless, will the minister tell this Assembly his views on contracting out and the protection that should be available for displaced workers?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I addressed this last week. I don't mind dealing with it again. The particular situation refers to a contract being put out to bid and another company getting it; in this case, Marriott over Versa Services. These aren't hospital employees, and they're not government employees. Many of these employees were working for Versa for about 25 years, so they certainly do have an affiliation with the people and with the community in that hospital.

I have talked with the union officials; I've talked with hospital officials and also senior officials at Marriott. I do have a commitment, especially from those at Marriott, that everything that is possible will be done to ensure that the workers from Versa would be able to transfer over. Again, it's nothing they can guarantee, ironclad, cast in stone, but they are going to give due consideration.

The member opposite was asking my opinion. That's not my opinion. My opinion isn't valid. This is the state of affairs right now.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact that's the point. The minister is in charge of the department; he should be providing leadership.

The fact is that this situation couldn't be happening in other provinces where legislation protects employees under such circumstances. I might note that when this debate occurred in Ontario on the labour legislation there, the former leader of the Liberal Party expressed support for that kind of legislation. I would urge those interested to seek out the Alberta Liberal Labour critic and determine his views on such legislation as well.

Back to the minister. Will the Minister of Labour be proposing amendments in the spring session for the Alberta labour code legislation, and if not, why not?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I hardly think that the present labour and economic environment in Ontario would be a shining example for anybody to rush to emulate. However, given that consideration, I will clearly say that I'd be open to anybody who's got suggestions about reviews on the labour code or changes. The door is always open on those for consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

Culture Grants

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question today is to the Premier. Government funding to the arts, now threatened, subsidizes thousands of Calgary students who have been able to attend at a nominal fee opera, philharmonic festivals, and theatre performances, students who have been able to use public libraries, visit museums and historical sites, and take part in school band programs. My question to the Premier: how will Calgary school boards ensure that their students receive a well-rounded education if they are unable to take part in cultural activities?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, there's an assumption – and I don't know how that came about – that there are going to be these massive cuts to art and culture programs. Basically we're saying that virtually everything is on the table, and art and cultural programs will be considered in the context of the overall budget.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you. My second question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. As we all know, thousands of tourists come to Alberta because of cultural

celebrations, small town theatre such as Rosebud, and visits to historical sites such as the Lac La Biche mission. My question to the minister is: has the minister looked at the negative impact on tourism if culture and the arts no longer receive government funding?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, this is very important, and I'm sure that the minister in charge of lotteries would like to supplement my comments.

Festivals are very important, and their economic impact on the economy is great. I just got reports, for instance, for the festival to be held in Calgary if the Grey Cup comes there, and it looks like the economics would show that there's a \$1.5 million benefit to the province, about a \$4.5 million benefit to the federal government, and \$400,000 to the city. There's \$13 million being spent that weekend, so it's very important.

With reference to the funding of the cultural aspects I'd like to have my colleague in charge of lotteries respond.

MR. SPEAKER: Very briefly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, this is a subject that one could go on for hours about because of the tremendous amount of funding that the province gives. Just a few examples. In 1992 the government of the province of Alberta opened the Reynolds museum in Wetaskiwin, a world-class tourism destination point. This year, in 1993, the Remington museum in Cardston, another world-class destination point, is going to be opened. This goes along with the Tyrrell museum. Edmonton is going to get Ex Terra, the world-class dinosaur exposition. These are projects being funded. I can give you \$30 million worth of examples that would just indicate that Alberta . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Rocky Mountain House, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona.

Workers' Compensation Board

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many small businessmen in my constituency have been expressing concern to me about the increasing cost of doing business in this province. They're becoming very frustrated because they feel that they have no control over these rising costs, and there is a perception out there that many of these are set by government. Of course, they also know that if we were to follow the Liberal lead, they would be set by government. One of these costs is the rate set by the Workers' Compensation Board. To the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. The rates have been increasing as of late. I wonder if you have contacted the board. Is there any rationale for these rapid increases in the assessment rates?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, first let me say that the 1993 assessed rate is \$2.04. That's the second lowest in Canada. However, having said that, we still recognize, as the member has brought out, that business, small business especially, is under considerable duress in the province dealing with all kinds of costs.

The matter of a rate increase was recently addressed by the industry task force meeting with the Workers' Compensation Board, and it was agreed by those industry representatives that there would be a ceiling of 15 percent on any increase. I'm concerned, as is the member, about any increases at all, either because of costs or because of the rise in injury rate. I've aggressively asked the WCB to address that, and that process is ongoing now.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. LUND: Thank you. One of the other concerns that has been raised with me relative to the WCB is the increasing cost of their administration. I wonder if the minister has contacted them. What is the accountability that the corporation has to the minister?

MR. DAY: I'm one of many Albertans who, like the Member for Rocky Mountain House, has concern about the size of the administration, Mr. Speaker. In my first meeting with the chief executive officer, who is new to that particular portfolio, I brought that concern to his attention, saying that we're very concerned about the size of administration costs. I received a commitment from him that he was going to aggressively pursue that. Within about a week or 10 days of that meeting there were the first announcements coming out that there had been some changes at the vice-president level, upper management levels dealing with administration costs, upper level management costs and the very clear commitment that within a short time, possibly even days or a few weeks from now, a new budget would be prepared with administration costs coming up substantially lower than originally had been projected.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

3:20 Administration of Justice

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've heard a lot of talk in the last few weeks in this Assembly about this government being under new management. The previous management had a rather convenient habit of referring embarrassing matters to a criminal investigation process that never came to a conclusion. I'm thinking of the five years that the Principal matter has been under investigation and the nearly a year that the Bench insurance matter has been under investigation. To the Minister of Justice: will the minister provide the Assembly with an update as to the present status of each of these investigations?

MR. SPEAKER: No. One of them is fine. We're not making this an omnibus question to ask about three or four cases. The first question is about the first one.

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, it is not the practice of the Minister of Justice to make any comment on any investigations that are currently under way. That practice will be continued under my ministry.

MR. CHIVERS: It seems that Albertans will never know the status of these.

In any event, since this is supposed to be new management, and I understand that they should be anxious to see that outstanding matters are resolved as soon as possible, and certainly the public is interested in knowing that justice has been done in these cases, will the minister take immediate steps to bring these investigations to a speedy conclusion and provide a full report to the public?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the police forces of Canada and Alberta and the world move at their own pace, which is thorough. In fact it takes considerable time for an in-depth investigation on a complex matter. I am not going to make any comment or do anything which will rush them to the point where an investigation may be less than thorough.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Farm Income

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of agriculture. While there have been some gripes about GRIP – that's the gross revenue insurance plan – the advantages of NISA, the net income stabilization account, are recognized by nearly all farmers. The federal government has recommended and the alfalfa and forage growers and vegetable growers have also asked for over a year now that they be included in NISA. Can the minister inform the House just why he is holding this up?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure that I clearly got the question as to what commodities the member is referring to. There was a lot of noise from that side of the House.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, that's a clever dodge he uses to try to get out of one question. Will you dock me if I repeat it to him word for word?

MR. SPEAKER: This is the supplementary question, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, that's exactly what he wants you to do, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. I'm not particularly interested if that's your opinion or not. That's what the action of the Chair is.

Supplementary.

MR. TAYLOR: I realize it wasn't an opinion. It was a fact, and so is your answer a fact.

The question is: why does the minister refuse to allow forage growers and vegetable growers who have been asking for a year now to join NISA when the federal government recommends that they be in NISA also?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of groups out there asking to come under NISA. In addition to the commodities that the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has mentioned, I would add red meat production. Lamb, pork, beef are all talking of coming under NISA. It's a matter of two things, I would say: one is developing the time line when we can phase the other commodities in to NISA; the second and maybe more challenging one is finding the funds to bring them under NISA.

Point of Order Tabling a Cited Document

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order which arose during question period. Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under *Beauchesne* 495, sections 1 through 5, which deal with reference to a document made in a way that would influence debate, requiring that in such cases the member referring to the document would have to table that document. Earlier in debate the Premier referred to some document prepared by a Liberal candidate that outlines something about a sales tax. No such document in fact exists, but I rise to give the Premier this opportunity to table the document to which he referred in order to maintain some credibility in the argument that he continues to make.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I do apologize to the hon. member. The person to whom I referred is actually the nominated Liberal

candidate in Edmonton-Parkallen – I mentioned Edmonton-Centre – and his name is Michael Percy. I don't have the document or any documentation. I only have . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hearsay.

MR. KLEIN: Not hearsay. This person has been quoted I believe on numerous occasions relative to the benefits of a sales tax, Mr. Speaker. If there is not a specific document, then I'm sure there is something on record someplace. I'll be glad to dig it up, with the help of the Liberal Party, and table it in this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: On the purported point of order the Premier has stated that he mentioned that a particular document existed. He has stated that he did not quote from it in the House. He has given the undertaking that he will, with his staff, search for such a document and if so file it. That's on a voluntary basis by the Premier, not at the direction of the Chair, because under the circumstance, having listened closely to the words of the Premier, there was no document here to be quoted for the Chair to demand be tabled. So it's on a voluntary basis. [interjections] Order. Thank you. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order in the whole House. Thank you. [interjections] Order, Edmonton-Meadowlark. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Two points of order held over from yesterday's question period . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I have a point of order too, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You will be attended to later.

Point of Order Reflections on Nonmembers

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members. I hate to have you hanging in the lurch here.

The first matter yesterday was raised as a purported point of order by the Member for Fort McMurray and dealt with comments which supposedly took place in question period, comments as uttered by the Leader of the Official Opposition. In rising to the purported point of order, the Member for Fort McMurray makes this statement, and I quote from page 2188 of *Hansard*:

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.

Having examined the record – and I'm sure all hon. members have their copy of *Hansard* before them – you would see that the Leader of the Opposition did not make any statement that could be construed as being “blasphemous and defamatory.” That is simply not accurate from the record.

However, in speaking to the point of order, the Leader of the Opposition did throw in another line, and I quote, “A lot of foreign dignitaries lost their shirts because of Mr. Dutton.” If that is indeed accurate, the Chair is not in a position to know. At any rate, it would seem to have appeared after Mr. Dutton left the employ of the government, so it is that the second statement by the Member for Fort McMurray as to the credibility and integrity of Mr. Dutton while he was a government employee still stands.

So there is no point of order because “blasphemous” and “defamatory” did not occur.

3:30

Again, the Chair warns all members the admonition of *Beauchesne* 409(7):

A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

MR. SPEAKER: The second point of order yesterday was indeed a very interesting exchange when it came back to examining the record of *Hansard*. It also points out the challenge to all members of the House to be able to listen to what's occurring in debate and try to catch it all.

In rising to the purported point of order, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark specifically makes this quote: “The Premier said that I had misled the House.” Again, if hon. members would be good enough to check what indeed was said in *Hansard*, they will discover that that quote as supplied to the Assembly by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark is not accurate, that no such statement was made by the Premier in either the first or second replies nor in speaking to the purported point of order.

However, in examining what did take place, the Chair would point out to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark in particular that on page 2184 of *Hansard* the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark makes this statement:

Will the Premier please tell us what exactly he is afraid of that he would stoop in this way to muzzling the Ethics Commissioner?

By this comment Edmonton-Meadowlark has been guilty of his own charge with respect to Standing Order 23(h), “makes allegations against another member,” and also Standing Order 23(i), which “imputes false or unavowed motives to another member.”

So in this case there is indeed a point of order, but in actual fact it's against the member who raised the point of order, Edmonton-Meadowlark, not against the Premier. The Chair therefore requests the hon. member to withdraw the statement “stoop in this way to muzzling the Ethics Commissioner.”

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I accept your ruling on your second point of order, and I do withdraw that statement. I do not accept, however, that there was not a point of order in the first place.

Speaker's Ruling Criticizing the Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I must admit that a fair number of unparliamentary words sort of slipped through my mind at the moment. [interjections] Order please.

The Chair notes that the member did indeed withdraw the offending phrase, and the Chair also notes that the member has challenged the Chair with respect to the first issue. Perhaps the hon. member would like to now withdraw that phrase, because once the Chair has made the decision with respect to the order of the House, that's the way it should be and unchallenged.

MR. MITCHELL: It was not my intention in any way, shape, or form to challenge the Chair's ruling in that regard, Mr. Speaker, and I withdraw whatever implication there was to that effect.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

Point of Order Not Hearing a Question

MR. SPEAKER: A purported point of order for today, Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point of order is under 416 in *Beauchesne*. It involves the Minister of Agriculture, when I questioned him. He got up and said that he did not hear the question. Now, I know that under 416 a minister does not have to answer a question. You're quite right, and I agree with that a hundred percent, but I think it may be misleading and also unfair from my side to lose a question because the minister says that he did not hear the question, wants a repeat. Maybe even more so I think it's unfair also from the minister's side who's been asked the question to appear to be trying to run away from it by saying that he did not hear it knowing full well you will not allow it to be repeated.

I find nothing in *Beauchesne* that stops anyone in this House from asking somebody to repeat a question, particularly the minister. I think it's quite within their rights and it's within their order to ask that the question be repeated rather than telling the questioner: "Sorry, that's it. Go on to the next question." Certainly 416 mentions the fact that you don't have to answer, the government can pass on it, and all these things are correct, Mr. Speaker. I don't find anywhere in the rules of order, and I've looked in the questions under chapter 4, and also under section 416 and back farther in that chapter – it goes from 407 through to 420 – that nobody is allowed to ask that a question be repeated if they couldn't hear.

Now, I know I have trouble hearing. I'm sure many of the others over there have trouble hearing too. Someday, Mr. Speaker, who knows, I might be a minister, and I would be most embarrassed to have you take away the right of any of them in the opposition to repeat their question to me.

So I would like you to look at that ruling again or at least tell me where you find that a minister cannot have the question repeated to him or her.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, thank you, hon. member. The Chair appreciates the comments and will take due note of it. The Chair also reminds the hon. member and other members of the House that on previous occasions when ministers have not been able to hear what the question was, I have indeed allowed certain members to repeat the first question. However, that has occurred in the middle of question period, not at the tail end of question period. In fact, today the Chair was able to quickly move and identify and recognize the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon when the Chair knew question period was about to expire. So I allowed you to get into question period in that sense.

MR. TAYLOR: Well . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, please.

The other thing is that the noise level in the Chamber keeps coming up time and time and time again. It is difficult to hear in various corners of the Assembly, and I know that causes a problem for a number of members. As you yourself have mentioned, you're not the only person here that has a bit of a hearing difficulty, but we know that you do not have a speaking difficulty. The Chair also understands that on a national radio program the other night you referred to the Chair as having rabbit ears, being able to hear everything. On this occasion I was able to hear what your question was, but the minister did not. Nevertheless, we

went on to the matter of having the supplementary. In that regard, I would point out to you, hon. member, that you started just about a half page too late. It's with respect to supplementary questions, 414: "The extent to which supplementary questions may be asked is in the discretion of the Speaker." Again, earlier on, it's the matter that the Speaker, whether he or she likes it or not, is in control of question period, although there may be many observers who wonder if there is any control in question period.

There is no point of order, hon. member, but the Chair takes your advice under consideration.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**
3:40

MR. SPEAKER: A Standing Order 40 request. Speaking to urgency, the Member for West Yellowhead.

NovAtel Communications Ltd.

Mr. Doyle:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly direct the Public Accounts Committee to hold such further meetings as are required to conduct a full and complete examination of the reasons for the financial losses of NovAtel Communications Ltd. after this session adjourns.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak on the motion which is one of urgent and pressing necessity. On January 28 this Legislature unanimously decided to refer the report of the Auditor General on NovAtel Communications Ltd. to the Public Accounts Committee and further directed the committee to consider the report. It is urgent for the House to bring this motion forward because this session of the Legislature is likely to end this week which means that the Public Accounts Committee will not be able to continue its examination of the NovAtel report including further questioning of the Auditor General.

I refer members to section 761 of *Beauchesne* which says, "It is the duty of all committees to give the matters referred to them due and sufficient consideration." Mr. Speaker, at the two meetings held by the Public Accounts Committee thus far less than 90 minutes was taken up by questions to the Auditor General about this report. Each member of the committee was only able to ask one question and two supplementaries of the Auditor General about this far-reaching report. We were barely able to scratch the surface of the report before the committee's meetings adjourned. I submit to the House that this hardly represents "due and sufficient consideration" of this matter and that it was referred to the committee by this House on January 28. This extremely limited opportunity to ask questions of the Auditor General is the reason why it was so unfortunate that the government majority of the Public Accounts Committee this morning voted against the committee continuing to meet after this session adjourns. In considering the urgency of this motion, I ask all members to consider section 760(2) of *Beauchesne* which says, "Committees receive their authority from the House itself and the authority of the House overrides that of any committee."

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of nonpartisanship that the Attorney General talks about, I urge all members to support bringing this motion forward.

MR. SPEAKER: There's no discussion whatsoever on a Standing Order 40 request other than the person who is the mover. Thank you.

The matter here is not the issue; the matter is urgency of debate as to whether the matter shall proceed to be debated by this House.

All those in favour that the matter proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Motions**

Alberta/Treaty 8 First Nations Agreement

36. Moved by Mr. Klein:

Whereas the province of Alberta wishes to enhance relations with First Nations located in Alberta and whereas the Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations has indicated that it wishes to enhance relations with the province of Alberta, be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Alberta to

(1) enter into an agreement with the Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations to establish a process for dialogue to facilitate consultation regarding policies, programs, and services affecting the First Nations located in Alberta who are signatories to Treaty 8;

(2) ensure that any agreements resulting from this resolution will be consistent with the provisions of the Constitution of Canada and, in particular, shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal or treaty rights of First Nations or their members;

(3) ensure that this resolution and agreements resulting from it do not diminish the special relationship First Nations have with the government of Canada; and

(4) indicate their willingness, upon request, to enter into similar processes of dialogue with treaty organizations which represent, respectively, the First Nations located in Alberta who are signatory to Treaty 6 and Treaty 7.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members to endorse this resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, Leader of the Opposition. I'm only too willing to recognize you, but I understand that there are some introductions to be made.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, do you wish me to introduce our very special guests now, or do you wish to wait until after the resolution is dealt with?

MR. SPEAKER: It's the pleasure of the House.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. KLEIN: I would rather deal with the resolution and then introduce our special guests, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Then the Chair will now recognize the Leader of the Opposition, followed by the Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this is one of those rare times in the Alberta Legislature that we can agree wholeheartedly on a

particular motion. I think one of the interesting things that developed over the constitutional talks, no matter what happened with the constitutional talks, going back from the Meech Lake accord to the previous accord, is that native issues went from the back burner to the front burner, and I think rightfully so. A long time had evolved not only in Alberta but in Canada without dealing with some very serious issues.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concepts that was dealt with in the previous accord was the inherent right to self-government. Obviously that can't go on now because we don't have a constitutional accord. As I see this, though, it is to say: "Well, we're not just going to forget about native issues. They are important, and there's some role that the province can play in terms of dealing with, in this case, Treaty 8 First Nations. There are a lot of issues that we can look at jointly." I think that's very positive. I commend the government for doing this.

While it's nice that we have the Treaty 8 people here, I'm also encouraged, Mr. Speaker, that we recognize the Canadian government and the Constitution, but also that the door is open for First Nations located in Alberta who are signatory to Treaty 6 and Treaty 7.

So certainly, Mr. Speaker, you have the full co-operation of the Official Opposition, and I commend the government for taking this step.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to read the resolution before this Legislative Assembly in Cree. I will also be making a few remarks regarding the resolution. [remarks in Cree]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to speak on behalf of the caucus to support the resolution and throw our wholehearted support and, I guess, even congratulations to the government. Even coming late to the table doesn't take away from the fact that they have come to the table. We've had a resolution on the Order Paper, I guess it must be four or five years now, where we've tried to see that each of treaties 6, 7, and 8 would have the right to elect a member of this Legislature, much as it's done in New Zealand and New Hampshire and parts of the northeast United States. So to see the government moving into the last half of the 20th century, a little late but moving firmly, I think we have to take some pride in the fact that we think we had a lot to do with moving them that way. Nevertheless, they deserve congratulations for going ahead with it.

3:50

I do have a bit of a concern. It says, "enter into an agreement with the Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations." I think the government should be aware that there are now more native people that live in our cities than live on our reserves, and whether the grand council accurately reflects that or not is something that I'm sure the government will want to look at quite closely.

I also note, Mr. Speaker, that they've created a willingness to also go to Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 down the road, and I see no reason why they could not be holding discussions along the same lines with these other two treaty areas at the same time. I don't think it is necessary to do it consecutively. After many, many years of sort of dragging our feet on this issue, I think we could move along with all three treaties at the same time.

Finally, I think I'd like to not only give congratulations to the government but to the grand council. I don't know whether they initiated this or whether it came from the government side, but I

think probably they initiated it. I think this is a step along the line that we've seen in the last referendum, where we want to make our aboriginal peoples much more a part of the governing process. This may be a small step for Alberta, but let's hope that it may be a large step to the ultimate goal of self-government.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to endorse this motion on behalf of the New Democrats. We've always taken the stand that when you have a group that wants to communicate with the government, in fact they should be able to do so. This proposal to sign the treaty, if you will, with the grand council does open a door for the people of Treaty 8 along with the government to facilitate what I hope will be improvements in program delivery by consulting with the recipients of the programs. On that note I do congratulate the government for doing that. Whose initiative it was is quite immaterial. I look forward to seeing that same type of process entered into with the other treaty areas.

I do appreciate the fact that the aboriginal people are diversified and come from very many different groups across this province. I would hope that the initiative shown with the organized treaty groups is extended to take in the various urban native groups also and to be cognizant of the fact that no one group of aboriginal people speaks on behalf of all of them in this province. I do recognize that the government has taken a very significant step forward in this matter, and I congratulate sincerely both the people from the Grand Council of Treaty 8 and the government for this worthwhile initiative.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Summation, hon. Mr. Premier.

MR. KLEIN: I have no summation, Mr. Speaker. I'd simply ask for the vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter before the House is Government Motion 36. All those in favour of the motion, please signify.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried, let the record show unanimously.

Introduction of special guests, hon. Mr. Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure our special guests are encouraged today by the words they heard from the government and all members of the opposition, and I appreciate those kind words myself.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce some very special guests who are sitting today in your gallery, sir. These guests are: Chief Frank Halcrow of the Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations and chief of the Grouard band; Senator Walter Twinn of the Sawridge First Nation – not here; Chief Bernie Meneen of the Tallcree First Nation, who is also representing the High Level Tribal Council; Chief Robert Horseman of the Horse Lake First Nation, here today representing the Lesser Slave Lake Indian

Regional Council; Chief Tony Mercredi of the Fort Chipewyan First Nation, who is representing the Athabasca Tribal Corporation; Chief Gordon Auger of the Bigstone Cree nation – he's not here; and Chief Harry Colo-Chonkolay of the Dene Tha' band. Finally, we are privileged to have here today two elders from Treaty 8 First Nations: Joe Willier from Sucker Creek and Harry Janvier from Fort McMurray. We are most pleased to have these most honoured guests with us today.

Thank you.

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

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The committee will come to order.

Bill 55
Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act, 1993

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair will recognize the Deputy Government House Leader for the purpose of a motion.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that further consideration of any or all of the resolutions, clauses, sections, or titles related to Bill 55 now before the committee shall be the first business of the committee and shall not be further postponed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the committee ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carried.

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

4:00

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Adair	Evans	Moore
Ady	Fischer	Nelson
Anderson	Fjordbotten	Paszkowski
Betkowski	Gogo	Payne
Black	Hyland	Rostad
Bogle	Isley	Sparrow
Bradley	Kowalski	Stewart
Brassard	Laing, B.	Tannas
Cherry	Lund	Thurber
Clegg	Main	Weiss
Day	McClellan	West
Dinning	McFarland	Zaruskly
Elzinga		

Against the motion:

Barrett	Gibeault	Mitchell
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Bruseker	Hewes	Mjolsnes
Chivers	Laing, M.	Sigurdson
Doyle	Martin	Taylor
Ewasiuk	McEachern	Wickman
Fox	McInnis	Woloshyn
Gagnon		
Totals:	For - 37	Against - 19

[Motion carried]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two nights ago in second reading I did speak to this particular Bill and to the concern that I have in a general sense with its provisions as it relates to Calgary-Currie. Last night I proposed to this committee an amendment which I hope all members had time to look at overnight. I want to say once again, because it is a crucial point in trying to persuade this committee to support the amendment, that there was never before this Bill, before the report of the committee an opportunity for the citizens of Calgary-Currie to have input into these suggested boundaries. Never before has anything close to this been suggested. I have yet, even at this late date, to have explained to me by any member of the committee why the particular boundaries for my riding were chosen as they were. I'm sure that it's because the committee in its enormous task didn't have the time to consult with people in Calgary-Currie - at least I don't know of any consultation that took place - or consult with myself.

4:10

If that is the case, if indeed there has not been that opportunity to allow citizens that are fundamentally put into a new area that they have not had an opportunity to know about, then I say to each member of this committee, on the government side or on the opposition side, that surely, regardless of where the Whips are on this particular question, it is imperative that we vote according to the logic that is given. I put forth a case last evening for riding boundaries which still meet the intent of the Bill, still provide for the numbers that are required in terms of variance, and I believe provide for a much more reasonable transportation breakdown and natural boundary breakdown than do those in Bill 55. I am convinced that the citizens of Calgary-Currie and possibly of other parts of Calgary will be better served by this proposal than by that which is in the Bill.

I've said before, and because this is a unique situation in this Legislature, I think, and perhaps in others, I have to say again that this has not been an easy battle to fight. It's not been easy, because I have stood with my party that I've believed in for some years, and I believe generally in the British parliamentary solidarity of caucus - at least until we change the system, which may happen as a result of the report from the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West's committee. I do believe that above all I have to represent the citizens who have been so kind to elect me these past 14 years. I do ask every member to search within themselves as to whether or not they can truly vote for a Bill without consultation with the citizens, without taking into account their boundaries. Or would they not be better doing their service to this province in voting for the proposal that I have put forth in a spirit of compromise and which I believe will be of greater benefit?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before proceeding with the debate, hon. members, the Chair would like to make a suggestion to the

committee, but the Chair recognizes that it would require unanimous consent. We are under time constraints, and the Chair doesn't want to waste time. For the ease of mind of all members, the Chair proposes that perhaps all amendments that have not been moved to date could be moved by their mover, filed, and circulated without comment so that the moving doesn't count as their opportunity to speak; get them all before the committee so that they will all be voted on and then we go back to the debate so that people can explain their amendment. Is there agreement to that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. WICKMAN: We didn't move closure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right; I guess there's not unanimous consent emanating from the far end of the room.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment to Bill 55 that I would like to introduce at this time. It's a comprehensive amendment.

Point of Order Relevance

MR. WICKMAN: On a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is rising on a point of order.

MR. WICKMAN: The point of order is that we're dealing specifically with line boundaries on Calgary-Currie, and an amendment now relating to a different constituency is totally out of whack.

MS BARRETT: We vote on all amendments at 5:15.

MR. DINNING: Percy, get the rule book; read the rules.

MR. WICKMAN: No; I know the rules.

Debate Continued

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud on the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to speak on the amendment moved by the Member for Calgary-Currie. The member has presented, I believe, a very, very clear case. It's unfortunate that he has to make such an amendment because of a process that led to the situation he is now in. I think it points out to me very, very clearly the difficulties, the evil involved in having members sit down and start drafting out specific boundaries.

AN HON. MEMBER: There's no evil.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, call it evil; I don't care what you call it. It's no good, it's wrong, it's against fairness, it's against democracy, it's against everything that this Legislative Assembly stands for, and I detest it. It's unfortunate that the Member for Calgary-Currie is caught up in it.

The constituents of his riding are the ones that are now going to have to pay the price because elected representatives chose to

sit down and draw lines and for whatever reason – call it gerrymandering; call it whatever you want – the end result is that it translates into a constituency that is totally lopsided against one particular member to the clear, clear benefit of another member. I think that's very, very clear when one looks at the maps that are presented and the new map that was drawn for our purposes to discuss this amendment from the Member for Calgary-Currie. I'm prepared to say that it's simply a coincidence that the member that benefits, the Member for Calgary-Elbow, happens to hold the highest position within this Legislative Assembly. That, I believe, makes it that much more wrong. That makes it a greater need to scrutinize it that much closer, because when Albertans look at these types of amendments – and this isn't the only one, but this is the amendment, I think, that is classical, that is symbolic of what went wrong with the procedure.

The Member for Calgary-Currie did a good job with the map. Now, just for a minute everybody pull out their electoral boundary books and look. If everybody doesn't have theirs, think of it in your mind. Calgary-Currie. It's so obvious. We see Calgary-Elbow, the adjacent constituency, snake around here, snake around there, snake around here, picking up supposedly good Tory support here, picking up good Tory support here, supposedly good Tory support here, all at the expense of constituents in an adjacent riding; no heed to the impact on those particular constituents.

The member representing Fort McMurray that spoke yesterday in this House I think did a very, very good job of stating in very simplistic terms the consequences of allowing this procedure where individuals are allowed to draw their own lines to happen, where elected politicians sit down and say, "We're going to draw here; we're going to draw there." You have to compare that with the original process. That laid out a process that was very, very restrictive, but the attempts were made there to at least represent what they felt was fair. When you look at that and you look at what you have here in this particular situation, Albertans will look at this, and they're going to find it very, very despicable.

I thought I saw a ray of hope yesterday. Correct me if I'm wrong, and if I'm wrong, I'll apologize in advance. I believe it was the Member for Vegreville that stood up in debate to the other amendment, made by Fort McMurray – maybe it was this amendment – and talked in terms of what was wrong when elected representatives did this type of thing. I thought I saw a ray of hope over there, but lo and behold that same evening what did we see happening? Others became involved in that same process. So you see? You allow it to happen here, and then you get somebody else, the Member for Edmonton-Highlands specifically, saying: well, if they can doodle-daddle with their constituents to benefit the head honcho there, then I'm going to attempt to do the same for my riding. For some reason, maybe it was a guilt complex, lo and behold, I don't believe there were too many nays over there.

4:20

MRS. HEWES: There weren't any.

MR. WICKMAN: Maybe none. In any case, there were enough yeas that that particular one carried as well, so I have to really question the integrity in this House. I have to question when words are spoken as to how seriously they are spoken.

Point of Order Questioning a Member

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont is rising on a point of order.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering if the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud would take a question at this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's up to the hon. member.

MR. WICKMAN: No. Mr. Chairman, I'm speaking to a specific amendment dealing with the Member for Calgary-Currie. If he wants to ask me a question, certainly. But this member has nothing to do with what I'm saying to the situation with Calgary-Currie. It's ridiculous on his part to even want to start questioning me. What's he want to question me on? Taxation?

AN HON. MEMBER: You're being gutless, Percy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please. [interjections] Order.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to deal specifically with this amendment that is here in front of us. [interjection] Call it gutless. Call it whatever you want. At least there's an ounce of integrity.

MR. MARTIN: An ounce, that's about it.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, that's a hundred times more than I see coming from over there. Right?

Debate Continued

MR. WICKMAN: Now, I look at the new map presented by the Member for Calgary-Currie that he has drawn up and presented to every member within this Legislative Assembly. You all have the opportunity to study that as well. I pulled out that map as well, so you can see the difference. You can see the comparison. Now, the member has, I think, very, very, astutely, bearing in mind the betterment of the people that he represents, the people that placed him in that particular position and said, "We're putting you there because we believe you will attempt to do the right thing for us" – now, you look at that – drawn what I believe is a more sensible method of trying to distribute that population in Calgary-Currie and respecting at the same time that there is an adjacent riding. That adjacent riding of Calgary-Elbow is accommodated, not accommodated in the fashion that obviously others prefer to see it be accommodated.

I have a great deal of respect for the Member for Calgary-Currie. I would be saddened if he drew this up, participated in the debate, and then did not have the opportunity to see the entire matter through. Getting to know the individual the way I have, I believe he will. I think he is committed to a process of fairness. He has represented fairness here, and I don't see that fairness coming in too many other quarters. Now, the Member for Fort McMurray attempted to make a plea, but it went on deaf ears. It wasn't taken very, very seriously even though some very sound points were made. The difficulty that I have, Mr. Chairman, even when it comes to voting on this amendment as a member in this House, placed in this House by people from the constituency: I feel that I have a certain responsibility.

Point of Order Relevance

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member.

MR. McINNIS: I refer members to *Beauchesne* 459 with respect to relevance and repetition. The member is now taking us on a travelogue of Alberta. He has just left Calgary. He has moved to Fort McMurray and points beyond. Now, I have representations to make on behalf of the communities of Canora, High Park, Mayfield, and Britannia-Youngstown, and this Liberal filibuster is preventing me from making those representations. So I would like the member to get to the point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair would ask co-operation of all members seeing that there are time constraints and that they be sensitive to the needs of the whole committee.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, again let me point out that I did not participate in the motion of closure. It wasn't me that was advocating closure. It wasn't me that was advocating that individuals be denied the right to speak. I'm taking the opportunity to speak on something here that I feel is very, very, very important, and I don't think I should be restricted in any fashion from speaking out.

Debate Continued

MR. WICKMAN: Again, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to make very clear that this amendment we are dealing with represents very clearly an attempt to correct a matter that was very, very wrong, and it attempts to correct it by shifting boundaries in a fashion that would be more fair to the constituents of Calgary-Currie, more fair, I believe, to the constituents in Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Chairman, I do have one difficulty: in being consistent. As much as I can sympathize with the plight that the individual member is up against and as hard as he may plead in this House, I cannot support his amendment. I can't support his amendment because consistently this caucus, myself included, has not voted on any amendments that have altered the boundaries in any fashion. One can go back. Yesterday, the day before: very, very consistently we have not voted for any line amendments, because every line amendment has been presented by an elected representative. Now, if that process would have involved a method of referring this to an independent body and having that independent body review it and then come back and say, "Yes, we can agree with what the Member for Calgary-Currie said in drafting his boundaries," saying to him that he did a very good job, an excellent job, then that would be a different story. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, we're not going to get that opportunity. We're not going to get the opportunity to have that input from any other source, and I would have to speculate that other members for different reasons from my reasons will in all likelihood vote it down.

Again, as much as I sympathize with the member, and I do because it's got to be a very, very difficult situation for him – he has made it very clear that he doesn't intend to seek re-election. He's made it very clear that he's making a last stand on behalf of his constituents. He's making a last stand symbolizing what he feels is integrity, what he feels is fairness, what he feels is the spirit of democracy, what he feels is the spirit of what this Legislative Assembly is all about. It's unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that I can't sit here and say that, yes, I can wholeheartedly support that amendment and I can vote yes, because I can't vote yes.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why not?

MR. WICKMAN: I can't vote yes, because it would be wrong. You may not understand wrongness, but wrong is wrong and right is right. It is not right to vote on amendments that are drawn up

by members of a caucus. It is not right. One may not understand that, but that's his particular problem.

MR. McINNIS: Does that include your amendments?

MR. WICKMAN: We don't have any amendments that deal with line amendments, absolutely none. Mr. Chairman, to this member here that doesn't seem to understand, why did we spend – what? – \$2 million setting up a process of fairness? We threw it out because government members weren't prepared to change some legislation.

Chairman's Ruling Relevance

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Chair is going to get a little strict with the hon. member staying to this amendment. The hon. member's present comments are relating to a speech that he should have made on second reading, if he had wakened himself up at that time. The Chair would admonish the hon. member to stick to the amendment made by the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie and not to the general principle of electoral boundaries.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will in my best ability attempt to do that. I was simply trying to respond to some catcalls over here and I guess trying to educate, at the same time, as to my reasons for wanting to support not the amendment but . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has heard the hon. member's explanation, but the Chair would like to hear the hon. member get to the point of the amendment before the committee.

4:30

Debate Continued

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, the point of the amendment, and getting very specific: when you hold the two maps together and you see the amendment that the Member for Calgary-Currie has drafted up and you put it up against the proposal that came from the four-member Tory caucus that originally drew up what I referred to earlier as that snaking thing, what I'm trying to say – and I'm going to start to conclude here – is that the member for Edmonton-Currie has . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Calgary-Currie.

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, Calgary-Currie. Thank you for the intervention.

The Member for Calgary-Currie has attempted to draw these amendments in a manner which most members here would feel would be fair. Unfortunately, I as an individual cannot support the amendment because it is a line amendment drawn up by an elected representative. I regret that. I can't really apologize to the member because it's inappropriate to apologize for doing right, and I believe what I'm doing is right. I believe that in his mind he feels that what he's doing in trying to draft this amendment to honour the wishes of his constituents is right.

Mr. Chairman, for that reason, as sympathetic as I may be towards the amendment, I can't support it. So when it comes to the vote, I will be voting no to the amendment.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As my colleague for Edmonton-Whitemud has suggested, I was very impressed with the eloquent comments yesterday of the Member for Calgary-

Currie. I appreciate his intervention on behalf of his constituents. His constituency is not unlike my own constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Chairman, I'm aware that the government presented an original package to us last night, and it was defined as amendment 1. It was a package of some 10 or 12 amendments to various boundaries. I'm curious, because this amendment was not part of that package. I'm not sure I understand why this amendment was not part of that package and what the test was that whoever developed that package put to this amendment. I don't know how that package came about as something – and it was not really explained as a package that held together for any particular reason, because there were some quite substantive changes to boundaries in the sections of that package. So I have to ask the question: why was the Calgary-Currie amendment omitted? To be sure, there were some other government amendments omitted. Some of them were put forward last night. Some were passed. Some were not. We have to ask ourselves what the process was that developed that omnibus, that umbrella package: what the process was, what the criteria were, what was the checklist that put some in and left Calgary-Currie out? I haven't heard any explanation, as I move around in the corridors, about why that occurred – some passed; some didn't – because the Member for Calgary-Currie I believe made some very compelling arguments on behalf of his amendment.

[Mr. Main in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, I think we've said before on a number of occasions that this is a flawed process, and I think we're seeing little parts of the process that themselves have offered some distortion in how we're being able to make these decisions here. This is despite the best wishes and hopes of the citizens of Alberta for a fair and democratic process.

Now, I've spoken before to the fact that citizens are demanding openness and accountability, Mr. Chairman. I think the electoral process and how the boundaries are chosen is an indigenous part of that, and we have in fact let them down by what we're doing here. Dare I say that this is a case of using 18th century gerrymandering? I think that is not one that gives credit to this Assembly and certainly to individual MLAs. It seems that the government has abandoned the principles here for short-term gain. I regret that, because I think we fail one another and we fail our electorate.

Mr. Chairman, the government has failed to respond to the input that was provided by the citizens of this province on electoral boundaries. The Member for Calgary-Currie spoke most definitely to that. The government has failed to respond. Albertans expected, I believe, a fair and legitimate process conducted by an impartial source. Instead, the government resorted to a process in which elected officials decided to draw their own boundaries. This is not a change. This is not a new way; this is not new management. It's highly troubling to me, Mr. Chairman, that the government failed to listen to the views of those they are elected to represent.

Last night the Member for Calgary-Currie spoke to just that. He asked the questions, Mr. Chairman: where did these boundaries come from anyway; who on earth was it that proposed the boundaries that have appeared on the map? Nobody knows the answer to that question. They didn't come from any of the submissions that were made. They didn't come from constituents in Calgary-Currie or the surrounding constituencies. They didn't come from legitimate organizations and concerned individuals, although some of those people did in fact comment. These are

not the boundaries that in any way reflect what was said to that commission. They don't reflect anything from anybody. So we have to ask ourselves: where did they come from?

Mr. Chairman, in the original report of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries, on page 1 in the recommendations, one of the specifics is "community interests." Another one is "geographical features including existing road systems." Now, the Member for Calgary-Currie spoke to both of those. There is no question that this boundary that is being recommended here defies those characteristics. The member told us about the demographics in the constituency as they presently exist, about the pockets of seniors and people who are living on marginal incomes, about the military who were there that live close by and work at Currie Barracks. He told us about the kind of ginger group, the group of people in part of the constituency that have been able to get people motivated and get things going. Yet he was able to describe a cohesive whole that works together, that works well, that has developed some camaraderie and support for one another and has been very successful in that. He described in a good deal of detail the various projects that have been successful in Calgary-Currie and why they've been successful: because there has been concern and support between these various groups. But here comes the committee, and in spite of all that information and that knowledge, they develop a series of boundaries that in no way reflect those demographics or reflect those community interests. Now, I think that's quite shocking.

4:40

So once again we have to say: why did they do it? What are the motives, Mr. Chairman? What on earth could the motives be to do it? If they're not going with what people said to them, if they're not going with what exists in the community, then what on earth could their motives be for drawing boundaries that don't in any way reflect these various elements? Well, we have to ask ourselves: what else was involved here? The member did describe the constituency of Calgary-Elbow. That constituency is quite a different one and reflects quite a different process in how those boundaries were drawn and how the decisions were made.

Mr. Chairman, I submit that the Calgary-Currie situation is a primary example of the problems that result where a commission of MLAs sits down to draw boundaries and pays no attention to the concerns of the community or to the existing factors in the community, and that's exactly what happened.

Last night the member commented that there's a perception that urban Alberta is a monolithic whole. I agree with him that nothing could be further from the truth. I've represented my constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar for six years. My constituency has many of the same concerns as others in the province; that is, we want a high-quality education and health care system. However, these concerns are expressed from a unique perspective of the communities within my constituency, and I don't think you can simply separate the fundamental characteristics of a constituency to serve the electoral prospects of certain government members. That's fundamentally wrong, Mr. Chairman, and unacceptable in a democracy. I would remind you that the first Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries, established in 1990, recommended no MLAs responsible for their own boundaries. I think that this has given rise to exactly the problem that we've seen here.

The Liberal opposition has maintained throughout this that fairness dictates that the people of Alberta should be able to trust that electoral boundaries are drawn on the basis of population, geography, common sense, communities of interest, and demographics, not on raw partisanship. It seems in these boundaries

that have been described that it's more important to the government to have political security. Mr. Chairman, it's obvious that the government feels that partisanship is more important than fairness. I think the government has betrayed a trust here.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary-Currie notes that the boundaries for Calgary-Currie are not at all similar to the boundaries proposed for Calgary-Currie in other reports conducted in the committee and commission process over the past two years. We had a process in place that described boundaries for Calgary-Currie that were remarkably similar to what exists, that respected the various parts and elements of the community. We had that described for us, yet the committee simply walked away from that, overlooked it, ignored it, and drew up boundaries that are totally different. Once again, we have to ask: why? Not one of the boundaries – not one of the boundaries – remains consistent. Did the government listen to the concerns expressed by the constituents of Calgary-Currie which separate communities? No. The government has an agenda that it wants to follow, an agenda that is far different from that of the constituents of Calgary-Currie or the people of Alberta.

I don't think there's ever been an explanation in the House, Mr. Chairman, as to why the boundaries of the adjoining constituency of Calgary-Elbow have undergone major surgery. Why is the community of Lakeview, which has historical ties to Calgary-Currie, now included in Calgary-Elbow? What's that decision based on? Is there any evidence that the citizens in Lakeview wanted to be in Calgary-Elbow? Is there any evidence that they will be better served or that there are more natural connections to Calgary-Elbow? No way; not that I can see. Does it perhaps have something to do with the fact that the Premier of the province resides in Lakeview? Calgary-Elbow now extends an astonishing nine miles from one end to the other. So we have on the one hand a constituency that's been chopped up and separated from its own elements, and on the other hand we have one that is in a very irregular, odd-shaped boundary and extends nine miles from one end to the other perhaps to accommodate the Premier.

Mr. Chairman, I wish someone could tell me who was consulted. I wish someone could tell me why the wishes and requests of the constituents of Calgary-Currie were overlooked or set aside or ignored and overruled. I don't believe that there is a satisfactory answer. I don't believe there's an answer at all. No one has answered why the Calgary-Currie amendment was not placed within the context of amendment 1 as it should have been. No one has explained that, and I don't believe that anyone has a satisfactory answer for it. There are clearly real discrepancies here.

The Member for Fort McMurray described also eloquently his circumstances, and I think that what we see are a number of constituencies where the natural boundaries, the transportation routes have been ignored for particular political purposes.

Mr. Chairman, the Liberal opposition believes that this amendment was sincerely introduced by the Member for Calgary-Currie. I believe that Albertans have to be provided an opportunity for input on the basis of how they choose elected officials, and I think this was disregarded in this particular instance. I don't believe that we can allow a committee of government members to decide the fate of 2 and half million Albertans. I think that's an unacceptable fashion. Elected officials are servants of the people of Alberta, but this government seems to hold the opposite perception to that fact.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, no one asked for these boundaries. On the contrary. These boundaries ride roughshod over the desires and the wishes of the people of that constituency and possibly of other constituencies. No one has explained what the motives were

behind this outrageous move. No one has explained to me why this decision is allowed to fly in the face of all of the principles that were described by the select special committee; no one has explained that. This is an aberration that has intense political overtones and I think is a shame. I think it's a tragedy when we allow this kind of intervention to occur. I believe it's incumbent on all of us to adhere to those principles that were enunciated by the select special committee and to respect our electorate. That's who put us here. If we don't do that, I don't believe we should be in this House.

I thank once again the Member for Calgary-Currie for bringing this to our attention as he did. I wish I felt this were the only constituency that suffered in this fashion, but unfortunately I don't think that is the case. I thank him because I believe it took considerable courage to move in the face of what is an overwhelming juggernaut of political interference and political desire, political power gone awry.

Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry that our caucus is not in a position because of principle that we believe we can support any amendment, but I think that the member in presenting his amendment has drawn to our attention the grave responsibilities that we have in this House and how we so easily can fail those. I think it is tragic that it has to come to us in this fashion.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this matter.

4:50

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, speaking directly and narrowly and carefully to the amendment.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to speak on the issue because probably more than anyone else in the House I've been very closely tied to it. I was just calculating. I've had a home in the area for 38 years; that's a long time to live in one constituency. I would take you through all those 38 years, if you'd give me a chance. However, I think I know whereof I speak after 38 years in a constituency and raising nine children. You go to the schools, the way the traffic patterns flow, and certainly the present hon. Member for Calgary-Currie did outline the case that it had to be the identity of the communities, the identity of interests. I don't believe he mentioned, of course, where Currie got its name.

I remember moving to Calgary the first time in 1946. We stayed at the former Premier's. The Premier's brother and I were classmates in school, and when we stayed in the Mount Royal section, which is in the Calgary-Elbow area, the place we rented horses to ride was the Currie academy. Mr. Currie was an old Scotsman, Mr. Chairman, somebody you would be familiar with, who kept horses out on the west side of the constituency. Unfortunately, he wasn't fortunate enough to make a fortune out of the city growing out to take over his riding academy. Some speculator got in there first. Nevertheless, he did sell out and go on. In fact, long before Currie had gone Conservative, occasionally you would get a smell drifting in from the barns over in the Calgary-Elbow sector. Once it went Conservative, of course, we got used to the smell, and it didn't matter as much. Nevertheless, the fact is that Calgary-Currie has a history all of its own, separate from Calgary-Elbow. I remember when Calgary-Currie people wouldn't talk to Calgary-Elbow people, Mr. Chairman.

Calgary-Elbow developed out along the river. In fact, my home was built in 1911, and that neighbourhood was developed between 1910 and 1920. The old Mount Royal area is the only area in Calgary that has a permanent caveat. City council cannot

change the caveat to put multiple dwellings in the area. Consequently, it lies as an island, you might say, so totally surrounded by areas where the zoning is controlled by city council. Zoning is not controlled in the Mount Royal area, because when it was sold originally in 1905 or 1910, all lots carried with them a permanent caveat. The whole community has to vote universally together to change the zoning. So when we come up with the idea of taking that area and moving it into the Calgary-Currie area, it is something that is rather intriguing, that no one else can do. Yet we have a committee that, as far as I can see, never took its hearings back to the community.

This is one of the worst things about this committee. Nearly every committee that comes down with decisions – I'll agree the committee went out. The hon. Member for Taber-Warner went out and tried to get people to come in and talk to him. A lot of us knew it would do no good. Nevertheless, that committee did go through the process. Nearly every committee that's associated with anything like this would then take the results, put them up on a wall, leave them to be studied, circulate them as widely as possible, and then have a second set of hearings so that the public could come in and say: "Look, Mr. and Mrs. Committee Members, you may have meant well. You may have done that, but this is not the way it works." We've got committees that are not included in the whole, we have got areas that aren't in the process, yet for some reason or another this very critical process, Mr. Chairman, was left out. If it had been followed, I am sure they would have found out that the communities of Mount Royal down along the Elbow River are entirely distinct from the old Calgary-Currie area, from the Currie riding academy down to Glenmore lake.

Now, there's no doubt that if such a hearing had taken place – and it would have been easy to do – the chairman of the committee, the hon. Member for Taber-Warner, would have learned, as the Member for Calgary-Currie is trying to provide him with the information, that indeed he was trying to put two entirely different communities together. I realize, Mr. Chairman, that it's quite possible that it was due to the fact that he wanted possibly to reward the new Premier, wanted to give him a little goody of some sort, a little goody in a basket that would make it easy for him to win the election. One may even go so far as to think that possibly if the Premier had a safe seat, shall we call it – we hear about safe everything today; we might as well throw in safe seats. If he had a safe seat, he might have been able to wander at will or with impunity around the province to dig up a vote here and dig up a vote there, whereas if we'd stuck on the old system, bearing in mind that there were only 500 mistaken individuals that separated him from loss last time . . . Let's put it this way: if 251 people had changed their minds and voted Liberal, this whole necessity to gerrymander Calgary-Elbow would not have been necessary.

When we look at the gerrymandering, it's rather unique. The constituency goes like a horseshoe. Mind you, the Member for Taber-Warner had enough rural background to know that if the horseshoe faced the open side down, it would be bad luck, Mr. Chairman. He indeed turned the horseshoe open side up to make sure that it would contain any luck that the angels may wish to bestow on whoever was going to run in the new constituency. You can look the maps of Calgary and Edmonton over with the sharpest of eyes and with the most magnifying of glasses, and you will not find a constituency that wraps itself 180 degrees around another constituency. That's what you have here: a very interesting geometric pattern that could have only been invented by someone that was up to rather unusual motives. The fact that it is turned up does indeed carry another little message to the

electorate that this chairman is wishing good luck to whoever runs in that constituency, probably because he or she may need it.

5:00

Lastly, I have noticed recently, Mr. Chairman, if you need any proof that the constituency has been doctored, gerrymandered, warped, twisted, manufactured, or contrived, one only needs to look at the embarrassment of the Premier. The Premier has actually started a rumour that he's not going to accept this largess, this gift, this little package thrown to him, and he might indeed run in another constituency. Well, I'll believe that when I see it. Calgary-Buffalo, you'll notice, has a horseshoe shaped the other way, and they have a reputation for electing Liberals. So I will have my doubts if I see him going from the horseshoe shaped this way to the horseshoe shaped that way. Nevertheless, he is so embarrassed by the largess of the committee rushing forward to lay these trinkets at his feet that he is seriously thinking that he will not take advantage of running in Calgary-Elbow.

Now, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar brought up a very good point when she said: why was it not included in amendment 1? Amendment 1 was that omnibus motion put forward by – what's the new name? – the Minister of Justice. What a grandiose name for a merger. The Minister of Justice put one through last night. I mean, after all, if somebody can get away with changing a constituency's name from Spruce Grove-Sturgeon to Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, seven syllables, enough to make any speaker turn himself inside out, and forget the beautiful, glowing towns of Rivière Qui Barre, Villeneuve, and Calahoo . . .

Chairman's Ruling Relevance

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. member. The committee is impressed by your knowledge of geography, but we are dealing with a Calgary amendment.

MR. TAYLOR: That's right. I'm glad you brought that up, Mr. Chairman. I was moving with speed towards that point but with a glacial slowness, I suppose.

Debate Continued

MR. TAYLOR: What I wanted to get across was that the hon. member did not include the changes to Calgary-Currie in that omnibus amendment, yet he included something so silly as a seven-syllable name and forgot a number of the other areas. The height of arrogance. He figured if you lived in St. Albert or Spruce Grove, the rest of the people didn't matter.

Nevertheless, obviously there had been work, there had been some thinking, because this was an omnibus amendment, Mr. Chairman, and that omnibus amendment put forward must have meant that there was some consultation. There was some committee, there was some envisionable tribunal that lurked behind the purple and orange curtain which came up with the decision as to which amendments would get holy water sprinkled on them and be put forward as a fait accompli to the House, and other amendments were stroked out. It is bad enough that this government put a committee together to draw boundaries around this province that was a hundred percent Conservative and, of course, then invited us to join it, provided they had more votes than all the rest of us combined. You can imagine what kind of an invitation that was. Anyhow, that committee at least occasionally met in public.

We had a committee that resulted in the Minister of Justice's motion last night that was really secret, a real tight caucus. It might have been a court of the Star Chamber, Mr. Chairman,

whatever it was that set to work with the sole idea of carving up what had already been carved up. In other words, the Member for Taber-Warner brought in the turkey, but then a secret committee within the caucus decided which turkeys were going to eat what. In other words, talk about a secret committee.

I would like to know what system they used to reject, for instance, the hon. Member for Fort McMurray's decision, a very noble one, one worked out by a man that knew his constituency, Mr. Chairman, a man that knew what he was talking about, but somehow or another cast aside, left out on the edge, and then something coming in like Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, something that took a great deal of thought and movement. Why would they throw out Fort McMurray, something that was based very well?

On the other hand, the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest also must have brought into committee – it's quite possible that the Member for Fort McMurray and the member for Pincher Creek didn't know where this committee met. It would be interesting. It must have been some secret committee that put through this omnibus set of amendments last night. I think you can go through it. What was there? Ten? Or were there 11 amendments?

MR. BRUSEKER: Twenty.

MR. TAYLOR: Twenty amendments. The hon. Member for Calgary-North West says that it's 20 amendments.

Twenty amendments were able to get through and be changed. Why weren't the others changed? My friend the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew's constituency: he's given them good representation, but I think they want superb representation, so I will probably move over there and run. Why was his amendment turned down?

What I'm trying to get at, Mr. Chairman, is that a number of these amendments were okay; they went through somehow or another. They were approved. Why, when the hon. Member for Fort McMurray's was almost laughed at, and he gave one of the better ones I've ever seen? The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie has explained why Currie should not be butchered, if you want to call it, or changed in order to make a safe seat for the Premier, a seat that's so safe that now maybe the Premier's wondering whether he should take it.

Now, when you put all these together and then operating in the dark, you have to examine the process very, very closely indeed, Mr. Chairman.

As I move on south, I've explained to you that an area I lived in for many years, Mount Royal, a community that is very closely associated with the Calgary-Elbow region, had no reason to be moved over. I can move on down the river valley and see some other areas that seem to have no reason whatsoever. As a matter of fact, Calgary-Elbow now wanders down all the way into part of the Oakridge area, areas of Calgary that don't seem to make sense at all.

There's no reason, Mr. Chairman, that constituencies, as the old map will show, can't be as equal in size or as square or rectangular as possible. There's no reason that they have to wander around the country. You can see sometimes rurally where someone will put a boundary along a river and maybe an adjoining creek, but to take something as old – and again, this is one of the older communities in western Canada – there was no need. I wouldn't say that the Member for Taber-Warner took a scalpel; he took a hatchet and split in twain one of the oldest communities in Calgary in order to give a safe seat or what he thought was a safe seat to whoever was going to run, and it later turns out to be the leader of the Conservative Party.

I'd like to conclude with a final working thought. [interjections] Don't get enthused and start clapping yet. After all, the conclusion will take time. I come from the era of William Jennings Bryan, who could speak for about three hours, Mr. Chairman.

I want to get right to the point, to bring it right in tight and point out that even the LRT line should be a natural feed-in from any city, any large community. People get out and settle and work, meet, love, and play along the LRT lines, but we ignored the LRT line. It went down the old LRT? No, it went across the grain; no LRT communications. I defy anybody that were to move to Calgary tomorrow to jump on a bus and try to ride across Calgary-Elbow. You'd probably have to transfer about eight times. Maybe not eight; I'll get it down to six times.

5:10

The point is that there's been no effort whatsoever made, Mr. Chairman, to try to have a community of interests. Indeed, the national leader of the party that the Premier now says he hasn't gone to bed with, that they're just friendly with – I still say if it walks like a duck and looks like a duck, it probably is a duck. I think they have got in bed. The point of the matter is that one of the past national leaders of that party said a community of communities, and this is what's happened here. It's been taken literally by Taber-Warner, and they put together a community of communities here, whereas we really only need a community.

The last thought I'd like to leave him with is how in the dickens, how in the world could we have a system put together whereby we took a community that was started around 1910, has a history going back to 1910, and somehow or another chop it in two and graft it onto communities that have just been built in the last few years?

No, Mr. Chairman, it's a sad day for this House when a member for that community, as well as a member for Fort McMurray and a member for Crowsnest Pass, have had their thoughts just thrown aside by some behind-the-curtain insiders, a cosy little group that decided which amendments would go and which would not.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place on the Calgary-Currie amendment.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has come to nearly the end of the time allotted to debate this Bill in committee. There certainly are things that can be said about the situation in Calgary-Currie and Calgary-Elbow – the two are closely related – because it does in many, many ways encapsulate the difficulty that we're in as members in this Assembly today. We're at the end of a lengthy process which has been frustrating for a wide variety of reasons. Those have been debated, I suppose, in each of the individual steps along the way – the Legislature committee, the commission, the second Legislature committee – and now here we are today at the end of the time that we have to speak in committee.

It is interesting that this motion comes forward the way it does. I recall that the Premier said publicly that the matter of these two boundaries had vexed him politically and he was quite prepared to throw the matter to the caucus to decide. Now, it would seem that caucuses are probably not the best forum for sorting out these kinds of things between members. In fact, I think that's a point that's been made on numerous occasions in this debate, that having people who are practising politicians, for lack of a better term, draw these lines leads to difficulties. A difficulty has arisen between two members, and there's an amendment that's right here

before us that reflects the concern of one of those hon. members that the boundaries chosen don't reflect the will of his constituents.

Mr. Chairman, I think a lot of us get representation from people who feel that the boundaries as proposed in this Bill are not in their particular interests, and I think the reason for that is very clear. The process that got these boundaries before us today did not involve the public in a direct way, and I guess that's the problem. So here we are at the very end of the time allotted to debate an amendment in committee, and we have a lot of community concerns that are unresolved. The Member for Calgary-Currie outlined some of them. He said that this riding, Calgary-Currie, has never gone so far as the bank of the Bow River in the past. I believe he said that it's never before gone north of 17th Avenue. That's a major change, and that affects community interest. The member stated that he had received representations from people who were affected.

Well, you know, we're all in that boat, Mr. Chairman. I've received representations, and I would dearly love an opportunity to have those addressed in the committee and perhaps even resolved, but that opportunity has been taken from me for two reasons. Now, the first is obvious: the fact that the government moved a closure motion today so that we can't go beyond the adjournment hour. The second is equally important: the Liberals filibustered this thing all afternoon so that we could not get other community concerns on the record. I don't know why they did that. Maybe they have received community representations that they're having difficulty processing. They don't know whether to support them or not. Well, if that's their problem, why are they filibustering so that we can't present our concerns here today? And why is it they haven't been here filibustering - I mean debating - this Bill in the second reading stage? What have they been doing? Have they been off raising money? Have they been in eastern Canada bagging money? What have they been doing? I don't know. They come here, in this precious hour and a half that we have this afternoon, and they blow smoke about things they know nothing about. They take us on a travelogue around the province.

I would like to relate this specifically, Mr. Chairman, to the amendment that's before the House today, because I think it's a very important one. You have two ridings that are affected by the amendment, one being Calgary-Currie and the other being Calgary-Elbow. Now, I recall that some of the news media outlets posited the before and after shot of Calgary-Elbow. The before shot looked a little like any other riding district, with kind of regular-shaped boundaries. I guess Calgary-Elbow looks like a cross between two dragons fighting and Italy squashed flat. It's one of those two; I'm not sure which. It is a somewhat irregular shape. As I understand the amendment that's proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, he's trying to make more regular shapes out of both of them, and he's trying to do so on the basis of representations he has received from the community. Well, I think it's good that the member has had an opportunity to bring those representations forward. I think it's a very suitable and fitting thing. I only wish other members could have that opportunity as well, but unfortunately that's not the situation we're in today. The situation that we're in today is that the Liberals have used up all of the time on this particular amendment so that nobody else can bring those forward.

Much of the debate surrounds the community of Upper Mount Royal, an area which many members of this Assembly are conversant with. It's one of the more traditional, stately, and beautiful areas of the city. The difference of opinion, if I can put it that way, between the hon. members who are affected and who are involved in this process is whether the Upper Mount Royal

district should be within the Calgary-Elbow area or within the Calgary-Currie area. That's a question that I guess the member has posed here. Now, it is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that the Upper Mount Royal district has been in Calgary-Elbow for a very long time, that that's the defining characteristic, if you like, of the Calgary-Elbow riding. Now that has been moved into Calgary-Currie, and the amendment before us today is to move that back.

Now, I believe that the Member for Calgary-Currie is a good member of this Assembly, and he has been during his time a very good minister. He has been very responsive in the consumer and corporate affairs portfolio to concerns that I've brought forward from my constituents. So I believe that when he brings this representation before the committee today, he does so not out of a narrow and partisan self-interest but out of a concern for people who have made representations to him. Now, what else is it that we do in this Assembly if we don't respond to those concerns that come directly from our constituents?

There are 83 of us in this Chamber, and each represents a geographically distinct area. That's very important. We don't have two-member ridings or four-member ridings. We don't have what we used to have in the city of Edmonton, where the whole city was one at-large district. We have individual single-member constituencies. Now, there are distortions in that system. It tends to artificially inflate the size of government majorities. We have a government today with an absolutely massive majority in the Assembly but no majority within the popular vote. That's one of the functions of single-member, first past the post. There are distortions sometimes in urban versus rural, north versus south, developed versus undeveloped, differences in the task, but each and every one of us in this Assembly is responsible for one group of people. Every Albertan in the province has one, and only one, MLA.

5:20

I happen to have as one of my constituents today the former Premier of Alberta, who happens to be the Member for Stettler. Now, I haven't seen a lot of him lately. I think I saw him on Saturday evening driving a late-model Lincoln. He must have purchased that car recently, perhaps from government surplus. My point is that I am that person's MLA, and I am the one person who can represent him politically. Now, if he were here, he could probably represent himself politically, but if he doesn't come to the Chamber, he can contact me and I will attempt to represent him, because that is his due. It's very important that the Member for Calgary-Currie, when he comes forward with an amendment such as this one, be listened to, because he is reflecting the views of his existing constituents. Were it only the case that others of us had the opportunity to do that. We can complain about the process all we like; the fact is that at the end of the day today, when this matter is voted upon, the committee study will close. We'll be on to the next reading, and the window of opportunity will have shut on the process. Since that is the case, I think it's very important that we make use of the time that is available.

My understanding of the sequencing of amendments is I guess similar to the hon. Liberal House leader's, who raises a question of what order amendments are presented to this Assembly in. It seems that some of the amendments were grouped into one large group of amendments, and since they were government amendments, it's logical that they were brought in first. The one that's before us today is marked number 18. Now, we have quite a number of other amendments that have been issued and brought forth and they have different numbers as well, so I too have

questions as to the order in which these particular amendments were brought forward. I do think that the representations that have been made by the Member for Calgary-Currie are relevant to the proceedings today.

Now, there's another side to his amendment. I mentioned that he wants to take the Upper Mount Royal district, which has traditionally voted Liberal. Now, I've heard people say these are Liberal polls, and some people are upset because Liberal polls are being moved from riding to riding. I don't think anybody can say that a poll belongs to any political party. I think it's awfully presumptuous, especially for the Liberals to talk about these as being Liberal polls. They might have been in the last election and the election before that, but the election to come is a very different matter.

AN HON. MEMBER: How do you know, John?

MR. McINNIS: How do I know what's going to happen in the next election?

AN HON. MEMBER: How do you know it's a different matter?

MR. McINNIS: How do I know it's a different matter? If the member asks an intelligent question, I'll try to address it.

What happens in the next election is a far different matter than what's happened in the last elections or, for that matter, what we think might happen in the next election.

The other part of the amendment, as I understand it, is to extend the proposed Calgary-Currie farther to the west so that it takes in territory in the vicinity and beyond Glenmore Trail, also a very beautiful part of Calgary. The effect of that would be to regularize the shape of both constituencies so that Calgary-Currie would assume a more regular type of shape and Calgary-Elbow would assume a more regular type of shape, because as I . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, hon. member. It's with deep regret that I interrupt you, but I'm looking at Standing Order 4(2) and also Standing Order 59 that prescribe that we adjourn at 5:30 on this day. Therefore, the committee must deal with the matters before it, the amendments and the title and preamble of the Bill and so forth. So I apologize for having to interrupt you.

The committee has before it an amendment proposed by the Member for Calgary-Currie. Is the committee now prepared for the question on the amendment?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On the Bill.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 55 as amended agreed to]

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 55 be reported as amended.

[Motion carried]

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Parkallen.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration and reports with some amendments the following: Bill 55, Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act, 1993.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? It is so ordered.

[At 5:27 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]