

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, February 11, 1993**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 93/02/11

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Be seated, please.

Before proceeding this evening, the Chair would like to note in the members' gallery Mr. and Mrs. Frank Appleby. Mr. Appleby is a former Deputy Speaker. I'd like to express our welcome to them.

The hon. Deputy Premier.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I proceed with Motion 37, it was my hope that I would have had an opportunity to introduce Mr. and Mrs. Frank Appleby. We all know that Mr. Appleby served the people of his constituency. He was elected, first of all, in 1971, re-elected again in 1975 and in '79 and in 1982. There are two parliamentarians in the history of elections in the province of Alberta that have been elected in four subsequent elections and have received more votes in all four of them. Mr. Appleby is one of those. He's here with his wife, Dorothy, tonight.

head: **Government Motions**
Winter Recess

37. Moved by Mr. Kowalski:

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.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure tonight to move Motion 37. Thank you, sir.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I too wanted the pleasure of introducing Mr. and Mrs. Appleby to the Assembly this evening. It seems we're all anxious to do that. I recall the times that he was here in the Assembly, but I recall more recently when the Member for West Yellowhead and I were at a function of the Fish and Game Association in Athabasca. Mr. Appleby was a very gracious MC that evening. He introduced both of us. I was the guest speaker, and the Member for West Yellowhead was there as well. I recall that he was introducing the member, who lived in that area at one time, in glowing terms for the work he'd done with the volunteer fire department, about how he'd single-handedly saved the grain elevator and he'd done many wonderful things. The member sat there and grinned through the entire thing and took all of the accolades. At the end of it he whispered under his breath and said: I was never in the volunteer fire department. Anyway, it was a great introduction, just a wonderful introduction.

The motion before us to reconvene the Assembly when the government gets around to deciding it is, I guess, the traditional one at the end of a session, and it must be a sign that the end of the session is near. I suppose traditionally these things go through fairly quickly, but I don't think there's anything traditional about the times or the proceedings at all. This is now the third sitting of the Fourth Session of the 22nd Legislature, and it's been an interesting one in the sense that we've had some specific things to do. We've had a lengthy and difficult debate over electoral

boundaries, not yet concluded. We've also had an interim supply Bill in the amount of \$400 million.

I am concerned, as I think many Albertans are. We're not quite sure where this government is heading after this first set of legislative Acts, which appear in one way to clear the decks for the possibility of an early election, but the Premier's on record today as saying that, well, maybe there won't be such an early election. We've been tracking these things. It's gone quite a lot of distance in a short period of time. Before he was elected, I believe he said that it would be at least 15 months before there was an election, and that got shortened to about eight months the next time he spoke about it. Then shortly after that the Leader of the Opposition received a letter saying that, well, it actually could be anytime the Chief Electoral Officer signifies his readiness. I guess now we're back to a somewhat more extended period of time.

I think that's one area, alongside many others, where Albertans want to know from the government what's the plan. What is it that this government intends to do? Why is this government different? I think it takes a little more than a change of a few faces to convince people that change is in the offing. I think people would like to have some idea of what's going to unfold in the next little while.

We do know that the government is interested in gathering information; that much we know. We know they're polling, because the Premier pulled one out of his briefcase the other day in response to the leaked Liberal poll, which he didn't think accurately reflected the views. Personally, I think that both political parties are rather too obsessed with what's in the polls rather than what's needed by Albertans. We know that they're interested in that type of information. We know that they're interested in having a public perception that they're willing to consult. We have a series of meetings that are planned in these buildings over the next several weeks, where people come and hear what the departments think they're doing and try to give the ministers an earful of what they think should be done. So we know that they're interested in gathering information. I think the more pertinent question is whether they're interested in doing anything, whether they're really interested in making change. It seems to me that change was an important part of the promise that was put forward by the present Premier.

Another thing that has been remarkable about this session is that some near records have been set for nonattendance on the part of a number of people. I won't dwell on that, except to say that two of the three party leaders were away nearly as much as they were here in terms of days, and that I don't think is what Albertans are looking for in terms of performance going into the next provincial election.

James Carvelle will probably be famous in history for a poster that he put up in the Bill Clinton campaign early on: it's the economy, stupid. James Carvelle, if he were here, would want to know what this government is going to do about the economy. I sure do. I mean, there are quite a large number of people who are presently out of work and many others who are very concerned about the future. I think it's certainly the case that people would want this government to say something relevant and something soon about the question of jobs in our economy, because we have today very little idea from this government about jobs.

We know that they want to cut jobs in the public service, because they've offered a bonus for people who will resign their positions. It's ironic that today the Premier is fretting in the public media about how public servants won't take the resignation bonus on account of the changes that have been made in unemployment insurance. Because of the new rule of the Mulroney

government that you can't collect UIC, that you're ineligible if you quit your job, they're afraid a lot of people won't quit. Well, you know, we would like to know why that issue wasn't raised when he met with the Prime Minister last week. Instead he was talking about campaigning for the local PC candidate in his riding.

We know that jobs are being cut in the health care sector, in the health care industry. We know that there's uncertainty in a lot of areas, yet there is no hint of a jobs program and no hint of when we're going to get a jobs program. We in the opposition have been saying for a very long time that if you look to the future, you'll see environmentally friendly industries involving small businesses and products that are perceived that way, that there is an economy coming that's based on better-lasting products that can be maintained and serviced locally with local labour rather than things being shipped halfway around the world and thrown away or into landfills once they're done.

There is a potential in recycling industries, yet there is no recycling program for the province of Alberta. The one that exists in the city of Edmonton is under attack due to lack of funds. The first and best chance that I recall for us to develop a new recycling industry was when two Alberta companies won a competition a year ago on what to do with our 2 and a half million disused, discarded tires every year. They won the competition fair and square as judged by not only a technical committee of experts but also an advisory committee of stakeholders, to use that overused term, and the cabinet as well. They convinced all three, but somehow between the pillar and the post the whole thing's fallen on the ground. All of a sudden we're not recycling anymore; we're going to be incinerating the tires.

It's the key dilemma, what we do with discarded products. In the past the thing to do has been to landfill them. Instinctively, people know it's a terrible thing to use up resources quickly and then bury them in the ground. For one thing, you can't find places to put them anymore. So we're moving away from that. The key dilemma today is between recycling and incineration, and the first chance this government gets to show which way it's heading, it goes towards incineration. That doesn't bode very well. There are no jobs in incinerating tires. There are jobs in recycling. The Minister of Environmental Protection knows this, but he continues to back the decision to incinerate.

8:10

The rest of the world is discovering that clear-cut logging is an environmentally destructive method of timber harvesting. It's the least job-producing method. In the United States clear-cutting is banned today as the choice method of harvesting. You have to meet stringent criteria. Here we have fellers, bunchers, delimiters that harvest 24 hours a day using clear-cut technology in areas where we don't know the effect of that type of logging, and we're not getting the kinds of jobs out of those industries that we need. I think it's . . .

Point of Order Items Not Debatable

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, this is rather interesting. What I moved this evening was an adjournment motion, and I would direct the Speaker to Standing Order 18(2), "All other motions, including adjournment motions, shall be decided without debate or amendment." I gather that my colleague, the hon. Member for

Edmonton-Jasper Place, rose to provide introductory remarks to the former MLA for Athabasca, but I think he swayed away from his introductory remarks about seven minutes ago. I repeat that Standing Order 18(2) is very clear, sir. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair would like to refer the hon. Government House Leader to Standing Order 18(1)(f):

The following motions are debatable: every motion . . .
(f) for the adjournment of the Assembly when made for the purpose of . . .

Oh, excuse me. I guess I should have read it.

MR. McINNIS: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is not an adjournment motion. This is a motion which grants authority to the Speaker to reconvene the session. An adjournment motion is when we adjourn. We're not adjourning. We're going to pass this motion, and we're going to go on to do other business this evening. The effect of passage of this motion would not be the adjournment of the House; therefore, it cannot possibly be an adjournment motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, the Chair does agree with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. The Chair well remembers other occasions of a similar nature when we have gotten into a somewhat protracted debate on the adjournment of the House to another time in the future.

Debate Continued

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assure the House that I'm not going to enter a protracted debate. I'm merely making the point that this government should not be able to sneak out of this Assembly without declaring what its economic plans are for the future, because the people of this province are in need and they're looking to this government for leadership. They recognize that there's been a change at the top, and they would like to see some real change following from that change at the top.

I also would like to mention the area of public works, because I think that we need to look to building our infrastructure in the future as we look towards the future economy. I think we need to think about making sure that our municipalities are in a position to foster economic growth, that they have within them the technical capabilities, the physical structure to provide the kind of economic leadership that they need in their areas. I think that in future local municipalities will be the engines of economic growth. People will make decisions about the kind of future they want, and they'll go out and get it.

I think also we need to think in this province about investing in our people, investing in the human capital or the human infrastructure, making sure that our work force today and in the future is not only well skilled to do jobs but understands and knows how to learn and relearn as time goes on. It's one thing to know a trade and a skill, but it's quite another to be able to learn new skills and new trades and embrace new ideas as they come along. We believe on this side of the House that our education system is in need of some reform, in need of some leadership and direction, and again, that's not been forthcoming from the government in this session of the Legislature.

The motion before us, Motion 37, says that, well, we're going to go away and we're going to think about things and we're going to analyze things and maybe come back at you later on with a new session or maybe not. That is simply not good enough. What I'm saying today is that we have to look in the area of what we're going to do in the economy, and we have to try and build those

foundations. There's an expectation that this government is going to do something or ought to do something, but to date it really has done nothing more than stall for time. The concern is that Motion 37 is just another device to stall further for time. It's just not good enough today.

We need a plan. Where is the plan? I think when that time comes, that day of reckoning when all the members of this Assembly present and future stand before the people to be judged and to ask to come back here, those who want to, people will be asking, "Who has a plan?" I think they'll find that the New Democrats do have a plan for Alberta, a plan for jobs, a plan for educational reform, a plan to deal with crime at the street and community levels. Those are the things that are important and the things that have been missing from the performance of this government to date and that are missing in a motion which says that we should simply adjourn and call back whenever the government feels like it has something.

Thank you.

MR. MAIN: Now, Mr. Speaker, because this is a debatable motion and because there should be two sides of the issue on the record for public consumption, I think it's important that someone from the government side speak to the motion and try to move this quickly to a question, but I cannot go much further without making an observation that concerns me deeply with regard to the collective health of both the Liberal and the New Democrat opposition. I've come to see over the last couple of weeks a rampant case of virulent and obviously very highly contagious filibusteritis, the chief symptom of which is you cannot let two hours pass without making a half-hour speech on nothing. It concerns me.

The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place – a gentleman for whom I have high regard, a gentleman for whom I hope, after the next election when his current leader is no longer the Leader of the Opposition, is in fact the leader of the third party, that there will be a leadership contest there and that he will throw his hat into the ring and join the Member for Vegreville and the Member for Edmonton-Highlands and perhaps the mayor of Edmonton in the quest to be the leader of the third party post the next election.

Mr. Speaker, we can't get there until we deal with the matters before us, the important legislative matters that the members of the NDP opposition and the Liberal opposition have spent literally hours debating ad nauseam, repeating point after point after point to delay the government from moving ahead on the plan that they so much tonight are saying they want us to move ahead on. You can't build plans and get to work and do all the things when you're in question period and debating here till the wee small hours of the night on motions and filibusters and all the rest of it. It's just not fair.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge that members of the Assembly would take matters into their hands tonight, deal with the motion, pass it, then move on to the piece of legislation that's before us, deal with that, pass it, get into tomorrow, get the Bills passed, get them in place. Let us get on with producing the agenda that he so urgently requires, and let us do the job that the folks have hired us to do, which is to work for them.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Parkallen mentioned that there were two sides to the argument. In this House, I'd like to remind him, it's three sides. It's much like the Speaker's hat, hon. member. There

are three corners to every argument. He must be a member that's very acquainted with the Good Book because in a short while he went off into prophecy and revelation and saw his vision of the apocalypse coming down in the years ahead as to who would lead what party and so on. Someday I might be prevailed upon to ask him a little bit more of what he sees in the Good Book, but he's been so bad at forecasting in the past that I don't know if he'll be any good as a prophet in the future. Of course, as is often said, a prophet is without honour in his own country. Certainly he's been without honour in his own party; he's shown that. I'm just referring to the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen. The Deputy Premier had a quizzical look. Well, I would never accuse him of reading the Good Book. I don't think he knows what it is. [interjection] Somebody said that when they saw that there were six chapters on St. Paul and nothing on Vegreville, he threw it away.

8:20

I think this government has had time to show a change, to show that if there was indeed a change – like the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place I am disappointed that they didn't come forward with something more. That old story about the elephant labouring long and hard and coming forward with a mouse is certainly very appropriate here. I think what you're seeing, Mr. Speaker, is a government that thought that when they changed the leadership, they would be able to show change. Consequently, they talked about going until fall or late summer in order to show change. Now, what we see is a desperate run on their side through closure and every other method to try to bring things to a close, to try to get an election in a hurry before the public wakes up and realizes that all that's happened is that the driver of the getaway car has been changed. It's still the same old gang in the back seat. They don't want that to come through to the public, so consequently there's a hurry to try to move everything along to come up with an election.

We look at the front bench: the same old ministers. The same ones that were pulling the strings before are pulling the strings now. They've done their best, Mr. Speaker, to bury the corpse, but like many a murderer they didn't bury it deep enough. The arms stick out. Maybe, as a matter of fact, they even start to smell a little: NovAtel, Gainers, MagCan, Myrias, GSR. You can go ad infinitum. Those are all different parts of the same corpse that they thought they had buried and kicked enough dirt over the top of so that the public wouldn't hear about it. Not only did we find that indeed it wasn't buried, in spite of the orders of the Deputy Premier to call out the whip on the committee investigating NovAtel, but it leaked through that very little, if anything, was done.

The only part of this party that looks good and looks at all acceptable is possibly the fact that the Deputy Speaker is so genial and so cognizant and so knowledgeable about his duties that even the Deputy Premier wasn't able to try to pull a Sandy tonight. No, I think there were many things that we wanted to hear instead of this headlong rush for an election, Mr. Speaker, before the public wakes up. This hope, somehow or another, that the people aren't wise to the fact that the Premier is nothing more than a cover-up for two or three on the front bench on either side – I won't even name them.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member, despite his kind words about the Chair, should know that the word "cover-up" is not parliamentary. He should withdraw that.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry. Actually I take the word "cover-up" back for two reasons. Not only is it unparliamentary, which I'm glad you reminded me, but this party is incapable of covering up anything that they've done in the past to the extent that it's been so bad. It's impossible for him to do a cover-up, so I won't use the word. You're quite correct, Mr. Speaker.

Debate Continued

MR. TAYLOR: We should have heard something in this session about job creation. All we've heard about is a little bit of increase in tourism, as we send off some deserving members of the back bench on tours of the world. Even that would have had a bright light to it, Mr. Speaker, if they'd have informed the electorate that it was only a one-way ticket and there was no way they could get back.

Point of Order Relevance

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Deputy Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This debate is extremely interesting, and it's broadening my horizons, certainly. However, I do refer to 459 of *Beauchesne* on the issue of relevance. Albeit I've been absolutely spellbound by the rhetoric of the member opposite, I've been trying to read through Motion 37 and find any reference to anything that the hon. member has stated since he rose to speak. I'm afraid I haven't been able to find that. We're certainly speaking in Motion 37 of time and timeliness. At this particular point in time I think the most timely thing we could do would be to adjourn this debate and get on to the much more important issues of Bill 55 and, if time allows, Bill 56. These are the matters for which this Assembly was brought together some three weeks ago. I would appreciate your good counsel on whether you feel that the representations by the member opposite are relevant to anything in Motion 37.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West on the point of order.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Banff-Cochrane quotes 459, and part of it says, "the Speaker has frequently admonished Members who have strayed in debate," but if we look at the beginning of that particular citation, it says, "Relevance is not easy to define." When we look at Motion 37, the motion suggests that there is some reason why we should be adjourning. There's an implication in the motion put forward by the hon. Deputy Premier that there's reason for us to now stand adjourned. As I listen to my most learned and eloquent colleague from Westlock-Sturgeon, I believe he was speaking in opposition to the motion and he was providing reasons why we should not be adjourning this particular Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, all you have to do is look at the breadth and scope and size of our Orders of the Day and the many things that still stand on our Orders of the Day. It seems to me that in speaking to this particular motion asking us to adjourn and in talking about why we should not be adjourning, we have a considerable number of things that we should and could be talking about, why we should not be adjourning. Why, when we look at the long list of motions, when we look at the unfinished business of this House, there is lots yet for us to debate, and I think that's the matter to which my honourable colleague was speaking.

Debate Continued

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, on the motion.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the ruling. Certainly, as my colleague said, there are so many things to go over. I mean, the nerve, the gall of somebody wanting to adjourn the Legislature when we've got literally pages and pages and pages that have been put aside and that will die on the Order Paper. People along the front bench over there are being paid salaries that amount to a hundred thousand dollars a crack with the expenses. You get to a million dollars before you're down to the minister of agriculture, and they have the nerve to say, "Let's adjourn; we've got nothing to do." Put up the white flag if they want to and say, "Enough is enough; we can't think of anything," but for gosh sakes, don't say that we don't have anything to discuss. How far can they go? I mean, move closure in order to try to get back and try to cut short maybe something like the boundaries thing.

After all, we've heard nothing on job creation. If you go out through the communities here – and it's not whether or not the Premier is a good guy to split a malt with or whether the Deputy Premier should be left solely in charge of the lottery funds or whether it's a gigantic lottery as to whether or not you're going to be unlucky enough to end up with the Deputy Premier again. Life is a lottery, but when we stop and look at the issues that are going through the community today, it's job creation. Nearly every home out there has someone without a job, someone that's back living with mom and dad, sometimes with grandpa and grandma, because they've come to the city or been out working in the oil patch or somewhere and they can't get a job. Yet the Deputy Premier has the nerve just because he gave a quarter million dollars to his own golf club and just because he has a bank note company making tickets in his town to presume that that type of largess and prosperity and job-making is spread throughout Alberta. It isn't, and they haven't discussed it at all. Here it is, page after page after page.

We can look at the whole health field. People are worried indeed because of the threats and talks about cutting, that maybe their mother, their dad, some of their loved ones that are having trouble getting hospital care will not be handled, will not be covered. They've got every right to worry about that. What have we done about the Michener Centre Act, for instance, brought on by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, a man I have a great deal of respect for? I know he was moved when he brought that Bill forward. He wanted to see things corrected, things done, but no, it will die on the Order Paper. They ignore their own back bench, Mr. Speaker. It'd be a travesty. If the public only knew about it, they'd rise up with a hue and cry and maybe move them out, like mob justice. The Member for Olds-Didsbury sees his Michener Act, a very good Act, die on the Order Paper. How could that come about?

8:30

The Franchises Act, put forward by the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie: what kind of thanks did he get, Mr. Speaker? His seat was grabbed right out from under him, like mine could be if I wasn't watching. It just disappeared. Told to go on a trip he knows not where, and he knows not where he'll sit when he gets back. He had the Franchises Act. Very, very important for the economy of this province: it would have created jobs right and left.

We go to the Public Sector Pension Plans Act by the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey. Somehow or another we couldn't take up the time or the trouble to work out a pension for these people that have devoted their lives to trying to keep those people out of trouble, but they can look after their own pension. They can double-dip; they can triple-dip, but when it comes to the public sector, let them eat cake. No, Mr. Speaker. They had the nerve to move to adjourn, to say they have nothing to discuss. I mean, it's shocking.

The Municipal Government Act, pushed forward by the hon. Member for . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Dunvegan.

MR. TAYLOR: Yeah. Thank you very much. You've helped me out.

Well, what's happened to that? I'm wondering about it, because this is an Act that deserves to die. Maybe they should have had the courage to withdraw it, not leave it smelling on the paper because nobody will support it.

We can go on and on and on. I've just done a part of this page. The hon. Member for Barrhead has the nerve to suggest that we should adjourn, Mr. Speaker. As I say, a million dollars I can count before I've even got down to the bottom of the row, a million dollars we're spending per year, and this is the type of government we get. We got a momentous movement yesterday. My friend the honorary bullfrog, or the hon. Member for St. Albert, got up and moved that the title "St. Albert" should be added to the question of boundaries. Well, I know it was great and momentous; it was one of the 55. As only the hon. member did, when he stood up and spoke, you could hear the rafters shake. You could hear God looking down on the Chamber. You knew something of great moment was coming through. What was it? Spruce Grove-Sturgeon has been changed to Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. That will go over big in downtown Smoky Lake. I could take that up and down, and I know that they'll run into the streets throwing their hats in the air, shouting hosannas because the Minister of Justice remembered to add St. Albert. No, it's really interesting indeed, and this Deputy Premier has the nerve to suggest that we should get on, that we should adjourn. No, it's very hard to tell indeed, Mr. Speaker, where it comes from.

In all the years I've been in this Legislature, I've never seen such a peculiar motion. I guess all I can say is that he's a novice at the job. He's used to distributing largess from our lottery funds, where people bow down and slap the ground as he comes into town as he gives out his little bags of gold. He didn't have a chance to think this one through. So that's all. I just feel sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. SIGURDSON: As tempted as I am to enter debate tonight, Mr. Speaker, I just move that we put the question.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling the business for the evening, might we have unanimous consent to revert to the Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a couple of guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce: a longtime and dear friend of mine, Sam Properzi. Sam, please stand up and take a bow. Before you greet him, I would like to also introduce the person beside him, John Day, who drew up a rather extensive reorganization of the boundaries north of the North Saskatchewan River in the north half of Edmonton which makes a lot more sense than the government's proposal. I think they both deserve to be welcomed to the Assembly.

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

Bill 55

Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act, 1993

MR. FOWLER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not want to decrease the time available for further scintillating, challenging, thought-provoking, brilliant, and spellbinding debate on the Bill at hand. Therefore, I will not do much more than move it in a moment. Before I do, I want to say to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, who indicated earlier that they didn't know where we were going, to, as the new Premier says, stay tuned, and as I say, don't move that dial, or you will miss where we're going and where we have been.

In respect to the good people of Alberta, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has indicated that the public sleeps or they haven't woken up yet. I do not believe that to be the case at all.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to move third reading of Bill 55.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped to have had a more spirited defence of Bill 55 from the hon. mover of the Bill, but that might in and of itself speak volumes.

If the events of the last two weeks are not enough to convince the government of the folly of the process that they've embarked on, to draw up Bill 55 and to pass it, then I'm sure that my few words tonight won't convince them either. I still feel that it's important to put a number of observations onto the public record as this Bill draws to a close and to final approval.

The actions of this government, Mr. Speaker, are more of a repudiation of this Bill than anything that I could say. The process was so bad that even responsible attempts to correct the errors contained within the Bill – honest, responsible actions – have themselves also been discredited by the process.

Now, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Parkallen had talked about the long delay that the opposition has created for the government from moving ahead because of the debate and the spirited defence of our position that we've taken on Bill 55. Well, I would say that it's quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker. The government, first of all, didn't have their act together, and then when they did act, as they did in the last few days by invoking closure, their actions were reckless, ill considered, and it was clear that they were not properly prepared. Even when they had all the time in the world to get it right, they still weren't able to do that. The reason was

because of the nature of the process. Some might allege or assume that it was out of maliciousness or stupidity or something like that. I don't take that particular point of view. I just believe that the process was so fundamentally flawed, where people who had a vested interest were drawing up boundaries, that even those with the best of intentions would not have been able to do it right.

8:40

I contended at second reading of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, that the best construction that could be placed on Bill 55 was that it was nothing more than an interim report, much like the one that had been tabled by the Electoral Boundaries Commission when we had one. At least in the previous process there was a forum for citizens to come forward to critique the legislation or propose legislation and make recommendations for changes. Because of the nature of the process this government embarked upon, there was no forum for citizens to come forward to critique this legislation or to make constructive recommendations to overcome its most grievous errors. There was no proper platform for this government to carefully consider the actions that they were proposing; there was no proper platform to ensure that the proper decisions were held or that a full review took place. At every opportunity, every overture at second reading, the government rejected the suggestions that were made.

Amendments to compel or call upon the government to step back from the brink were all rejected. They all fell on deaf ears. Proposals to commit this Bill to an impartial process of an Electoral Boundaries Commission fell on deaf ears. A call for them to pull back from the brink and put in place even a minimal process for public hearings through the Public Affairs Committee of this Legislature fell on deaf ears. Every constructive, positive suggestion made by the opposition to correct the errors of Bill 55 were rejected at every turn.

There was no proper platform in order to bring forward the problems inherent in Bill 55. The only platform provided was committee reading of this Bill. Well, even before we got to that, Mr. Speaker, we had the sorry spectacle of closure, not simply rejecting the proposals from the opposition. What was clear by the invoking of closure was that there was some predetermined timetable that the government had to meet that had to be followed, that for some reason known only to the government, we had to be out of here by tomorrow afternoon. What came about was that the timetable of the government, the wants of the government, took precedence over the needs of Albertans in terms of Bill 55. So even when closure was invoked, we saw that the process at committee stage was very undesirable and ineffective. It was the last opportunity that anyone in this province had to correct the errors inherent in Bill 55, and it was obvious from the speeches we heard in this Assembly that there were lots of errors implicit in Bill 55.

Members from all over the province gave impassioned speeches about the difficulties that the new boundaries were going to be creating for this group or that group or this community or that community. That was clear from the statements that were made and the impassioned speeches from all corners of the House. If anybody needed evidence that the product was flawed, there would be no better evidence than to review the *Hansard* transcripts at committee stage. If anyone has any need to examine the evidence of how imperfect the mechanism available to us to correct those flaws was, they only need to review the *Hansard* for committee reading of the Bill. What became very clear for those who were here that evening and for those who would read the *Hansard* excerpts is that the mechanism to correct the flaws of Bill 55 was as inherently flawed as the contents of the Bill.

Now, what we have at third reading, Mr. Speaker, is an amended Bill. Some changes have been made. Some improvements were made in the process. Minor though they were and few though they were, some were adopted. But fundamentals still apply. This Bill legitimizes inequalities amongst Albertans. This Bill denies Alberta's largest city and its second largest city their full voice in the future Assemblies of this province.

There are many communities of interest in this province who are severed by the boundaries that have gone through their communities. One amendment I proposed at committee stage to correct an obvious fault in the riding of Calgary-Mountain View and Calgary-North Hill was turned down by the committee. There were other amendments that were brought forward for the same reasons that were turned down. There were other amendments to correct flaws in the Bill that couldn't even be put on the floor of the committee because of the short time frame given for debate to deal with the problems of the Bill.

Now, as one who put forward amendments, I certainly make no apologies for speaking out on behalf of the people who elected me to be here. I think it was the only thing that could be done, and it was obvious that members from all sides of the House put forward amendments in that same spirit. What distresses me is how few of those substantive amendments were adopted at committee stage. It was the last opportunity to correct the Bill before being committed to the next Legislature, and there was no other forum in which to do it. What was obvious was that the process, the time, the opportunity were so flawed that the fundamental errors of the Bill could not be corrected.

We had many proposals about how the boundaries are wrong, how ridings don't reflect trading patterns, how ridings with such diverse communities of interest will be unable to be represented effectively. Some of those suggestions were accepted; some were not. It was a highly arbitrary nature in terms of how those decisions were made. It is unknown to me how it was that certain amendments got approved and others didn't get approved and how others didn't even see the light of day. It was just an unsatisfactory result all the way around, and there is no coherent basis on which to defend the final product because of the arbitrary and unknown nature of the decision-making that occurred.

Mr. Speaker, it is a discredited process; it was discredited from the beginning. The product has been discredited, and the efforts of all those in this Assembly who have tried to come up with reasonable recommendations for boundaries for the next Legislature have been discredited as well. Bill 55 is beyond rescue. Attempts were made, but it was not possible in the time frame or in the forum provided to this Assembly to fix something that was fundamentally flawed. Every effort made to try and fix something fundamentally flawed in turn became discredited.

Mr. Speaker, the experience in Canada has been clear over the years. Legislatures and parliaments cannot do a good job of redrawing boundaries. Our experience in Alberta just affirms that experience elsewhere. We have gone backwards 30 years in this province, reached back in time to adopt a process that was left behind 30 years ago, when the first electoral boundaries commission legislation was passed in this Legislature those many years ago. We've gone backwards in time, and unfortunately we were not able to learn from the experience of those who led before us, because we have not done a better job in this Assembly than has ever been done by electoral boundaries commissions before us. We have not improved on the work that anybody on electoral boundaries commissions has done before us. Even our best attempts, even those attempts made with good intentions have fallen into disrepute because of the process and the product that we have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, it is just not possible for the Legislature to provide the leadership and the decisions that are required to fairly draw up electoral boundaries. It is not possible now for us to compromise with the amended contents of Bill 55 and give approval to this legislation.

8:50

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Smoky River, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 55. It's unfortunate that it is in third reading and not in committee. It had been my intention to bring forward some amendments on behalf of my constituents, the constituents of Smoky River, and the constituents of the neighbouring constituency. Unfortunately, because of the Liberal filibuster I was not able to introduce those amendments. I think that is very unfortunate for my constituents, because I had a genuine concern on their behalf, and it was my intention to introduce them on their behalf. I had committed to them to do that, and unfortunately I was denied because of the antics of one political party.

Four years ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of being chosen by the constituents of Smoky River to represent them in this House. Smoky River is a large geographical constituency. The largest centre in the constituency is Valleyview, and the population is less than 2,000 people. Being such a large area requires a great deal of understanding and patience on behalf of the constituents because obviously it's very difficult to serve those constituents on a regular basis. I've received that understanding from the constituents, and they've participated very willingly and very patiently. I think it's important that I recognize the patience and the co-operation that those people have developed in a good working relationship that we have had through the past years.

Every municipality in Smoky River became involved in the discussions – and there were 12 of them – involving the boundary review process. Not once, but twice and now a third time they have communicated to me in letter form or through the use of the telephone. They've shared their concerns, and they've shared their wishes with me. I think it's only fair that I share them with the rest of this House. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I'll share the contents very briefly, the highlights of these letters, and then it will be my intention to table them with the House.

From the village of Girouxville:

We wish to inform the Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries the Village of Girouxville prefers to remain status quo versus to the proposed Fairview/Dunvegan Boundary.

That, of course, is because of the huge geographical area that will be formed because of the population requirements. This again is a very unfortunate element of this whole process, because the understanding of fairness hasn't always been able to be achieved. I think that's an unfortunate element that my constituents are really in need of and are crying for.

From the village of Nampa:

The Council reviewed the map and are happy with the decision to include Nampa in the Peace River Constituency. We are more closely associated with Peace River.

However, they do have a concern with the rural and the urban representation.

From the town of Falher:

Throughout this [process] we strongly objected to the proposed consolidation of the Smoky River Region with the Dunvegan Constituency. We suggested that Municipalities in this region remain in the Smoky River Constituency as defined by the Electoral Divisions Act, 1985.

The reason they're asking for this is that as large as the Smoky River constituency is, the new Dunvegan constituency will become even larger and more difficult to operate because it will constitute a large number of additional municipalities.

From the municipal district of Smoky River No. 130:

We feel that it would be in the best interest of our Municipality if the Electoral Boundaries Commission would incorporate us within the Grande Prairie-Smoky Constituency,

again because of the geographical component. Unfortunately, the Grande Prairie-Smoky constituency has a very large population, and with the addition of the Smoky River area, it would be impossible to include them and still remain with the boundaries the way they were structured.

From improvement district No. 17 West:

Our main concern with the report is the shift of electoral divisions from rural to urban. It appears to be contradictory that this government would portray an image of supporting rural Alberta through various committees and Cabinet positions and then decrease the representation from rural Alberta.

From ID No. 16:

The Advisory Council for Improvement District No. 16 is pleased to inform you that we herein accept the latest proposal for the "Grande Prairie-Smoky" constituency.

Again, they express their concern about the rural/urban representation.

From the town of Valleyview:

Council is still very concerned with their proposed electoral division. The concern is that one half of the population in the proposed constituency will be made up of Grande Prairie residents.

From the city of Grande Prairie:

The Council of the City of Grande Prairie, at its meeting held December 21, 1992, asked that I relay to you, our opposition to the proposed split of the City of Grande Prairie into two . . . divisions.

The town of Sexsmith has indicated a concern regarding, again, the rural/urban split. The community of Nampa has expressed that same concern. The communities of Donnelly and McLennan have expressed that same concern.

Obviously we have concerns that the committee has tried to address. But for two weeks we listened to members of the opposition tell us that really it's so important that we have equal representation, and here we talk to my constituents who really are concerned about fair representation.

I think it's important that the balance has to come about. I quote from Justice McLachlin's decision:

Absolute parity is impossible. It is impossible to draw boundary lines which guarantee exactly the same number of voters in each district. Voters die, voters move. Even with the aid of frequent censuses, voter parity is impossible . . . The problems of representing vast, sparsely populated territories, for example, may dictate somewhat lower . . . populations in these districts; to insist on voter parity might deprive citizens with distinct interests of an effective voice in the legislative process as well as of effective assistance from their representatives.

That's key, and it's very, very important in the element. I think this was an effort the committee brought forward in their final decision-making process.

We've had opportunities to make some corrections, and by and large I have to commend the work that the committee did. I think they were thoughtful in their decisions, but again they had some restrictions and some difficult regulations that they had to abide by. Certainly in our area, because of the large geographical area that the northwest region encompasses, we were caught up in that situation.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table these letters with the House, if I may.

During the process I spent quite a bit of time trying to develop an alternative to help the various communities with their concerns. Through this we developed a process that would have added an additional constituency to the northwest region of Alberta. It would have moved the area from five to six. It would have developed a far north constituency running from the border of Saskatchewan to the border of British Columbia which would have followed between township 97 and township 98. It would have brought the Peace River constituency within an area which would have included Smoky River through to Manning. It would have made Dunvegan a more workable area and virtually left Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie-Smoky, Grande Prairie-Wapiti, and Lesser Slave Lake intact. The unfortunate element that the committee had to work with was the constraint that they had regarding the plus/minus variance. So obviously, although the map would have been very practical to the northwest region, they weren't able to accept it, and they weren't able to use it. At this time I'd also like to table this map, and perhaps in some future deliberations it may be useful in the development of constituencies within the northwest region of Alberta.

9:00

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend a little time – and I feel obligated to do so – to discuss the unfortunate situation that my constituents find themselves in. We've indulged in approximately three weeks of debate. It's unfortunate that my constituents were not able to have an amendment brought forward which perhaps would have helped them very significantly. We've been indulging in debate for some time now. This isn't the first debate on this issue. I hear of the sincerity of the opposition members in this discussion, and I think it's important that we recognize just how sincere some of these discussions are. I see in *Hansard*, page 2855, December 13, 1990, that a lone Liberal rose to support the amendments that their party brought forward. How sincere was that discussion? I have to really question the sincerity of their party in the process. Their leader wasn't even here during the debates that took place on this issue, not even for five minutes. Now, that is quite a significant sign of the importance that their party has placed on this whole process. I think it's very unfortunate that this situation has developed, because I really didn't recognize a great deal of sincerity in the opposition debate that came forward. I see all kinds of filibustering, which denied the people from my constituency the proper opportunity of having the proper impact on and the proper input into this process. I don't consider the sincerity of this whole process as perhaps being as good as it could have been.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important element in the development of our province. It's a very, very crucial element for proper servicing of the constituents. The whole issue that seems to have developed in earlier times is that we have to develop geographical boundaries that accommodate in essence equal representation. From my perspective equal representation would have been a real tragedy to my people.

So at this time I appreciate the opportunity of bringing forward the concerns of my people. I appreciate the opportunity of basically expressing what I consider to be genuine need for the constituency in the area. I want to thank the constituents I've worked with in the past; it was a wonderful relationship. I look forward to the opportunity of serving the people in the new Grande Prairie-Smoky constituency, although if I'd had the opportunity of bringing forward the amendments as I had hoped to do, we might have been able to draw some better boundaries. It's unfortunate that through a process of filibustering we have that as a final outcome.

Thank you.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words, a couple of minutes on third reading. You know, I listen to some of the comments being made. I guess there's an old expression: you kind of shoot at what you feel is a dangerous target. There seems to be more and more of a tendency for all sides of this House to take aim over here, so obviously we're getting to somebody. Obviously somebody is starting to get a bit worried. Keep up the good work, fellas. We don't mind that little bit of attention.

On the Bill that's in front of us for third reading, I repeatedly hear the finger pointed at the Liberal caucus: the filibuster. We speak with sincerity from the bottom of our heart, and we hear this talk about filibuster, that people are limited in their opportunity to speak and such. Let me remind the last member who spoke, Mr. Speaker, that it was not a member of the Liberal caucus who moved closure for second reading. It was not a member of the Liberal caucus who moved closure for committee stage. It was not a member of the Liberal caucus who moved closure this morning for third reading tomorrow. It is a member of his own cabinet, his own caucus – whatever you call it now, with all these committees over there – the group all together. So if he has a beef, using the Premier's words, why beef with me? If he has a beef, beef with the Member for Barrhead. I think he's the one, if I recall correctly, who has repeatedly moved the closure motions.

There are members who would have liked the opportunity to debate this issue further. There probably are some additional amendments that might have come forward and had some hearing, but because of the actions of the government members – and if I recall correctly, the last speaker voted in favour of closure, thus denying himself the opportunity to make amendments. Now, I don't understand that particular strategy. Then to turn around and point at somebody else, really makes no sense at all. It's a desperation ploy to try and shift the blame to somebody. Face up to the rotten Bill you have here, a very rotten process. Now you're trying to look for some airy-fairy method of trying to look clean and pass the blame on, that others are responsible for limited debate. Live up to your own actions. Live up to them, and don't pass them off.

Thank you.

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

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to express a few concerns, make a few comments.

First of all, from the town of Nanton. Nanton has been historically associated with High River and with the Highwood area since the inception of the province in 1905. They have written to the Speaker of the House, the Premier, the chairman of the Electoral Boundaries Committee, and to the Minister of Municipal Affairs as well as myself, expressing their concern. I will pass this around to the members. For the record:

At the Regular Meeting of the Council of the Town of Nanton held Monday, January 25, 1993, Council passed a resolution to remain in the Highwood Electoral Division. Council feels very strongly it would be advantageous and definitely in the best interests of the Towns people to remain in the Highwood Division. We realize this is an "Eleventh Hour" request, but as a brand new Council we have had to take time to familiarize ourselves with the different issues. We hope the lateness of the request will not be detrimental to our chances of remaining in Highwood.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Well, it truly was the 11th hour, a little past the 11th hour for the community of Nanton. I know they'll be well served in the electoral district that they are going to be joining.

I'd also like to share with you with the reverse of that, written fully a month before the Nanton one, and this is from the town of Turner Valley.

Dear Sir:

Council has reviewed the proposed electoral boundaries submitted by the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

I am pleased to advise that Council unanimously endorsed the recommendations regarding the Highwood Electoral Division boundaries. It is gratifying to know that our previous concerns were heard and acted upon.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see the conundrum that some communities face in terms of not everyone can get what they might wish to have; not all of the needs can be met. There are a number of communities in the Highwood area who when the electoral commission came out with its interim report, were so agitated by the 'rurban' notion that they joined together – the towns, the villages, the school districts, the hospital districts, and the municipal districts – to make presentations to the electoral commission. For most of those people who did appear, they felt that the Electoral Boundaries Committee heard them well and did pretty well stay within the bounds that they were suggesting at the time. Unfortunately, the town of Nanton decided not to appear before that commission to make its representation heard at that time.

9:10

I want to also make mention that the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane and myself visited with Chief Roy Whitney of the Tsuu T'ina Nation, known to us as the Sarcee people, on the Sarcee reserve to discuss the impact of the decision on those people. They were of various minds, and I don't choose to speak for them at this time; I think they can speak better than I. Nevertheless, they were of a contrary opinion to having their reserve split in a very small corner. In the northwest corner of that reserve they have, as good free enterprisers, engaged upon a long-term project called Redwood Meadows. They have leased land on long-term leases, and there are several hundred people who've taken advantage of that and have a thriving community in Redwood Meadows. The highway runs between Redwood Meadows and the rest of the Sarcee Nation reserve, so that part of the reserve now remains in Banff-Cochrane. I think they had some concern about that. They had some general concerns about representation in the provincial context regardless of who it was that represented them.

I would say that I regret to see the loss of improvement district No. 6, the ranch land. In a constituency that is quite breathtaking in its beauty, to lose that part of the ranch country is a personal disappointment. But electoral divisions are not made on the whims and for the wishes of the members. They are made to serve the people who will be within the boundaries. So we have that to take solace in.

Mr. Speaker, in the last three weeks we've heard much about the issue of whether rural members of the Legislative Assembly work harder or whether urban members of the Legislature work harder. I don't know that one could discern which is which, so I'll come down firmly on both sides of the issue and say that they both work very hard. The issue that many of us were trying to get at was not how hard the member worked, because we do know that people who work five and six and seven days a week and for anywhere from eight to 16 hours on given days are working hard. It's the access that people who are within that electoral boundary have to the member that's important. Can they walk on a nice afternoon to the office of the member? Could they drive in

anything less than an hour or two or three? Could they get a taxi? Could they go by bus? Can they telephone without it being long-distance? These are some of the issues I think we need to focus on.

I think we heard a lot about the notion of flawed process and gerrymandering and that which maybe Lethbridge-East would say is part of the argot of the Assembly. I don't know that it was a flawed process. If we started out five years ago and having two different judges and having a commission that is split in its decision, that is as split as five people can be – if you have sort of five different opinions, eventually along the way someone had to do something. The committee that was struck I'm sure sorely missed representation at that time from the opposition parties, but I think they did a commendable job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's not often I speak twice in one day in this Assembly, but I was compelled to say a few words tonight as a result of some of the pontifications, if I can put it that way, by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View about the issue of commonality of interest. I just want to talk about that issue for a moment and the notion that somehow or the other judges and independent commissions are invested with great wisdom that is not present in this Assembly. I'd just like to remind hon. members, as Albertans, of a federal redistribution under the auspices and the chair of a learned justice of the Supreme Court of Alberta that drew the federal boundaries and created, because of commonality of interest, a riding called Rocky Mountain. Now, what was the commonality of interest? The commonality of interest was that the mountains ran from the south of Alberta up to the north, and they included in that beautiful constituency – and it is magnificent in terms of its beauty – the national parks of Waterton, Banff, and Jasper. That was a notion that a justice of the Supreme Court of Alberta felt demonstrated a commonality of interest. Now, it may have had that feature, but it was almost an impossible constituency to represent.

So people can't come into this Assembly and say that, somehow or the other, by putting it in the hands of a judge you're going to get necessarily a sound judgment. Of course, a later redistribution had to come along and change that constituency because it was totally an impossibility to represent. I just want to get people to think a little bit about commonality of interest when it comes to representing people, whether they happen to live in cities, in the areas surrounding cities, or in the rural areas.

Despite what I've just said about the nature of that particular constituency, which was far too large and impossible to represent and get around for a Member of Parliament, I think the commonality of interest which must be first and foremost in the minds of everyone in this Assembly is that no matter whether we live in the inner city of Edmonton or in the outer reaches of Fort McMurray, the commonality of interest is that we are all Albertans. Whether or not you are representing the people of Fort McMurray or Medicine Hat, the primary interest should not be to represent only the interests of the people right around you but to think in the better interests of this entire province of Alberta.

I am very disturbed, and have been for some time now, particularly by the press emanating from the two larger cities of this province that somehow or another there is something special or privileged about living in either Edmonton or Calgary. I think by taking that attitude, that approach is serving to divide Albertans in a way that they have not been divided traditionally and historically in Alberta. Quite frankly, I think they are doing an injustice to the people of this province by trying to perpetuate that notion. Just as an example, the *Calgary Herald* has been calling

for a downsizing of the cabinet. It occurred; 17 members in the cabinet. How did they draw a graph, Mr. Speaker, to illustrate where those members of the cabinet came from? They said that the number of representatives from urban Alberta has decreased very substantially, so there are now only four members of the front bench in this province representing urban Alberta, and then a little asterisk which said that urban Alberta only meant the two large cities of Edmonton or Calgary. Well, that kind of perverse thinking, if I may use the term, is the type of thing that is helping to drive a wedge between Albertans.

I suggest that those members in the Assembly who over the last three weeks have been discussing this matter had better think again about that tendency to divide Albertans, categorize them as urban or rural as if there were some kind of second-class status applied to those people who live in either one of the two categories that have been set up primarily by the news media in this province. I think we should get away from that, because the commonality of interest which we have to bear in mind is that we are Albertans. When I'm in this Assembly to vote on issues, I don't vote just to represent the views of Medicine Hatters. I try to think of the broader issues as they impact upon the entire province. So let's get away from this stuff.

9:20

Furthermore, may I caution hon. members who've been standing in this Assembly and saying, "Oh well, I'm going to be put in this constituency." I caution them to think about this. If it becomes an issue in the next election – and I say "if," and that's very unlikely, because the issues that will be determining the outcome of the election will not be the boundaries. Whether members think so or not and having tried to make nice political points over the last three weeks in doing so, the issues will be decided on much broader issues than that. They might think again about the implications of some of things that have been said. What they are really saying is, "Oh well, I'm going to be put into this constituency, but I really don't want to represent you; I want to represent the people on the other side of the Whitemud freeway," or whatever it may be. "But here I am; I have to represent you." They may have to think about that a little bit as they go out and try to represent the people. So let's get off this stuff.

Furthermore, in the process, Mr. Speaker, if we haven't consulted with Albertans enough on this issue, I can't think of another topic, aside from the constitutional discussions that I went through for almost a year, where there was more opportunity for consultation. We had a select committee with all-party representation on it. They brought forward a report. We set up an independent commission, and it came back with five members on it with three different reports.

AN HON. MEMBER: Four.

AN HON. MEMBER: Five.

MR. HORSMAN: Or five, or whatever it was. Now they say: "Well, what we really need to do again is set up another independent commission. Maybe if we have seven members on it, we could get seven reports." The fact of the matter is that we set up another select committee. The opposition parties were invited to join in, and they said: "No. We don't want to be part of this. What we will do instead is stay outside the process. Then when it comes into the House, as inevitably it must do, we will be able to make fine political points." Mr. Speaker, that type of approach on the part of the Official Opposition and the Liberals in this House I think does a disservice to the process. No matter what

happens, since I won't be here the next time, I can tell you this: what has been brought forward is as fair, as reasonable, and as objective as could possibly be determined, given the circumstances leading up to the introduction of the Bill, the introduction of and the acceptance of a number of amendments. I say: let's get on with it.

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

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think most things have been said, so I won't be too long. That should bring out a cheer.

I also want to take a moment, of course, to wish the hon. Member for Medicine Hat the very best in what he chooses in the future. I think he is a member that has practised what he preached: he did try to represent all Albertans. Maybe now that he's retiring, I might say he's even done fairly well. Coming from that area, I can just imagine and sort of be a little jealous of him in picking retirement: the mud of the South Saskatchewan squeezing up between his toes as he walks around, skipping through the coulees there, dodging rattlesnakes. It's going to be a lot of fun, I'm sure, and add more hours of sunshine than any other sector of Alberta. Of course, that sometimes brings a little drought with it, and I've often said that if we don't get rain down in that country, it will start to look like your constituency, Mr. Speaker: badlands.

I was a little surprised at the Member for Smoky River complaining about filibustering; somebody said whining.

I'm distributing an amendment, Mr. Speaker, that has been checked out by the legal eagles and so on, but I did want to mention my surprise at Smoky River. To complain in his own party that he hasn't had a chance to have the input he should, the only thing I can think of is that there must be a little cross-pollination coming from the NDP benches over there. For a moment he forgot and thought he was in the opposition, the way he was giving the party a little bit of the dickens. I know he sounded a lot like the fellow that had murdered his mother and dad and now is throwing himself on the mercy of the court because he is an orphan. Why he didn't use the caucus, the constituency – after all, there were amendments put through out of the caucus, and now he brought it here.

I give him a bit of a challenge. I'm circulating an amendment to third reading that's been put through.

Moved by Mr. Taylor that the motion for third reading of Bill 55, the Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act, 1993, be amended by striking out all the words after "that" and substituting "Bill 55 not now be read a third time because it failed to have an independent review committee chaired by a Court of Queen's Bench judge to review, action, and report back to the House within 30 days:

- (a) the town of Grande Prairie being split into two constituencies,
- (b) the towns of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove into two different constituencies,
- (c) the towns of Wetaskiwin and Camrose in the same constituency,
- (d) the town of Grimshaw and the Peace River airport in a different constituency from the town of Peace River,
- (e) the constituency of Calgary-Elbow and the resulting dislocation and readjustment of Calgary-Currie and Calgary-Buffalo,
- (f) the village of Bawlf not being in the same constituency from the town of Athabasca,

- (g) the town of Lac La Biche in a different constituency from the town of Athabasca,
- (h) Morinville, Bon Accord, and Namao being separated from the constituency of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon, and
- (i) the town of Redcliff being in the constituency of Bow Valley rather than the constituency of Medicine Hat or Cypress."

The Member for Smoky River will notice, if he reads it, that the very first item is that the town of Grande Prairie be split into two constituencies. So I would challenge the hon. member to vote for the amendment, because that's one of the things that has to be cured.

I might add, Mr. Speaker – I'm a little embarrassed – that when you get down to "(f)," there are two typographical errors in one sentence. It should be: the village of Bawlf not being in the same constituency "as" rather than "from" the town of "Camrose," not "Athabasca." Even the committee chaired by the hon. Member for Taber-Warner wouldn't have the gall to put Bawlf in with Athabasca. It was supposed to read Camrose.

It does address the issue about Grande Prairie being split into two constituencies, two solitudes, whereas Fort McMurray is one. Most of St. Albert was able to stay in the one constituency and so on. Grande Prairie gets split. The towns of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, which are adjacent to each other, should be different constituencies. Wetaskiwin and Camrose should be different constituencies. Grimshaw and Peace River airport, which the hon. Member for Peace River tried to get moved into Peace River constituency and was defeated the other night, should be looked at. It was defeated, I think, because of the whole question of . . . [interjection] The hon. Member for Dunvegan says no, but the hon. Member for Taber-Warner says yes; I take my cues from him. Besides, he's bigger than I am. The town of Lac La Biche is a different constituency from the town of Athabasca; they should be together. In my own constituency, Morinville, Bon Accord, and Namao have been separated from Spruce Grove-Sturgeon, or Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, as it is now called: seven syllables. The town of Redcliff being in the constituency of Bow Valley rather than the constituency of Medicine Hat or Cypress, and as the Member for Medicine Hat pointed out: commonality.

Now, I know, as the Member for Medicine Hat said, that judges don't always come out with much better decisions than politicians. As a matter of fact, judges quite often are failed politicians. In the U.S. you have to win an election to become a judge, Mr. Speaker. Up here all you have to do is lose two elections and you can become a judge. Nevertheless, they should know something about it, and I'll be the very first to admit that the Rocky Mountain constituency, which ran from just south of Grande Prairie down to the U.S. border because it had mountains in it, was one of those things that a judge came up with. After all, judges are just lawyers that have gone on to their reward, so if they didn't have a lot of knowledge when they were a lawyer, why should they when they're a judge? Nevertheless, what I think the Member for Medicine Hat missed is that they are not elected members. They are not elected members, and that is what we are after. If there were a source out there of chairmen or arbitrators that were not judges, that's fine. But judges make nice, handy, taxpayer-paid, independent chairmen for commissions. This is why I have suggested in this amendment, Mr. Speaker, that we not now read Bill 55 and refer these matters. We couldn't use these in committee, because a domino effect would take place. There is enough movement of population that we couldn't move it around and through as a simple amendment. So we're saying that these problems all have to be referred to an independent committee.

9:30

I think this is the thing that's most wrong. Some of the members mentioned how much consultation has gone on here, but we must remember that when the final report came out of this committee, that was it. There were no second readings around the province so people could look at it. There were letters that could be submitted, but in quiet and in caucus and behind the curtain.

I'm sorry; I'll be within 30 seconds. I'll keep my word. The hon. Deputy Premier has reminded me that I said I'd only be four or five minutes. I exaggerated a bit, but I think I can do it.

I just wanted to say that having those final reports and final adjustments done within the Tory caucus in such secrecy – obviously the Member for Smoky River, the Member for Highwood, the Member for Peace River, and the Member for Fort McMurray didn't seem to know anything about it. They had to try to bring amendments to the floor here. And there were probably some other members. It has to bother one. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'd encourage particularly those members in the government benches that feel their amendment was not listened to or didn't get a chance to put it forward to vote for this amendment to the motion.

Thank you.

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

MR. ROSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak against the amendment, mainly on the point that it has been reviewed. I think the Member for Medicine Hat put it very aptly when he said that this is the highest court there is. We've had days and days and days of debate. In fact, last night I guess some of us who wished to speak or put a position forward on behalf of our constituents were somewhat snookered by a procedural trick of the Liberals to filibuster and shut it down.

MR. TAYLOR: What about closure?

MR. ROSTAD: Closure? You bring in closure not because you want to stifle debate but when there is no debate and you just get verbal diarrhea over and over and over again. That's why closure is brought in. It's unfortunate that opportunities weren't given for all to speak.

I think having an electoral boundaries review after every second election has mixed blessings. One is that you get an opportunity to look and to bring some fairness to representation as we change our demographics in the province and as our population expands. The downside is that unfortunately there are situations that constituencies are split up. I think the Camrose constituency is one such constituency. The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon brings up that the towns of Wetaskiwin and Camrose should not be in the same constituency. First, he has made an error, if I may point it out. Both are cities, and he will not be well endeared by either of them for referring to them as towns. But aside from that, when you look at the size of either of the communities and you try and look at whether you go on a north-south or an east-west or a trading pattern, which I proposed, which numerous people from my constituency proposed to the numerous public hearing bodies that were part of this process – yes, that's what we wanted to do. But when you try and design, because you're close to a very large metropolis, Edmonton, it becomes very, very difficult.

I can tell you that as the MLA, whether it's me or whether it's someone else that represents the new constituency, you have to work very, very hard to represent all of your constituents, whether they're in a natural flow or an unnatural flow. It's with regret

that as a new boundary is made, the northern part of this constituency leaves and joins Leduc and the southern part leaves and joins Ponoka-Rimbey. It's with regret, not only from my own perspective as the MLA, that you lose these very worthwhile constituents and, frankly, people who've become friends. You can still maintain a friendship, but in a professional friendship you lose that. That is an unfortunate result of this process. However, they all go to new MLAs, and I think with the commitment of all 83 people who are in this Assembly, we're all there to work with these constituents, to serve them, and to accommodate their needs to the best of our abilities. Sometimes it isn't on a trading pattern, or sometimes it isn't because there's a straight common interest. If you look within each of our constituencies, you see the varied interests within one, whether they shop in the same stores or trade in the same ways.

As I mentioned, I feel great regret for the parts that are leaving, and I do welcome the new parts that are coming in. My successor will, I'm sure, be endeared to serve them as well. But to say that we need to have somebody else review it – this is the highest court of the land, and frankly we've been here for three weeks, late nights, reviewing this. Not everybody is going to be happy as constituents or as MLAs as a result, but absolutely everybody has had the opportunity, other than at the last when we were snookered by a procedural thing and filibustered to fill in the time with verbal diarrhea that didn't amount to too much but did move the process on.

I speak against the amendment.

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

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also will be brief in speaking to this amendment, the reason being, of course, that the hour for the vote fast approaches and I'm sure there are a number of members on both sides of the House who are anxious to have an opportunity to speak. I think that indicates to us one of the reasons why the process has been so inadequate and why there is such a feeling that there's a lot of unfinished business here.

Now, the amendment speaks of "an independent review committee chaired by a Court of Queen's Bench judge to review" a number of specified examples of concerns raised by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. Although I share the gist of his concerns, I think the list is totally inadequate. Of course, the reality is that when one embarks on any sort of review with respect to any of the electoral divisions, there is indeed a ripple effect which is going to result inevitably and consequentially in review of all of the boundaries. Of course, that's exactly what is required with respect to the map which is being proposed for Alberta.

Now, the Member for Camrose has spoken of this Legislature being the highest court in the land. I think he was echoing comments made the other day by the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen, who had suggested that it was fair and indeed democratic for this Legislative Assembly to draw the electoral map for Alberta. Indeed, it was the ultimate in democratic procedure, since the members of this Legislature represent the electorate of the province of Alberta. Now, at first blush that argument seems somewhat attractive. But if you examine its application in the context of this House, you will soon see that there's a great fallacy in that reasoning. The fallacy is simply stated. In the last election the governing party, the Tories, garnered 44 percent of the votes, but they achieved 71 percent of the seats. Consequently, what we have is a party that represents 44 percent of the population dictating to this Assembly what the electoral map of Alberta is to be. Of course, that is anything but a democratic process, and that

is exactly why public hearings were necessary, as has been argued previously in this debate. That is precisely why, according to the terms of the subamendment – I see the Speaker reaching for it – it is necessary to remit the matter to "an independent review committee chaired by a Court of Queen's Bench judge."

Mr. Speaker, I did promise that I would be brief. The difficulties with this process are too numerous for me to mention in the context of these brief remarks. Suffice it to say that the process has been skewed from the outset. It continues to be skewed. The process was flawed. The result, which will be dictated by the representatives of a minority of Albertans, will also be flawed.

9:40

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a few comments about this particular amendment we have before us today by my colleague from Westlock-Sturgeon. We've heard that this is the highest court in the land on a number of occasions in this particular Legislature, and I'm not here to debate that particular issue. The reason for this amendment, the reason why we're suggesting that it should go to "an independent review committee chaired by a Court of Queen's Bench judge," is related to what we have been talking about in this House for the last several days, which is the clear issue that there is a conflict of interest between members of this Legislature that set their own boundaries, that in turn decide what's going to happen.

The reason we have particularly selected these nine proposed amendments is simply because these are the towns, the constituencies, from which we have had letters, from which we have had concerns expressed to us. That's not to say, as the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona suggests, that this is an exhaustive list, that these are the only problems that might be out there. These are simply places from which we have received letters expressing concern.

We've talked before about the fact that following this most recent report and this most recent piece of legislation, Bill 55, that we are debating, there was no hearings process, which has been pointed out by members in this Legislature and by members from the public. Mr. Speaker, we've said that there should be some voice for them, and that is the reason for this particular amendment.

With respect to the concerns raised by the hon. Member for Camrose regarding a filibuster from the Liberal caucus, I might just refresh his memory on two points. Number one, the government imposed closure. I know that has pointed out before. It was not the Liberal caucus or the New Democratic opposition caucus. In fact, it was the government caucus. Secondly, the Liberal filibuster consisted of three speakers, and I'm not sure when three speakers constituted a filibuster. But if he is so thin-skinned as to believe that that created a problem for him, then I guess he should have had a better consultation process with his own government House leaders.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would urge all members to support strongly this particular amendment.

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

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly, as we debate this amendment here. I am, of course, going to oppose it, but it gives me the opportunity just to correct something the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona talked about when he referred

to my initial argument about why we should get on with the process, why we should defeat this motion so we can have third reading and move on to Royal Assent and have the boundaries in place and get on with all of that work, and that is his arithmetical argument about the fact that this is an undemocratic House, which is of course more fallacious than he says my argument is. There were, granted, 44 percent of the people who voted for the Conservative Party and elected 71 percent of the members. That's democracy, has been always, and is widely, universally seen as the way to do it. His arguments suggest that the percentage of Albertans who voted for individuals who did not get elected – in other words, people who voted for candidates who aren't here – have no representation, which is of course wrong. Those individuals who represent their constituencies represent everybody in them, whether they voted for them or not.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is indeed an interesting amendment, an amendment which suggests that a judge should be instructed to make a very detailed list of changes in the electoral map, changes which one might refer to perhaps as tinkering. This from a party that accused others of wanting to tinker with the map and went so far as to coin a disrespectful term called 'pammy-mandering' in reference to an amendment moved by the hon. New Democrat House leader. Now, if that's 'pammy-mandering,' this has got to be 'nicky-mandering' right here, because the member has an entire list of things he wants to change: a line here in Grande Prairie, and he wants to move one between Stony Plain and Spruce Grove, and he's got a Wetaskiwin and a Camrose line, and he's got a little one around Grimshaw and the Peace River airport. The Peace River airport, for crying out loud: talk about tinkering. I know that the Premier said you can't use the H word in reference, but I have to say, you know, that when it comes to the Liberals saying one thing and doing another, this is just about as glaring an example as I've seen: Lac La Biche, Athabasca, Morinville, Bon Accord, Namao.

MR. FOX: Trying to tailor the ridings for their own purposes, is he?

MR. McINNIS: Taylor-made: exactly. Here we are, the whole thing right there.

I can't support this amendment. This is really an attempt to do what they've been viciously attacking others for doing openly in committee. They're trying to do it through the backhand under the guise of an amendment at the third reading stage. What for? Are they going to go to these communities and say: "Oh, look, we fought for you. We tried to get you what you wanted." Yeah, right they did.

I think many things have been said at this hour in the debate, and perhaps it is time to move on. I think the reference that the former attorney general made to this honourable Assembly being the highest court in the land and that we should eschew the idea of trying to get judges involved because in this case we are the judge – I'd have to say that if this is the kind of trial you get, this is probably a very poor excuse for a court. Kangaroo court might be the best way to describe it, because I'm one of many members who had no opportunity whatsoever to be heard in terms of the representations made to me by constituents, and I know there are others because they've already stood up in debate. I guess we can argue back and forth about who was responsible for that. It's really a two-part process. We had a closure motion in committee which, just due to the scheduling of things, wound up with a definite hour of adjournment, and therefore it was an easy matter for the Liberals to talk out the clock. I know they couldn't

manage a filibuster more than an hour and a half. Everybody knows that. On this occasion we had a one and a half hour window, and they managed to talk the clock out. They're up for that kind of thing, and we know that they can do it.

The representation that was made to me was by a group of communities, four of them who worked very closely together because the communities are of similar age, similar demographic structure, and they have very complex interrelationships. They are the communities of High Park, Canora, Mayfield, and Britannia-Youngstown. So intertwined are they that their kids go to programs in each other's communities. In fact, they have an arrangement such that one offers one, another offers the other. It didn't always used to be that way. There were times in my memory when there was bad blood between the communities, but a newer generation has found ways to co-operate, and they work together on so many things. There are so many organizations that have cross-membership, it's not funny. When their local MLA, me in this case, meets with them, I meet with them as a group, because they have common concerns and they express them to me in that way.

The interesting thing to me is that they represented their views about how and why they should be together in correspondence to the commission before there was ever any public report made. After the report was made, they went down to the public hearings and they made the representations again. Now, somehow, for some reason when this committee went and made their map, an error was made: a line was drawn down the middle where a line has never been before. From that point forth, they did everything that they possibly and humanly could to get their point across that that line should be changed. They lobbied their MLA, they lobbied the chairman of the committee, they lobbied their prospective MLA under the new boundaries' current representation, the Leader of the Opposition, and so on and so forth. My point is simply that there was not any opportunity to make that representation at a point where it could make some difference in the process. Even if everybody acknowledged that something should be done about it, there was no opportunity for anything to be done. Surely when you go to a court, whatever kind of a court it is, you have the opportunity to be heard before sentence is passed. So for that reason I think there is merit in opening up some type of process where these things could be adjudicated fairly.

Now, I'd have to say that the Taylor-made amendment here doesn't quite fill the bill, because it does provide merely an opportunity for the Liberals to appear to be helping these groups who've asked for help while they stood in a high moral tone and said: we're not voting for any changes in this Act because we can't countenance MLAs drawing boundaries. To heck with them.

9:50

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Three Hills.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand appalled and somewhat amazed by what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has had to say about this amendment, especially in light of the fact that it's not being referred to our members to decide who's going to draw them but to a committee. The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is not trying to draw boundaries, unlike the Official Opposition, who is determined to have it both ways.

For the record, so that the public would know that it was not our intention at all to draw our own boundaries, to very carefully pick and choose who was going to vote for us, this amendment refers it to a committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. McEACHERN: Yes; thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've spoken at some length on the Bill in second reading. I will say that our caucus put forward a number of amendments to make the case as strongly as possible that these boundaries are not good boundaries and that the process of arriving at them was not a good process. I'm not going to go back over all of that, except just to say that all the defence that we've heard from the government side in terms of the process and how many hearings there were and how many submissions there were – all of those submissions and hearings were pretty well ignored in the final submission that the Tory committee brought forward. I mean, it's just so clear that nobody from the central part of Edmonton was represented at any hearing of the Tory committee, if they held any or if they asked anybody for any input. It's just so clear that that input was not there. All you have to do is look at the section of the map that I have represented for the last seven years, the Kingsway area: eight community leagues that have worked together before carved into four different constituencies. Clearly, that kind of division is not acceptable.

I have letters from two different community league presidents. One from Keith Switzer of the Sherbrooke Community League I've mentioned before, but I didn't mention, and I would like to briefly do so now, a letter from Mr. Alvin Schrader, the Dovercourt Community League president. Those two community leagues are just across the St. Albert Trail from each other and have worked together for years, sharing programs like the ones that my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place talked about that his community leagues do. Also, south across 118th Avenue to Inglewood, Inglewood and Westmount have worked together for years. On the other side of Sherbrooke is Prince Charles, and again these community leagues have all worked together for years and years. As Mr. Schrader says, splitting up these eight community leagues that have shared all these different services for so many years does not make any sense. He goes on to say how he would be willing to appear before an independent commission to help fix those boundaries.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is true that we made a lot of points on second reading of this Bill, but we also had some amendments and so did other members of this Assembly. There was no reason for the government, because they finally decided to use closure on second reading, to immediately introduce it before all the amendments were at least on the floor. They could have held off for a day or two to see how the discussion at committee went and to see that all the amendments were put forward. There was absolutely no indication from this side of the House or anywhere else that there was any kind of stalling or prolonging of debate on amendments at Committee of the Whole. There was no reason for the government to invoke closure before they ever started introducing amendments, yet they did.

What we ended up with was the rather weird situation that the government brought in the closure motion, and because there was a lot of other business yesterday, then we only had a short time left. The Liberal Party, which had not participated very much, their leader never being around, never even made a speech on second reading, never introduced any amendments. They spoke to a few of ours a little bit, but really the contribution was rather feeble in second reading. Yet they all of a sudden woke up and decided that they could talk for an hour and a half on one amendment so that other amendments wouldn't be brought forward. Now, it was totally ridiculous, and what that meant was that I didn't get to introduce in as much detail as I should have –

of course, I can't now. It's the wrong reading. This is now third reading, not time for detailed amendments, but I would at least like to make a few comments about the gist of some amendments and credit some of the people that worked on this.

One of the things that the Liberals worried about was that they didn't want MLAs making amendments. This amendment, although it's under my name, was not put together by me. [interjections] Well, that's true. The basic idea in this amendment you already have as an independent submission from a Mr. John Day, whom I introduced in the House a little earlier.

AN HON. MEMBER: Tell us about that again.

MR. McEACHERN: He's just someone that I happen to know, and he wanted to some input into the Assembly. So I said I would bring his submission down here, and I did to some extent introduce it in second reading, although of course that was not the reading to give it in great detail.

So I put together a map. There was some adjustment to his ideas, but they were all in the northeast, an area that did not affect me at all. They were done at the behest of community leagues, to some extent paying attention to some of the ideas that were put forward by the Tory committee itself. The six ridings in the centre and west side of the city that would affect my area I did not change at all from his submission. They were exactly as he put them forward. In fact, he had an A and a B plan, and I didn't really mind the B plan. It wouldn't have worried me that much to put that one forward instead. I also got a submission from Mr. Bill Glass that was very similar in nature, but at some point you had to put in this Assembly a detailed proposal that we could use to illustrate the shortcomings of the process that had led us to the Tory proposal, Bill 55. So this was as good an example as any.

Now, we on this side of the House have long since learned that we don't get very many amendments past the government, but this was one we felt was at least worthy of government consideration, and it's really too bad that it didn't get on the floor for consideration yesterday. The basic problem that one is trying to fix on the north side of the river – and I want to just spend a minute on that and compare some of the contrasting suggestions for fixing it – is that as the west end of the city grows, you either have to add a riding there, which would be fine if you just go from 11 to 12 ridings, but . . .

MR. TAYLOR: We're on the amendment, Alex.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, the judge, I'm sure, would like to look at these ideas. [interjection] Yes, that's true.

If you're not allowed to have an extra riding on the north side of the river, then you have to eliminate one of the ridings in the centre in order to accommodate growth on the west end, or at least that seemed to be the dilemma in the discussions with some people I know that had a lot of experience in trying to redistribute boundaries, as well as Mr. Day's two proposals and also in the one that Mr. Glass put forward. In the process of working with those and another idea that came up later, I really discovered a principle that I think should have been looked at, and if anybody gets into these boundaries again and this kind of a dilemma, I think they should consider it for the north side of Edmonton.

The government proposal actually puts together in one riding part of the present Edmonton-Calder riding from north of the CN tracks, part of the Edmonton-Kingsway riding from south of the CN tracks, and part of Edmonton-Jasper Place. Now, what all of these other three proposals that we looked at did was decide that you couldn't accommodate three ridings in the west end without

eliminating a riding in the middle because we didn't want to breach the CN tracks barrier. We felt that if you were going to breach it on the east side with Edmonton-Norwood up into the Edmonton-Calder and Edmonton-Belmont areas, you didn't need to turn around and breach it on the west side as well. Actually, if you do, you could amalgamate, for instance, some of the south part of Edmonton-Calder with some of the north part of Edmonton-Kingsway and not have to eliminate a riding in the central part of the city and only have two ridings in the west end by moving Edmonton-Glenora a little bit west.

That, Mr. Speaker, would have taken account of and fit all the proposals put forward by community leagues and would have made sense for the city. It just shows how the Tory committee did not talk to any community league people. The Liberals certainly did not talk to any community league people. We could have had a decent map. If this is the highest court in the land, then it should do its homework and pass a good Bill, not a lousy Bill as this government has brought forward.

10:00

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be brief, because we've had more than ample opportunity on previous occasions to debate the issue before the House this evening. I did not propose an amendment at committee stage because I recognize that my constituency is essentially left the same way that it was previous to the process that has been ongoing through the Electoral Boundaries Commission and the Electoral Boundaries Committee.

I did make representations to both the Electoral Boundaries Commission and committee that the constituency of Banff-Cochrane should be left essentially as it has been since the late '30s, the early '40s, Mr. Speaker, because the constituency is growing quickly, the numbers seem to me to be reasonable given provincial averages, and it was a workable constituency from my perspective. Therefore, I believe that the constituents of Banff-Cochrane were represented as well as they could be. Again, I recognize that the issue is not how the electoral boundaries are for me but rather how my constituents are represented, having me or any other MLA as their representative in Edmonton.

I do have some concerns, however, Mr. Speaker, about two areas of my constituency that as a result of the growing numbers of people from Banff-Cochrane will now be moving into other constituencies: the area that I call upper Bearspaw, north of Highway 1A between Cochrane and the city of Calgary, and an area slightly to the west and north of the town of Cochrane will be moving into the constituency of Olds-Didsbury. I have some concerns about that because, number one, historically the people in that area have traded with Cochrane and Bow Valley and feel very much a part of that area and feel very much a part of Banff-Cochrane constituency. I also had a concern because the Bearspaw community is now literally split in two, the upper Bearspaw, as I said, being part of the Olds-Didsbury constituency and the lower part south of Highway 1A being in Banff-Cochrane.

However, I have not had too many representations from the folks out in that area, so I believe that they are prepared to agree to the change of electoral boundaries. I think they're well aware of what has occurred through a very long and sometimes convoluted process of trying to make 83 reasonable electoral boundaries, given populations, given sparsity, given urban/rural splits, et cetera, et cetera.

The other area, that my colleague from Highwood referred to, is in the southeast section of Banff-Cochrane constituency, specifically the Tsuu T'ina Nation, the Sarcee reserve. A substantial part of that reserve, Mr. Speaker, will now be going into the Highwood constituency. Both the hon. Member for Highwood and myself met with Chief Roy Whitney about this issue. There was some concern raised by Chief Whitney particularly with respect to the native self-government issue. The chief made representations to us that notwithstanding what we were trying to do here in Edmonton with respect to provincial lands, he had a great concern that until the issue of native self-government was dealt with, perhaps it was not appropriate that his reserve should be included in any kind of an electoral boundary drawn up on a provincial basis.

Those are the major concerns that I have heard. I'm sorry to lose those folks from the upper Bearspaw and from the Tsuu T'ina Nation. I know that my colleagues from Olds-Didsbury and Highwood are very happy that those areas will now be part of their constituencies. I know that these folks will continue to be well represented. I certainly will keep an eye out for them and on their representatives to ensure that they continue to be well represented in this House.

Thank you.

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

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't really going to speak, but when I saw this amendment, it did remind me of something.

MR. McEACHERN: We're not on the amendment.

MR. CLEGG: I know we're not on the amendment, sir. I listened to you for four hours already.

It did remind me of something when the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon did mention the town of Grimshaw and the airport at Peace River. I'm sure he didn't make these amendments out either. At least he would have known that Wetaskiwin and Camrose are not towns. I don't know who drew his amendments.

However, I do in one way feel bad for the people in Grimshaw and some of the area in the MD of Peace that now have to come into Dunvegan. They were represented by the longest serving MLA in this province, the hon. Member for Peace River. He worked very hard, and he represented those people very well. Certainly I do feel sorry in one way only for the people of the Falher, McLennan, Girouxville area that was represented by the hon. Member for Smoky River. However, we have to face facts. Whether it be me or whether it be some other MLA in Dunvegan, I'm sure that they will work very, very hard to try and represent those wonderful people in the new areas that Dunvegan now takes in.

I'm sure many people realize that from the northwest corner to the southeast corner of the constituency of Dunvegan it is now 400 kilometres long. I might add that there isn't one mile of that road that you travel that isn't a settled area. Now, when we look at some areas – for example, the constituency of Lesser Slave Lake – they say that it's a lot larger. Yes, it is a lot larger, but there

are many, many miles with no people living in it. The Dunvegan-occupied area is a very large area. I believe that the committee did just as good a job as they could do. We were short in population. We know what the courts would say if we don't follow the rules. I just look forward to serving the areas that I will be taking in. A wonderful bunch of people live there, and as long as I'm MLA, I will do the very best to represent them. I'm sure if I'm not there, the next Progressive Conservative MLA will do exactly the same as I do.

10:10

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a few comments and respond to some of the questions put by members of the Assembly.

One of the issues raised by a number of members, particularly from the Official Opposition and the third party, related to public input. In addition to the more than 1,000 representations made that were all reviewed, all recorded in *Hansard*, in addition to those very detailed and extensive submissions from across the province and, I submit, the most extensive review ever undertaken in reviewing electoral boundaries in this province – in addition to that process, invitations were extended to and accepted by a number of very prominent citizens of our province. The mayors of Edmonton and Calgary came in and met with the four members of the committee who chose to sit. In addition, we met with the head of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the presidents of the Rural & Improvement Districts Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. In addition to those individuals, we met with a number of former commission members so that we would receive the input and sage advice that could be put forward by those individuals.

Now, one of the things that is most difficult, Mr. Speaker, for all members of the Assembly is that when we're dealing with any kind of changes at all to our constituencies, whether it's a very small change where very few people are being transferred from our constituency to a neighbouring constituency or whether indeed it's a significant change, there are great feelings that come into play because of the attachments that members have for their constituents. That in part relates to the kind of work we do within our respective areas.

I would again like to draw to the attention of all members that this prediction was made and stated in the 1990 report. We knew at that time – seven members of the Assembly: two from the Official Opposition, one from the third party, and four from the governing party – that there would be great consternation, that this would be a very difficult matter for the Assembly to deal with, that it's not easy when you are forced to look at that kind of change. We indicated at that time that approval of the recommendations by the Assembly meant that all 83 electoral divisions will see some change:

“These changes may be minimal in some cases; however, most will be major and significant.” That's a fact that we have to deal with, Mr. Speaker.

The elements of the Bill that have received little attention in the debate need to be highlighted again, Mr. Speaker. The fact that we are staying with 83 ridings, the first time in many, many years that members of this Assembly have not tackled the thorny issue of redistribution by merely adding more seats to the Assembly: that was not done. It was not done because Albertans told us, whether we were in small towns, medium sized cities, or large cities, not to increase the size of the House. We did not. What was the end result from that move? The loss of three seats outside

of Calgary and Edmonton and the transfer of those seats to Calgary and Edmonton.

As well, Mr. Speaker, finding a basis for redistribution by using the latest census figures and adding to that the Indian population for those Indian reserves and Indian settlements where the enumeration was not complete and coming up with a total figure based on the 1991 census and the figures supplied by Indian Affairs.

The recognition of special consideration electoral divisions. The four divisions in this province which occupy in excess of 30 percent of the land area in the province is a significant factor.

The fact that we have 44 single-municipality electoral divisions and 39 multi-municipality electoral divisions.

We addressed the length of time between redistribution, that the next redistribution should occur after the release of the 2001 census so that this Assembly and an Electoral Boundaries Commission are not put through the kind of agony we've had to deal with and that a commission dealt with. The commission, on the unanimous endorsement of the 1989-90 all-party committee, was directed to use the most recent census figures available. That was 1986 figures at that time. They could not use the 1991 figures because those figures weren't available. In fact, they barely became available in time for this committee to do its work. So we're saying that rather than trying to tie to an artificial date after every second election or between every second election, in eight years, whichever comes first, we've recommended that it be after the 2001 census.

There has been much talk about the process. The makeup of the commission has not been affected. We are recommending that when redistribution next occurs in this Assembly, it will be based on the results and recommendations of a five-member commission, a commission chaired by a judge that contains three citizens at large and the Chief Electoral Officer. Those are all factors which will come into play.

A number of members in the Assembly have expressed concern that they weren't aware of the magnitude of changes which were going to occur. I'd like to restate the facts. All members of the Assembly were invited to appear before the committee. Most did appear or sent letters with their recommendations. Regrettably, a few members chose not to come or were not able to come. I can say that all caucuses in this Assembly put forward representations – all caucuses.

Now, let's look at some of the amendments, because there have been questions raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar as to why some amendments were acceptable and others were not.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View earlier this evening again raised questions as to why the amendments put forward by that hon. member were not accepted. There's a simple reason, Mr. Speaker: they did not meet the population test. The hon. member obviously was not able to redraw the boundaries in such a way and stay within the population criteria, and therefore the amendment was unacceptable.

Let's look at another. Let's look at Peace River, where the hon. member spent some considerable time, looked at the map, realized that the committee had inadvertently split a community of interest, brought forward a reasoned amendment, and it was accepted.

I look at Calgary-Currie, where approximately 25 percent of the riding was lost. The only thing I want to draw to the members' attention is that there are 37 ridings in this province that were affected more severely than by 25 percent. Seven more in the city of Calgary, seven in the city of Edmonton, and 23 in other parts of the province were affected more severely than by a 25 percent factor.

Let's look at Rocky Mountain House, where again the hon. member came forward and reminded the committee that we had inadvertently split five summer villages. That may not seem like a very significant point, but it is in the sense that all of those summer villages rely on part-time secretarial help, so they work together. Even though they're separate entities, they work together. The hon. member pointed out an error to the committee, and that amendment came forward and was adjusted.

Let's look at Westlock-Sturgeon.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let's not.

10:20

MR. BOGLE: Yeah, let's look at Westlock-Sturgeon. Mr. Speaker, the hon Member for Westlock-Sturgeon tried to bring forward an amendment, worked hard to find a way to bring forward an amendment, worked with his colleague in the Assembly the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew and myself, spent some considerable time poring over maps to see if it could be accommodated, and unfortunately it could not.

Then I look at Edmonton-Highlands, where the hon. member was able to sit down and work carefully on a map and come up with a couple of community changes that affected Edmonton-Belmont and the constituency of Edmonton-Highlands. Yes, that amendment was accepted here in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, what's really important now is that we get on with the job. The purpose of this Act is to allow two critical things to begin; first of all, to allow the Chief Electoral Officer to begin the necessary work to prepare us for the next general election. [interjection] There's work which must be done to prepare for the next election, hon. Member for Edmonton-

Meadowlark. That's a matter we're looking very eagerly towards, looking very comfortably towards ridings like yours. The Chief Electoral Officer will complete his work. At the same time, the government will refer the legislative package to the Alberta Court of Appeal, as we did in 1990, and when the naysayers across the way in the Liberal caucus say, "Oh, it won't pass it; it will be thrown out of court," guess what? In 1990 all 13 key elements were unanimously upheld by the court, and we believe this legislation will be upheld in the same way.

The key, Mr. Speaker, is let us get on with the job. Let us get on with it so we can get out on the hustings and let Albertans decide, because that is the ultimate test. That's the ultimate court. They are the individuals who will decide whether what has been done is fair or not, and we on this side and my colleagues across the way are looking forward to that challenge.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the hour I request leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner has moved that debate be adjourned on Bill 55. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

[At 10:23 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

