

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Friday, February 12, 1993** 10:00 a.m.
Date: 93/02/12

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our divine Father, as we conclude for this week and this session our work in this Assembly, we renew our thanks and ask that we may continue our work under Your guidance.

Amen.

head: **Notices of Motions**

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice of my intention to move immediately after question period the following motion under Standing Order 40:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the family court in Calgary and applaud the efforts of Maud Riley, president of the Alberta Council on Child and Family Welfare, an outstanding advocate of child protection.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 40 to give oral notice of my intention to seek immediately following question period today the unanimous consent of the Assembly to deal with the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta extend congratulations to Bret Hart, of Calgary, for his significant achievement as reigning heavyweight champion of the World Wrestling Federation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice that after question period today I intend to seek unanimous consent for the following motion pursuant to Standing Order 40:

Be it resolved that this Assembly express its congratulations to Ms Jodi Evans, an Albertan Rhodes scholar and former University of Calgary basketball player. On February 14 she will be the first woman in British history to play in a university men's basketball match, playing for Oxford against Cambridge.

I have 90 copies.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of question period it is my intention under Standing Order 40 to seek unanimous consent of the Assembly to approve the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta congratulate Mr. Gary McPherson, of Edmonton, Alberta, on the occasion of his receiving the King Clancy award from the Canadian Foundation for Disabled Persons, and be it further resolved that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly convey this congratulatory message in his usual manner.

Mr. McPherson is the Chair of the Premier's council for the disabled.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

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

Bill 341

Limitation of Actions Amendment Act, 1993

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Limitation of Actions Amendment Act, 1993.

This amendment, Mr. Speaker, will permit an action to be brought at any time without reference to limitation periods with respect to damages for sexual abuse of a minor.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 341 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table a response to Motion for a Return 375.

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

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table this morning a response to a question during question period from the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

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

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore I have for filing this morning four copies of a petition signed by 308 Albertans which proposes a 35 percent pay cut for the minister responsible for women's issues because she doesn't believe in pay equity.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's not often I get a chance to introduce people from southern Alberta. Today I'd like to introduce to the Assembly my godson, seated in the gallery along with his mother and twin brothers, who happen to be the children of the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff. I'd ask Colin Hyland and his brothers and mother to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Provincial Fiscal Policies

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we have listened to this government during this session talk about a plan. We've seen them borrow \$500 million. They say that there are going to be no new taxes. They say that they're not going to liquidate the heritage trust fund. Yet magically they're going to have a balanced budget. Now, we're very interested in how they're going to do this. I'm going to ask the Treasurer to tell us the real truth and tell us how he's going to balance the budget with no new taxes and not selling off the trust fund. Is he going to wave a magic wand?

MR. DINNING: No, Mr. Speaker. The provincial government has spelled out very clearly that our intention is to balance the budget by the fiscal year 1996-97. The hon. member is asking me how we are going to do that. I'll tell him. We are in the process now of going through a program-by-program review of each

department before the standing policy committees. It's an open public process in which we are inviting Albertans to participate. Secondly, we will hold a budget round table with those who create the wealth in this province and those who help spend it – the school boards, the hospital boards, the nurses, the teachers, the universities and colleges – bring those people together to help us set our proper spending priorities. Thirdly, we have the Financial Review Commission, which will report to the public by March 31, 1993. All of that, asking Albertans to help us set our priorities to make sure that we focus on those essential, important, core programs but at the same time live within the taxpayers' means: that's what Albertans are telling us, and we're getting the message.

MR. MARTIN: What a gang, Mr. Speaker. They're going to balance the budget by talking to people. This is four years into their mandate, and they're running around talking to people: help us; help us; help us; we have no idea what we're doing. At this stage in the Alberta Legislature, in the fourth year of a mandate, we should at least know where they're going. That's the problem.

Now, the reality is that they're not prepared to look at the revenue side. Then they have to look at the expenditure side. Eighty percent of the budget goes to people services, Mr. Speaker. Would the Treasurer tell us, then, is this what they're planning: massive cuts in health care, education, and social services? Is that what they're talking about?

10:10

MR. DINNING: The simple answer, Mr. Speaker, is: no, we are not. What the hon. member has just said and, as I recall, what he said on the second day of this Legislature: don't talk to Albertans. The NDP don't want to talk to Albertans. They don't want to listen to what Albertans are saying. The government does, and we are out talking with Albertans. You know, we could go on and on. The opposite members agree. We're not going to take the cuts of brutality, the brutalistic cuts that are suggested by the Liberals and by the leader of the Liberal Party. When he appeared before the *Edmonton Sun* editorial board, he said: we're going to be brutal. Well, this government will not be. We have our priorities straight. Education and health care are the priorities of Albertans. So, too, are Albertans saying: live within the taxpayers' means. We've got the message, and we're going to act on it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, frankly, this is drivel coming from the Treasurer. Let's look at the facts. They've run over a \$3 billion deficit, and yes, they're trying to be nice to everybody, trying to get through an election. No new taxes, no brutal cuts, no nothing, yet magically they're going to balance the budget. I'm saying to this Treasurer: quit fooling around and tell Albertans the truth. If you're not going to look at the revenue side, then isn't it true that you're going to have to make these massive cuts, similar to what the Liberals are advocating, in those people services? That's the reality.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is doing is simply undermining all of the efforts that school boards, that universities, and that hospitals are engaging in right now to figure out how they're going to live within the taxpayers' means and ensure that they continue to deliver quality services so that kids get an education, our young Albertans get a proper postsecondary education, and those people who are in need of health care get it. All the hon. member is doing is creating an environment of fear. He's mongering fear, I could suggest. He's not helping to sustain or support the environment that universities and hospitals and school boards are trying to create, whereby they're trying to come

up with more creative, different, better ways of delivering services to Albertans so that kids do get an education, so that Albertans do get quality health care but we also live within the taxpayers' means. That's the message we've got, and we're acting on it.

MR. MARTIN: This is just amazing. Four years into the mandate and we're getting this sort of drivel, Mr. Speaker. It just blows my mind.

Consumer Assistance and Registry Services

MR. MARTIN: Maybe we're getting some ideas, if we look at it. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the government announced its new one-stop shopping. Now, in principle I agreed with that. We have government offices we spent a lot of money on in the good times, Treasury Branches all over the province where people could go in and do one-stop shopping. However, as usual we have to look at the small print with this government. It seems that the government has decided to privatize the provision of government services and make Albertans pay for this privilege. Now, I want you to think about this. What they are setting up, frankly, is a possible patronage network all over the province for good Tories. That's what it's all about. Now, the government hasn't changed its stripes at all. My question to the minister is simply this: isn't the reason that they're considering privatization, which ultimately would be more expensive for the taxpayers of Alberta, the fact that loyal Conservatives all over the province could be rewarded?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've had this government action before. They privatized wine stores, and then good Tories like Joe Dutton got on the gravy train. This is precisely the same thing that will happen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's look at the other part of it. He also said in there: gee, there just may be more user fees. So the people of Alberta are not only going to privatize to reward Tories, but they're going to have to pay more for it. I'd ask the Deputy Premier: on what new programs does he plan to push user fees onto ordinary people?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, firstly let me indicate that had the hon. member checked with his office staff prior to coming into the House yesterday, he would have found that he had the full documentation on his desk at 1:30 yesterday in his own office, contrary to the comments that he mentioned yesterday.

Also, let me share with the hon. member that in the background information we indicate in a very forthright manner that the initial planning for the new agency will begin immediately and will be completed by March 31, 1993. We're also going to have a complete business plan developed by September 15, 1993, under the capable leadership of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party is doing again is playing bogeyman, attempting to put things that are not factual on the floor of this Legislature. It's our desire to have a more effective service for the Alberta population as it relates to a number of these agencies that we do presently have under our control so that we can have a one-window shopping area.

Let me just reinforce with hon. members what the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party said yesterday on this issue, because I want to stress the inconsistency again by the New Democratic Party. He indicated:

I certainly have been advocating much more efficiency in terms of government services . . . and I'll say at first blush . . . I think there are . . . some good ideas here.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just reinforce what the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party said yesterday in contradiction to what he's saying today, and again it underscores the inconsistencies of the New Democratic Party.

MR. MARTIN: That's blatant nonsense. First of all, if I'm looking for bogeymen, I don't need to look. I just look across the way, Mr. Speaker. Patronage, to the hon. member, is not efficiency in government service, and that's what we're talking about, the same as how we did the wine stores before.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that this government under new management has talked about is that they're going to consult with people. Well, I guess they consult with Tories, because on something as important as this the provincial employees' union was not consulted even though they were promised this. Even though they don't believe in consultation, I want the minister to come clean, then, and tell us exactly how many jobs are going to be lost as a result of this measure.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, firstly, as I indicated to the hon. leader's first question, this is not an area whereby we're going to involve ourselves as it relates to patronage. Don't believe one word that that hon. member has suggested as it relates to that area. Secondly, as it relates to our desire to inject greater efficiencies and who we have consulted with, we indicated at the outset that as we go through this process of government reorganization – and we've been very effective. Firstly, the Premier reduced the size of his cabinet; secondly, we saw the reduction of deputy ministers; thirdly, we saw the reorganization within individual departments; and now we've seen the reorganization as it relates to the agency for consumer assistance. We're going to continue with those thrusts because we recognize that the Alberta population wishes to see greater efficiency in their government. Let me leave him with the assurance, as we have done right at the outset when we involved ourselves with all of these initiatives, that we're going to do so with great sensitivity and care because we recognize the outstanding contribution that the individuals within the Alberta public service have offered to our population.

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

Alberta Intermodal Services Ltd.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in July of 1991 the then minister of economic development and trade announced that a prospective shortlist was being compiled on the sale of Alberta Intermodal Services and that a sale was imminent. In fact he said that he anticipated the sale would be completed before the end of that year. We are now better than a year and a half down the road, and the only action that seems to have taken place is that the government fired the then president of that corporation without just cause and replaced him with a buddy of the now Deputy Premier. My question is to the Deputy Premier in charge of privatization. Can the minister explain why this company would have \$27 million in cash sitting in the bank, when this government can't balance its own books, and would have a value of \$35 million? Why \$27 million in the bank?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, firstly, let me correct again the inaccuracy of the hon. Member for Calgary-North West. The individual who is the head of Alberta Intermodal Services is not a friend of mine. He was an individual who was highly regarded within the department of economic development, a public service

individual who's worked hard within the public service, stayed within the public service. We recognized his transportation abilities, and he went to head up the Alberta Intermodal Services as we are going through this privatization stage.

Yes, I indicated that it was our desire to privatize it. I also indicated that we felt very confident that we would receive the majority, if not all, maybe even more than what we had invested, and that process is still on stream.

10:20

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, it may be true that they didn't develop any friendship when they were both Members of Parliament for the Conservative Party, but I find that hard to believe. However, it's entirely possible, I suppose.

Nonetheless, my supplementary question to the minister is: isn't it true that that \$27 million in cash is likely going to be lost when a prospective buyer takes it over because nobody has come forward to offer \$35 million for this corporation?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, firstly let me correct another inaccuracy of the hon. member. Stan Schellenberger, the individual he is referring to, is not the head of Alberta Intermodal Services. He is attempting to imply so, and it's not factual. It's worse than that, but I can't say that type of thing within the Legislative Assembly.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, another nonanswer. We still don't know what the minister is planning to do with the \$27 million that's in the bank. He's avoiding the question once again.

My supplementary question to the minister is: in a corporation that the government claims they've been trying to sell for the last two years and that Mr. Schellenberger is now babysitting for this minister, why would the government invest an additional \$2 million in the last fiscal year when you're trying to get rid of it? Why put more money into it?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'd be more than happy to give the hon. member a more direct answer to his questions if he wouldn't have a very lengthy preamble to the question full of inaccuracies that we have to correct the record on. If the hon. member would put his question more directly without those inaccuracies, I would be more than happy to get to it. Let me just leave the hon. member with the assurance that I'm sure it is the new minister's desire, as it was my desire when I was in that portfolio, to privatize Alberta Intermodal Services at no cost to the Alberta taxpayer.

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

Reorganization

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Deputy Premier as it relates to his responsibilities for government reorganization and downsizing. There's been a lot of speculation on the status of our foreign offices. The NDP has suggested that we do away with the foreign offices.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Right.

MR. FISCHER: I noticed that former Premier Lougheed endorsed the role of these offices. Could the minister indicate just what the status of these offices is?

MR. ELZINGA: Well, I want to thank the hon. Member for Wainwright for raising this issue and share with him that we do

recognize the importance of our foreign offices. As with all things within the Alberta government we are going through a thorough examination as it relates to their effectiveness. I deeply appreciate former Premier Lougheed's comments as it relates to the importance of those offices. It is our desire, though, to shift the emphasis, if we maintain the offices, to a greater trade component rather than an ambassadorial component, because we recognize that we have to be more proactive in selling the goods that are produced within Alberta.

I should share with the House also, Mr. Speaker, the great inconsistency that the hon. Member for Wainwright has indicated as it relates to the NDP. They've indicated: do away with all the foreign offices, and I just heard them say, "Right." Right? Yet in the policy paper that they put out in January of 1993, they say, "A New Democrat government would reduce the number of . . . offices", but we would maintain three. Now they're saying that they're going to do away with them. This shows you the inconsistency of the New Democratic Party. In their documentation they say that they want to maintain the offices, yet in the Legislative Assembly they say that they want to do without them.

MR. FISCHER: My supplemental is again to the minister responsible for government downsizing and reorganization. On Wednesday I noticed that both the minister of reorganization and the Minister of Community Development spoke to the arts communities in both Edmonton and Calgary. The perception was that the two ministers did not have the same message. Would the minister clarify this, please?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to have the opportunity on behalf of my dear friend and colleague the Minister of Community Development to meet with the arts group here on Wednesday since she was in Calgary meeting with that same group. I indicated to them at that time the superb job the minister was doing in advocating the arts.

I should share with hon. members that when we were there, the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party was present as was the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. I want to pay tribute to the leader of the Liberal Party, because at that time the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark indicated that they were going to give more funding to the arts community, whereas his leader is saying that they're going to have brutal slashes across every area of the government. Again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we illustrate the inconsistencies of our opposition parties, and we have it on record. One member of that party says that they're going to spend more money; the other member says that they're going to slash brutally. It's outrageous, the inconsistencies from the opposition parties.

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

Gambling

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the minister responsible for lotteries and gaming. In the report that was tabled yesterday in the House entitled *Compulsive Gambling: General Issues, Treatments, and Policy Considerations*, the author proposed three

- remedies to counter the negative effects of compulsive gambling . . .
- (1) research to identify the magnitude of the problem, (2) public awareness campaigns to alert citizens of the potential dangers [associated with] gambling, and (3) state-funded treatment for compulsive gamblers, their . . . families.

I just want to ask the minister: exactly how and when does he intend to implement those three excellent recommendations?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The report that we tabled yesterday is one that was provided to me some time ago. I do appreciate the efforts of the author in putting his comments together. He's also pointed out that Alberta has played a leadership role in this whole issue in Canada and asks us to do more.

Mr. Speaker, I've said publicly now for about three years that when a group in the province of Alberta came to me with a recommendation or a submission, I would very seriously take a look at it. The last time a question was asked of me, I indicated that no group had come to me at that point in time. Since then a group has come, and I've asked them to meet with my deputy minister.

It would be my intent very shortly to in fact undertake a compulsive gambling prevalence study in the province of Alberta, a study that would in fact have about three different areas associated with it: one would be to assess Albertans' gambling behaviour; secondly, to estimate the incidence of those experiencing problems as a result of their gambling and gaming; and thirdly, to determine the relationship between the gaming behaviour of Albertans and the key sociodemographic characteristics that are thought to precipitate such things.

Mr. Speaker, I would want very shortly to outline the purpose of the study and then put it out. Hopefully it can be done in such a way that all consultants in the province of Alberta who would want to bid on the study would be in a position to do it, rather than simply award it to a particular person or to a particular group.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, the report makes it absolutely clear that the government, because it profits from gaming, has a "responsibility to protect the welfare of those citizens who become compulsive gamblers." That's a quote. The research was the first step, and that's fine. I want to ask the minister: what about direct action, the other two components that were recommended in the report. Will he give action on that?

MR. KOWALSKI: As I've indicated before, Mr. Speaker, we have four Premier's councils in the province of Alberta. I've outlined them here in question period before, and all four would, in fact, if they were to receive a submission from a particular group that would want to see some action taken in this regard, be in a position to respond. Until the last few days we have had no submission from anyone in the province of Alberta.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, please understand that we have approximately 1,800 kiosks throughout this province that do provide information on this whole area. That's available. That's been under way for a long period of time, and of course my office is open on any occasion to receive additional submissions.

It's one thing to respond to a so-called issue out there that isn't defined. What we want to do is respond to an issue that is clearly defined to determine if this is a problem, to quantify what level the problem is, and then basically work towards some resolution of it.

Dairy Industry

MR. MacDONALD: Mr. Speaker, Alberta egg and dairy producers already have a smaller market share of Canadian production proportionate to our population than they should, and now

their output is being cut even further due to the decline in national consumption. These Alberta producers provide a reliable supply of high-quality food to our consumers, and they're getting the short end of the stick twice. To the minister of agriculture: will the minister acknowledge the benefit these producers bring to rural Alberta and assure this House that he will advocate on their behalf to maintain their production?

10:30

MR. ISLEY: Yes.

MR. MacDONALD: Well, that's good, Mr. Speaker. The minister has to do more than just move his lips, though. He has to say something. Maybe he's not saying very much because the Premier said that he's opposed to the marketing boards. Is the reason the minister is not pushing to increase Alberta's share because he's trying to scuttle the supply management side of the industry?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the hon. member doesn't really understand the marketing board system in the dairy industry. There are two sections to dairy in this country. There is the fluid, or table milk, section, which is on quota but is adjusted to your provincial consumption. So in fluid milk our producers have virtually their share of the Canadian production. Then you have the industrial milk quota, which is under the national program, and under the national program if you were to take the border of Manitoba/Ontario, west of it there is 33 percent of Canada's population but only about 18 percent of Canada's industrial milk quota. What the hon. member is really advocating is that we break down the national system. Our producers don't want that. Certainly they want to lobby for a greater share of that. The bulk of that share is being held by Quebec and by Ontario. If he's advocating that he wants me to break out of the national agreement, that's a different matter.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Smoky River.

Federal/Provincial Services Overlap

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The publication *Improving Efficiency and Accountability: Rebalancing Federal-Provincial Spending Responsibilities* indicates that the federal government spends approximately \$4.3 billion pursuing the same purposes within Alberta as the provincial government. This means that there is an apparent overlap of 55 percent of the \$7.8 billion in total federal expenditure that's directly appropriated to Alberta. To the Deputy Premier responsible for Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs: will the upcoming federal/provincial conference scheduled in Alberta later in March be dealing with this issue?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why the Premier had advocated the coming together of both senior federal ministers and provincial ministers is so that we could examine the area the hon. member highlighted. Let me also take this opportunity to commend the hon. member, who is the chairman of our financial review standing policy committee, for doing a superb job, as this was one of the issues we briefly discussed last night.

The hon. member is also very much aware that during the constitutional discussions there were provisions within the constitutional paper whereby there was going to be a removal of government overlap. Recognizing the failure of those talks, we have to now go into discussions as it relates to specific items, and this is one of the specific items we will be discussing with our

federal counterparts so that we can inject greater efficiency and better service to all of our population.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: will other issues such as interprovincial regulations be discussed at this meeting?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, what the federal government has done is institute a process very similar to what they had in place as it related to the free trade discussions, whereby they wish to have all provinces participate with them in ongoing dialogue to resolve the issue of internal trade barriers. I have asked the hon. Member for Medicine Hat to help play a role in this, recognizing the expertise that he does bring to the table. He is going to work with our officials in representing the province of Alberta as it relates to the breakdown of internal trade barriers, because we as a province have been the leading advocate of reducing those internal trade barriers that do exist within the province.

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

Landfill Pollution

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Whenever the siting or expansion of landfill sites is considered, divisive and sometimes painful controversy is generated in communities. Some express concern about the need for jobs and tax revenue while others express their concerns about the impact on public safety and quality of life. Unfortunately, this government has done nothing to ease the tension through the introduction of fair and effective legislation that guarantees that people's views will be sought, will be respected, and will be reflected in the decisions that are made. I'd like to ask the minister what changes he plans to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act to provide for an EIA process for significant landfill development.

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for his question. However, I think he's dead wrong when he says that in our new environmental legislation we aren't dealing with and conscious of the need for public involvement. Hon. member, that's one of the principles of that legislation.

As you're well aware as well, the siting of landfills is the responsibility of the Department of Health. There was a very significant review of that issue in a committee that I chaired that went around the province and took input into the new environmental legislation. Now, there were certainly many, many Albertans who said that landfills are an important issue, that they are a substantial possible impact on our environment and therefore should be under Environment. There was the other side of the argument which said that Health is the proper department to be dealing with the siting, to be dealing with the overall issue of landfills. I think we have to have a co-operative effort here, and I truly believe that under the new government of the Premier of this province we will have an enhanced co-operative effort between Environmental Protection and the Department of Health in dealing with these issues that are so important to Albertans.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the local board of health needs to be involved, but because there's no application fee required by the developer, money must be taken from other important public health programs to pay for whatever process is put in place. What does this minister plan to do so that people in places like Thorhild, west Edmonton, and those on both sides of the controversy in the Ryley area can be assured of a thorough public input process prior to decisions being made?

MR. EVANS: Well, I'm glad actually, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member referred to the Ryley situation. There's a perfect example, hon. member. Ryley has two landfills essentially. One is a private operator, and the other is owned by the county of Beaver. The issue there at this point in time is that the Laidlaw facility is a hazardous waste facility. They are considering expanding the numbers of hazardous wastes that they want to dispose of at that facility. We at Environmental Protection don't yet have a formal proposal from the people at Laidlaw. This is an example of how we're going to make the environmental protection Act work, hon. member. When we receive that application, we're going to study it very carefully, and at that point in time we will decide the level of public participation, the level of review that will be required before approval is given. We are very concerned in Environmental Protection that the people of Alberta have input into any change of policy, have input into those serious matters that affect their day-in and day-out existence. I assure you that when we receive that application, we will look at it very carefully and ensure that Albertans are given that opportunity for input.

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

Wildlife Management

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a letter from the Ralph Klein leadership to the Alliance for Public Wildlife, four copies, before I proceed.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Hey, Nick, have you changed your mind again?

MR. TAYLOR: You never know. The only wildlife around here is concentrated on my right.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Time is flying, hon. member, and other members would like to get in.

MR. TAYLOR: All right.

This is to the minister of the environment. In a letter dated December 1, which I've just tabled, the Premier says that he is "fully committed to putting the privatization/commercialization of wildlife issue through a thorough and public assessment." I commend the Premier for this commitment. He says at the end of his letter that "a complete and thorough review" will follow if he wins. Now, will the minister be setting up this review that the Premier promised to take place after the successful completion of his campaign, or will he be giving the task to an independent body?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

10:40

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, I don't recall having seen that letter from the Premier. It's one

of the many issues that affects the new and expanded portfolio of Environmental Protection, hon. member. It's an issue that has been out there and that the people of Alberta have been discussing. As a matter of fact, this morning I met with a new advisory committee that we have set up under our department, the Environmental Protection Forestry, Parks and Wildlife Advisory Committee. This may well be one of those issues that that committee wants to look at and make recommendations back to the Minister of Environmental Protection on. I assured the people at that meeting this morning that that group would be the primary source of public input on a continuing basis to this portfolio. I will certainly bring your concerns forward to that committee and ask for their input.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can see why he wasn't notified. I think the Premier felt fairly secure of your vote.

Nevertheless, the second question, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister of agriculture. In view of the minister's policy and outspoken opposition to any kind of public hearing on game farming, will he now assure the House that the Premier's opinion on this question, that we should have hearings, now rules the day, rather than his opinion?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Premier's opinion is definitely the dominant one on this side of the House, but I don't think the hon. member is clearly reflecting the Premier's opinion to the House.

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

Public Lands Management

MR. TANNAS: With the new government's downsizing of the number of cabinet ministers and consolidation of departments, the issue of public lands comes to mind. Crown lands, or public lands, have been moved from one ministry to another and back again with a smoothness that recalls Sir John A. Macdonald's double shuffle of the last century. My question to the minister of agriculture then: how much of Alberta's forest lands does he supervise and control through his department of agriculture?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the transfer of the day-to-day administration of public lands from the Department of Environmental Protection to Agriculture involves only lands under agricultural disposition. That means about 6 percent of the total public lands in this province. Land under homestead sales, farm development sales, long-term leases, long-term licences, annual permits, or the grazing reserves is all we're talking about. So as far as forestry land is concerned, Agriculture has no involvement with it.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, again, to the same minister: would the minister then confirm or deny that he or his department intends to auction some of this 6 percent of the Crown lands, the agricultural part of it, to farmers and ranchers and the general public of Alberta?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environmental Protection may wish to supplement my answer as he is the owner of all public lands. The point I'm making here is that under the transfer Agriculture is involved only in the administration. The ownership remains with the Department of Environmental Protection. Any decision to dispose of public lands has to be

made by that minister, not this one. I would clarify that it is not my intention to lobby for or direct the sale of any public lands.

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

MR. EVANS: Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, to expand on the comments of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is very, very clear that the Department of Environmental Protection remains in ownership of public lands in the province of Alberta, remains responsible for planning, allocation, and if there is to be any sale of public lands in Alberta, it's within our portfolio of Environmental Protection. I think members in the House and Albertans may be aware that about .3 percent of public lands are at some stage moving towards disposition. This is well known. Those lands that are at some stage of disposition will continue to move through the various stages, hon. Member for Highwood, but there is no change in the philosophy of public lands in the province of Alberta except for the day-to-day operation of those lands under agricultural disposition, which will come within the purview of Agriculture under multiple . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

Labour Legislation

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On numerous occasions when the Minister of Labour served as a back-bench member of the Getty administration, he spoke of his support for the right-to-work concept. Right to work is a euphemism for union busting and worker impoverishment. Now, I would submit that the member for . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: It's the '90s.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yeah, I'm well aware that it's the 90s, and that's the problem.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the Member for Red Deer-North knew full well what he was doing when he chose to use the term "right to work," and for that reason I would ask him as Minister of Labour to advise the Assembly that he does indeed understand what right to work means and that he would renounce his previous support for the right-to-work concept for Alberta workers.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, one thing I have found in the last month in meeting with large numbers of people who represent labour groups and are in the union movement is that there's a high degree of willingness to co-operate and to consult. What I've also found in those meetings is that they were not quick to believe specious remarks made by the member opposite in the media soon after my appointment, remarks that appeared to be intended to somewhat taint what is a fairly good conversational and co-operational atmosphere between myself and many of these members. Even the media was careful enough to do the research to point out that my remarks had been taken grossly out of context by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, because I was suggesting that every person in this province has a right to work. Even the media were very careful to explain that shade of difference. Now, this member opposite wants to continue to try and propagate a feeling of ill will, and that creates some difficulty with me.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine that the Minister of Labour would be able to stand in this Legislative Assembly

today and say that he didn't know what "right to work" meant. When he used it in 1986 and 1987 he knew full well what right-to-work legislation meant in Louisiana, Alabama, Missouri, and all of those other progressive states where workers are impoverished.

The minister still refuses to renounce his position, so I would ask the minister today to commit to the Assembly that he will, before he attempts to introduce any changes to the Employment Standards Code or Labour Relations Code, hold comprehensive public meetings around the province to explain to workers the problem there is with right-to-work legislation and what they can expect if this minister has his way and introduces that kind of legislation in this province.

MR. DAY: Well, once again the member opposite shows he's hopelessly out of date. He's asking me to hold meetings around the province. From the day I was given the responsibility of this portfolio I began many significant meetings with representatives of labour in this province, and I'm happy to report to you, Mr. Speaker, that in those meetings the conversation was very open, the conversation was very honest, and there was a commitment between us that any suggestions in terms of changes to the labour code would certainly be given full consideration by myself. If I or my colleagues or this government were anticipating changes to the labour code, it would only be done with full consultation and discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report today that I have had good meetings, collegial meetings, meetings that I feel are constructive with representatives in the labour movement. They have suggested to me that that's what they felt about the meetings. Let's continue in that air of co-operation and not confrontation. That's from another era.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly. [interjections] Order please. Does Edmonton-Beverly have a question?

10:50

Liquor Sales

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister responsible for the Alberta Liquor Control Board stated the other day that increased accessibility to alcoholic beverages does not lead to an increase in alcohol-related problems. The alcohol-related car accident that critically injured a 17-year-old youth in Grassland the other day following his purchase of beer from a convenience store is a concrete example of the problems of allowing an increase in the privatization of liquor sales outlets. To the minister responsible for the Liquor Control Board: given that this instance of alcohol sale to a minor would never have come to light had it not been for the unfortunate – and I underline "unfortunate" – accident that it precipitated, does the minister now recognize that private liquor retailers have a significant potential in increasing minors' access to alcohol and that this issue is a serious social problem?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, our heart goes out to the family and to the situation that existed in that accident, but I would ask the Assembly that this could be sub judice at the present time.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, a number of Albertans think the minister favours raising the drinking age from 18 to 20 years of age. From the replies he's written in letters on this issue, it's easy to get such an impression. Raising the drinking age while increasing accessibility of minors to alcohol by allowing more private liquor vendors is logically inconsistent at best. Given that

you can't have it both ways, will the minister be honest with Albertans and tell us whether you plan to raise the drinking age or increase the private outlets and effectively abandon any hope of enforcing even the current 18-years-old cutoff?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the drinking age issue has been around for many years, and I did make a few statements, I think it was around a year ago, in regards to it and asked Albertans to respond as to their opinion. At the present time I have received not a great deal of input, and the input that I did receive was about 50-50. The jury is out on this as far as Albertans, but one thing came through in spades and that was: enforce the drinking age that we have at the present time. We have taken steps within the ALCB, to the best of our ability, to send a message out to all those that have licences that sell alcoholic beverages that they will be held responsible to that licence in the sale of alcoholic beverages to underage individuals.

This is an ongoing discussion, and it will go on through the years. I remember that when I was younger, 21 was the age in Ontario, and then it has been lowered across this nation. I would ask the hon. member, if he has constituents that have concerns in this area, to please write to me, write to all members and bring forth their points of view, because at the present time, as I said, the jury is out, and I see a split in this society as to where they want to go.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

The time for question period has expired. The Chair regrets that it was unable to move things along a little faster today. There were many people left on the list.

There was a question deferred to the hon. Minister of Environmental Protection that was raised by the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View earlier this week, and the Chair is wondering whether the minister would be prepared to respond to that.

Three Sisters Golf Resorts Inc.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly would be. This is a question that arose on Tuesday, February 9, and in the hon. member's initial question, he stated that I had said that refusal with respect to the Three Sisters project in the Bow Valley to allow any development in the Wind Valley area, that refusal being from the Natural Resources Conservation Board decision, amounted to expropriation. He then asked why our government had taken the position that this was expropriation.

Well, certainly nothing could be closer to the truth – or further from the truth. What am I saying, hon. member? Nothing could be further from the truth. That's what happens when as a practising lawyer you start giving free legal advice. It's worth exactly what you pay for it.

The government of the province of Alberta under my ministry has never said, from the date of this decision, that the decision of the board amounted to an expropriation. One of the many arguments that may come forward, hon. member, from the Three Sisters group with respect to their position on the Wind Valley property and the fact that they are not going to be able to develop in that area may well be that this is an expropriation. I think that's where the hon. member may have been hearing this. There may have been some communication between the media and the Three Sisters group. Although that has in honesty, hon. member, been brought up by the Three Sisters group as perhaps an argument they might want to bring forward, there has been no firm

position taken by Three Sisters, and certainly that would not be the position of the government of the province of Alberta.

Secondly, if I might just briefly, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member expressed his concern about that 525-odd acres being purchased by the government of Alberta. As I understand it, he expressed a great deal of support for that happening. However, he was saying that this land should be purchased at its current use. I would say to the hon. member that negotiations will continue as to whether or not this is appropriate or not, given that we have had an independent board that says that this property is very special for Alberta, for Canada because of its wildlife, because of its flora and fauna. What it's currently used for is quite irrelevant as to what its value is. Parties can use property for anything they want to, but that's not reflective of the fair market value. That's a question that has to be answered. That's a question that we will be dealing with as we continue to work with the Three Sisters people.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, supplemental.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciated the statement made by the minister that they have not embraced the argument of the Three Sisters resort group, but the whole question of the value of the land has to, of course, be based on whether it can be developed or not. That determines its market value. So I'd like the minister to clarify his final statements there and make it clear to the Assembly. Will any purchase of Three Sisters land or a swap of lands with Three Sisters be based on the value of the Three Sisters land with its current zoning and its current land use approvals, not on the basis of some false market value based on something that they're not allowed to do?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought I'd made this clear. This government and, I believe, the vast majority of Albertans believe that if the government is going to deal with people on their land and get into negotiations with respect to private land, then those negotiations must be based on the fair market value of the property. I assure the hon. member that any negotiations that are undertaken by this government will be on that basis, not on the present use but on the fair market value.

One of the things that is considered in determining what fair market value is is what the land can be used for, what approvals are on the land, what zoning is on the land, but clearly that's only part of the description of fair market value. That will be our criteria, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**
(*reversion*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Paul.

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and members of the Assembly 12 students from Saddle Lake school. They are accompanied by Ms Bilassy, Ms Makokis, Ms Audrey Lapatak, and Mr. Robert McGilvery. They are seated in

the visitors' gallery, and I would like them now to rise and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would beg leave of the Assembly to introduce a very special visitor who is in your gallery today. I want to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to all of the members of the Assembly the Hon. Titus Allooooloo, who is the Minister of Renewable Resources for the Northwest Territories.

The hon. minister is here to have some discussions with me about matters of environmental protection that affect both of our jurisdictions. He is accompanied by Mr. Joe Handley, his Deputy Minister of Renewable Resources for the Northwest Territories, and Bob McLeod, the assistant deputy minister of Renewable Resources. They are all in your gallery along with my deputy minister, Mr. Peter Melnychuk, who is on Mr. Allooooloo's right. I would ask that they all rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. BOGLE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to introduce a good friend and colleague, the mayor of Coaldale, Alex Hann. Alex in addition to being mayor works tirelessly with special needs residents in southern Alberta through Rehoboth, and he's also president of the Alberta Senior Citizens Homes Association. He's accompanied today by Pat Hay,* the secretary-treasurer of that association. Would Alex and Pat please stand and receive the warm welcome of our colleagues.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**
11:00

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair has received notice of four Standing Order 40 motions. The first to be received was that from the hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*. The hon. member, speaking to the urgency of this motion.

Family Court Anniversary

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. February 16, 1993, will be the 40th anniversary of the start of the family court in Calgary. Today is the only opportunity that we will have to deal with this matter while it's timely to do so. Finally, sir, this coincides most appropriately with the Family Day celebration of February 15. With that, I urge all members to support this motion and the hearing of it now.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, there is no debate on the question of urgency. The hon. member proposing the motion is entitled to state the reasons; then the Chair must ask whether or not there is agreement to proceed with this matter.

All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Let the hon. member then say a word or two in moving his motion.

Moved by Mr. Dickson:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the family court in Calgary and applaud the efforts of Maud Riley, president of the Alberta Council on Child and Family Welfare, an outstanding advocate of child protection.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members. The Family Court Act was passed by this Legislature in 1952, and this was a result of a number of years of vigorous lobbying by the Alberta Council on Child and Family Welfare. That's an organization I'll say more about in a moment. The family court in Calgary was established by order in council on January 1, 1953, and on February 16, 1953, the family court in Calgary came into formal operation with His Honour Judge C.M. McKeen in charge. It's of interest that the social worker that was attached to that first family court in 1953 was Herb Allard, who now sits as a judge of the family court in Calgary and to my knowledge is perhaps the last judge in this jurisdiction who sits without any formal legal training.

MR. PAYNE: He'd be one of the best.

MR. DICKSON: No doubt. We've had a number of examples, sir, and I think Judge Allard may be one of the best, that legal training doesn't necessarily ensure the most judicious and the most effective kind of justice.

The jurisdiction originally, sir, involved maintenance orders, assault between spouses, assault between parent and child, truancy, child neglect, and unlawful employment of children. The chief aim of the court was, and I quote, to leave no stone unturned to keep the home together. Changes to the jurisdiction have been many. It now deals with young offenders. It remains one of the last courts in this jurisdiction that Albertans can access without requiring a lawyer to be with them.

Mr. Speaker, I've mentioned the Alberta Council on Child and Family Welfare. That organization in many respects pioneered the kind of volunteerism that I think is so characteristic of Albertans. That organization was animated by Mrs. Maud Riley, spouse of perhaps one of the most famous jurists in this jurisdiction. She was president for 32 terms. Mrs. Riley had been told in 1917 that she was a visionary but that her ideals would never be realized, but she and her group started fighting. First it was for supervised playgrounds, and we now have Riley park in Calgary. They distributed and prepared literature on health, baby care, delinquency, pressed for baby clinics, persuaded the government to create a separate statute. I expect that the most enduring achievement of this remarkable woman was the creation of family court in Calgary and family court in Alberta as well.

Mr. Speaker, almost 50 years ago the then Lieutenant Governor, John J. Bowlen, lauded the work of the council and in so doing offered an opinion which is every bit as applicable today as it was then:

The leadership of tomorrow is largely dependent on the children of today, and the importance of ethical, physical and mental care for all children cannot be over-emphasized.

If the example of Maud Riley can be useful to us, if February 15 is to serve some useful purpose other than just a day off, perhaps it's an opportunity for all members in this Legislature and particularly those members in the Executive Council to find creative ways to advantage children by having a fully accessible education system, by ensuring that we have a family court and

*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

child welfare system that's adequately supported, and an aggressive action plan to eliminate family violence.

Thank you, sir.

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

MR. FOWLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, let me commend the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo for bringing forward this motion. Indeed, it is an entirely appropriate time to recognize this 40th anniversary and also to congratulate and recognize Maud Riley for her very positive and very large role in our family court system.

For those of us that practised in the family court, Mr. Speaker, yourself being a practising lawyer would realize that it is a different type of court in which we practised there. It was not one that was as cut and dried as in the criminal court or in some cases as in the civil litigation that some of us may have been involved in from time to time. It's a court that desired and required sensitivity to the family, and that which we were dealing with required special attention. Really there were no winners or losers in that court on every occasion. Where the child was involved, I believe in most instances the lawyers on both sides realized that that was the prime person who should be taken regard to in the settlement of those matters that came into family court. I would hope that that continues.

This House and I think all Albertans are aware of my concern as Justice minister for what is happening on the streets in respect to very young members of the family. I need no feigning of anger or being upset when I think of what is occurring on those streets when children are being robbed of their childhood. It's a type of robbery that in fact cannot ever be replaced. A very famous person said: he who takes my purse takes nothing. Of course, that means that anything in my purse can be replaced; anything of a material matter can be replaced. There is no replacement for a destroyed childhood irrespective of whether that childhood is destroyed on the street or within the home by parents of a family who have either stopped caring or can no longer attend to their own differences in such a manner that it does not greatly harm the children.

So this government is fully in favour of this motion, and I'm sure that it will receive the unanimous consent of this House.

11:10

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to give our caucus's support to the motion to recognize the 40th anniversary of the Calgary family court and the contributions of Maud Riley. I want to concentrate very briefly on the causes championed by Maud Riley in relation to what came to be the family court and in relation to children's rights.

Maud Riley championed causes such as the rights of children to be well born, to be well treated, to be well housed, to be well fed, and to be well taught. Those causes that she championed so effectively over the years are as pertinent today as they were in the days when she first raised them. She also championed the right of women to be appointed to police forces as early as 1943, and those issues still are as topical and as controversial today as they were in the days that she raised them. She was an advocate for measures to improve child welfare and was one of the leading advocates for the establishment of the family court, a court which has served Albertans well.

It's my pleasure to support the motion.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion as moved by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Let the record show it was carried unanimously.

Point of Order Brevity

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, a point of order dealing with the Standing Order 40 items we have today. We have three more of them to deal with. We also have on our agenda today the calling of Bill 56 and the calling of Bill 55. It's my understanding that when we deal with a Standing Order 40, there's an argument of brevity associated with it. I'd like to forewarn the House that the government is quite prepared to endorse all three additional Standing Order 40s. I would ask that there be brevity associated with them. If there's no intention of brevity, I will call out nay, because we have business to deal with on 56 and 55, and that takes precedence over the attempted filibuster that may go with some altogether very worthy Standing Order 40 items. So could I ask for brevity. The government will provide support for all three of them, and we can move forward.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then the next one received was from the hon. Member for Vegreville.

Wrestling Championship

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Brevity is indeed my middle name. I request unanimous consent of the Assembly to consider the following motion under Standing Order 40. Now, I recognize, in terms of urgency, that wrestling isn't everybody's cup of tea whether you call it sport or entertainment. This Calgarian is absolutely tops in his field, has millions of fans around the world. Although he didn't win the championship during the legislative session and I was hoping I could delay this until Mr. Hart visits Alberta later this month, this is indeed the last opportunity for our Assembly to honour his achievement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there agreement?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed?

Moved by Mr. Fox:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta extend congratulations to Bret Hart, of Calgary, for his significant achievement as reigning heavyweight champion of the World Wrestling Federation.

MR. FOX: Just very briefly I would like to point out that Mr. Hart has a large and loyal legion of fans young and old in the province of Alberta. He's proud of his Calgary roots and his responsibility as a prominent Albertan. He was a student at Ernest Manning high school and developed most of his skills both academic and wrestling thanks to his teacher and coach Mr. Ray Martin, now the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood and the Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad we have the support of the Assembly. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Is there agreement to this motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried unanimously.
The hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight.

First Woman on Oxford University Basketball Team

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not reread the motion because we are running out of time this morning. Speaking to the urgency of this motion, the match in question will be played on February 14. This is our last opportunity as members of the Legislature to congratulate this very excellent woman athlete from Calgary. Because there's been so much controversy surrounding her participation on this team for this game, I think it would be a real morale booster if Ms Evans were to get our support. So I urge members to support the motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there agreement that this motion be put to the Assembly?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

Moved by Mrs. Gagnon:

Be it resolved that this Assembly express its congratulations to Ms Jodi Evans, an Alberta Rhodes scholar and former University of Calgary basketball player. On February 14 she will be the first woman in British history to play in a university men's basketball match, playing for Oxford against Cambridge.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion as moved by the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Let the record show that it was carried unanimously.

The hon. Minister of Community Development.

King Clancy Award

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've already read the motion, so I won't repeat it. I would just like to mention that Gary McPherson is being honoured at this moment in Toronto as the 1993 recipient of the King Clancy Award. It recognizes distinguished Canadians who have made a significant contribution in assisting the disabled. Gary is a worthy recipient, having devoted his last 25 years in service for the disabled. Mr. McPherson has served as president of the Canadian Wheelchair

Sports Association and also as a director of the Canadian Paraplegic Association. The government is working in partnership with Mr. McPherson as Chair of the Alberta Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there consent of the Assembly for the hon. minister to make that motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

Moved by Mrs. Mirosh:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta congratulate Mr. Gary McPherson, of Edmonton, Alberta, on the occasion of his receiving the King Clancy award from the Canadian Foundation for Disabled Persons, and be it further resolved that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly convey this congratulatory message in his usual manner.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a few words on the motion. This is very, very important. This is the Gary McPherson of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The Deputy Premier may feel that this is silliness and threaten to vote no.

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

Speaker's Ruling Improper Inferences

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. The hon. Deputy Premier doesn't have to raise the point of order. The Chair will speak on the . . . [interjections] It's unworthy of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to be starting his comments with remarks of that kind.

MR. WICKMAN: I withdraw the remark, Mr. Speaker.

Debate Continued

MR. WICKMAN: Let me put it this way then, rephrase it. I know it may bother some individuals for us to speak, but this is an opportunity to, and if any individual wants to vote nay, that's their business. It shows up on the record.

Speaking specifically to Standing Order 40, Gary McPherson has worked tirelessly not only on the Premier's council but on many, many occasions. I've had the opportunity on many occasions to meet with him, work with him. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar likewise has worked with him. He is outstanding, and he must be recognized for the recognition that he is being given by a national organization. I commend them for it. I commend the minister for recognizing him. I say support it.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, Gary McPherson is a great guy. I know him personally. He deserves this award. This is beyond politics.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion as moved by the hon. Minister of Community Development, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried, let the record say unanimously.

**Point of Order
Items Not Debatable**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling Orders of the Day, the Chair wishes to apologize for the less than crisp and rippling decision made last evening with respect to a point of order as to the debatability of a motion. The Chair feels it's important for the record to be set straight. The authority for the Chair's ruling really is Standing Order 18(1)(a), which says that motions standing on the Orders of the Day are clearly debatable.

head: **Orders of the Day**

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

**Bill 56
Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1993**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to move third reading of Bill 56, the supplementary appropriation Act. This has been debated in Committee of Supply and has had a fair amount of debate in this Assembly over the last two and a half weeks, a valuable debate because the government is bringing forward a request for additional spending authority amounting to approximately \$190 million, primarily welfare payments for Family and Social Services as well as important educational requests to grant funds to school boards which had higher than expected enrolments prior to September 1, 1992.

11:20

Mr. Speaker, this has been an interesting session, an interesting debate about all budgetary matters. I had the good fortune to bring forward a budgetary update that spelled out in clear, graphic terms the state of our provincial financial situation and reached out to Albertans asking them for advice and suggestions on how we overcome our deficit problem. We will continue to do that over the weeks and months ahead as we pull together a plan to balance the budget by 1996-97.

I was sorry that we couldn't have gotten into more debate, Mr. Speaker, because it's fascinating to see the positions of all members of the House. We heard from the NDs that they don't want to do any more consultation. They're tired of talking with Albertans. Instead they say: just get on with it. Of course, the Liberals sort of echoed that, because the leader of the Liberal Party suggested that he was going to cut government spending. He was going to be brutal about it, he said in his remarks on January 19, 1993, before the *Edmonton Sun* editorial board. He said a number of things: that not only was he going to be brutal but he would not rule out a sales tax and that he in fact was looking forward to bringing to Albertans a provincial sales tax.

Mr. Speaker, it's good that those kinds of things are on the record. When I read the article, I couldn't help it, I went to my *Merriam-Webster* dictionary and read the meaning of the word "brutal." Just so that it's on the record and all members know how the leader of the Liberal Party would deal with government spending, he said that he would be brutal – brutal being "typical of beasts, grossly ruthless or unfeeling, cruel, cold-blooded, harsh, severe, unpleasantly accurate and incisive." Well, it's the brutal, it's the "grossly ruthless or unfeeling" that was just absolutely fascinating.

You know, the members opposite keep calling upon us to be consistent: where's the government's position? Well, it's fun to go back and do a little quiet research on the side and see what the Liberals have done. They talked in one session about being

brutal, and on the other hand they talked about a September 9, 1992, press release where they said that they ought to implement a provincial commodity loan guarantee program. Or we heard from the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark last year when he suggested that there ought to be a sales tax on new vehicles. I can't help but think that here I read about brutal cuts, and then I read about more spending. It's sort of a case of flip-flop, flip-flop. Everywhere you look there is inconsistency in the Liberal position.

Mr. Speaker, I think of the hon. leader of the Liberal Party talking about brutal cuts. Then I read through the trinkets that the Liberal Party wants to introduce for Albertans. I couldn't help but think of "brutal." I thought back to my childhood, and I thought of Cracker Jacks. Always at the bottom of a Cracker Jack box was another trinket. So I think of the Liberal Party being perhaps a new musical group; they could present a rock video called "Brutal and the Cracker Jacks." I think it's a fitting label, but I'll leave it there and perhaps we could have some fun on the streets of Alberta over the months ahead when we talk about Mr. Brutal and his gang of Cracker Jacks. I would be happy to . . .

**Point of Order
Relevance**

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

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

MRS. HEWES: The Standing Order is 22(2). I don't see the relevance of this to Bill 56. I don't know what the hon. minister is going on about.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity here. We've been talking about the government's appropriations for Health and Education . . .

MRS. HEWES: Why don't you stick to that?

MR. DINNING: . . . part of a budgetary plan. I would await your ruling on the point of order, Mr. Speaker, unless you allow me to proceed with the debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the hon. minister stated the scope of what he should be talking about, and we'll leave it to the hon. minister to try to remain within that scope.

Debate Continued

MR. DINNING: Then I will return, Mr. Speaker, to simply encourage all members of the Assembly to support this appropriation Act.

I move that we adjourn the debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister has moved that debate be adjourned on Bill 56. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion carries.

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

11:30

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Fischer	Nelson
Betkowski	Fowler	Orman
Bogle	Gesell	Paszkowski
Bradley	Horsman	Payne
Calahasen	Hyland	Rostad
Cherry	Isley	Stewart
Clegg	Johnston	Tannas
Dinning	Kowalski	Thurber
Drobot	Lund	Weiss
Elliott	Mirosh	West
Elzinga	Moore	Zarusky
Evans	Musgrove	

Against the motion:

Barrett	Ewasiuk	McEachern
Bruseker	Fox	McInnis
Chivers	Hewes	Sigurdson
Dickson	MacDonald	Taylor
Doyle	Martin	Wickman

Totals: For – 35 Against – 15

[Motion carried]

Point of Order

Exhibits

Speaking Order

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

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I rise now because, as you know, the point of order is not allowed during a division. I would draw the hon. Speaker's attention to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, sixth edition, page 152. I'm citing in particular sections 501, 502, 503, and 504 with respect to the hon. minister of booga-booga over there, who seems to have added shake, rattle, and roll. If I look at section 501:

Speakers have consistently ruled that it is improper to produce exhibits of any sort in the Chamber.

Secondly, I just draw your attention briefly to section 462, also from the same book of course:

While the Speaker is the final authority on the order of speaking in the House, and on occasion has used independent judgment . . .

And we go to the last line:

At all times the Speaker tries to arrange for both sides of the question to be heard in reasonable rotation.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill we were prepared to debate deals with a \$400 million expenditure, and it seems that opposition members should have the opportunity to speak to this particular Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member has raised three different points of order. The first one was not raised at the earliest opportunity. The second one is true, but I don't know what relevance it has to what is before the House. The third is that the Speaker, while the debate is going on, certainly has the duty to see that there's fairness and balance in the debate.

MR. McEACHERN: Why didn't he?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, this is not your point of order.

What happened here was that the motion was made to end the debate, so therefore that takes it out of the Speaker's hands. The Speaker has no right to refuse to put a motion to the Assembly that's moved in the proper way. So there's no point of order.

Bill 55

Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act, 1993

[Adjourned debate February 11: Mr. Bogle]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, as per the motion that had of course been advised, I would like to follow through with the notice that was given yesterday and read the following motion into the record:

Be it resolved that the debate on third reading of Bill 55, Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act, 1993, shall not be further adjourned.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion of the hon. Government House Leader, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

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

11:40

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Evans	Musgrove
Betkowski	Fischer	Nelson
Bogle	Fowler	Orman
Bradley	Gesell	Paszkowski
Calahasen	Horsman	Payne
Cherry	Hyland	Rostad
Clegg	Isley	Stewart
Dinning	Kowalski	Tannas
Drobot	Lund	Thurber
Elliott	Mirosh	West
Elzinga	Moore	Zarusky

Against the motion:

Barrett	Ewasiuk	McInnis
Bruseker	Hewes	Sigurdson
Chivers	MacDonald	Taylor
Dickson	Martin	Wickman
Doyle	McEachern	

Totals: For – 33 Against – 14

[Motion carried]

11:50

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question on Bill 55?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would hope that if we in fact do conclude our debate on Bill 55 prior to the adjournment hour today, there will be an opportunity to go back to Bill 56.

There were a couple of points I wanted to make in summation. First, the intent of the present legislation is to provide Albertans with an electoral map which embodies the concept of effective representation. Relative voter parity remains an important factor but is not the sole or overriding consideration in drawing constituency boundaries. This matter has been dealt with by the Court of Appeal in Alberta and by the Supreme Court of Canada and has very clearly given direction back to the Assembly that, where applicable, deviations of up to plus and minus 25 percent are indeed within reason. The courts have further stated that there may be special consideration ridings. That was one of the factors dealt with in the unanimous decision brought down by the Alberta Court of Appeal, wherein up to four special considerations may be created. As indicated, the four special consideration ridings in the province of Alberta cover a land area in this province of over 30 percent of the total.

It's important as well to recognize that of the single-municipality constituencies only eight of the 44 in fact exceed 20 percent, with an average deviation being 11.3 percent. In the case of the multimunicipality constituencies, only seven of the 39 deviate by as much as 20 percent, with the average being only minus 8.4 percent. There certainly is a move in the direction of greater voter parity.

The Official Opposition and the third-party opposition have spent considerable time suggesting that something devious took place with regards to the constituencies of Calgary-Currie and Calgary-Elbow. There's absolutely no fact in foundation to that, Mr. Speaker. As indicated last evening during debate, while the former Calgary-Currie constituency sees its population drop by 25 percent – in other words, 25 percent of the former riding is transferred to another constituency – there are seven other constituencies in the city of Calgary which suffer greater deviation than 25 percent. There are 37 constituencies across the province which suffer that fate. In fact, three ridings, all government held ridings, disappear from the map, and that was part of our overall objective in keeping the size of the House at its current level of 83.

In summation, I would like to again go back to key points. Public input was sought: extensive, exhaustive public input; the most comprehensive review of boundaries ever taken in the province of Alberta. Secondly, all 83 constituencies in the province have changed. A few have changed in a very minor way, most in a substantive way. In fact, 37 of the 83 ridings have had a change of greater than 25 percent.

There are major elements contained that we dealt with during Committee of the Whole. I'm somewhat saddened that we spent so much time debating not second reading of the Bill, not the principles of the Bill but amendments and subamendments put forward by the Official Opposition and the third-party opposition which did not deal at all with the merits. We were taken away from the key thrust. Then at the last minute, while we were in Committee of the Whole, a substantive amendment was brought

forward by the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, an amendment which would have completely altered the northern half of the city of Edmonton. The amendments as suggested by the hon. member did not follow the key recommendation of the mayor of the city of Edmonton to respect community lines of interest. The map followed major arteries, transportation routes in the city primarily. There was not time to go back and double-check the numbers. It's really unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the member didn't come forward much earlier, because there were indeed community associations that had expressed legitimate concerns. I believe some of those concerns could have been met and in fact were addressed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, but because we were dealing with it in the comprehensive way and because the homework hadn't been done, as was the case with Calgary-Mountain View, the Assembly did not deal with the matter.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that no matter which way you cut it, three seats outside of Calgary and Edmonton disappear and three new seats are created in Calgary and Edmonton. That's a transfer. It's a significant transfer, and it's within the parameters as established by the Supreme Court of Canada and reiterated by the Alberta Court of Appeal.

One of the things that's troubled me in this process, Mr. Speaker, is that through the various tactics employed by the Official Opposition and the third-party opposition, there's been an attempt to stall, to delay, to refer a final decision – send it out to a judge or some other independent body – to prolong the process, knowing full well that we can't go to the electorate of Alberta until we have our new boundaries in place. That troubles me greatly. Clearly, the citizens of Alberta are entitled to pass judgment, and we are eager to go forward. Under our dynamic new leader we are excited and charged up as a caucus. We want to go forward. We want to see you at the polls, and the earlier the better.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we understand from the advice given to the all-party Legislative Offices Committee by the Chief Electoral Officer that approximately six months is required between the time this Bill receives Royal Assent and when a writ could be issued. As explained by the Chief Electoral Officer and contained in the *Hansard* records of the Legislative Offices Committee, we have deputy returning officers who must be appointed in all of the 83 ridings. We have a number of new ridings, a number of changes, so changes must take place. The Chief Electoral Officer then must go through the process of training sessions in the northern and southern parts of this province. There's the detailed work which must be done on drawing the polling division maps for all of the 83 constituencies, and there will be some substantive changes from old boundaries because of the changes to our constituencies. There are all the forms and the literature and material which has to be reprinted based on the new ridings, the new polls. There are all of the enumerators and assistant enumerators who must be selected by the deputy returning officers in the constituencies, and there is indeed the opportunity for involvement by the political parties in that process to ensure fairness and an independent approach. Finally, there is the general enumeration which must be called.

In short, Mr. Speaker, we have work to be done by the Chief Electoral Officer. Before he can begin his work, an order in council must be brought forward by the Minister of Justice to Executive Council. That order in council will in fact officially appoint all 83 deputy returning officers. The Chief Electoral Officer begins his work, and when he is ready to conduct a general enumeration, then the Chief Electoral Officer comes back to the all-party Legislative Offices Committee who will indeed set

the date and allow the Chief Electoral Officer to do his work. All of that is in the open. All of that is public information, so there's no surprise for anyone.

Why the opposition parties would want to delay that process is something I have great difficulty understanding. Why would they not be as eager as we are to get on with the job at hand? We all know that we're going to refer this legislation to the Alberta Court of Appeal, so for those who believe there's something fundamentally wrong with the legislation, we'll have the Court of Appeal looking at the legislation as it did in 1990.

12:00

I remember, hon. members, that with the exception of the opposition member who represents Vegreville, who stood in his place and said, "I believe the legislation will indeed pass the test" – I don't believe any other opposition member shared that view. In fact, most said that all sorts of terrible things would happen to us, that we'd be in complete political turmoil and create problems for ourselves. You know, we believe that this legislation referred to the Alberta Court of Appeal will receive the same kind of endorsement the last legislation did, because we've taken great care to respect the Charter of Rights principles to ensure that we're within the plus/minus 25 percent variation, to ensure that ridings conform, and also to respect the wishes of the mayors of Calgary and Edmonton, the heads of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the municipal districts and counties. Those are factors which were a fundamental part of the report we brought forward.

I would like to say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the great debt we owe some very hardworking members of our public service. Bob Pritchard was seconded from Family and Social Services approximately three and a half years ago to work with the original seven-member all-party committee. When Mr. Pritchard was approached, it was on the understanding that this task would take about three to three and a half months. Well, it's more than three years later, and until January 1 of this year Mr. Pritchard worked tirelessly for the all-party committee, for the commission chaired by a judge, and again for the committee appointed through this Assembly. He traveled to the hearings throughout the province. He saw parts of Alberta that he had never seen before. His understanding of communities has been enhanced significantly, and I think of many, many interesting stories he shared with committee members on his travels.

Another tireless worker in that team was Ted Edwards. Ted has been the administrative backup. He's been the continuous member from the beginning of the process until today. In fact, his contract will run out very shortly. Again, he has been most helpful to all members of the Assembly. I see some heads nodding in the opposition ranks, and I'm really pleased about that because it shows the impartiality through which officers of the electoral boundaries committees operated. They did their very best to help all members in looking at any ramifications in their boundaries, any changes that might be contemplated to ensure that they would meet the population tests and the community of interests test.

Finally, a young woman who came on board very recently to fill in when Bob Pritchard left on January 1, Miss Eileen Fedor. Eileen has had extensive involvement with government in the past, knows the system well, and she came in when the committee was going about 90 miles an hour. The committee didn't slow down its work for her; she had to speed up to catch up to the committee. She's done so and has worked very long and hard. I'd like to express my personal thanks and indeed the thanks of all members of the Assembly to these three individuals.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, electoral boundaries, as has been stated previously, is one of the most sensitive things members of any elected body must address. It's so fundamentally critical that we do it in a fair and open way. It's important that when indeed we do have the results, we're able to go forward to the public, because while I've mentioned the Alberta Court of Appeal and the review of the legislation which will take place there, the ultimate test of the fairness of these boundaries will be made by the citizens of Alberta in a general election. I'm anxious, as I know my colleagues are, that we get at it. I can understand why the opposition parties would be stalling and trying to prevent us from moving forward. So let's get on with it. Let's get this Act behind us; let's get ready for the next election and let the people of Alberta decide who is right and who is not. [some applause]

MR. FOX: I'm unaccustomed to applause from the government benches, Mr. Speaker, but I do welcome the applause. Perhaps after they hear what I have to say about Bill 55 in third reading, they won't be clapping so loudly.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we have to recognize here as hon. members is exactly what has transpired through the course of debate on this very important piece of legislation, legislation that puts in place electoral boundaries that are to serve the people of the province of Alberta until well into the next century, until after the year 2001 when the next decennial census is held and a new commission is struck and new boundaries are in place. These boundaries that will be legal today after the Bill receives third and final reading and Royal Assent may be in place for as many as 12 or 14 years before an election occurs after the year 2000. We as members of the Legislative Assembly have not done a good enough job of ensuring that the process was above reproach, that it was independently done, and that indeed it serves the people of the province of Alberta well for the coming term. The member refers to opposition delays and opposition filibusters and opposition attempts to stymie the process. Well, Mr. Speaker, we're debating this under closure. Let the people know that when this Bill comes forward for third reading, we have less than one hour. Eighty-three members trying to represent their constituencies and the people in their areas have less than one hour total debate in third reading: I think that's a shame.

When we as hon. members had to look at what is a very extensive Bill, look at all the clauses of the Bill, all the implications of the boundary changes that were proposed and will be made, the other aspects of the Bill, we had only – what? – three or four hours total debate in committee of this very important piece of legislation, which is not enough time for hon. members of the Assembly to make representations on behalf of the people in their constituencies. Totally inadequate, done simply because the government was afraid to stand up and defend this piece of legislation in this House before the people of the province of Alberta.

Let's make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker; it was the closure motion that put the lid on this Bill. It's a shame that since 1986, since a strong and aggressive New Democrat opposition was elected in this House, the Conservative government has beat a hasty retreat on 15 occasions using closure, this most unusual parliamentary tool, to stymie debate. Frankly, I'm quite sick of it.

The other thing is that I will acknowledge the hon. Member for Taber-Warner's gracious comments about the staff who have worked very hard in an independent way to make this process work as best it can. I join him in his comments – they're well deserved – and thank him for advancing them, but the fact that these people worked long and hard does not make a flawed process any better. The fact is that it was done by MLAs for

MLAs, it wasn't done in a way that involved legitimate public input at every stage, and we're left with boundaries that are inadequate as a result. I think that's a shame.

As well, I'm a little puzzled by some of the debate here, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition on principle said we will not participate in the drawing of the electoral boundaries, but when the time came to debate that issue in this Legislative Assembly he was here and led the debate, moved the amendment in second reading that said we should not be doing this in this House, that we should be doing it in an independent way, referring it to an independent commission. It was the Leader of the Official Opposition that led the debate against this Bill at every stage. Curiously, the other leader of an opposition party who said it was wrong in principle to participate in drawing the electoral boundaries apparently feels it's wrong in principle to even show up to debate the Bill. Let the record show that in 14 days of debate . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order.

MR. FOX: You can have order all you want.

In 14 days of debate the Leader of the Liberal Party has not deigned to grace the Assembly once to participate in debate on electoral boundaries, and I think that's a shame. It's doubly a shame, Mr. Speaker, because he's admitted that not once but twice during a 15-day Legislative Assembly he's been down in Toronto begging for corporate cash to fund their . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member surely knows those remarks are not germane to the debate on third reading and are strictly against the rules of the House.

12:10

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I think they are germane to the debate, because it's been up to the New Democrat opposition to carry the debate on behalf of the people of the province of Alberta to the government with respect to Bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: I resent that remark.

MR. FOX: You can resent it all you want. I resent it that as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I show up to represent my people day in and day out. I'm not down in Toronto begging for corporate cash to fund my election costs. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

MR. FOX: I'm going to raise money from the people in the constituency that I hope to represent after the next election, Mr. Speaker.

Carrying on with Bill 55, Mr. Speaker, regardless of the end result, regardless of how sincere and earnest the Conservative members of the committee were in their efforts to come up with fair and reasonable boundaries – and I take my hat off to them, because I like and respect all four of them – regardless of how sincere they were in their efforts, the process is wrong. The ends do not justify the means, and we have electoral boundaries that do not reflect in a meaningful way the public input of the people of the province of Alberta. The government members can say we had hearings, we listened to them two or three years ago or last year, we invited someone to come and express their opinion, but the fact is that the people of Alberta did not have the opportunity for legitimate public input prior to the drafting of the map that led to this Bill, nor did they have a chance to express their concerns

about these boundaries in a process after the fact. It was rushed through the Legislative Assembly under closure by this government, and we even saw some members on the government side expressing concern about the particulars of the boundaries and the fact that the people they represent did not have a chance to have a say.

The Member for Taber-Warner curiously accuses us of trying to delay this process at a time when we need to move forward, we need to make haste, we need to get ready for the next election. Well, we'd like to have the next election tomorrow if the hon. member would only call it. The fact is that there is a process in place that has been delayed and frustrated by a Conservative government afraid to change the boundaries for the last four years. It's been four years since the last election, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's through the appointment of a committee prior to the commission, the extension of the mandate of the committee prior to the appointment of the commission, the lack of adequate funding, apparently supported by the Liberal Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, to the commission to do its job, the resignation of the hon. justice in charge of the commission that the Premier didn't tell anybody about for three months after it happened – all these little delaying tactics, trying to push this to the wall so that in the 11th hour the government can say, "Oh, well, we can't debate it at all; the opposition just wants to stall things."

There is lots of time to put this process in place. Every amendment moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition, and subamendments by the Member for Vegreville and the Member for Stony Plain to ensure the integrity of this process – there's ample time, Mr. Speaker. The government, if they had the political courage, could tell Albertans when they plan to call the election. People are calling for a fixed election date. Let's say March 20, 1994, and we'll work toward that date. We'll set up the independent commission. We'll make sure that the boundaries we put in place are effective, they're legitimate, they're arrived at through an independent process without MLAs drafting them behind closed doors. I submit we will have done our job as elected members, we will have put in place an electoral map and indeed a process that encourages people to get out and get involved in the election. That's what we want. We want the help of Albertans to make decisions. In the first place, we want them to get involved in nominations, in the electoral process; make sure they come out in large numbers to choose the best women and men to represent them in their constituencies; make sure they listen closely to policies of various parties that are advanced and listen to ideas put forward, the concrete plan of action that at least one party, the New Democrats, has put forward with respect to what's going to happen when we're government after the next election. They make those decisions in a responsible way to the best of their ability, and the process encourages their legitimate involvement after the fact so we're not just electing a government once every four or five years and telling people it's none of their business afterwards.

It all starts with the electoral boundaries drafted in a fair and equitable way to encourage the input of Albertans. I submit that we've failed in that regard, and it's not because of a lack of effort on the part of the Official Opposition New Democrats. We participated in a strong, forceful, and meaningful way at every step in the debate on this Bill. We were here to all hours pushing the government; we forced them into closure. They beat a hasty retreat in second reading.

MR. FISCHER: Where were you on the committee?

MR. FOX: Well, we weren't on the committee. That's right, hon. Member for Wainwright. I'll explain it once again. It's not

logically inconsistent for members to say it's wrong in principle to sit on a committee and draw boundaries behind closed doors and then come and argue that point with vigour in the Legislative Assembly. That's not inconsistent. You and your friend from Vermilion-Viking seem to have the attitude that you guys didn't help draw the boundaries, therefore you can't criticize the process. Well, it's the process we're criticizing, before, during, and after. That's what we're doing in third reading right now. We're concerned about the process, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Taber-Warner says let the people decide. Well, I submit to you, hon. friend for Taber-Warner, that when the people of Alberta do go out and decide, this is one thing that's going to be on their minds. How were these boundaries drawn? Were they drawn in any way to hedge bets, to influence the outcome of the election, to make it more winnable in some areas for some members than others? They're not going to know that this member was sincere and hardworking in his efforts. They're not going to know that. What they are going to know is that he's a government MLA who went out and did a job, and they're going to be suspicious. As long as there's that germ of suspicion, that unease in the minds of the people, they're going to punish this government at the polls and reward the party that's been consistent and principled in this debate at every stage.

Mr. Speaker, in the time left to me, before the member of the Liberal Party gets up and explains why they've behaved the way they have in debate and justifies their leader's extensive participation, I'd like to talk briefly about the constituency of Vegreville, soon to be Vegreville-Viking after the next election. When the whole notion of redrafting the electoral boundaries came up, I solicited input from the people of my constituency. I offered to speak and make representation to a wide variety of community groups and did so in as balanced and impartial a way as I could, making sure people understood the implications, the whys and wherefores, why we were into this process, what was going to happen as a result, and encouraging them to make representation not only to the all-party committee, the first all-party committee that was indeed a legitimate process involving members from all three parties, but also to the commission when it was established to make sure they were advocating for their communities. Now, I didn't suggest to them what they might say. I didn't try and lead them in any way. I just encouraged them to take part in the process.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, as the representative for the constituency, I recognized that as MLA for the Vegreville constituency I had a unique perspective that had been garnered through my years of service to the people in the area. It was a regional perspective that frankly is difficult for a politician working in a town or a village or even a county to develop. I know rural members and indeed urban members who work with several communities will understand that there's a regional perspective you can develop as a MLA. As awkward as it was to consider writing to Justice Virtue, I did it. I wrote that letter very carefully, saying: I know that my representations to you may be considered in a certain light by Your Honour because I am an MLA and you may think I'm grinding my own axe by making representations to you; I'm going to take that risk, because as the representative for the Vegreville constituency, I have an obligation to stick up for the region and ensure that whatever decisions are made are not made in a political way, that decisions wouldn't be made by the government or the commission that would try and get rid of an opposition member, the way some suggested it might be, or decisions wouldn't be made that would benefit one party or the other.

I had to stick up for the region included in the Vegreville constituency because the integrity of that region was important to

me. Whether I run or don't run or win or don't win or who is the government or is not the government after the next election should have no part in those decisions because we might be gonzo alonzo or may decide not to run.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, would the member entertain a question?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister is wondering whether the hon. Member for Vegreville will permit a question. The hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Certainly.

DR. WEST: Could the hon. member indicate whether he's insinuating that there was gerrymandering out in our area, where Vermilion-Viking lost its constituency completely and was a government-held constituency and yours, which you represent as a member of the Official Opposition, was unscathed? Are you trying to insinuate to this House or to Albertans out there that there was a form of gerrymandering going on?

12:20

MR. FOX: Caught me. If the hon. member would listen very carefully to what I said, I made representation on behalf of the people of the Vegreville constituency irrespective of my intentions as a politician. I made them because I felt it was important. And I will answer your question, because I planned on addressing it in a very direct way, hon. member, and I assure you it will be included in my remarks.

There were some who said that the process would be done in such a way – and I won't name names – that the ridings would be drawn in such a way as to get rid of certain opposition members or influence the process in certain ways. I wanted to make sure that in my representations to Justice Virtue he understood I was advocating for the region, not for a particular politician or a particular political party. I sent that letter I wrote to Justice Virtue to the committee headed by the hon. Member for Taber-Warner just to make sure he had all the information that was made available to the commission in his hands when they were considering boundaries.

Now, I made it very clear that I believe there is a distinct region in Alberta south of the North Saskatchewan River and east of the city of Edmonton. That region has Vegreville as its largest community. Highway 16 is the primary transportation artery in that constituency. It's contained primarily within the counties of Lamont, Two Hills, Minburn, and Beaver. People in that area, regardless of who their MLA is, regardless of what party is in power, have much in common. They have a common history. They have common economic interests. They share a common culture. It was very important to me that I advocate on behalf of the integrity of that region as MLA, Mr. Speaker, because I care very strongly about that and, quite frankly, was worried about some of the maps proposed in the Cripps proposals. There were five different maps, and some of them carved up the Vegreville constituency in such a way that would put Two Hills into St. Paul, Vegreville into Vermilion, and Mundare into Redwater-Andrew. I'm confident I could run a successful election campaign in any one of those three proposed constituencies, but I did not want to stand idly by and see that distinct and very important region centred around Vegreville carved up to suit somebody's electoral purpose. So I made representation to Justice Virtue and mailed that on to the committee because I thought it was important that they have that information.

Now, with respect to the member's question, I have said on the record in this House and in interviews with CBC radio and with the Viking *Weekly Review* that there is no evidence as far as I'm concerned of Tory gerrymandering in the proposed Vegreville-Viking constituency. If the hon. member wants me to state it again, I will: no evidence from my point of view of Tory gerrymandering in that particular consistency. They asked me: "Are you worried about Viking? Don't you think this is a bit of subterfuge here? They're adding Viking from West's constituency to Vegreville to defeat you." I said: "Well, no, I can't see that. They followed logical municipal boundaries, and currently the Vegreville constituency includes half the county of Beaver. After this process is complete, it will include all the county of Beaver." Now, how can I argue against that? And how can I prejudge the electoral preferences of the people in Viking? I mean, they have supported the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking in the past two elections. They voted Conservative for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, but so did people in the Vegreville constituency before 1986. So I'm not going to prejudge their intentions. I believe I have as good a chance as any to earn their trust and support in the next election, and I'm going to work very hard to do that.

So I see no evidence of Tory gerrymandering there. The boundaries now include in a very sensible way all the county of Beaver. We will include in that the town of Viking and the area around Kinsella, some townships that were previously left out in the Camrose constituency and Clover Bar constituency south of Holden, Ryley, Tofield, and to the west of Tofield. It makes sense. There are significant areas in the county of Lamont currently represented by the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew that are now in the proposed Vegreville-Viking constituency. Is that Tory gerrymandering? Would I say that? No, I wouldn't. I think it makes sense. They followed logical community boundaries and municipal boundaries. The communities of Andrew, St. Michael, Wostok, Lamont, and Bruderheim will now be part of the enlarged Vegreville-Viking constituency, and I think that makes sense. There are some additional areas in the county of Two Hills north to the river, using the river as a natural boundary, going over to Brosseau, Lac Sante. You know, I think that makes sense from a geographic and municipal boundary sort of point of view. I've said on the record more than once that with respect to that riding, I see no sign of Tory gerrymandering. Now, that does not mean there aren't ample examples of Tory gerrymandering in other constituencies. Members of the government caucus have made representation much more eloquently than I can about that, hon. member.

But with respect to the constituency of Vegreville-Viking, I see no evidence of that, even though on paper, if you took the results of the '89 election and translated them onto '93 boundaries, the Tories actually win that seat. That doesn't worry me at all, because I believe we can mount an effective campaign, especially considering the fact that this government, supposedly under new management, hasn't changed at all. The tiger has tried to change his stripes, but the tiger is worn out. The tiger is running out of gas, and we expect that as soon as they muster the courage to call the next election, Mr. Speaker, we'll be sitting on that side. And we're not going to use closure on every Bill at every stage to ram our legislation through the House.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to debate yet another piece of boundaries legislation, perhaps for the last time in 10 years if this one passes today, as I expect it well

might. I was pleased to hear the Member for Vegreville describing himself very well in terms of carrying on, because that's precisely what I saw him doing in much of his speech.

I want to make a few comments with respect to third reading on this particular Bill that we have before us, Bill 55, the Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by just following on . . . The Member for Taber-Warner made some comments respecting a couple of staff members who were pivotal in helping our committee as they traveled around, that being Mr. Bob Pritchard and Mr. Ted Edwards. I too would like to express my thanks to those two individuals for a fine job, many hours on the road back and forth. I think they are to be commended for their efforts. I would like to add my thanks to those of the Member for Taber-Warner in that regard.

The Bill we have before us today does indeed, as the Member for Taber-Warner suggests, affect a great number of constituencies – in fact, all of them across the province – in terms of the communities that will form those different constituencies. When I look at my own constituency of Calgary-North West as it is constructed today and as it is proposed in the future, I guess the upside, if you will, is that the communities I share today with the Member for Calgary-Foothills will now all be in one constituency or the other. They are not going to be split in two. I believe that is a positive step, and I think the committee did do a good job with respect to trying to put all communities in either one constituency or the other. "I hope to be re-elected" is, I guess, all any one of in the Legislature here can hope to say. I hope to be re-elected by those constituents next time around in the constituency of Calgary-North West. I look forward to the next election, as I'm sure all members of the Legislature do, and certainly hope I will be given the opportunity to represent the constituents of Calgary-North West once again. To that end, I must say that I regret the loss of a number of communities. Calgary-North West as it's constituted today is a very large constituency in terms of population and had to be pared down, and it has been.

The government has pushed forward closure on Bill 55 at second reading stage, at committee stage, and again today at third reading stage. Mr. Speaker, I guess my big concern with that is that when I look at this Bill, I know it could be improved upon. There is no doubt in my mind that this Bill could be improved upon, not only in the content we see today but also in the manner in which the content was reached. Therefore – and I'm sure it will come as no surprise – I'll be voting against this Bill at third reading, as I have at other readings. The Bill we have has, I believe, a number of errors in it, and I want to briefly go over some of those because I think it's germane to some of those amendments.

Why do I believe there are errors? First of all, Mr. Speaker, if you think back – and I know we were in the House here a little over two years ago debating another Bill that was the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. We were told that that Bill was absolutely right and was going to do a great job for us and there was no need to make any changes. Despite numerous amendments from the New Democrat opposition, despite numerous amendments from the Liberal opposition, we were told that Bill was absolutely terrific; no changes were necessary. Yet lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, in Bill 55 that we're debating today, the government says, "Well, gee, we need a number of amendments," in other words saying that the Bill they introduced two years ago had a number of flaws in it. This Bill 55 contains yet more flaws.

12:30

Mr. Speaker, when we look at some of these – and I don't want to pretend that there are no good points in here. I don't want to

pretend that none of the boundaries are any good. I think that in many cases they are more equitable than what we have currently existing, and from that standpoint I think there are some improvements. There is a better balance between single-municipality and multimunicipality constituencies than what existed in the past.

Mr. Speaker, one of things we're putting into this Bill that we're asked to support is the concept of using the decennial census. Now, that may appear at first blush to be a step in the right direction, but the Act here talks about the decennial census as referred to in the Statistics Act from the House of Parliament. Well, in section 19 it talks about a decennial census, but in section 19(1) it talks about the fact that there will be a census every five years. Why not review it every five years? When you look at the growth in some of the constituencies that has occurred, whether they are in the city of Edmonton, the city of Calgary, or in some of the rural areas, there has been tremendous population growth. By agreeing to what is in this Bill, we are saying that we will live with whatever growth is going to occur in any of those constituencies until the year 2001, eight years away. So why not look at it once again in a few years' time, when we have another census before us? If the government is committed to more equitable constituencies, why are we saying we're going to put it off for eight years? When I look at the rate of growth in my own constituency – and I'm sure the Member for Edmonton-Belmont has tremendous growth in his constituency, and the members for Edmonton-Mill Woods, Edmonton-Whitemud; tremendous growth in those constituencies. The Member for West Yellowhead talks about growth in his constituency as well. So growth is occurring across the province, north, south, east, and west.

Mr. Speaker, the concern, then, is that this Bill says we're not even going to look at it for 10 years. We don't care what happens with growth; we don't care whether it's balanced or equitable or fair. All we care about is what's in the Bill today, and I submit that's a substantial flaw.

Mr. Speaker, the government has made a commitment, to their credit, to send this to a court, the Court of Appeal, for a reference to justify whether or not this in fact is appropriate, whether or not this meets the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I suspect it probably will. Today it probably will meet those criteria, because with the exception of the four special circumstance constituencies, the Member for Taber-Warner points out that the others are all plus or minus 25 percent; they're within that range. I suspect it probably will and, in a sense, for the sake of Albertans I kind of hope it does, because we spent a lot of time, we spent a lot of money, and I think the people of Alberta, quite frankly, are tired of this issue. The reason they're tired of this issue is because this government has moved like a snail.

Mr. Speaker, we could have had this thing done two years ago. The committee of which I was a member started in August of 1989, and we didn't see legislation from that committee until December of 1990, 16 months later. That whole process should have been completed; I'm not talking about just the committee stage, but the whole process could have been completed.

The Member for Taber-Warner says, "Well, the opposition members stalled." I recall back in 1989 opposition members saying, "Let's get on with the job." In February of 1989 we said: "Let's do it. Come on; let's get going. Let's get this job out of the way."

Oh, no. "Well, we've got to have session, and we can't have any hearings during session. Gosh, we've got summer holidays. We can't do anything during summer holidays. Gosh, things are busy in September. We've got the Labour Day long weekend; we're not going to be around then. So gee whizz, golly gosh,

shucks, we can't get back to work till, oh, six, eight months down the road."

AN HON. MEMBER: A trip to Japan.

MR. BRUSEKER: A trip to Japan. Thank you. A trip to Japan for the Member for Red Deer-North. The Member for Taber-Warner says that the opposition is delaying? Give me a break. When you look at the history, Mr. Speaker, the opposition members were pushing for this to be done long ago. In fact, well I remember a very contentious day in Rocky Mountain House when I made a proposal that, had it been adopted then, might have resolved the whole issue. It did create a little contention with some of the Conservative members of the committee, but it might have resolved the issue long ago had we simply adopted that proposal. However, that was 1989, so it's long ago.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Bill before us today and when I listen to the hon. Premier, we've heard that this is a new government under new management and that they're looking for and they're ready to accept ideas. I just want to refer briefly to one section, the section in this Bill 55 that's numbered 13, and it talks about the special consideration constituencies. I recall well that discussion in our committee. I think it was the Member for Red Deer-North – I might be wrong – who said: Gee, maybe we need to do something like Saskatchewan; maybe we need some special consideration constituencies; they have two in Saskatchewan. He proposed 10 percent, or eight, here, and we in the opposition kind of gagged and said: "Gee, eight? That's a little high." Finally we agreed that perhaps four might be appropriate. Given we have better than twice the population of the province of Saskatchewan, four might be appropriate for Alberta.

Then we said: what are going to be the parameters that decide what might make up one of those special consideration constituencies? All of us, this all-party committee, sat around the table and we discussed ideas. I had some input into those ideas and the Member for Edmonton-Belmont and the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. We came forward with a proposal, and it was one of the things I think we did have some agreement on. What do we see in this Bill? "Thanks for the input, guys. We're not going to listen to you anyway." Well, Mr. Speaker, under new management they've suddenly said: "We don't want your input. We got it; we don't like it. We're chucking it out the window. We're going to come in and instead of saying we need four out of seven, we're going to need three out of five for these special consideration constituencies." So much for the new management. So much for the new outlook. So much for the new government.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at all these proposals that are in here, I have difficulty supporting the Bill for the reasons I've enumerated, enunciated so far. The government talks now about a need to get on with the task and has spoken about hearings: the need for no more hearings, that we've had enough hearings, that enough has happened already. Well, we have argued in the past in the Liberal opposition and in the New Democrat opposition for a need for hearings on this Bill. I look back to what happened in British Columbia, because this is really where it all kicked off here a number of years ago.

Did they have hearings? Yes, they had a round of hearings, and then they went back and created some ideas and wrote some ideas down. They went out and had a second set of hearings, and they came up with some more ideas and refined their goals and their objectives a little bit more. They went out and had a third set of hearings, and they refined their goals and their objectives some more and came up with another set of legislation. Then they had a fourth set of hearings, Mr. Speaker. We in the

province of Alberta have had a set of hearings with our committee of which I was a member three years ago, and the independent commission that was struck as a result of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act did hold hearings. So why the concern? Why not have another set of hearings on this Bill?

You know, Mr. Speaker, I've had the good fortune to be born and raised in Alberta. I've lived here all my life, and I've always been very proud and privileged to have had that special opportunity that not all people can have. The reason I got involved with this process and in fact, strange as it may sound, volunteered for the process in 1989 was that I saw that we had an opportunity. I saw that before us we had an opportunity to do something really good, really outstanding, to be a beacon here in Alberta to the rest of the provinces. I really thought we could do it. We didn't. I must confess I'm disappointed at that. I'm disappointed because I think an opportunity to really go ahead, to move ahead has slipped through our fingers. Maybe I should refine that. It has been rammed through our fingers because of the closure imposed by this government, but the opportunity that was there has almost passed us today.

The Member for Taber-Warner talks about only eight of the single-municipality constituencies being over plus 20 percent. He talks about only seven of them being below minus 20 percent, as if that is acceptable. Mr. Speaker, I don't find that acceptable. I don't think the constituents in those areas will find that acceptable when they look at some of the other constituencies, comparing the numbers. When you simply look at the numbers, as high as 37,000 and as low as 23,000 and 22,000, that's a substantial variation. I think Albertans are going to be very cynical of the process that has led to that kind of variation.

You notice I haven't talked about those four special constituencies. I think there is reason and I think people are prepared to accept that in certain parts of the province there should be special consideration given to them. I'm not sure that I agree with the reasons outlined in this Bill why they should be there. I'm not sure that Albertans are going to accept the reasons as given in this Bill why they are there. But, Mr. Speaker, when I look at that range that has been institutionalized, if you will, by this Bill, I can't support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reflect on this Bill, and I reflect upon and compare it in my mind to the piece of legislation that aims to do the same sort of thing in British Columbia, that creates new boundaries in British Columbia. I reflect back on the guidelines in their Bill and simply wish we could have seen something similar in this particular Bill. The Bill in British Columbia says that there shall be an independent commission. In British Columbia it says that there shall be 75 seats. Here in Alberta we're saying we need 83.

12:40

AN HON. MEMBER: Who's the government in B.C.?

MR. BRUSEKER: I'll get to that, hon. member, because I think that's a valuable point.

It says that there shall be 75 seats; it says that the variation shall be no more than plus or minus 25 percent. That's all it says. It doesn't have a long list of where they shall be or what the names shall be. It doesn't prescribe that the commission shall be bound by this or that or here or there. It simply says: here is the task; you have the mandate; go and do it, and come back to us.

Mr. Speaker, in 1987, '88, and '89 in British Columbia the commission was given that mandate, and it came back with a report that was accepted by all members of the government. That was the difference, in that the commission there had the latitude,

the leeway to do the job that was necessary. The commission that we struck here two years ago did not have that latitude, did not have that leeway, and therefore we had the hung jury.

Mr. Speaker, when I reflect on that process in British Columbia and compare it to the process we've had here in Alberta, I can't help but regret that we didn't accept that. I'm sure there was a bunch of other things, but the end result was that when people looked at the way the boundaries had been mixed around and fooled with but finally approved in the British Columbia Legislature, people said, "Now we have fair boundaries," and they tossed the government out. Maybe that's what this government is afraid of. Maybe they're afraid that they won't get to preserve a couple of seats here or a couple of seats there, and that's why we see the Bill before us.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot about members saying, "Well, there's a difference between urban and rural," and so on and so forth. There was a book written, and I just want to quote from it briefly because I think there were a couple of real gems of wisdom in this book, and I found it very interesting. The book is called *The Candid Commission*. It was written by a fellow called Terry Julian, and as best I can understand, he was kind of similar here in Alberta to our Mr. Bob Pritchard, who worked with our commission extensively. It's called *An Insider's Revealing Story of B.C.'s Royal Commission on Electoral Boundaries*. There's a quote in here that talks about the effect of fair representation. It's from page 126; it's just two sentences. I trust you'll let me just read it. He says:

Non-political [that's his first word] fairer electoral boundaries make for a better democracy. Equitable districts do not necessarily help MLAs but they do grant equal power to the people of the province.

If I could find a short quote to describe the position of the Alberta Liberal caucus, this man said it. I wish I'd said it first, but I didn't. He sums it up very nicely.

Mr. Speaker, the problem with this Bill 55 we have before us today is that it says that in the rural and multimunicipality constituencies versus the single-municipality constituencies we're not going to have that equitability. I think that is really a tragedy, that we did not learn from what happened in British Columbia. This Bill is going to be passed very shortly and I'm sure . . .

Bill 56

Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1993

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair regrets to interrupt the hon. member, but due to Standing Order 61(5), the Chair is required to put the question to the House on Bill 56 for third reading.

[Motion carried; Bill 56 read a third time]

Bill 55

Electoral Divisions Statutes Amendment Act, 1993

(continued)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a few comments pertaining . . .

Point of Order Speaking Order

MR. BRUSEKER: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Are we on Bill 55, or where are we? I was speaking, and I had not concluded my remarks.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh, I'm sorry. It sounded like the hon. member was just in the final process of concluding.

MR. BRUSEKER: I had about one minute.

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

Debate Continued

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was indeed just wrapping up. You were quite correct. I just wanted to finish up one more quote from this book that I was referring to earlier.

Mr. Speaker, the newspapers will come out over this next weekend, and I'm sure they will be commenting on this process. I've been referring to British Columbia, and I just want to quote again. Within this particular book there was an article quoted from the *Vancouver Sun* editorial of July 24, 1989. It says:

The 1989 session will long be remembered for the shining hour in which it gave the voters of B.C. a democratic electoral map, free of gerrymandering and partisan bias.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that our papers in Alberta are not going to be writing such a glowing review of this piece of legislation on the weekend.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a few comments, primarily about the constituency I represent, that being the constituency of Cardston, but would like to make a few comments first about the process that's been discussed in the recent debate. Certainly it has received a lot of debate. It seems to me that a lot of it has been rehashed and played over and over again by the hon. members from across the way. I think we all know that the process has caused something to happen that we not necessarily wanted to have happen. Certainly there was a great deal of effort put forward by the government to put a process in place where elected people would not be caused to draw the boundaries.

We know that there was a commission set up and that there was some difficulty with the commission. Judge Liden's was the final commission that was charged with that responsibility. I recall going to Lethbridge to appear before that committee after they held hearings on the initial report. I remember receiving an opportunity to speak before that commission and asked them why they were so concerned about maintaining the very tight percentages. I called on them, in fact, to be a little bit brave in some of the results that they would bring forward. They were trying very hard, it appeared, to find a zero tolerance and in most cases kept it within a 10 percent tolerance. Consequently, much of their initial report that they brought forward and submitted was not acceptable by either side of the House. As I recall, no one seemed to approve of it, and it caused the committee to go back to the drawing board and to draw up proposals that brought in somewhere between three and five reports from a five-member commission. Of course, that brought on a circumstance where time had elapsed. So there was a suggestion and in fact legislation put in place that there would be an all-party committee struck to do this because there was not time to strike another committee similar to that which was headed by Judge Liden in order to draw these boundaries in an expeditious manner, drawing on the information that had been put together by the so-called Bogle

committee and the hearings that were held by the Judge Liden commission.

12:50

I recall also over the past year hearing the hon. members from across the way on numerous occasions stand and say that the government had no intentions of drawing new boundaries; they're going to go on the old boundaries because it's an advantage for them; it's going to be an advantage because it protects rural Alberta. On it went. There are three less seats now in rural Alberta than there were, those three seats having moved to the urban part of Alberta. [interjection] Let's be clear, hon. member. That's what happened.

Fairness was the overriding initiative on the part of those who sat down to draw the boundaries. Bear in mind that the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs stood today and cited a prime example where his constituency was taken away, merged, destroyed, gone, but the other hon. member who was speaking at the time was protected. Now, if there was going to be gerrymandering, it certainly would have been done in that instance.

Let me go on to say again that the old boundaries were not protected. Almost every constituency, in fact every constituency in this province was affected to a considerable degree. Consequently, the members from across the way saw a political opportunity, and they quickly commercialized on it. Their thinking you could read from across the way. It said: "Hey; the government being the responsible people - they're the government - they must respond. They have to do something to move this forward, to be responsible to Albertans, so that the boundaries be put in place so an election can be called within the mandate of the government." So they said: "The best thing for us to do is stand back. We'll refuse to get on the committee, and we can stay on the sidelines and snipe." That's what they've done for 19 days. For 19 days they've stood in this Assembly and picked away at what the government members were obliged to do. This is the 19th day of this sitting.

MR. FOX: Are you counting weekends?

MR. ADY: Yeah, we count weekends as well in this case. Nineteen less weekends; all right. We convened this session on January 25, and this is the 19th day of the session, albeit there are some weekends in there.

Let me go on to say that the old boundaries were not our priority. Our priority was to draw new boundaries and draw them fairly and equitably throughout Alberta in order that the residents of Alberta could be adequately represented. Let me go on to say, though, speaking about my own constituency, that the Liden commission brought forward a recommendation for my constituency which took half of the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest's constituency and put it into the Cardston constituency. The people from Pincher Creek, including the town of Pincher Creek, would have been part of my constituency. Totally not workable. Talk about mixing oil and water; that's what that would have done. I came out in opposition to it. The people from Pincher Creek came out in opposition to it. The agreement between both of us was that it was not workable, and we presented that to the commission. No, no, no. Consequently, when the Liden commission report was not accepted, then of course we had the all-party committee that was struck and ended up with four members to draw the boundaries.

Now, my representation and the direction that I wanted to see for the Cardston constituency was, first of all, that it would not be divided, that it would not disappear. That was the representation

that was made to any public hearing they appeared before: just don't dissolve us; we have some cultural ties, and we belong together. They went on and related why this was so necessary. That was respected by the committee. However, let's remember that from my perspective as an MLA the easy answer would have been to reach out and take people from Lethbridge-West. There's a rural area there that could hopefully have fit reasonably well with the Cardston constituency, but again that was not very workable for the same reasons that it was not workable to bring the people in from Pincher Creek. So in the wisdom of the committee they elected not to do that.

Now, the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is shouting across the way: what happened to the Cardston constituency? Well, the Cardston constituency did not come out of this unscathed, not by any means. The Cardston constituency lost a village with 900 people in it and almost 1,200 surrounding people who were carved off my constituency and into another adjoining constituency. Let me say in this House today: that was not the wish of the people of Stirling. They were quite happy to stay in the Cardston constituency. Their cultural ties and the roots of the people who live in Stirling primarily relate to the Cardston constituency. It was not my choice, certainly not my choice that they be carved off. Now, I want to make that very clear. This was not anything that was suggested by me or suggested by the people from the village of Stirling.

AN HON. MEMBER: Say it again.

MR. ADY: One more time: it was not.

Let me say again that the Cardston constituency also contains the largest native reservation in Alberta, the Blood reserve. We have some 7,000 natives there. Also, the Cardston constituency will inherit a new name in this process. It will become Cardston-Chief Mountain, a long name to spell out on the many, many memberships that will have to be written in the Cardston constituency in the forthcoming . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: There's nobody there.

MR. ADY: Not so, hon. member. I was less than 1,900 members short of reaching the minus 25. That's not that many. There were many, many constituencies in this province who were far below – as a matter of fact, 14 were lower than Cardston. However, Cardston constituency kept receiving all the news as being the smallest constituency in Alberta. Not so. The reason that that newscast went out is because the Blood reserve opted to . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair regrets to interrupt the hon. minister, but due to consideration having been given to the hon. Government House Leader under Standing Order 21 and 21(2) as well as Standing Order 4(3), the Chair is required to conclude the debate on this matter and must put the

following question. On the motion for third reading of Bill 55, Electoral Divisions Statute Amendment Act, 1993, does the Assembly agree to the motion for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

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

1:00

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Fowler	Nelson
Betkowski	Gesell	Orman
Bogle	Horsman	Payne
Calahasen	Hyland	Rostad
Cherry	Isley	Shrake
Clegg	Johnston	Stewart
Drobot	Kowalski	Tannas
Elliott	Lund	Thurber
Elzinga	Mirosh	West
Evans	Musgrove	Zarusky
Fisher		

Against the motion:

Bruseker	Hewes	McInnis
Doyle	MacDonald	Sigurdson
Ewasiuk	Martin	Taylor
Fox	McEachern	Wickman

Totals	For – 31	Against – 12
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[Motion carried; Bill 55 read a third time]

1:10

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to thank all hon. members, on all sides, for the generally amicable way in which this short session has been conducted and completed and to wish all of you a happy Family Day and happy hunting between then and April.

Pursuant to Government Motion 37 agreed to yesterday, the House stands adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 1:11 p.m.]