

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 26, 1993**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 93/04/26

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We, Thine unworthy servants here gathered together in Thy name, do humbly beseech Thee to send down Thy heavenly wisdom from above to direct and guide us in all our considerations.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly His Excellency the ambassador of the kingdom of Morocco to Canada and his wife. Ambassador Baddou was appointed Morocco's ambassador to Canada in October of 1991, and we're honoured that he is making a visit to the province of Alberta. His Excellency has had a distinguished career.

May I also take this opportunity to indicate my thanks to my colleague the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, who hosted a lunch in honour of His Excellency this afternoon.

It's noteworthy, too, that Morocco is Alberta's 11th largest trading partner in the world and the largest in Africa. In 1992 Alberta exports to Morocco were valued at approximately \$68.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, His Excellency and his wife are in your gallery, and I would ask them to rise so that we can extend them a very warm welcome on behalf of our province.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as a member of the delegate council of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, which hon. members will recall has been joined by Alberta, with four members of this Assembly as members of the delegate council including my colleague the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Member for Calgary-North West, I'm pleased to introduce in our gallery today a distinguished visitor, a gentleman who has served Canada as an ambassador from our country to various countries abroad and most recently acted for Canada as the consul general in the Pacific Northwest. Late last year the Pacific Northwest Economic Region took a new step and has retained an executive director to serve the interests of the legislators in the Pacific Northwest Economic Region. We are joined today in the gallery by Roger Bull. He is accompanied by Melanie McCallum, of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. I would ask that they rise and receive a warm welcome from members of the Assembly.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have for presentation a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta by 1,226 residents of Alberta, 776 from Edmonton-Strathcona and 450 from Sherwood Park, calling upon

the Government of Alberta, immediately and before the next election, to reduce pension benefits which will be payable to MLA's and Cabinet Ministers leaving office at or before the next [provincial] election.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by almost 600 Albertans asking that there be an environmental impact assessment into the burning of tires in cement kilns and asking that tire recyclers have fair access to the tire levy.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by 156 people in the Andrew area concerned about the government's possible plans to close the liquor store in that community.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to have the petition I presented last week now read, please.

CLERK:

The petition of the undersigned members of the Royal Canadian Legion humbly [request] . . .

Therefore your petitioners do pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of the Province of Alberta to maintain the existing senior citizen rental grants and senior home-owner tax grants as they are currently in effect.

head: **Notices of Motions**

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

Be it resolved that the debate on second reading of Bill 57, Electoral Divisions Amendment Act, 1993, shall not be further adjourned.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 40 of this Assembly allows for the urgent and pressing necessity motions to be moved without the usual notice. I have such a motion, which I will move at the end of question period. It's in two parts. The first urges

the Provincial Treasurer to withdraw Peter Pocklington's line of credit with the Alberta Treasury Branches in the event that Mr. Pocklington [attempts to move] the Edmonton Oilers hockey club outside Alberta, which I gather the Treasurer has already agreed to.

The second part encourages the government to seek an injunction preventing the relocation of the Edmonton Oilers hockey club pending the outcome of lawsuits and the successful repayment of loans that Mr. Pocklington has taken out through the Alberta government.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

Bill 61

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Bill 61.

Mr. Speaker, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act is a major step in ensuring that all Albertans have single, comprehensive access to information schemes and at the same time provides for the protection of privacy of personal information in the hands of government. There are two major parts to this complex Bill: part one dealing with access to information held by the government, and part two dealing with

rules concerning the protection of privacy of personal information held by the government.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the request of many Albertans and various organizations, it is our intention to seek introduction of this Bill, give it first reading, and then send out to the public a discussion paper with a draft copy of the Bill for further public input. I would like to table four copies of the discussion guide.

[Leave granted; Bill 61 read a first time]

Bill 63

Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1993

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 63, the Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1993. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that this Bill puts into action the recommendations of the Auditor General in the report which he provided to members of the Assembly just about six to eight weeks ago. We are acting responsibly as a government, quickly, to implement a number of very sound and solid recommendations to ensure and improve the financial responsibility and accountability of this government.

[Leave granted; Bill 63 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development.

2:40

Bill 58

Students Loan Guarantee Amendment Act, 1993

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 58, the Students Loan Guarantee Amendment Act, 1993. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the contents of this Bill have to do with the ability to change the amount of liability beyond \$250 million at any given time for the student finance program.

[Leave granted; Bill 58 read a first time]

Bill 64

Safety Codes Amendment Act, 1993

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Safety Codes Amendment Act, 1993, Bill 64.

Basically these amendments will deal with concerns surrounding liability to the accredited agencies that will partake of this process, also appointing of members to the councils and certain functions of the council itself.

[Leave granted; Bill 64 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

Bill 364

Members of the Legislative Assembly Independent Remuneration Panel Act

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 364, the Members of the Legislative Assembly Independent Remuneration Panel Act.

This Bill seeks to limit the excessive generosity of current MLA pensions and benefits. The Bill provides the government one last chance to do it right. The Bill will immediately cut maximum benefits in half by setting a 10-year pensionable service limit, will end the re-establishment allowance that will provide departing MLAs up to \$57,000 each after the next election, will tighten up expense claim rules, will require deductions from an MLA's pay for all unexcused absences from the Assembly. Finally, the Bill will establish a broad-based independent review panel with the authority to ensure that MLA remuneration is fair to taxpayers.

[Leave granted; Bill 364 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 1991-92 annual report of the Department of Energy.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'm providing the Assembly today with copies of the public accounts for the year ended March 31, 1992, as well as the supplements to that.

As well, in keeping with our access to information, we're providing the annual report for 1992 of the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation as well as the annual report of the Alberta Automobile Insurance Board for the year ended December 31, 1992.

MR. SPEAKER: With copies to all hon. members of the Assembly. Thank you.

The Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling today the annual report of the Society of Management Accountants of Alberta and also the 1991 annual report of the Alberta Registered Professional Foresters Association.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional? The Member for Grande Prairie.

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to table the annual report for 1991-92 of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the chairman of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act and pursuant to Standing Order 52 I hereby would like to table the 1992-93 committee report. Copies will be distributed to the members after question period.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I have two groups to introduce today. The first group I'd like to introduce are 17 visitors from Sacred Heart community school. They're accompanied by teacher Mrs. Burghardt. I assume they're in the public gallery. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, going from small to large, I've got another group to introduce today. They're sitting in both the public and members' galleries. They're from Concordia College, 53 in total, accompanied by teachers Lloyd Grosfield, Neil Fenske, Janet Brucker, Linda Nikolaj, and Guy Pariseau. I'd ask them and the students to also please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly

a young constituent of mine from Leduc, Mr. Michael Laveck, who is currently attending Leduc composite high school. I'd also like to mention that he has had the distinct honour of spending an entire day with the Hon. Ralph Klein and now knows what it's like to be a Premier for a day. His present business card reads: future Premier. I'd ask him to stand – he's in the members' gallery – to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly student leaders from the University of Calgary. They are Ray Wong, vice-president of external relations, and Bill MacKay, external commissioner. They're accompanied by John Schmeiser, the communications co-ordinator of the U of C students' union. They're seated in the public gallery. I'd ask that they rise and receive a warm welcome from the members.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to the Members of the Legislative Assembly four people who are in the gallery today in support of the petition that I presented earlier in the session. They are Dave and Elaine Mandrusiak of the ATRA Tire Recycling Association of Alberta, and Wayne Panasuk and Ron Bertsch of Enviro-Concepts Incorporated, a company that produces recycled rubber products. I would ask that they rise in the gallery and receive the welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

2:50 **MLA Pensions**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, Bill 62, that was brought forward on Friday, the Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Amendment Act, 1993, is frankly unacceptable to Albertans. Today already thousands of Albertans through petitions, other thousands of people through phone calls are saying: this is not good enough. They know that this isn't fair. I've talked to many people myself, and they know that the government's golden handshakes to retiring MLAs are far too generous. Legally the government can roll back these pensions, and morally they should. The only people that won't acknowledge the fact is the Conservative government. My question to the Premier is simply this: why is the Premier being so stubborn on this? Why doesn't he do the right thing and roll back these excessive pensions?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Premier – Mr. Speaker, I mean. [interjections] Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that sometimes it's better to talk to myself. At least I get the right answers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition stands to get about \$1.747 million if he lives to the ripe old age of 75. I guess before I provide the Legislative Assembly with my answer to his question, I would like to point out that the ND opposition were all part of this. The recommendation to commission the report by Peat Marwick was a recommendation by all the parties. I recall the opposition members saying last February: will you guarantee the Legislature that you will bring in this report and that we will have it debated? Indeed we brought in the report, we prepared a Bill based on the report, and there is ample time now to debate that Bill. I would suggest that if the opposition members, both the Liberal and the New Democrats, wish to bring in

amendments, there is ample opportunity to do this. That is what it is all about.

I find it interesting also, Mr. Speaker, that in addressing the whole issue of pensions, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, quote, unquote, in *Hansard* said that no one ought to be making political hay out of this issue. Well, I'm telling you, you talk about political hay being created in this House; you'd simply need to look to the Liberals and the NDs.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, maybe the problem is that the Premier has been talking to himself too much, because he's the only one that believes in what he's talking about.

Now, the Premier can go back and muse all he wants. The reality is that right now he has a choice here in the Legislature to do the right thing. That's ancient history, Mr. Speaker. He said the other day that he went around listening to Albertans. Well, he has very selective listening if he doesn't understand that this is a serious issue with Albertans. It's a symbol out there. Again I come back to the Premier. Stop talking about amendments later on that he knows will be voted down. Will he do the right thing, if he's listening to Albertans, and roll back these pensions so he has some moral authority to deal with some of the other issues?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about moral authority, I think that we talk about moral authority to abide by contracts that were legitimately entered into, and that applies to the opposition members as well. Aside from that, if there is a compelling argument, I guess, on the part of the opposition or on the part of any member of government to introduce an appropriate amendment to address this matter, then let the Legislature debate the amendment.

We brought in a Bill that provides the least attractive pension plan of any political jurisdiction in this country, the least generous.

MR. MARTIN: That's not true.

MR. KLEIN: It is true, Mr. Speaker. All he needs to do is check the facts, sir. He will find that it is true. The least generous pension plan is what we brought in, notwithstanding the protestations of the Liberals and the NDs to enhance it, to make it even better. [interjections] Well, *Hansard* shows that with respect to MLA pension benefits most of the motions to enhance those benefits were made by the Liberals, including increasing the salary of the hon. leader of the Liberal Party by 70 percent.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we're not talking about the future. There's going to be \$40 million walking away from this Legislature at a time when we have a huge deficit with these huge pensions. That's the reality. Albertans are saying: show some leadership here. The Premier could show leadership here. He could do it, but he won't do it. He says that this is the "least generous pension." I would point out that in Saskatchewan since 1979 they've had self-contributing. You can't run an unfunded liability in that pension. You still haven't gone that far. Why are you trying to mislead Albertans by saying that this is the "least generous pension" when you know it's absolutely nonsense?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the proposal that we have brought in represents the least generous pension plan of any political jurisdiction in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I guess what really bothers me about this is the hypocrisy of the situation. These birds were all part of the action. Now they're backtracking. They're backtracking like stepped-on snakes for political expediency and nothing more.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, shouting and calling names is not going to change the reality of the problem.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, please.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Edmonton Oilers

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know this government allows the Alberta Treasury Branches to make loans outside of Alberta. We also know they make loans to friends of the government, like \$40 million and some to Peter Pocklington and his Edmonton Oilers. Now there seems to be a possibility that an in-Alberta loan is going to become an out-of-province loan if he moves his team. Well, Peter Pocklington can go if he wants to, but New Democrats want the Oilers and the Treasury Branches loans to stay in Alberta. The Provincial Treasurer said that if the team is moved, the Treasury Branches will call in the loan. How can Albertans know that he means business? What evidence can he give us that his promise to pull the Oilers' loan is not just an idle threat and hot air?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, you would admonish me from speaking about any client/business relationship between a banking customer of the Treasury Branches and the Treasury Branches. Let me say that clearly it's a well-known fact that the Treasury Branches provides financial arrangements to the Edmonton Oilers hockey club, and I can assure you that if that is no longer the Edmonton Oilers hockey club but becomes a hockey club of another province, the Treasury Branches will not be banking it.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer seems to be saying: trust me. Now, Albertans could be forgiven if they didn't believe him because of this government's track record in their dealings with Peter Pocklington. I was hoping that he would announce some sort of policy banning out-of-province loans, so I'll give him an opportunity here this afternoon. Is it the policy of the Treasury Branches to ban all out-of-province loans so that an NHL team outside Alberta could not be a borrower with the Treasury Branches?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'll say it again. If the Edmonton Oilers hockey club is no longer an Edmonton-based club and finds itself in another province, whether it's Ontario or Nova Scotia or British Columbia, the Treasury Branches will not be banking that hockey club.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, will the Provincial Treasurer tell this Assembly whether there is any other NHL team or teams besides the Oilers that is a borrower with the Alberta Treasury Branches?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I believe that would be a confidential matter, and I am not going to break the confidence between clients of the Treasury Branches and Treasury Branches itself. Albertans must know that there is that confidentiality, and I will not break it.

NovAtel Communications Ltd.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the government admits that Albertans have lost \$614 million in NovAtel. Much of those

losses were because of the negligence of NovAtel's operations in the United States. Millions of dollars, in fact, were given to an operation known as GMD Partnership of California. In fact, part of the millions given to this particular partnership were used to allow some partners to buy other partners out. On March 29, 1993, the Federal Communications Commission in the United States fined GMD Partnership \$250,000 for what they called a violation of alien ownership laws. They noted that it was willful, and they noted that this had taken place over a considerable period of time. Mr. Premier, what kind of government monitoring was in place that would have allowed NovAtel to involve itself with a company that was clearly violating U.S. laws?

3:00

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I don't think that we need to table with the Legislature the Report of the Auditor General on NovAtel Communications and all the ancillary information associated with it. Surely if the hon. leader of the Liberal Party wants to know what went wrong, it's all contained in this report, and we have accepted the recommendations contained in this report.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the report does not itemize and set out the negligence of the Conservative government. For that there is still a day of reckoning, Mr. Premier.

NovAtel has been exceedingly generous to this GMD Partnership. Mr. Premier, I'd like your assurance that there will be absolutely no taxpayers' moneys used in the payment of this fine.

MR. KLEIN: How would there be? I would be at a loss to explain why we would even be involved. I would be curious, Mr. Speaker, as to why the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is asking the question. Maybe he'll do that in his supplementary.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the previous Attorney General of this province indicated that he would like to hang someone for the NovAtel mess. Mr. Premier, there's been lots of time now for a complete investigation both civilly and criminally. I'd like to know when we're going to see some people hang.

MR. KLEIN: I'm still curious as to why he would raise the question of why we would pay somebody's fine, but maybe he can send me a note on that particular issue.

Hanging has been abolished in this country for a long, long time, and the hon. leader of the Liberal Party knows that. We've been investigating this matter on an ongoing basis. Perhaps the Provincial Treasurer would wish to add to my comments.

MR. DINNING: Only to reiterate the Premier's comment that the Auditor General did a full, complete, comprehensive investigation into NovAtel Communications Ltd., provided that report to all members of the Assembly and to all Albertans in September. The facts are there, Mr. Speaker. The facts are there.

MR. SPEAKER: Innisfail.

Public Service Downsizing

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year the government offered a voluntary retirement package to all civil service employees in an effort to reduce the number we have in a humane and orderly fashion. We have heard in this Assembly that some 1,800 people accepted this offer. My question is to the intergovernmental affairs minister and Deputy Premier. What is the number of employees who were refused this package?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, when the Premier announced the voluntary separation allowance, he indicated at that time that it was his desire to make sure that we conducted ourselves with great compassion and great fairness. The program itself exhibits that great compassion and great fairness. I should share with the hon. member that we did receive some 2,142 applications for the voluntary separation allowance. Of that, 1,842 were approved, 209 were denied, and 91 are still pending as of last week.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is: will the government consider setting up an appeal process for all those that were refused the package? If so, when and how?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, when we announced the program, we indicated right up front that we might be unable to accommodate everybody who did apply for the voluntary separation allowance, because we do have a number of frontline services where our first obligation is to the individuals who call upon those frontline services, such as the tuberculosis clinics or our correctional facilities, whereby we do need these individuals to serve on behalf of the Alberta government. I should indicate right up front, too, that we truly value the contribution these employees do make to the welfare of the citizens of this province.

I share with the hon. member that we do have a review process for those who have been denied. Individuals who wish to have their denial reviewed can either send a note to myself or to the public service commissioner, and we will be coming back to them within a number of weeks as it relates to their review.

I should indicate to the hon. member, because there have been expressions of concern by individuals within the Health department, that last week we had some 155 employees who had made application. There were 96 approvals given within the Health department. Fifty-nine were not accepted, again because of the frontline service that we have an obligation to offer to the citizens of this great, great province.

We have indicated that we are willing to review those who were not accepted to see if there is some way they can be accommodated, but I should reinforce that it was indicated right up front when we announced this program that we would not be able to accommodate all.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by Calgary-North West.

Retroactive Legislation

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's comments last week with regard to the legal impediments to making pension reforms retroactive indicate, I submit, the double standards of this government. In 1977 the Conservative government had no qualms about passing Bill 29, which retroactively extinguished the rights of the Lubicon band and six other communities to file a caveat indicating that the title on their traditional lands was contested. There was no concern then about the injustice of a law which deprived the Lubicons of their vested rights without fair compensation. How is it, Mr. Premier, that the legal duty to respect vested rights applies to MLA pension rights but not to Lubicon land rights?

MR. KLEIN: If there was an issue of retroactivity there, Mr. Speaker, then I would assume that the Lubicon Indians, through their ongoing litigation relative to claims, are pursuing this particular matter.

This whole issue will be before the House, I understand, this evening. This Legislature, I guess, can do pretty much as it pleases. What I was saying is that the legal opinion rendered by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel simply says that if indeed we make it retroactive, he concludes that the courts would be unlikely to allow a wholesale expropriation of pension rights without fair compensation. So even if we did roll back those pensions, these people would be, in his opinion at least, entitled to compensation. So it's six of one and half a dozen of the other, and I think that these people know it.

MR. CHIVERS: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting here. There's no doubt, I submit, that the Lubicon band has suffered tremendously as a result of the passing of Bill 29. The traditional livelihood of the band has been destroyed by oil and gas development, 90 percent of the work force is on welfare, and the government has obtained \$1.4 billion as a result of oil and gas revenues. Will the Premier now act to compensate the Lubicon people for the tremendous losses and irreparable harm to their way of life that they have suffered as a result of the passing of retroactive legislation?

MR. KLEIN: I have to take great exception to the hon. member's remarks. If there is any government that has gone out of its way to try and resolve a land claim, it is this government. We have been most generous in our consideration of this matter. Mr. Speaker, we are fully committed, through the Minister of Family and Social Services, who is also responsible for native affairs, to pursuing this matter to its successful conclusion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Calgary-North West.

3:10

Magnesium Plant

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The \$125 million that taxpayers poured into a mothballed magnesium plant in southern Alberta is another example of this government's bungling in financial matters. We've now learned that the Klein government has secretly struck a deal to finally purchase the technology from Magnesium International of Houston. Despite having provided a \$102 million loan guarantee in the past, they're just now getting around to buying the technology. So my question to the Premier is: will the Premier now tell Albertans how many more millions of dollars are going to be spent to cover up the financial ineptitude and finally purchase the technology we should have owned long ago?

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

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the department has been working very diligently with the two proponents that own the plant to tie down the long-term technology. They are very close to finalizing that agreement, and I would like to come back to this Legislature as soon as that agreement is finalized and give you a report.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, in February of 1993 the Premier said that he was going to come clean and be accountable to Albertans and provide all the information. So my supplementary question is: when are we going to get all of the information on this magnesium company down in Highwood in terms of the loan guarantee, the interest to purchase the technology, and any other blunders that have been made along the way, the total figure?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Treasurer has already filed with the House all of the documentation with reference to the loan and loan guarantee. As I stated earlier, as soon as an agreement can be put in place, we will report back. It's very hopeful that after that technology is in place, the plant will be put into operation. We have quite a number of people waiting for that agreement to be put in place. The price of magnesium has gone up worldwide, and the opportunity to have a very useful plant in southern Alberta is still a very high opportunity that we should look for.

MR. SPEAKER: Rocky Mountain House, followed by Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Natural Gas Sales to California

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that tomorrow the Premier and the Minister of Energy are traveling to California. To the Premier: what is the purpose of this trip, and who are you going to be meeting?

MR. KLEIN: Well, certainly one of the key issues in this province over the next few years is going to be the sale of natural gas. The Minister of Energy and myself have been planning this since some time in February. In light of the sale of about a billion cubic feet of gas per day to northern California, worth some \$800 million a year, we think that it's best to really shore up our markets and see what we can do once again to achieve some long-term contracts. We will be meeting with the Southern California Gas Company, San Diego Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison, Pacific Gas and Electric, Pacific Gas Transmission, and the California Public Utilities Commission. We will also be speaking to about 90 major companies in the Los Angeles area at a chamber of commerce meeting relative to this issue, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is good news. As I've said in this House many times, the Rocky constituency depends very heavily on the sale of gas, as do many other parts of Alberta.

This has been an ongoing battle between the producers, the government, and the purchasers in California. Could the Premier or the Minister of Energy share with us where there's any optimism that there could be a resolve to this dispute?

MR. KLEIN: I'll have the minister maybe add to my answer. There's always optimism. Signs indicate that there could be an increase in the price of gas over a moderate period of time, and we would like to revisit with the California authorities the opportunity of securing with them some long-term contracts. No, we don't expect to return to Alberta later this week with all the issues resolved, but we hope to make some significant headway.

MR. SPEAKER: Very briefly, minister.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been encouraged with the commercial restructuring that has been taking place over the last few months with our producers in A and S from Alberta and PG and E. We've been following that very closely and encouraging that restructuring to take place. Our objective is to see a market-driven gas market relationship between willing buyers and willing sellers develop, again through this restructuring

process. We may not have all the issues resolved by the time we return, but we're certainly encouraging the players to get to that resolve.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Students Finance

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the minister of advanced education announced a limited piecemeal review of the student loan repayment system. Only two of the seven student finance recommendations made by the Council of Alberta University Students in its December 1992 discussion paper and only four of the 11 Students Finance Board recommendations of the University of Alberta senate's task force on student finance are addressed in the minister's announcement. My question is to the minister of advanced education. Given that loan repayment can't be separated from inadequate allowances, the realities of part-time students, student representation on the Students Finance Board, parental ability to pay, et cetera, when will the minister do a complete and public review of the entire student finance system?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, it really hasn't been that long since there was a complete review done on the student finance system. I believe it was 1990. There was a review done, and there were some dramatic changes made to the program at that time. As far as the review that we've set in motion to review the repayment schedule, although I've outlined four particular areas that we would like to have them look at, we're not necessarily closing the doors on other options that may come forward from within the review to adequately address the repayment schedule for students and put some flexibility there to address some of the problems they've voiced to me over the past few weeks as I've visited them in the institutions.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, on a related issue the University of Calgary students union has organized a letter-writing campaign to all MLAs. In addition, they've collected over 300 letters addressed to the minister. I have them here, and I'd like the page to take them to the minister of advanced education if she would.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, it's most unusual, hon. member. It can come to the Table.

MR. PASHAK: The students are concerned that our postsecondary system is falling apart, and they call for the immediate establishment of a provincial commission to look at all postsecondary matters in the province. Given the urgency of this request, will the minister convert the secret education process begun last fall to a full-fledged, open process of public consultation and planning?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I can only assume that the member wasn't in the House last Thursday, when the Premier talked in pretty definitive terms on the process that we plan to put in place. Certainly we plan to put a process in place to allow consultation on restructuring the postsecondary education system, and we anticipate having a broad review of that and input from a broad area of stakeholders and other interested Albertans. So certainly that process will be moving forward before very long.

MR. SPEAKER: West Yellowhead, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

MLA Pensions

(continued)

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's MLA pension reforms will finally end double-dipping, where former ministers can collect both their salaries and the minister's pension while they sit on the back benches. However, the refusal to deal with this problem until now, despite my Bills in 1990, 1991, and 1992 on behalf of the New Democrats, has meant that former ministers in this current government are still allowed to draw a pension and salary at the same time. I'd like to ask the Premier. Given the changes to cabinet last December, the Premier has a responsibility to tell taxpayers how many government members are currently double-dipping. Albertans want to know how many current government backbenchers are eligible to draw a pension while collecting an MLA's salary and how many of those eligible are collecting this double-dipping pension.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The phrase has been ruled out of order before. I trust that's the last time I'm going to hear it here.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. It's been ruled out of order in committee, it's been ruled out of order here, and it's ruled out of order right now. That's the end of that point of order.

MLA Pensions

(continued)

MR. DOYLE: Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. I can understand the Premier's reluctance to discuss double whatever you want to call it, double-dipping. Though I proposed amendments for the last three years . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. If you persist, you will have your question taken away. Just ask the question.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, for the last three years I have proposed amendments to stop this unbelievable practice of two salaries being drawn: one a pension, one a salary. Got that? I still regularly meet people who can't believe that some MLAs now draw a pension and a salary at the same time. I'd like to ask the Premier: will the Premier tell Albertans how much his refusal to ban former ministers receiving pension benefits while they remain MLAs will cost Alberta taxpayers between December 1992 and the next provincial election?

3:20

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, he's asking me to tell him when the next provincial election is going to be, and I don't know. So I can't do those calculations right now. Mr. Speaker, this whole issue is going to be debated, and it includes the whole issue of double-dipping, including those in the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry. [interjections] Order. Order. Right; that does it. Okay.
Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a member who has refused the gold-plated MLA pension plan, I put this question to the Premier. Will the . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjections] Thank you. [interjections] Just a moment.
Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I hadn't made it clear, let me clarify now. As a member who has refused to participate in the gold-plated MLA pension, I put this question to the Speaker. How can the Premier justify so-called pension reform when it means that members of his caucus who are drawing pensions as former ministers are still entitled to receive a salary and that that will continue up until the date of the next general election?

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. There are a lot of questions that seem to be echoing exactly what's gone on before in here.

The Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it was the hon. Member for West Yellowhead who first had the novel idea of asking a question of the Speaker.

In answer to the hon. member's question, I'm curious why he hasn't taken the lead of his leader. You know, if his leader serves one more year, then his leader will be entitled to almost a million dollars worth of pension benefits. So maybe the best thing that he can do is resign and save us all a lot of money.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question is: will the Premier confirm that members of his caucus who lose their seat in the next general election will receive the full benefits of the current gold-plated pension plan?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, I have considered this member to be a highly intelligent individual who is capable of listening and understanding. I said at the outset that this matter is now before the Legislature. It's coming before the House, as I understand it, later today. There's ample opportunity to debate this issue, to introduce amendments, to have it thoroughly discussed.

I would like to pose this question perhaps, and maybe he can answer at a later date, Mr. Speaker. Will the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud rescind the motion that he made in Members' Services to increase from \$750 a month to \$1,000 a month the living allowance for MLAs? Will he rescind the motion he made in the Legislature to increase the salary of the hon. leader of the Liberal Party by 70 percent? Will he rescind that particular statement?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Premier. Thank you.
Highwood.

Senator Riley High School

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Education. Early this morning fire destroyed the central wing of Senator Riley high school in High River with major smoke and water damage to the other wings. What forms of assistance and support are the minister and his department

prepared to offer to the Senator Riley school staff and to the board and the administration of the Foothills school division?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I was distressed to learn early this morning that a fire was in fact in progress and was in contact with officials of the Foothills school division, as were officials from the Calgary regional office of Alberta Education. Certainly Alberta Education will make available all services possible to help with this situation, including the provision of portables, if they can be worked in to help with the situation, moved to the site, and put into place to help. There of course will be some delay while the fire is investigated and the whole needs of that community, high schoolwise, are assessed.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm sure the people so affected will be pleased with that response.

Such a tragic event as this has an adverse impact on the 520-some students of Senator Riley, so I ask the minister: is he prepared to delay or postpone the final examinations for these students?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, there are certainly no plans to do that at this time, and I would not be prepared to be involved in such a move. I've been very impressed by what I gather is a very well-organized approach on the part of local school officials in the Foothills school division to assessing the situation, moving their students into temporary accommodation. I expect that with that kind of leadership and efficiency down there, they will soon have their students into temporary accommodation where they can pursue their studies. I hope there'll be no need to think about delaying final examinations.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

Workers' Compensation Board

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. For a number of years the Workers' Compensation Board had as a mission statement, and I will quote: to serve workers and employers by reducing injuries, compensating workers while disabled, and rehabilitating to re-employment or self-sufficiency. Now, that mission statement under the new president has changed, and I quote again: to balancing the fair and reasonable needs of injured workers with adequate funding from employers based on realistic employer assessment rates and careful control of Workers' Compensation Board costs. In reality, the Workers' Compensation Board assessments are only 85 percent of the national average, and the assessments do not cover the costs of the actual needs of the expenses of the board. Would the minister now confirm that the Workers' Compensation Board has shifted its priority away from injured workers to one of looking out for employer assessment rates?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that the focus on workers has not changed nor will it change. I'm also happy to report that there has been an increased focus, which I have asked to be brought to bear, in terms of administration of WCB, because what happens is that as administration costs rise, assessment rates also rise and greater pressure comes on the system. When that happens, we are then less able to care for those workers who are injured, who need rehabilitation, and who need the type of care that is required to get them back into the workplace if that's possible. So there has been no change of focus, but there's been

an increased emphasis on administration costs, making the whole system more responsive to workers.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, my supplementary. I'm going to have to take issue with the Minister of Labour, because recently when we saw the massive layoffs at the Workers' Compensation Board, we saw that the vocational rehabilitation department was completely shut down while the department that assists employers with respect to their appeals against those employees who have been injured has increased the size of its staff. So I would ask the Minister of Labour: what guarantees can he offer those injured workers that they're not going to suffer any more at the hands of this current administration?

3:30

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, to go on further, one of the commitments that has been made to employees and to employers is that the whole process of having the workers assessed and having their needs met be abbreviated, that there be less obstacles and less hoops for people to jump through so that the needs of the employees can be met. Again, when you address the administrative side of things, these needs indeed do get met on a more rapid basis and on a more responsive basis. So that's the direction it's going. I don't think we have to apologize for that at all. Employees and employers are responding to and asking for that type of direction.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Tire Disposal

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of concerns about proposals to incinerate tires in cement kilns. First, there is a legitimate fear that there will not be enough good-quality tires left for genuine recycling operations after cement kilns get their allocation. My question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. What guarantees can the minister give that the Tire Recycling Management Board will allocate sufficient tires of suitable quality for genuine recycling operations?

MR. EVANS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, that's an important question. Three weeks ago when I tabled the screening report from the burn that was conducted at Inland Cement, I indicated that we understand that there are between 2 million and 2 and a half million tires in Alberta that go into the waste stream each year. I want to make sure that even if we do go ahead and authorize Inland Cement to burn tires, there are enough tires available for what we call the high-end recycling initiatives in the province, because that is the mandate of the Tire Recycling Management Board. It's extremely important that we recognize that even if the burning of tires is authorized, that's a short-term to a medium-term solution, a three- to five-year solution until the high-end recycling opportunities are realized given the markets – that's an important issue – and ensuring that the \$4 advance disposal fee is enough to make the projects viable.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the cement kiln companies are getting the bulk of the good tires, and there aren't sufficient left over for recycling operations to get started and to build a business over the next three to five years.

A second concern is the health effect of burning tires. When will the minister call for a complete environmental impact assessment of tire burning to ensure that the emission limits proposed by his own department will adequately protect Albertans' health?

MR. EVANS: Well, that's two in a row, Mr. Speaker. That's an important question as well. Three weeks ago when the screening report was tabled, I indicated that I wanted to give the Alberta public and particularly the people in the Edmonton area an opportunity to review that screening report, review the science of the screening report, and I encouraged Inland Cement to have more public input. Again, that's three weeks ago. I expect that I will be receiving a final report from Inland in the very near future. In particular, I'm concerned if any of the scientific information that was in that screening report is being debated, is being challenged. Once I receive that report, then we will decide whether in fact an environmental impact assessment is required.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

Native Education

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's commitment to native education is suspect. As part of the recent education grants announcement moneys for native education were cut by 8 percent and amalgamated with other grants so that school boards can divert funds if they choose. My questions are to the Minister of Education. Since education is the key to a better future for aboriginal Albertans, why is the government cutting grants and moving away from targeted funding?

MR. JONSON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, education is the key to the future for young Albertans. In our recent grant announcement of April 15, which was following from our earlier major grant announcement, we did put an additional 2.4 percent, or \$35 million, into the school jurisdictions and school programs of this province. One of the types of recommendations that has frequently come to us from school boards across the province is that they want more flexibility in dealing with their budgets. Therefore, as part of the overall announcement that was made on April 15, we responded to that recommendation and provided flexibility and interchangeability in an area of a number of grants that had been specifically targeted before.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you. My second question is also to the Minister of Education. Financial support for two-thirds of the students at the Plains Indian Cultural Survival School in Calgary has been discontinued. The Premier visited there recently and promised help. Now, what does the minister have to say? How can he justify his government's hands-off policy when it comes to over-18 natives when the Premier promised help?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the question from the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight seems to be related to the native project grants but is not. In fact, it does deal with the extension grants for adult students in the school systems of the province, particularly in Edmonton and Calgary. Now, the Plains Indian cultural school has been under discussion among advanced education, Alberta Education, and the Calgary public school board. It's my understanding that an overall approach is being worked on, and I have reason to think being worked out, with respect to reasonable funding for that school in the next scholastic year.

Speaker's Ruling Questions for the Order Paper

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Question Period has come to an end. It should be pointed out that there were at least two questions today – I'd check the Blues, but I think it was from West Yellowhead and also from Calgary-Buffalo – that by nature of the questions

were so detailed that really there's another means of dealing with that kind of an issue in the House, and it's called a motion for a return. Both hon. members are aware of that.

A request: Standing Order 40, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Point of Order Explanation of Speaker's Ruling

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order coming out of question period. Is that after the Standing Order 40 or before?

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not certain just what your point of order is. If it's with regard to the ruling earlier today, I'll be very interested to hear your points.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I would like, Mr. Speaker, to file with the Assembly three copies of a news release issued by the government last Friday stating that

the Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Amendment Act, 1993 . . . ends "double dipping," that is, the ability of an MLA to collect a pension while continuing to hold office.

I think just by way of a point of order that if the government can announce outside the Assembly that it's going to end double-dipping, then a member in the Assembly can ask when that takes effect.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. In this House on February 3 of this year, I believe it was, the Chair raised the caution with respect to the use of the word. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is also a member of Members' Services Committee, where the chairman, which happens to be myself, has consistently ruled that that phrase is out of order. The comment that was made outside the House by the government is within the government's purview. Unfortunately or fortunately, it's the Chair that makes the decisions in here.

Thank you.

Now on a Standing Order 40 request.

head: Motions under Standing Order 40

Edmonton Oilers

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the matter of urgency, tomorrow morning at 10, which is a matter of a few hours from now, the owner of the Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club, Mr. Peter Pocklington, will have a news conference. Now, I've learned that the subject of the news conference is an offer received by Mr. Pocklington from the city of Hamilton, owners of the Cops Coliseum, a very generous offer that if he will relocate the team, they will give a lease agreement for that facility which appears to be one that the Edmonton Northlands facility is not able to match.

Now, the significant fact about Mr. Pocklington is that he has many major business dealings with the government of Alberta, and at risk in these business dealings are substantial taxpayers' dollars. I believe that the government is bound to act. The Treasurer has indicated a willingness to move a certain distance in the direction of protecting the investment of Alberta taxpayers in the Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club. Specifically the Treasurer stated on Friday and again reiterated today in the Assembly that he would support calling loans from a line of credit in the amount of approximately \$42 million, which Mr. Pocklington owes to the Treasury Branches. There is also the matter of some \$60 million in loans which were advanced to Mr. Pocklington in respect of Gainers,

and litigation is coming out of that. The motion would further suggest to the government that they seek an injunction preventing removal of the Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club while that matter is unresolved, basically the philosophy being that Mr. Pocklington cannot consider moving his hockey club until he pays his bills in Alberta.

I believe that a motion by the Assembly would be timely, and it would strengthen the government's hand in dealing with this matter.

3:40

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. members, under Standing Order 40, as contrasted to Standing Order 30, the matter here is the member trying to make the case for "urgent and pressing necessity" for the matter to proceed. It has nothing to do with what the matter may or may not mean to members of the Assembly let alone to persons who happen to be watching this on TV or listening on the radio. So the request here is for unanimous consent for the matter to proceed so that it might be discussed.

Those members willing to give their consent to the matter to proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The request fails. [interjections] Order please, hon. members.

head: **Orders of the Day**

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

Bill 57

Electoral Divisions Amendment Act, 1993

[Adjourned debate April 23: Mr. Sigurdson]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday last when we were discussing Bill 57, I was talking about process. I was concerned that when the last special select committee of the Legislature reported to the Legislative Assembly its final proposed map for electoral boundaries, there was no public hearing process. Therein lies the major part of the fault. The public did not have the opportunity to come before the committee or before any Member of the Legislative Assembly to express any concern. That's a significant departure from what's taken place with earlier electoral boundaries commissions and committees. I know that when I worked as an executive assistant to the late Grant Notley back in 1983, the last process that the commission undertook prior to the Bill coming before the Legislative Assembly was to have public hearings throughout the province so that members of the public, political parties regardless of their stripe could come before the commission and speak to the commission members so that they could make certain representations either on behalf of their constituency association, on behalf of their community groups, or on behalf of their town, village, or city. That didn't happen this time.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I know that the government proposed that those individuals or community groups, constituency associations, political interests could contact their member of the Legislature so that the member of the Legislature could make representation inside the Legislative Assembly once we discussed Bill 55. I know that a number of members of the Legislature received either telephone calls or letters. I as the member of the Legislature for Edmonton-Belmont received some correspondence from people in my constituency. I believe it was the president of the Progressive Conservative Association for the constituency of Edmonton-Belmont who wrote me a letter. His concern, Mr. Speaker, at that time was the proposed name of the constituency. He had no problems with the boundaries even though the boundaries had been significantly changed. He had a concern about the proposed name of one of the constituencies in the northeast.

The Member for Taber-Warner will recall that the first proposed name for that constituency that came from Edmonton-Belmont was to be Edmonton-McClung. The president of the Progressive Conservative Association for Edmonton-Belmont was concerned about that. He said: there's no relationship there. He wrote the Member for Taber-Warner. He copied me. He phoned me. He probably even phoned the Member for Taber-Warner to say: well, why would you call this constituency Edmonton-McClung when there's no relationship there? You have a constituency proposed over in the west end of the city called Edmonton-Manning. Why wouldn't you call Edmonton-McClung, Edmonton-Manning? After all, the constituency of Edmonton-Belmont, which was proposed to be Edmonton-McClung, had wholly contained in it the Manning Freeway. That runs through it. The former Manning farm is still located in that constituency. So there is some relationship there. Wouldn't it make more sense for that constituency to be renamed from Edmonton-Belmont to Edmonton-Manning rather than Edmonton-McClung? The government agreed. The government submitted an amendment to Bill 55 so that there would be a name change inside Bill 55.

Now, interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, one night when I was heading out of the Legislature during the spring when we were in session debating Bill 55, I had a telephone call from the president of the Progressive Conservative Association for Edmonton-Belmont. He had another thought, and he didn't have time to communicate that thought in written correspondence to the Member for Taber-Warner as the chair of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. That other thought was: well, why would we even have the name Edmonton-Manning? After all, we have Ernie Manning, the former Premier of the province. He's still alive. We have his son leading the Reform Party, a national party in Canada. He's still out there doing his thing on behalf of the Reform Party of Canada. He's still out there, very, very active. So why would we even want to have the name Edmonton-Manning there at all? He suggested that perhaps it might be more appropriate that we have the name of one of the long-standing serving communities placed in there. We have Londonderry, the community that I reside in. We have Londonderry Mall. A number of people know northeast Edmonton by the Londonderry community. There's a possibility. Contained inside the constituency of what is now proposed to be Edmonton-Manning, we have a farming area with a very rich tradition. That community is called Horse Hill. In fact, the president of the Edmonton-Belmont Progressive Conservative Association suggested to me in that telephone call that what we ought to do is, rather than have Edmonton-Manning as a proposed name, change it to Edmonton-Horse Hill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I knew that the president of the PC Association there couldn't communicate that in written correspon-

dence to the Member for Taber-Warner. He asked me if I would make that representation in the Legislative Assembly. I said that if it were at all possible, I would undertake to do that. That's how we left that conversation. The unfortunate thing is that when we were debating Bill 55 on the night that we could have dealt with that amendment to change Edmonton-Belmont to Edmonton-Horse Hill – not changing any of the boundaries, the geographical configuration of the proposed constituency but just the name – I had to be away from the Legislature on constituency business. Because I was serving my constituents outside of this wonderful building, I didn't have the opportunity to be here and participate in the debate. Nobody else from the constituency was able to come before the Legislative Assembly to make that proposal.

Had we had public hearings throughout our province, those proposals could have come forward from, again, the individuals that have an interest in politics; those proposals could have come forward from community groups, towns, municipalities. It wouldn't just be with respect to the name of a proposed redrawn constituency. It could be to deal with communities that have certain communities of interest, a certain economic flow from one community to another. Those individuals, those folk, those representatives could have made representations to the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. They were not afforded that opportunity.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, we have a problem with the process, and that's what we're dealing with again today with respect to this proposed amendment. Had we gone through the process, I am convinced that we would have arrested the problem that was created by just ramming Bill 55 through the Legislature. The people of Muir Lake would have been aware that they had been excluded, that they were disenfranchised. They would have come out and said: "My goodness, we have a problem here. We've been excluded. Where do we fit into the process?"

It's interesting, you know, that the Member for Taber-Warner, again as chair of the special select committee – the first one, Mr. Speaker, the one that I had the opportunity to serve on – told us time and time again, the seven members that were on the committee, how when there were changes in I think it was the 1983 boundaries, people from a trailer park just outside of Lethbridge had been improperly put into a constituency that they didn't want to belong to, and they made representation to the Member for Taber-Warner about not being moved, about having the boundary redrawn around the trailer park so that they could be back in the constituency where they felt a little more comfortable. Representation was made not just to the Member for Taber-Warner – I'm sure that if I'm incorrect, he'll stand up and let me know – but also to the former special commission on electoral boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, that process wasn't allowed to occur this time. That very important process of public input was completely missed and missed intentionally. The government had an agenda. The government wanted to move on with its electoral agenda. We kept on hearing how it was necessary to get the boundaries into place so that we could have the mapping in place, so that we could have the returning officers appointed, so that we could have enumerators go out and enumerate in time for an election. The government had an agenda, and in order for them to meet the time lines of their agenda, what did they want to do? They wanted to skip over perhaps the most important process that's available to citizens of a democracy, and that is the process that allows citizens to make representation to elected officials or to the commissions that make certain determinations on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, as we try and fix a problem that's been created by a flaw in the process, I know that we still have left in this

government's mandate 11 months: 11 months to deal with the problems that have been created by the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries. There is no reason that this Legislative Assembly has to deal with this amendment. My goodness, we've got a matter before the courts right now where the town of Lac La Biche is trying to argue a certain . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. It's been ruled that comments on the matter before the courts are out of order in this debate, hon. member.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to discuss the specifics, but I just wanted to say that there is one position that could arrest this entire process, and that we can't determine. What we can determine in this Legislative Assembly in the 11 months left in the mandate of the government is to have a proper commission go out, hold the public hearings on where electoral boundaries should be drawn in the general scheme of things. Indeed, I'm sure that if those public hearings were to take place, knowing that there would come back to the Legislature a different proposal, I would submit that what would happen is that any group dissatisfied with the proposed boundaries or with the boundaries that have been announced through Bill 55 that was passed – any group dissatisfied with that would be able to go to that commission. I would speculate, sir, that even the Liberal candidate for St. Paul would probably withdraw the matter that's before the courts because he would rather make representation to the politicians that ultimately will pass the legislation. So it would be able to end the matter that's before the court that I'm not allowed to speak of.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, that's what I would encourage this Legislative Assembly to do: undertake to examine the process once again. It's not too late. It may be too late in the political agenda for this government to have a public hearing process and then come back and consider boundaries, but it's not too late in the mandate of this government to hold those public hearings. For goodness' sake, that's what we ought to allow. We are just but representatives of the people, and it's important to make sure that those representations are heard, that they're listened to, and they're acted upon. It's important for the people of the province of Alberta to be able to come before the Legislative Assembly. If we don't want to strike another committee, then at least allow representations to be made to the members of the Legislature so that we can debate it and understand fully the consequences of what certain boundaries will do to certain communities.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, I want to say that the process that we're going through with respect to Bill 57 is just a correction. It's a correction that will include thousands. I believe it's 2,100 people that will be able to go into one constituency or another. But it doesn't correct the process, and I think that's what we as members of the Legislature ought to be trying to do: correct the process that was flawed some number of months ago.

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

MR. EWASIUKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to rise this afternoon and make a few comments relative to Bill 57, the Electoral Divisions Amendment Act. Like many of the speakers before me, I too am concerned that we are using up time in this House to deal with this particular piece of legislation and the reason why we are doing that. Certainly there was an oversight when the Bill was introduced to us. Bill 55 was brought before us earlier this year, and an oversight occurred where we missed out on a large group of individuals to be placed within a particular

constituency. That's being corrected at the present time with this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, one wants to then think about why we are at this stage. I think many speakers have already said it. I think the process that was employed by the government was not adequately and properly followed, and it was indeed perhaps the agenda of the government that caused this problem. Now, we are all familiar with what transpired.

The process was in place, and in fact is there by statute, that's required for the government to follow and the time frames that are involved. Now, the government obviously was aware quite some time ago that before the next election took place, there had to be boundary adjustments, a review of the boundaries in the province of Alberta. Why is it that we took so much time or delayed activity and action to implement the process in order that we had this thing properly done in such a way that it not only would meet the needs of the government but also ensure that all citizens in the province of Alberta had an opportunity to participate and to add their thoughts and be consulted as to how they felt about the constituency in which they reside or had a thought that should have been brought before the committee that was reviewing the process?

4:00

Mr. Speaker, the process was in place. Certain things happened. There was a tour of the province and some hearings were held, but as a result nothing was resolved. The question was: why? It was because the legislation that directed this select committee prevented them from really doing the kind of job that they had envisioned and that needed to be done. As a result, they came forward with recommendations and three or four or five different reports, putting the whole issue in jeopardy and indeed the government in a dilemma as to what to do next. In light of the time frames that they were approaching, the electoral boundaries issue had to be resolved, and here we were. Time became of essence, yet in fact perhaps it didn't. As just mentioned by the previous speaker, there are still 11 months, in which time the government indeed could do the right thing and implement the process that is in place to carry out the things that need to be done to ensure that when the boundaries are changed in this province of Alberta, they are done as a result of proper consultation and dialogue with the citizens of the province of Alberta. However, the government has chosen not to do that, and we are here today debating Bill 57 to make a number of amendments that were an oversight when Bill 55 was brought before us earlier.

Mr. Speaker, the haste in which this was brought into the House and the way the process followed really made it very difficult, obviously, for the committee to function adequately and properly. More importantly, the committee was made up of government members, members who very clearly were not familiar with, for example, the city of Edmonton and more specifically the constituency of Edmonton-Beverly and other northeast parts of the city. They proceeded to draw boundaries, presumably on community interests, on community league structure, and so on, but again they obviously were not aware of what was really happening and how they functioned in that part of Edmonton, because the boundaries that they initially developed were certainly not in line with the kind of mandate that they presumably had. I would suspect that is because there was no input into the committee.

Now, the argument, of course, is: why didn't you get involved in the input? I think other members of our caucus have stated on a number of occasions that certainly the process that was employed was not proper and on principle we felt – and I believe that – that MLAs should not be determining their own boundaries.

As a result, we didn't participate in these hearings. However, when Bill 55 came before us, it became very clear that the committee had really not understood the structure, the boundaries, the community interests in northeast Edmonton and Edmonton-Beverly's particularly, and had drawn up lines that really threw the community into confusion and in fact into anger when they saw what was being proposed. Fortunately they did put their energies into gear and quickly through the community league structures, the area council structures that exist in that part of the city were able to come and develop what they thought might be some way of salvaging what was already presented to them. The Member for Edmonton-Highlands and I together met with them to see what could be done and how they could participate and help to resolve a mess that was cast upon us. I have to commend the Member for Taber-Warner for at least giving us the opportunity to come back to the committee as a result of our meeting with the community leagues and area councils in the area and to bring forward amendments. As I say, that somehow rescued what appeared to be a rather unfortunate kind of boundaries that we were put into.

This is the area I really want to stress: there is a structure, certainly at least in the city of Edmonton, that is very capable of reacting very quickly to circumstances and situations. Had they been given the opportunity by the government committee to at least participate in even a limited way in the discussions, I'm sure that they'd have alleviated some of the problems the committee obviously incurred, as displayed by their ignorance and lack of knowledge of what exists in northeast Edmonton.

So, Mr. Speaker, it then really brings to light the fact that MLAs should not be establishing their own boundaries in the province of Alberta. On principle I think it's improper. I think there are accusations, whether wrongly or rightly, of gerrymandering of the boundaries. I'm not going to speak to that, but certainly there are those who suggest that that in fact has happened. The case before the courts is also a case where there's a suggestion that there's something improper about the way these boundaries were drawn up.

So I guess we're going to have to approve this Bill; I suppose there's nothing else we can do. I hope that this government has learned some lesson. I know the Premier and other members of the government continually like to make reference that they're in consultation, that they're discussing with community groups, with individuals, with companies, whoever, about things that need to be done and how they should be done. I question in fact how well that's being done and how much emphasis is placed on consultation by this government, because here was an opportunity for the committee to involve the citizens of this province of Alberta in helping the committee to determine really what is community interest. What represents community interest? What kind of structure in the community would reflect a good constituency? Many of those things obviously were overlooked, weren't considered, and as a result the drawing of the boundaries that was developed just simply did not make sense. As a result, we have this amendment.

Even the changes, the amendments that were proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands and myself that were accepted by the government have not really rectified the problem. They were very quick cosmetic changes that needed to be done to at least have some semblance of organization within the constituencies in the northeast part, but the people are still not happy campers as a result of some of the changes that have occurred.

The other thing that really became important to us and to the residents in Edmonton-Beverly particularly, Mr. Speaker, was the complete deletion of the name of "Beverly." Again this suggests to me the total lack of knowledge of the members on the commit-

tee to understand what Edmonton-Beverly is and was and continues to be. It's a name that has been part of that community since the early 1900s. I believe the town of Beverly was first struck in about 1903. Many of the people that came to that area were miners, and because there was a fair amount of coal in the area, Beverly was struck and the community grew.

4:10

Many of the residents that are still living in Edmonton-Beverly are descendants of those early pioneers that came to that part of Edmonton, to the east side of the city. There are the daughters and sons, the grandsons and granddaughters of some of the original people who lived there, who identify themselves as being from Beverly. They are not from Edmonton; they're not from anywhere else. They are from Beverly. I think that's very significant. Yet the committee, for reasons unknown, chose to simply entirely delete the reference to Beverly in that part of the city, not recognizing this well-established community.

Fortunately, again I'm pleased that when we suggested these deficiencies in their proposal, the committee agreed to in fact include Beverly in the name of the constituency. In fact, we gained one in that we now have Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont; we also have Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly. So Beverly's recognized in two different constituencies in the northeast, and we're certainly pleased about that. That only happened because the community league, the individuals who live in the area, the area council people had an opportunity to discuss and participate and make suggestions. That's how these changes were made. That's consultation, Mr. Speaker. That's the way I would have hoped this committee would have operated. The process they'd have implemented would have, I'm sure, resulted in much happier people in the province of Alberta and certainly a much happier group in Edmonton-Beverly had they been able to participate in the discussions in the earlier stage. It would have avoided the panic decisions that had to be made at the eleventh hour to amend the original Bill 55.

So, as I said earlier, I think we're going to of course have to adopt this Bill, but I think we're doing it under some degree of duress. I think the whole process was improper. Hopefully we have learned a lesson from it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MAIN: Oh, I'm sorry.

MS MJOLSNESS: You have to be quicker on your feet than that.

Mr. Speaker, I find it quite unbelievable that we're back in this Legislature debating electoral boundaries once again. This time, mind you, the Bill has a different number, but we're back here debating this Bill after the government chose to bring in closure not too many weeks ago when we were in the Legislature prior to this sitting. However, some people have said that we might not be in here at all if it weren't for this flaw, this major omission that had taken place, with one of the communities left out of the original Bill.

I would say, though, that this whole process has been flawed since the beginning. I think that this is one of the reasons why we're back here today debating this particular Bill 57. This government has refused to give Albertans an opportunity to have input into the process. They chose a partisan route, one where

Albertans were excluded from the whole process. They're saying it was wrong, Mr. Speaker. As I recall, four Conservative MLAs got together behind closed doors and in their wisdom drew up the electoral boundaries that are currently in legislation. There was no consultation on those particular boundaries. There was no explanation given to MLAs, to Albertans as to how and why they chose those particular boundaries. We don't know. We do know, though, that it was a very partisan group. They were drawing up boundaries under legislation that was far too restrictive. Again I say that the process along with the legislation has been flawed since the very beginning.

Now, if that's not offensive enough – that they got together to do it in this way, to proceed this way – once we were in the Legislature, they brought in closure so that we couldn't properly debate the proposals that were being made on Bill 55, as I recall, at that time. They chose to just ram through the legislation at the same time that they were telling Albertans to contact their MLAs if they had concerns about the proposed boundaries. Albertans wanted some input; they had concerns. Yet at the same time the government was telling Albertans to contact their MLAs, the government was busy in the Legislature bringing in closure so that MLAs could not give sufficient debate that should have occurred.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that there were concerns about these boundaries. I had people asking me: why were the boundaries drawn up the way they were? I couldn't answer that because I was given no explanation as to why the committee chose to exclude some areas from certain constituencies and include others and so on. I know that in my riding of Edmonton-Calder, south of 137th Avenue is an area that is made up predominantly of senior citizens, of elderly people who don't necessarily have access to other areas of the city. Now this particular area, and it's quite a significant area, has become part of a riding that takes in all the way to the west end of Edmonton.

Something else that is very disturbing, Mr. Speaker, is that this particular area is divided by a major highway, the Yellowhead Trail, as well as the CN tracks. So not only is it a distance to drive, but it's also isolated by those landmarks. I know that the MLA that takes over in the new riding of Edmonton-Mayfield will do his best – I'm assuming right now that it will be the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway – to represent those elderly people in that area and the many low-income families as well. Just speaking geographically, I think it's going to be a very difficult thing to do. Now, those seniors are asking me: why were the boundaries drawn up the way they were? The president of the Calder Seniors Drop-In Society wrote the Premier, came in to see me. They're very concerned. I do not know if the Premier responded to his letter in an explanation as to why they chose to draw up the boundaries in the way that they did. One thing is for sure: those seniors and those people in that area were not given input into this process or an explanation as to why the final outcome was the way that it was.

My colleague from Edmonton-Belmont was talking about the name change in his riding. Again, I have people saying to me: why is it now called Edmonton-Roper? I'm not saying that I don't appreciate having a riding that was named after a CCFer to run in the next provincial election, unlike the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, who is of course running in the constituency of Edmonton-Manning. But people in Castle Downs say to me: why would they choose a name like "Roper" when the whole area of Castle Downs – each community league and almost every school – is named after a castle and has a history in mascots and so on that relate to a castle? I can't answer these questions, Mr. Speaker, because we were given no explanation as to why certain decisions were made the way that they were. If we'd had proper

debate in this Legislature when we were in the Legislature in February, maybe some of these issues could have come up. Maybe they could have been answered. The government chose to bring in closure, which they have done again today. They're getting very good at this. It's becoming a habit that they want to close down debate. They don't want free and open debate. [interjection] Now, one of the members opposite is groaning. I'm not sure why, but I haven't heard him stand up and defend this process or defend these current boundaries in the legislation. I'm looking forward to the minister doing that. I'd rather hear him speak than groan, although, I don't know, not much difference. Anyway, I think it's just so ironic that the government was in such a hurry in February to pass this legislation that they made some major mistakes. Now we're back, hoping that they'll get it right this time.

4:20

I realize that we're considering several amendments – 11, I believe – in this particular Bill, and one very significant amendment, one that now includes Muir Lake, which is an area of about 1,700 people, I believe. Certainly they deserve to be part of the amendments, as the government left them out in the prior legislation. I think the government should be very embarrassed by what has taken place. How they could overlook such a large area of population, I don't know. They should be embarrassed not only of the sloppy work that has been done and now is being continued, the fact that we have 11 amendments that we're dealing with, but I think they should be embarrassed of the whole process since the beginning when we first began to look at changing the boundaries.

The government, Mr. Speaker, was in such a hurry. I don't know why. Previous speakers have talked about that they have quite a few months left in their mandate. They don't have to rush through things in the way that they do. We don't even know at this time if this legislation will be constitutional based on overrepresentation or underrepresentation that may be present in the final boundaries. I don't know what the hurry is, but again we have closure brought in today. I'm feeling like the Member for Edmonton-Beverly: we don't have much choice. Of course we have to include the people of Muir Lake and deal with these 11 amendments. I think that again we have to point out that the process has been wrong, and it's coming back to haunt the government and will continue to haunt the government as long as they operate in this fashion.

Thank you.

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

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WEISS: Wow. Fast, fleeting.

MR. MAIN: Because of the admonition of the opposition to be quicker on my feet, I leapt to my feet the moment the Member for Edmonton-Calder finished her persuasive address. I think it's important that members from the government side get involved in this debate not necessarily to defend the Bill but to put this entire exercise in perspective.

To review the facts of the case respecting boundaries, we don't need to go through a long harangue today. What we can do is invite members of the Legislature and members of the public to review reams of *Hansard* dissertations from February 12 backwards during the course of the session, during which virtually every member of the opposition spoke more than once or twice.

The number of speeches I most vividly recall is something in the order of 60 to 70 speeches made on Bill 55, the first piece of the boundaries legislation. This particular Bill that we're debating today is designed to provide a few corrections. I'll talk about that in a minute, but I do want to review the whole boundaries issue and put it in perspective for my remarks today.

Each couple of elections a process of boundary redistribution must take place; it is required under law. We cannot operate elections on the boundaries that were in place 10, 15, 30, 60, 80, 90, 100 years ago. That doesn't make any sense. So obviously the process of doing a boundaries redistribution or redistricting must take place on a regular basis. Inevitably, when it comes around on the political clock, it engenders some level of debate. Now, my experience is going through this once, and the level of debate carried on in the constituency was negligible. There were a few people who expressed some interest in the process, and – I'll use the word “outrageous” because that was a word that was used to me – when some proposals outrageously suggested there be a combination of rural and urban seats, the famous ‘rurban’ map submitted I think by the first commission that looked at this, there was some chatter but not a great deal, just some chatter: “Oh, that's ridiculous. We don't want that; we don't like it. They ought to fix that” – they being some ethereal, ghost-like “they” out there that looks after these kinds of things.

Well, deciding who the “they” is is a process that's decided in this room by the Legislature. It was determined that it would be, first, an all-party committee of MLAs that would go around and get some of the sense of how this should be done. Then an independent commission headed by a judge and made up by appointees of each of the political parties would be involved, and they went out and went through this entire exercise and came to the conclusion that it was not doable for a variety of reasons. Then we had another set of hearings and another set of maps. It went on and on and on. Eventually we wound up with a situation that was ridiculous, I suppose, with a five-member commission submitting, in essence, five different suggestions, none of which was acceptable to anyone, certainly not the other members of the commission much less anybody in this Chamber or, I guess, by extension, any Albertan.

So the question then was: what do you do? Now, I made this point when we were debating Bill 55. The thing that had to be done was that the decision had to be made, and something had to be done. We couldn't go around this entire mulberry bush again; we had to move. The government suggested that a committee of all-party MLAs would be struck: four Conservatives, a couple of New Democrats, and a Liberal. This would provide us with seven MLAs with a broad range of geographic representation, gender representation, and political affiliation representation. Well, fine. It's not ideal, but given the electoral clock and the clock of the mandate of the government ticking inexorably towards its end, it needed to be done. Well, the government, of course, ponied up its four members, and the two opposition caucuses decided that they didn't want to touch this because it was somehow evil for MLAs to be involved in the process of deciding their own boundaries. Yet, ultimately, that's what's going to happen when the legislation in whatever form, whatever recommendation, comes here and MLAs do in fact decide their own boundaries, just as they do decide their own remuneration, and they do decide their own pensions. This is the highest decision-making body in the province, and these big decisions do come here.

Of course, this decision about electoral maps did come here, and the New Democrats despite their distaste for this whole business of MLAs deciding their own boundaries were quick to make several suggestions for constituency names, constituency boundary

reallocations. One member submitted an entire map for the entire north half of Edmonton. Another MLA wanted to do a deal with another MLA in our caucus to adjust boundaries that would make it more comfortable and easy for him to get renominated. We've already heard a speech today from another member describing how he was pushing for name changes. Those things all happened because we were all together not trying to do some nefarious political deed but trying to get an electoral map drawn that made sense for Albertans, was constitutionally acceptable – Charter-proof, if you like – and one that we could put in place, get candidates nominated, and get on with the process of having a democratic election. That was the plan.

Now, it became rapidly evident that that was not the objective of the opposition parties. Rather, the objective of the opposition party was to hammer away and belabour and crash and push and push and push and push every day, each member standing in his or her place, making the same speech over and over again about how this was behind closed doors, and there was no consultation, and we never had a chance to do this, and oh, you guys are all evil, and this is a terrible process, and it's not democracy, and so forth. We had every member over there standing up saying essentially that. Obviously this was not any kind of a process that was moving towards resolution; it was political posturing and filling up *Hansard*. So the government introduced a closure motion to get this thing stopped and to get on with what we originally set out to do, which was to get the decision made.

4:30

Now, when the Liberals found out that there are rules in the House that work to their advantage, although they attempt to get around them or ignore them, this time they found out it was possible. On some subamendment to some subagreement clause fill-in thing, they started their process of standing up in their places and speaking ad nauseam on these types of issues, with the result that the time for dealing with amendments that had been brought forward by the New Democrats and by the government caucus in a long list shrank and shrank. The clock was ticking. Everybody knew that there was a certain amount of time on the clock, that the debate was going to end and that there were still things to be dealt with, but the Grit opposition kept at it and spoke and spoke and spoke.

One of the amendments that was on that list dealt with the community of Muir Lake, and the chief reason we're here today dealing with Bill 57 is to rectify that wrong. I remember it vividly. I was in here the night it happened. There was a list of amendments that we were dealing with. I remember it because for part of the time in the committee I was sitting in the Chair watching the list of amendments and trying to make sure that everybody got their chance to speak, that we got this thing all done. We got to the conclusion, got the thing through committee. Then we got to third reading, got the thing done, and got on with the process. I remember it vividly.

I also remember that there were a couple of amendments, because there was some discussion between MLAs whether the Muir Lake community should be in this constituency or that constituency. The MLA for the area was not able to be in attendance for the debate and asked that it be set aside. We'd come back the next day, and it was going to be put in. Well, we never did get to come back the next time, because the debate – and I'm using that term in its loosest possible reference – the chatter carried on and swept that thing right off the table along with a couple of other amendments. One that I've alluded to in my remarks was from the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, who had an amendment he'd brought forward, a member of the

New Democrat caucus involved in writing and drawing his own boundaries. Another member of our own caucus, the government caucus, had a question that had been brought forward regarding his constituency. That was not dealt with. There was a variety of other little odds and ends that we now have been able to sweep into this, I guess, tidy-up, housekeeping kind of Bill. That's why we're here today: to get this done.

Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned about what I'm seeing now, and that's why I'm on my feet: to make representation to the House, to ask that we can deal with this matter. We're going to be able to fight the political fight on this issue very soon, in my guess. I don't know. I mean, you heard the Premier today say that he didn't know when the election will be. I certainly don't know, but I'm guessing it's going to be relatively soon. We'll all be able to go out, those of us who are running again, and have the political debate about whether this is a good thing or a bad thing, a bad line or a good line, an evil government or a good government, or if these guys are stupid or we're stupid. We can do all of that out there on the election campaign trail, but we're here to try to make some kind of decision. My request is that we do that, that we deal with this issue, get through second reading, get into committee, get through committee, get to third reading, and get the thing passed, get the map done. Let's get on with it. Mr. Speaker, that's why I was elected, and that's why the other 82 members of the Legislature were elected: to get on with the job of doing things. I'm asking that we now agree to the motion for second reading of Bill 57, that we all say aye and move on.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to try to answer what I think is the objection the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen just brought forward, which is that in and of itself this is a necessary amendment to the boundaries legislation that was introduced earlier. We do have to pass it so that every citizen in the province of Alberta can vote and none are left out. I think from the point of view of many of us on this side of the House it's important to restate, whenever we have the opportunity, our concerns about the boundaries legislation that was introduced previously. It's critical because from our perspective there is an unfairness that was built into that boundaries legislation. The issue is going to be dealt with by the courts at some point in the future. I'm quite sure the courts are going to review the record of everything that's said in this Assembly, so it's incumbent on those of us who have this concern about the inequities which are built into that existing boundaries legislation that we go on record and express our concerns with the existing legislation, even if it's to repeat what we've previously said.

I would like to comment on this, again essentially from a Calgary perspective. When you look at the way the boundaries were drawn, Mr. Speaker, Calgary came out with 20 seats. If you did this strictly on the basis of equitable representation – that is, one person, one vote – Calgary would have had 23 seats. Even in stating that, it looks like Calgary has three fewer seats than it should have on average, but that also means that some area of the province has three more seats than it would be entitled to on the strict basis of equity of representation, which means that the discrepancy is magnified. It's twofold. There's a discrepancy of actually six votes in terms of voting power. So Calgary as a city is significantly shortchanged in the way in which these boundaries were drawn.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that it has a particular impact on the part of the city that I represent. I represent at the moment the

constituency called Calgary-Forest Lawn. It's going to disappear, and so is the constituency immediately to the south of the one that I represent, Calgary-Millican. The northern half of the old Calgary-Millican and the southern half of Calgary-Forest Lawn, which I currently represent, are going to be put together into a new constituency called Calgary-East.

I think any fair-minded observer looking at what happened in the '89 election in Calgary would recognize that for all intents and purposes, other things being equal, our party effectively has lost at least one seat because of redistribution. In the last election not only did we hold Calgary-Mountain View, but we held Calgary-Forest Lawn, and in the riding of Calgary-Millican we came within 125 or so votes of winning. In spite of the fact that Calgary got two additional seats, redistribution in effect meant a collapse in two of the three seats that I just referred to: Calgary-Millican, Calgary-Forest Lawn, and Calgary-Mountain View. Approximately a third of Calgary-Forest Lawn went into the new riding, the new configuration of Calgary-Mountain View. A little bit of Calgary-Forest Lawn went up into Calgary-Montrose, and Calgary-East picks up half of Calgary-Forest Lawn and half of Calgary-East. The other part of Calgary-Millican went essentially into Calgary-Egmont. Some parts of it also went into the new configuration of Calgary-Buffalo. So from my party's perspective there was an unfairness in terms of the way these boundaries were drawn.

I had my researchers do a bit of analysis of just how other governments might benefit from this redrawn map, particularly in the Calgary case. It's pretty clear when you look at the evidence, that on the basis of the 1989 results, with the existing boundaries for Calgary-Elbow, for example, the Progressive Conservative Party would have got 4,505 votes. If that election in '89 were fought on the new boundaries, the Progressive Conservative candidate would have received 6,696 votes, which means, in effect, that the ability of the Conservative Party to elect a candidate in the new riding of Calgary-Elbow has been considerably enhanced.

The same analysis, by the way, Mr. Speaker, would hold true for Calgary-Foothills as well. There's a net benefit to the Progressive Conservative Party in terms of the vote that it would get if the election held in 1989 was on the basis of the new boundaries that we enacted earlier this year. The Liberal vote in that riding would have declined from over 4,800 votes to 3,800, and the New Democratic Party vote in the riding of Calgary-Foothills would have declined from 4,133 to 2,573, a net loss of 1,500 votes. So there's obviously been a gerrymandering that has taken place in the drawing of these boundaries.

Why is it important that we have equity in terms of representation between the two largest urban areas of the province, Calgary and Edmonton, and the rest of the province? I think that's a very critical question to address, Mr. Speaker. I think that if you look at what the government has been doing over the last number of years, from a political perspective its major activity has been to shore up what one might call its rural electoral base. I think its efforts to do that have cost this province enormously. If we're looking at a net provincial debt of \$20 billion – and we can argue that figure. It might be larger if you take into account unfunded pension liability, but certainly the Auditor General released a figure in his latest report of approximately \$17 billion worth of debt, and that's not counting the debt during this fiscal year we're currently in that will end on April 31. Now, that of course doesn't take into account the assets of the heritage savings trust fund, and I think that's what a member of the government benches is signaling to me. So if you subtract from that the value of the heritage savings trust fund, which is debatable in terms of its

value, maybe the net deficit position of the government isn't quite as bad as I've suggested by setting it at \$20 billion, but certainly it'd be close to the \$10 billion mark overall.

4:40

First of all, our debt isn't bad in relationship to the total assets of the province. That's not where the real problem lies in my view. The real problem lies in the annual deficits that we have been running. Why have we been running those deficits? I think we just have to look at the record of government spending. I think that if you look at the record of government spending and the loan guarantees and the things that have really cost us money, especially since 1986 when I was first elected, you can see that a disproportionate amount of our resources has been directed to the rural areas of the province in some significant ways. MagCan, which was raised in question period, is a good example of that. Why would we put a \$125 million magnesium operation into High River? Why would we duplicate a malt barley operation in Calgary that's running very successfully? Why would we put that into the town of Alix, Mr. Speaker? Why would we want to pave every single highway in the province of Alberta?

AN HON. MEMBER: Relevancy here?

MR. PASHAK: Well, I think there is relevancy, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that the point I'm trying to make is that the way in which this electoral map was drawn is reflected in the kind of economic priorities the government has.

And why did we build a whole bunch of unnecessary hospitals throughout rural Alberta? [interjections] You can quote that wherever you like. It's a fact, and I think people recognize that we have more active treatment beds in this province than we can utilize. In many of the small towns where we built these hospitals, over half of these beds are closed in some hospitals. There's one up in Swan Hills, as I understand it, that doesn't have any patients at all. You can go on and on; there are all kinds of examples of this. You could probably even argue that we've built hospital facilities in the cities that weren't necessary in terms of the number of active treatment beds that are actually needed.

AN HON. MEMBER: In Calgary?

MR. PASHAK: Even in Calgary that's the case, Mr. Speaker. I don't hesitate to go on record. I think all Calgarians understand that. There's certainly a need for long-term patient care facilities throughout Alberta in small towns, and every member of the Legislature recognizes that those kinds of beds cost an awful lot less than active treatment beds.

The point that I'm trying to make here is that in order to maintain its rural base, this government has spent an awful lot of money in rural Alberta trying to hold on to a vote there. If the votes in this province were distributed fairly in terms of numbers between urban areas and rural areas, there wouldn't be the same compulsion by the government to waste money through projects that really aren't needed. Everyone recognizes that everybody in rural Alberta should have the same access to adequate health care that everyone in the cities does, but the way the government has gone about it has been wasteful and inefficient. There are much better solutions to these problems.

Now, the second major issue with respect to the electoral issues that are before us has to do with how we can arrive at true equity between people who live in rural or underdeveloped or remote parts of the province of Alberta and those people who live in the cities. I have to agree that in terms of representing an urban

riding such as the one I do in Calgary, I could walk from one end of my riding to the other probably in about an hour. The population is quite compact; it's quite dense. My office is centrally located. If anybody wants to come into the office, they don't have a problem in getting there. I handled over 400 calls last year just on social services cases.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a quiet office.

MR. PASHAK: Well, maybe other people handle more. That's just in terms of social services cases alone and handling social services appeals.

Now, the whole notion of a riding, of course, came from the distant era in which riding boundaries were established by the distance that one rider could ride in a 24-hour period. We've gone a long way past that older technology that was based on being able to ride a horse. We now have new inventions. The first one is a telephone, and we've had fax machines, which are really a primitive form of communication largely supplanted by E mail, which is available to all of our members in their offices. We've got satellite dishes, and through that we've got the possibility of face-to-face communications using telecommunication. There's no reason why a member, no matter where he's actually located in this province, couldn't reach out and communicate with any citizen no matter where he or she lives in the province.

I'm not suggesting that that's the ideal way to do it. I mean, there are other things that we could do to allow people who live in remote areas of this province to have access to their member. For rural members I think it would make eminent sense to grant rural members a greater constituency allowance budget so that they could set up maybe more than one office in their constituencies and staff those offices so people would feel they did have closer access, maybe not directly but certainly at least indirectly, to the member who represents them.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to raise one other point that's in line with this. I think that if we're looking at this province and what's in its best interests, it's really important that urban members have the voice in this Assembly to which they're entitled by reason of their numbers. At one time the economy of this province was based largely on primary production: grain production, mineral extraction from coal, harvesting of trees, certainly oil and gas production. But if you read the modern or contemporary economists, it's becoming more and more clear that if we're to have any kind of reasonable economy and any kind of reasonable future for the young people in this province, we're going to have to increase the skill level and the knowledge level of all citizens of the province, particularly those of our young people. We're obviously into a much more competitive world, and any economist you look at says that the key to survival in this highly competitive jungle is to increase the skill level and the knowledge base of your work force, which means that we really have to think about the role that cities play in this.

It's in the cities where you have the greatest opportunity to educate your citizens. It's in the cities where you have the concentrations of people that allow you to process your primary production. It's in the cities where you have the greatest opportunity, in a sense, to explore ideas and to engage in art. You have a sufficient population base that allows you to do these things, to move ahead, to realize that it's the production of knowledge and how it's used that is important. It's in the cities, and it's only in the cities where you have these population concentrations where you can really engage successfully in the processing of goods and raw materials. This is where the wealth and the strength of the

province of Alberta is going to be in the future, if we can recognize that, and all Albertans will benefit.

I'm not just saying that all the resources should be concentrated in the cities. What I'm really arguing here, Mr. Speaker, is that it's in the cities where you're going to get the strength and vibrancy that's going to make a stronger Alberta possible. We can't have that as long as we have the kind of distortion in electoral representation that we currently have at this point in time, because we have so many backbenchers in there who come from rural parts of the province that decisions are made that go against cities. It was insane to promise that we'd pave all the roads in this province, for example. It's insane to have as many colleges scattered throughout the province as we do. It's insane to do all of these things. If we're going to get our economic house in order, we have to recognize where our strengths are.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I'd just like to say that if we really want a strong, vibrant province, a province which we really can be proud of, a province that's going to work for all of us, we have to begin to do that by correcting all of the injustices that exist in the current electoral boundaries legislation.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

4:50

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few comments after some of the things said by the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn about the insane things that happened in rural Alberta, such as schools, colleges, paved roads. I wonder if even his back alley behind his house in Calgary is paved.

AN HON. MEMBER: His front street is.

MR. HYLAND: Who pays for it?

AN HON. MEMBER: He does.

MR. HYLAND: What percentage of the street grants in the cities are . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. members. I'm back.
Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, if we followed true the comments made by the last member and moved everything to the cities, as if wonderful and happy and interesting things happened only in the cities of this province – it's attitudes like that which were turned around 20 years ago in this province that allowed the rural part of the province at least to grow partially too. The member could stick around. He might find out something.

Mr. Speaker, we have things happening all over this province. If we talk about representation as it relates to the Bill in front of us and the evenness and the equality or inequality of that representation, I believe if we go back and look at the findings from the Supreme Court on the redistribution, we will see that you make some allowances for distance. You make some allowances for many things.

We heard one of the other members in the Legislature this afternoon make comments related to a boundary in their constituency, a railroad track or a road; I forget which it was.

AN HON. MEMBER: Both.

MR. HYLAND: Both. Okay. If that's all I had dividing off my constituency, with the size of the constituency, I would be happy. Five minutes, 10 minutes to go around a railroad track or a road. Mr. Speaker, it can take me 20 minutes to go between two places, two homes. I mean, let's be reasonable in some of our arguments.

MS MJOLSNESS: I'm not talking about the MLA travel.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Thank you, hon. member. This is not back and forth.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, the representation in this province is something that I've taken seriously for 18 years plus. I've gone through at least three redistributions. In one redistribution I had Redcliff added to my constituency. In another one I had some taken away that went to Taber-Warner. For members to say that because in those instances we had commissions, that people made representations to commissions – the commissions didn't take all their advice. I know of two instances. In one, some went to Taber-Warner. Under that commission they moved the line farther than the people asked. They moved the line almost twice as far as the people asked and changed some of the direction of where people go for business. North of Redcliff, people asked to be added to Cypress-Redcliff. I believe there were 120 people or something; 55 of them signed a petition. The commission chose to ignore it and chose to leave the borders where they are. So just because a commission is there, that doesn't mean to say it's all nice and rosy.

We heard other comments that we have too many rural members, because we're trying to pave all the roads in rural Alberta. Where is the member from? I mean, where's he been the last however many years he's been in this Legislature? It's obvious that he has concentrated on the city, because he hasn't bothered to tour rural Alberta to find out where the paved roads are. There are a lot, including myself, who wonder where the paved roads are.

AN HON. MEMBER: Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Some say Cypress-Redcliff. If memory serves me right, according to the secondary road program, Cypress-Redcliff is something like 15 to 18 percent upgraded or paved – and I said upgraded – so we can haul produce out. Fifteen to 18 percent completed, not 90 percent completed. Too, to say that just because we change the representation in this Legislature and get lots of people in the cities, it's the only place that can do manufacturing – if the hon. member wants to take time, I'll take him to my constituency and show him a couple of plants that are transporting product from Bow Island, Alberta, to all parts of the world. And he says it can only happen in the city? Mr. Speaker, I ask where he's been for the last number of years. You know, it's attitudes such as this, where city thinks they're better than rural, that I spent 18 years trying to change. I think the only place that exists is in that party and that member's mind. That's why we need representation in this Assembly to counteract very thoughts like that.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak on the principle of Bill 57 too, the Electoral Divisions Amendment Act. I would like to respond to a couple of the speakers that went before me, particularly to the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen,

who is attempting to blame the opposition for indeed the need for us to be here to make corrections to the Bill that was passed last January. I would just simply say to that member that he should think on who brought in closure, who rushed the process, and who shut out Albertans. It wasn't the opposition. We were trying to bring their voices into this Legislature.

To the last speaker. I was recently speaking to a constituent from rural Alberta, not a constituent of mine but an elector who lives in rural Alberta, who certainly would echo some of the same kinds of sentiments that were articulated by the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, saying that a lot of what has gone on in rural Alberta has been for show and that inside those stunning buildings is a lack of utility and a lack of concern for the very humanness of the people who will be using those buildings. I can tell you about a lot of roads that have been paved around Stettler, seeing as I go to visit there periodically. I think all the secondary roads have been paved there.

Anyway, back to this Bill. We have a Bill before us to correct the errors and omissions in the Electoral Divisions Amendment Act of January of this year. This Bill is necessary because of the shoddy and hasty process which produced the January Act, an Act that disenfranchised the people of Muir Lake, 1,400 to 2,000 people. One has to say, "Isn't that quite shocking?" One has to wonder about this government and its legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Bills passed in this House have an impact on how people in this province will live their lives, on their rights, their responsibilities, on how they will share in the benefits and liabilities of living in society. The process and the results of the process of redistribution and redrawing the boundaries demonstrate how people can be harmed by rushed and unthinking action and legislation. Part of the problem arises out of the legislation to draw the boundaries under which the independent commission served. The independent commission brought in four or five reports in order to reconcile the guidelines in the legislation and the Supreme Court ruling of Justice McLachlin, who provided for some allowance for geographical considerations but not the gross discrepancies that we see in the legislation that was brought before this House. Thus, instead of amending or bringing in new legislation after the independent commission discovered that they could not collectively and in a consensus way reconcile those two principles, the government chose to establish a committee of politicians. I would say talk about conflict of interest. That's why the opposition parties opted out of that process. They saw it as totally flawed, that politicians do not draw political boundaries.

5:00

Then the committee of government members met, drew the boundaries, and brought the boundary proposal to this Legislature: no public hearings, no opportunity for Albertans to voice their concerns about the proposals. We've heard today and we've heard before that there were concerns about boundaries and also about the names of constituencies. When people had concerns, they were told to contact their MLA, whoever that was as the boundary shifted. There was no guarantee or certainty of how the process would work, because you cannot just move this boundary and not that one, or you shouldn't do that, but of course that's what did happen. That's why we're here, because we moved this boundary but not this one.

Boundary drawing, believe it or not, carries thoughtful analysis, considerations of communities of interest and numbers, and I think of the constituency of Edmonton-Strathcona. Well, they just failed to take into consideration the university population that is there most of the time. In the constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore they just failed to take into account that in the next 10 years this

constituency will probably have about 10,000 more voters than it has now. Boundary drawing also must take into account natural and constructed boundaries, but there was no opportunity for citizens who felt that these issues had not been properly or adequately considered to bring their concerns forward.

Individual MLAs, of course, could sponsor amendments for change on behalf of their constituents, but would those amendments be worked into a map? That was the question. Who would work it all out? If in fact they were worked into a map, would they be passed in the Assembly? There was no guarantee of that. Indeed, I sat in this very Legislature through several impassioned speeches on lobbying for such changes, and I watched them defeated. So where was the voice of the people? Where were the guarantees that errors, omissions, oversights would be corrected? They were not there, and indeed that did not occur. Indeed, one community is now in the courts to correct what they view as a grossly unfair and undemocratic boundary decision that they believe will work against their interests.

So instead of pushing through amendments to correct obvious errors, this government should allow the many Albertans who still feel that their democratic rights have been violated to have an opportunity to have their voices heard in a meaningful way that will bring about the changes that will respect their needs and their interests, not the interests of this government. Albertans need to have a process that will ensure that the changes that would serve the public good will be made.

We still have time to do this, Mr. Speaker. We have 10 months left in this mandate. The government could hold public hearings and consult with Albertans, but I think they will not. So we have to say: so much for open government. We must indeed pass this legislation, correct gross errors which have disenfranchised people, but this government could have and should have done better.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought for a moment there, near the end of his speech, that the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff might announce that he was going to run again after all. He still, I gathered from his remarks, felt that he had a mission to continue to try and change attitudes. Well, he's given many years of good service, and his voice and counsel will be missed.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Parkallen seemed to think the opposition had dumped mercilessly on this legislation when it was introduced and passed earlier in the year, and he's quite right. We severely criticized it. I don't know that anyone would have labeled it a nefarious deed, but we certainly said in no unmistakable terms – nobody could misinterpret what we were saying – that the process of arriving at the legislation was absolutely wrongheaded and that the government had made some very, very serious errors in bringing forward the legislation that they brought forward. He also seemed to think that the opposition by being opposed to this legislation had in effect made the mistakes happen that have now required the government to bring this legislation forward.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I sat in this Assembly and listened to those speeches earlier this year, and it was not just opposition members who severely criticized what the government was doing. The hon. Member for Fort McMurray gave one of the most impassioned speeches I've heard in this House in my seven years here, and it certainly was not impassioned in support of the government's legislation. He made a very compelling case.

Now, I'd ask the Member for Edmonton-Parkallen: was the Member for Fort McMurray posturing when he made that speech? I didn't sense that he was posturing. I think he was trying to tell the government that they were doing something they shouldn't be doing, and that's certainly what the opposition was trying to get this government to recognize. It was not posturing, Mr. Speaker; in no way was it posturing.

The idea of politicians drawing boundaries is a wrong idea. That was the point we were trying to make. The fact that there were amendments and counteramendments being proposed and we were trying to fix something in the final moments of the process to try and prevent the government from making serious errors was something that all of us in this place, from various parts of the province, were trying to do. It didn't negate the fact that we were in a conflict of interest in trying to make changes to boundaries, because our political future is based very much on how those boundaries are drawn. It has been our case, our allegation, our position all along that politicians should not be doing that and that that should be somebody else's job to do, somebody outside at arm's length.

Well, the mistakes were made, Mr. Speaker. The government brought in closure, and in so doing, they put themselves in a corner. They made mistakes. They failed to appreciate what needed to be done. They had an agenda. They had a time line. They weren't prepared to listen to opposition. They weren't prepared to listen to criticism. They weren't prepared to listen to positive alternatives. They weren't prepared to send it off to an impartial body to judge, to rule, to make amendments, to make changes. No, they were determined. They had this deadline. They had to do it right now. They couldn't wait.

I remember being told: oh, how much expense it would be to the Legislature and the people of the province to go back and fix the problem, to let the Legislature sit longer in order to allow the proper amendments to be made. Well, how much is this costing the government because they decided that they would prematurely proceed with closure? In the process of doing so, they blew it, and now here we are back in the Legislature to debate the legislation all over again just to clean up the mess.

Now, I would say that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Parkallen's comments really serve to underline the argument that the opposition has been making all along: that the process was hurried, that it was being forced to artificial deadlines, that the process needed improvement, that it was wrong for us to be involved to the extent that we were involved. I think it's quite correct. Time has proven that we were right. I would hope the government would believe us now, that their sloppiness and speed have contributed to a poor drafting of the legislation to the point that this anomaly has to be corrected, Mr. Speaker.

Here we have a group of Albertans who just disappeared right off the map. They were in one constituency. They were removed and not put back into another constituency. So here we are. We have to bring the people of Muir Lake back into Alberta. They were overlooked, forgotten, whatever. It was a mistake. I don't know, but as a result of the process, they were left out. Now, we know that all Albertans have been left out by this government, but the people of Muir Lake know in a special way that they have been overlooked and forgotten, and the process gives a whole new meaning to being overlooked and forgotten.

5:10

Here we are to fix this problem, and already this afternoon the government is going to bring in closure again. Well, they were the victim of their own device once. I guess they presume that they're not going to make a second mistake twice. Just for the

sake of argument, Mr. Speaker, you know, I'm just wondering whether the people of Muir Lake want back into Alberta. I mean, look, we've got a \$15 billion debt that appeared out of nowhere in the last eight years. We were a debt-free province. There was lots of money. We had the heritage savings trust fund.

Speaker's Ruling Relevance

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Let's come back to the Bill that's before the House.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, if Muir Lake is not part of Alberta . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You know full well what I'm referring to. We're not regarding the economic situation in the province. We're dealing with the eight constituencies that are mentioned within Bill 57. There's been sufficient latitude in the debate earlier in the day, but I'm giving you notice.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your ruling.

Debate Continued

MR. HAWKESWORTH: We do have a time-honoured principle that there should be no taxation without representation. So presumably if the people of Muir Lake are not part of Alberta, they wouldn't have to pay a provincial sales tax after the next election if the government was returned or if another political party across the way was elected.

This government has said that they want to set up more foreign offices. The Premier announced that last week. Well, you know, maybe they could apply to have government set one up in Muir Lake, and they wouldn't be forgotten quite so much by the government. Well, they'd certainly see a lot more cabinet ministers. As you know, they like junkets to foreign countries, and Muir Lake might see a whole string of them.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Bill 57. If it continues, your right to speak will be taken away, hon. member.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, there are many good reasons why the people of Muir Lake would want to come back into Alberta. Certainly the legislation that is in front of us, Bill 57, brings them back into Alberta. You know, the schools, the education, the health care: these are all good reasons for being an Albertan and good reasons why the people of Muir Lake would like to have the benefits of being a part of Alberta. It's just unfortunate that these are the very things that this government is planning to cut.

Of course, the one compelling reason, I'm sure, why the people of Muir Lake would want to be back in Alberta is that if they weren't, they'd miss out on the opportunity to punish a government that overlooked them and forgot them. After all, they're going to be extended the franchise as a result of this legislation, as the rights of citizenship, of being the people of Alberta. I don't think they're going to forget the fact that in the process of drafting electoral boundaries legislation they were forgotten, they were missed, they were overlooked. I predict that now that

they're brought back into Alberta as a part of Bill 57, they'll make sure that this governing party never forgets Muir Lake again, that they will never, never be allowed to be forgotten by this government the way they were in the drafting of the original legislation. So they'll have all the benefits of debt, the trust fund, taxation, government offices, foreign offices, the whole business, Mr. Speaker. They'll take on their responsibilities and the headaches of fixing up that mess after the next election, because as citizens of Alberta they're not any longer going to be overlooked. They're not any longer going to be forgotten as a result of Bill 57.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a call for the question. The matter before the House is second reading of Bill 57. Those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter carries.

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

5:20

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Adair	Fox	Moore
Bogle	Gogo	Nelson
Brassard	Hawkesworth	Oldring
Calahasen	Horsman	Orman
Cardinal	Hyland	Pashak
Cherry	Johnston	Paszowski
Chivers	Jonson	Payne
Clegg	Kowalski	Severtson
Day	Laing, B.	Sigurdson
Dinning	Laing, M.	Sparrow
Doyle	Lund	Tannas
Drobot	Main	Thurber
Elliott	Martin	Weiss
Evans	McFarland	Woloshyn
Fischer	Mjolsness	Zarusky
Fowler		

Against the motion:

Bruseker	Hewes
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Totals:	For - 46	Against - 2
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[Motion carried; Bill 57 read a second time]

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:27 p.m.]