

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, October 4, 1993**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 93/10/04

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Dear God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask for Thy guidance in order that trust and justice may prevail in all our judgments.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly students and staff visiting us this afternoon from Father Kenneth Kearns school in Sherwood Park. Our group today consists of two classes of grade 6 students, 47 students, and they're accompanied by their teachers Sharon Howrish and Sam Kostiuk. They're seated in the public gallery. I'd ask staff and students to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly. Welcome.

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

MR. MAR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, I am pleased to announce to you today His Excellency Luis Jerez, ambassador of Chile to Canada. The ambassador is accompanied today by his wife, Paulina. His Excellency was appointed ambassador to Canada this year, and this is his first official visit to our province. Chile is an important market for Alberta wheat, coal, and sulphur. We in turn are a good market for Chile's agricultural produce, especially in the winter. We look forward to much expanded two-way trade in many other sectors. I would ask that the ambassador and his party rise in the gallery and receive the recognition and warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly teachers Mrs. Kim Krushelnicki and Mr. Michailides, parents Mrs. Chin and Mrs. Ellinger, driver Mr. Kruger, and 57 grade 6 students engaged in a study of government at Minchau school. Minchau school was located in Edmonton-Mill Woods and under redistribution is now in Edmonton-Avonmore with MLA Gene Zwozdesky. The group is seated in the gallery, and with your concurrence, Mr. Speaker, I would ask them to please stand and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to the Members of the Legislative Assembly today a man called Mike Filip from Camrose. He's here today to tell whomever in that government will listen of his experience with the health care system. It's one of those melodramatic horror stories which the Premier has dismissed as being nothing more than that. I'd ask that he stand in the gallery and receive the welcome of the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly Steve Sapers and Debra Jackson, who are visiting us today from Vancouver, B.C. I ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

### Provincial Fiscal Policies

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we close the book on the 1993-94 budget process. Year 1 of our four-year plan to balance the budget is now behind us. On May 6 we first announced our spending plans to this Assembly. Albertans endorsed those plans on June 15, and they were updated on September 8.

We set ourselves a goal of reducing our expenditures this year by \$714 million. The reductions of \$122 million announced today in the health sector reflect the innovative measures Albertans have been telling us need to be taken in order to get our spending in line with our revenues. Mr. Speaker, we believe that we are spending too much money, yet we also believe that in spending less money, we can still maintain a proper quality of life, one that is within our means.

Today we are saying to Albertans that no Albertan who requires health care shall do without. There will be different delivery systems, different programs, and different infrastructure, but there will always be care for those who need it. The same is true in Education, in advanced education, in social services, in Municipal Affairs, and in other government operations. Mr. Speaker, the programs Albertans truly need will always be there, but we will spend less money and find new and better ways of providing these programs. We hope that other sectors are paying attention today to what we are asking of the health sector.

So let me close today by being clear about our message: while making reductions in government operations, we will continue to protect our quality of life. We must all work together to find more efficient and affordable ways to serve Albertans. Mr. Speaker, this will involve change and restructuring, but we know that Albertans are equal to the task.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could start by saying that it is part of the parliamentary custom and tradition that when a ministerial statement is given or the Premier wishes to make a statement, there is a courtesy of supplying that statement to the opposition caucus. It's been done in a tardy way. Today it wasn't done at all. I would simply ask the Speaker to make note of that and to ask that somehow, somehow the government deal with that problem.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the issue of cutbacks and the government's claim to control of its deficit, I am still not impressed and this caucus is still not impressed. We're not impressed with the so-called plan in dealing with roundtables. Our party and I think Albertans have seen the so-called plan that was employed to deal with roundtable discussions in health care to have been manipulative and to have been simply an exercise to get what you wanted out of the system in terms of a decision. We see a frightening direction that's being set for education. We think this is more horror stories yet to come, Roman numeral part 2. Mr. Premier, you are not impressing Albertans. You are impressing them by being a bully. You are impressing them by taking attention and care from young children, children who need to get

to school, children who need school supplies. You're bludgeoning little people, and you won't get away with it, Mr. Premier.

### Health Care System

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, at the provincial roundtable on health held in August of this year we heard from Albertans on two important points. First we received valuable advice on how to reduce our health spending for the 1993-94 fiscal year by \$122 million to meet our budget target. We also heard about ideas for longer term restructuring of the health system and about what changes were needed to ensure that our quality health system is sustainable.

The short-term reductions announced today will allow us to meet our fiscal target and allow us a period of time to develop further strategies on the restructuring of the system. The short-term measures include a request for a voluntary rollback of 5 percent for salaries, wages, and benefits of those who work in the health sector; a reduction in capital spending for this fiscal year; a work force adjustment strategy; further grant adjustments to acute care, long-term care, and health units.

Albertans are providing valuable advice through the roundtable process on how to create a better health system. I will be forming a team in the near future to take the valuable advice we receive from the report of my colleague the minister responsible for the Health Planning Secretariat and begin to implement those recommendations. We look forward to hearing from Albertans as we continue to create a more cost-effective and sustainable health system for now and into the future.

Thank you.

1:40

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the minister for her courtesy in not giving me a statement before. Is it not the custom, Madam Minister, to provide a statement? [interjections] Then why don't you live up to the custom of parliamentary tradition?

MR. KLEIN: We were busy today, Laurence. We had better things to do.

MR. DECORE: Oh, I see. You had better things to do. Then you don't have any respect, Mr. Premier, for this Legislative Assembly and parliamentary tradition.

Mr. Speaker, the person that was taken up by the government, the person that was put in place to handle the roundtable discussions, that individual himself proudly announced at one of these so-called roundtable discussions that there was no health care plan and that he was proud of it. There is no plan, there never was a plan, and there never will be a plan. That's clear to Albertans. The whole system is contrived. The best example that I can give to the minister is to have heard people at these roundtables talking about scaling wage reductions so that the little people, people at the bottom end of the totem pole don't get hurt. That never came up as an observation in anything that the government printed. Why not? Because you were manipulating the process, Madam Minister, and it won't wash with Albertans. It won't wash.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order arising out of the comments from the leader of the Liberal opposition. Would it be more appropriate to take it up at the conclusion of question period? It has to do with the delivering of the ministerial statements that were delivered, sir. Perhaps we can deal with it at the end.

MR. SPEAKER: After question period.

The Chair also wants to remind all members of the Chair's comments on Thursday regarding the form of questions.

MR. DECORE: Succinct.

head: **Oral Question Period**

### MLA Remuneration

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, today the government did announce their intended so-called plan for cutbacks in the health care area. They talked about rollbacks. But the Premier and the government should have been forthright with Albertans today. They should have told Albertans about the \$36 million that was paid out last year and probably will be paid out this year to look after MagCan and to look after Gainers. That \$36 million, if the government hadn't been so foolish, would have been the 5 percent rollback that they needed. The government should have been forthright with Albertans and said that there are back-bench Conservative MLAs that are making on the average \$18,000 a year more than any MLA over on this side by being on boards and tribunals, by doing special committee work. They should have told Albertans about the free cars that they're getting and the sort of perks that they're fleecing the system with. My first question to the Premier is this. I'd like the Premier to announce and to tell Albertans that all of the income of all MLAs will be subject to this 5 percent rollback, whether it's made on a committee, whether it's made being a chairman of a committee or a board or tribunal, whatever. Everybody should pay the 5 percent rollback, Mr. Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to announce that, yes, it's in the press release. It's spelled out loud and clear, long before the hon. leader sent over his letter suggesting the same.

Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about all these things, we might as well talk about the \$10,000 extra that the hon. House leader gets for being the Whip, for calling the Liberal members to parliament. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. A supplemental question without preamble. [interjections]

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, Albertans elected us. [interjections] Get used to it. You've got four and a half years to go, Laurence. [interjections]

### Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order please. [interjections] Order. The Assembly will come to order. Christian names will not be used. There will be a supplemental question that will give the hon. Premier a chance to pursue this which will be asked without preamble.

### MLA Remuneration (continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, given the fact . . .

MR. SPEAKER: No givens. A question.

MR. DECORE: Well, it's part of the question, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious that it's part of the question.

The government committed itself to a review of the pay, benefits, perks that all . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. Leader of the Opposition. [interjection] Order. That is a preamble. A question please, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. DECORE: When, Mr. Premier, is the commission that the government committed itself to set up to look at pay and benefits and perks for MLAs going to meet, and when is it going to decide this matter once and for all?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I consider that to be a very good question. The hon. Leader of the Opposition knows very well that there is a process. I have recommended, indeed my caucus has recommended, that MLAs' salaries be reduced by 5 percent, that all the things associated with MLAs' salaries – that is, committee work and so on – also be reduced by 5 percent, that we recommend the same to Members' Services Committee, which has on it members of the opposition party. I think that committee, the rightful committee to do it, will bring forward the proper legislative changes, and I hope it's done as quickly as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Answer the question.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, to answer the question, it'll be done tomorrow, and I'll give that direction.

MR. DECORE: Good. That's all you had to say. See how . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order please. Just so we know the procedure here, the Chair understands that the Chair is the chairman of the Members' Services Committee, and the Chair is happy to hear from both the government and opposition sides as to when this committee will meet.

MR. KLEIN: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I can't direct you, but I would ask.

MR. DECORE: Well, it's nice to see that he's decisive once in awhile, and I like that. I like that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. This is a final supplemental which is to be asked without preamble.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the Premier tell Albertans why it is that there are 5 percent rollbacks inflicted on all health care workers across the board but there is only the expectation of a 2 percent rollback on senior public servants. Why?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. leader had tuned into the announcement today – and I understand it was being covered live – I said that senior public service employees would be taking a further reduction of 3 percent to make their total reduction in salary 5 percent.

MR. DECORE: You should get your house in order and put it in your press release, Mr. Premier.

#### Public Employees' Pay Rates

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, many health care workers earn minimum wages. To roll back the wages of those employees would be devastating. Many of them live just at the poverty line,

but there are many others in the health care system who earn \$60,000 or \$70,000 or \$80,000 or \$100,000 a year. To those high earners a 5 percent cutback is like a mosquito bite compared to those that are earning minimum wages. Across-the-board cuts are not fair. Across-the-board cuts are not part of a proper plan. Mr. Premier, my first question to you is this: don't you agree that it would be fairer, more reasonable to ask those high-income earners to pay their share, a better share than for those people that are living at the poverty line?

1:50

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, again, obviously the hon. Leader of the Opposition hasn't been listening. He hasn't been listening since December 5, when I became leader of this party and Premier of this province. I said that our first line of attack will be the administration, and I have asked quite succinctly those people who are in charge of administering municipalities and school boards and hospitals and universities and colleges to look at their own administration and to look at their own salaries. Indeed the purpose of the amendment to the Financial Administration Act was to get the extent of these salaries out so people will know what these administrators are getting paid.

I have appealed time and time and time again, and indeed there has been some response. The Royal Alex hospital has responded in a positive manner, the university hospital in a positive manner, the Cancer Board in a positive manner, Foothills hospital in Calgary in a positive manner, the municipal district of Foothills in southern Alberta, the Banff school of fine arts. So it is starting to catch on, Mr. Speaker.

I'm saying that if we're going to ask those people in the line departments to make some sacrifices, we have to start at the top. Indeed we started with ministerial salaries. We started with the salaries of our senior administrators. Now we see consensus throughout this Legislature that indeed MLAs should make a bit of a sacrifice. We're saying that if we expect those people to voluntarily take a 5 percent rollback, then we have to show the leadership, and this government is showing the leadership.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as the medical doctors have said that they will not roll back unless every person in the public sector agrees to rollbacks, I am asking the Premier to tell Albertans how he intends to invoke, to force rollbacks, if some jurisdiction that the Premier can't bully says no to rollbacks.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the doctors, maybe that's what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has heard. I have not heard that, and I'll wait until I hear from the doctors.

Mr. Speaker, this is not bullying at all. This is asking for a voluntary rollback, and we're giving virtually all components of the public service sector till November 23 to do the same. Certainly we're starting with Health because that was our first line of attack. We have just completed one of the initial roundtable processes at Red Deer, and it brought forward those recommendations. Certainly the message is there. We want to see voluntary compliance. We will work with all segments of the public sector to arrive at reasonable formulas for these reductions. We're not saying that it has to be done this way or that way, but we're saying that we'll work with you to achieve overall that 5 percent reduction in pay and benefits.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that this is voluntary, but you have until November 23 to do it. That's not voluntary, Mr. Premier.

**Speaker's Ruling**  
**Disturbance in the Gallery**

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order in the gallery. Just for the understanding of people in the galleries, there will be no demonstrations of support or disapproval from the gallery.

**Public Employees' Pay Rates**  
*(continued)*

MR. DECORE: I'd like to know, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier and his government intend to do if a union representing some of those people that are earning minimum wages, that can't make ends meet says "No, we can't, and we won't." What do you intend to do?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we think that there are good thinking and good feeling people in the public service, and we feel that overall in the public service there are people who are willing to make sacrifices to keep jobs, small sacrifices. As I say, over the next six weeks or so we have the opportunity to work with the public sector unions, those in administration to arrive at reasonable formulas that will meet the requirements of not all – you will never satisfy all – but of most of the people. What I'm hearing, the phone calls that are coming into my office are: "You're right on; your government is right on. Treat the people fair. The approach you're taking is a sensitive, compassionate approach." It is now up to the public sector to work with us to find ways to keep people working, to deliver adequate service, and at the same time make a small, small sacrifice.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Health Care System**

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If anything characterizes the health care cuts announced today it is that they are unplanned, that they are arbitrary, and that they are across the board. To make matters worse the minister's view of co-ordinating these cuts stops at bragging that hospitals in Edmonton and Calgary are actually talking to one another about the cuts. My first question is to the Minister of Health. When is the minister herself going to understand that she has a responsibility to co-ordinate these cuts so that the sick, the injured individuals and families and the health care services they need in this province do not fall between the cracks?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we've had somewhat of the same discussion before on consultation, on plans, and so on. I have outlined for the hon. members in this House a number of discussions that we have held in this province starting with The Rainbow Report and coming up to the roundtable. Rather than going through all of those today, I would like to table a copy of them for all hon. members as well.

Secondly, on the co-ordination. Yes, I am very proud of the hospital boards and of the councils in our cities for the work they are doing on co-ordination of services to ensure that the people of the cities and indeed the outlying areas that they serve maintain access to quality health services, which they are today. I believe that is the correct way. In the roundtable process, both in Red Deer and to date in the roundtables that we've held across this province, that is what we've been talking about: regional planning, community-based decision-making, communities identifying the health needs, identifying the services that they

require, and how best to deliver them. I am very proud of that, Mr. Speaker, and I will continue to work with all of the health organizations across this province to achieve a sustainable health service for the citizens of this province wherever they live.

MR. MITCHELL: How can the minister stand in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Is that the question?

MR. MITCHELL: . . . and say that she is responding to the health care roundtables with respect to regional governance when the health care roundtables in Red Deer stated very explicitly that what was needed were specific, elected regional boards to co-ordinate that process, not some kind of chatting mechanism where they sit around . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order please. The hon. minister, if she can find a question.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd be very pleased to outline exactly the health roundtable in Red Deer, and indeed it is has been fairly consistent, as my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore would attest to following the roundtables across the province. In the discussion of community-based decision-making or regionalizing health services in communities, there is a discussion that first it should be in planning, secondly, it should be in a discussion of fiscal dollars, and thirdly, governance. There is governance in all of the areas in health care delivery today. As we move into the planning process, if the communities find that is the most appropriate, then, yes, enabling legislation should be put in place. There is nothing today that prohibits any regionalization or community planning from occurring, and indeed if that is the community's desire, we will continue to support them to ensure that they can plan to meet the health needs of their community.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Premier. Mr. Speaker, without a plan, without any labour force redeployment program, without studies assessing community needs, without differentiating between . . .

**Speaker's Ruling**  
**Brevity**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member knows the rules. Now, why doesn't the hon. member make some attempt to honour the rules which the hon. member was part of making? A question, please.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

**Health Care System**  
*(continued)*

MR. MITCHELL: Without a plan, without the kinds of studies that need to be . . .

**Speaker's Ruling**  
**Brevity**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order please. The Chair is not going to permit the hon. member to continue on that path. If the hon. member has a direct question, ask the direct question.

### Health Care System

(continued)

MR. MITCHELL: How can the Premier defend his statement earlier today with any kind of credibility that there will always be care for those Albertans who need it, when he hasn't got a health care plan, when he hasn't got a . . .

#### Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order please. Order. Hon. member, take your seat. [interjection] If the hon. member continues with that kind of behaviour, the hon. member will be asked to leave this Assembly.

2:00

### Barley Marketing

MR. HIERATH: Mr. Speaker, between August 1 and September 10 under the continental barley market 23 million bushels of barley were contracted for sale into the United States. The opening of the border to allow individual barley farmers to have marketing freedom was a tremendous success until the Alberta Wheat Pool along with its other provincial counterparts got a federal judge to close the border on September 10. My question to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is: what is the status of this ruling now?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I'm very pleased to advise the House as to what efforts this government is doing on behalf of barley producers to be able to allow them to achieve the ultimate price they so justifiably have earned. Indeed, the process has gone through a court hearing. The judge at the time ruled that this was legal. This was appealed, and a judge has overruled the original hearing.

Since that time, the provincial government has taken a very strong and affirmative action to be able to achieve a decent price for our Alberta barley producers. We are indeed in the process of appealing the stay, because it does have constitutional ramifications for the province of Alberta, and once the process goes to the appeal, it is our intention to be very, very much involved in that appeal process. Alberta farmers have told us this is what they want, and we stand behind our farmers.

MR. HIERATH: Mr. Speaker, since this is a terrible disruption for the farmers at this time of the year, will the minister support the Western Barley Growers Association and the Alberta Barley Commission in their proposal to ask the federal government to remove barley from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board is under the federal minister, and it's obviously under the direction of the federal minister that ultimately that decision will be made. At this stage we are reviewing all the options that are available as a government. We have already indicated that we will be participating in the appeal for the stay as well as participating in the appeal process.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

### Hospital Construction

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The great health unplan continues to unravel as we learned today. Today in fact we learned the fate of some 27 previously approved health care capital projects. Hundreds of hospital beds, including psychiatric and long-term beds, are being cut throughout the province but not in Westlock. For some reason, this project has been rushed ahead. My question to the Premier: on what basis, Mr. Premier, was it determined that the Westlock project was a priority for scarce capital dollars?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, it was not considered a priority. As a matter of fact, it was considered in the context of 17 projects that were contracted for and were in the ground, including seven of those 17 in opposition ridings. By the way, if there's any suggestion of politics here, of the 27 projects that have been deferred, 17 are in government ridings.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the Minister of Health: why is it, then, that the Westlock redevelopment is pushing ahead when 90 percent of the work remains to be done, while at the same time reconstruction of the general hospital in Slave Lake has been put on hold?

MR. KLEIN: That's better directed to public works.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, there are different reasons for the different projects to either be continued or be put on hold, to be deferred for a period of time. The health projects that are on hold right now and have been deferred are in the planning and design stage, which makes it rather easier to defer them for a period of time until the results of the roundtable discussions on health are completed. Certainly the ones that are in the ground, as the Premier has mentioned, are more difficult, because there are a lot of commitments already in the works and it's much more difficult to stop those at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Minister of Health told us last week that there were some 60 capital projects that were being put on hold and today we find out the fate of 27, what about the remaining 33? What's happening with those?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe that what I said was that there were some 60-odd requests for projects before the government. A number of these projects have been held for some time. We have tried to meet the most immediate needs in the province. As we indicated, we have to care for the health and safety of the workers in the institutions as well as the patients. So we look at that, we look at access to services in the various communities, and we also look at whether they are supplying long-term beds or acute beds, if it is a renovation or an upgrading or a replacement of the facility.

There are a number of requests that come to us from communities, and we have endeavoured to prioritize on the highest health needs of the communities in making the decisions as to which go forward. That is not to say that any of those projects are not important to the community that's requesting them or to the

members of that community that would access that service. We have had to prioritize, and that is what we have done.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Varsity.

### Liquor Sales

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister responsible for the Alberta Liquor Control Board. Is there any conflict of interest legislation in the privatization program that prevents any Member of the Legislative Assembly from owning directly or indirectly a new liquor store?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is: not that I know of. I will certainly take that forward to the Ethics Commissioner and ask a direct question on that following this inquiry, but to my knowledge to date, no, there is nothing that precludes that.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister plan to make public a list of those that have been granted liquor store licences immediately after they have been granted?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, when a class D licence goes out, it is a requirement of the ALCB to post that licence for all public to have a look at. That requirement will continue.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont.

### Long-term Care

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A great number of acute care beds, especially in Alberta's major cities, are occupied by seniors and the elderly awaiting long-term care beds. This wait is anywhere from a few months to as long as six years. Combined with bed closures, the situation is adding immensely to our health care crisis. To the hon. Minister of Health: what is your government doing about easing this crisis in long-term beds?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Then, Mr. Speaker, I would expect that the hon. member fully supports the project in Sherwood Park for long-term care that is going ahead and also the hospital at Westlock, which carries a large component of long-term care beds, which that community has never had access to in any way.

On the subject of some people having to be in acute care facilities until there is a long-term care bed available, it is of concern to us. I would say that the managers of the acute care facilities are doing their very utmost to ensure that those people have as much of a program as possible within that facility and are ensuring that they receive the care they need. We are obviously paying special attention to the long-term care needs and will be continuing to do that as the need grows. However, there are a number of new ways of keeping people in their homes longer: improvements to access to home care, to homemaking services. We will endeavour as much as we can to allow people to remain in their own homes in their community as long as they can, but when they must access an acute care facility, we will endeavour to have it close to their residence.

2:10

MR. YANKOWSKY: In view of such long waiting lists, why did the government allow extended care centres to go from 99 percent

maximum occupancy to 94 percent maximum occupancy while still continuing to pay for 99 percent occupancy?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, that is not entirely correct. It was 98 percent originally. When we asked our long-term care facilities to accept some reduction in funding, we allowed them some flexibility in their numbers. We continue to try to work with our long-term care facilities to ensure that they do not have long waiting lists. Waiting lists occur in certain areas, Mr. Speaker, and we do have some availability in others. That was the reason: to provide our facilities with some flexibility to manage the dollars to ensure that they could continue the program for the people they care for.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Why are extended care centres subject to a two-tier subsidy: a higher subsidy for those built during the boom and a lower subsidy for those built more recently?

MRS. McCLELLAN: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of a two-tiered system in the long-term care sector. If there is some hidden meaning or more clarification in that comment, I would appreciate a note from the member, and perhaps I could answer him.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

### Hospital Construction

(continued)

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. Slave Lake general was one of the projects that was deferred. I thank the Member for Edmonton-Glenora for speaking on behalf of Slave Lake residents, but I find it curious that the Liberals would bring up this matter considering the fact that the Liberal leader said that he would not – would not – build a Slave Lake hospital. I think it's really important that we lobby as hard as we can to have this hospital built. I know that I've lobbied, and it frustrates me to see that this is to no avail. My question to the minister is: please explain what you mean by deferment of Slave Lake hospital.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister of public works.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake brings up a very good point. It's very difficult sometimes to determine what should happen with these facilities that are in the planning and programming stage. We had to make an assessment, and hopefully when the results come back from the roundtable discussion, maybe our assessment has been absolutely accurate and you're on again.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question without a preamble.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is: since I've been through this process over and over without resolution, what criteria were used to determine which projects would be deferred and which would go ahead?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, it was talked about at all of the roundtables and other discussions over probably the last two years that have occurred in the health care field. They felt that there was an overbuilding of capital projects in the health care field. Now, because of these comments and because of the consultation process that is in place now, we tried to defer the ones that were in the best position to be deferred, and these are in the planning

and programming stage. It was a little bit simpler to defer them as opposed to the ones that were in the construction stage. That was the main criteria.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister then please clarify what length of time we would be looking at to make sure this hospital doesn't stay on hold forever?

MR. THURBER: Like you, hon. member, I would hope that it would not stay on hold forever. The period of time that they will be deferred will depend on the outcome of the roundtable discussions, and it's my understanding that the roundtables will be completed sometime the end of this month. I would hope that shortly thereafter we can make the assessment that will allow those ones to go ahead that are considered necessary.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

#### Freedom of Information Legislation

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday the freedom of information committee opened their hearings in Fort McMurray, Alberta. On the previous day the chair of that committee voted six times – six times – against freedom of information. To the chair of the standing committee on community services, who also chairs the FOI committee: will you resign as chair since you obviously do not support freedom of information?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is: absolutely not. I was appointed by the Premier, and there's only one person I will accept a recommendation to resign from, and that's the Premier. I will certainly not take it from a member that insists on continuing to grandstand.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplemental, then, to the Premier of this province: will you consider replacing this chair with one of the many members of this House that did not vote against freedom of information last week?

MR. KLEIN: No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to ask for the hon. member's resignation, nor will I ask for the other hon. member's resignation, but I would ask: be good boys and get along.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: why would you risk impairing the valuable work of this committee by not solving this easily solved problem?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, this committee was put together with checks and balances. The Liberal opposition wanted to be on this committee to provide, as I would say, an opposing point of view or an objective look at what the government is proposing, and I would hope that's the way it's going to be. That doesn't mean to say that everyone at all times has to agree with anyone else on the committee. That's what the process is all about. It's about give and take. It's about receiving input.

Mostly, it's about hearing from the public as to what the public thinks is right or wrong about this legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

#### Child Prostitution

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Youth prostitution in our large city centres is a malignant tumour on society, and it must be stamped out. In many societies this sort of crime is punished most severely, and the problem diminishes. However, in our society many of these young women find it far too dangerous for them to become witnesses for the prosecution against the filth that live off them. My question is to the Minister of Justice. How can the minister protect these children from the pimps and allow more successful enforcement of the law?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, child prostitution or, I guess, prostitution is a very odious part of our society and something that we've been attempting to work at for some time. In fact, we're working very closely with two task forces, the mayor's task force in Edmonton and the mayor's task force in Calgary, on ways we can approach prostitution and attempt, if to not eradicate it, to control it. Most particularly we're interested in any initiatives anyone has that are within our realm or ways we can convince the federal government under the Criminal Code to attempt to attack child prostitution.

2:20

MR. PHAM: My supplemental is to the Minister of Justice again. Can the minister toughen sentences in order to make it much more costly in terms of time and money?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the Criminal Code sets out the parameters for sentencing, and it's totally within the discretion of the judiciary as to what sentence is meted out. The prosecution asks in each situation, according to the facts, for specific penalties. If because of a question of law, not of fact, they're not happy with the result, we always look at whether we can appeal. We'll continue to pursue that endeavour.

MR. PHAM: My second supplemental is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Can the minister tell us what there is in terms of support and counseling for children that are forced into this type of life?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated to this Assembly before, this department alone is spending over \$160 million under child welfare. [interjections] These people of course don't like to hear that. I think it is a considerable amount of dollars for the size of the province. To show how serious we are in dealing with problems of this nature, as far as support and assistance for any child that comes under our jurisdiction, part of that \$160 million will support that program.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville.

#### Gainers Inc.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 1992-93 public accounts reveal that the government's financial involvement in Gainers has been a substantial and growing drain on the wallets of Alberta taxpayers: a working capital deficiency of \$143 million, an annual loss of \$22 million, an increase in long-term debt from \$85 million to \$149 million in four years, an accumulated deficit

of \$103 million. My question to the minister of agriculture: considering this dismal financial record, how can you claim that the assets of Gainers are salable to the private sector?

MR. DINNING: The books of this company have assets showing accounts receivable. They have a supply line and a product line, Mr. Speaker, that's well known and well respected across this country. We believe that notwithstanding the financial difficulties of the company, those are assets that are attractive to some investors in this business.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister of agriculture: can the minister indicate whether the \$21 million payment made to avoid default is part of the \$138 million allowance for doubtful accounts in the '92-93 public accounts?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, perhaps if the hon. member would like to give me the details of the \$21 million that he's referring to, I could try to answer the question.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I certainly can do that.

I can maybe address my last question to the Treasurer if the minister of agriculture doesn't want to address it. Why don't we just sell Gainers to the private sector for whatever we can instead of asking Albertans for an extra \$20 million every year?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister of agriculture stood before this Assembly some three weeks ago and announced precisely that. That is the track we're on. I know that the minister of agriculture is dealing with a number of interested prospective investors, and I know that the hon. member and his party would not want to damage or affect those negotiations and would not want to jeopardize a return on our assets, would want to maximize the taxpayers' return. I respect the hon. member's cautionary comments so as to ensure that these negotiations are successful ones and that the taxpayer is relieved of this responsibility.

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

#### **Biomedical Waste Disposal**

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Environmental Protection. The Lethbridge regional hospital has a licence to burn their waste and biomedical waste for another 18 months or so. After that, they will have to transport waste to landfills. Now, the question I have is: are landfills the proper place for hospital waste?

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just a bit of background on this. Back in 1992 the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment established emission guidelines for the management of biomedical waste in Canada. Alberta, wanting to continue to be really an environmental leader, in May of this year endorsed and decided to implement the standards that are set out in those guidelines.

Now, that is recognizing full well that in hospitals in Alberta there are basically three types of wastes that are created: hazardous waste, biomedical waste, which may or may not be hazardous,

and a general waste stream. Certainly, hon. member, landfill is not where we want general waste from a hospital to be disposed of. Most certainly we want the biomedical waste and the hazardous waste to be treated. The hospitals, as their clean air licences are coming up for renewal, have to be cognizant of the costs of dealing with their waste stream at a landfill and also at the biomedical waste station that we have now at Beiseker. I think all those hospitals are going to be looking at that. We have to recognize as well some flexibility in terms of the general waste, which is a very substantial part of the waste stream that is generated by hospitals.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. DUNFORD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why are the standards in Alberta higher than the standards in other provinces?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister.

MR. EVANS: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Again, to the hon. member, I alluded to that in my first comments. These guidelines are just that. They're guidelines that have been established after consultation by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. Alberta has always taken the view that we are very concerned with our clean air, our land, and our water. We want to ensure that we have the cleanest air, land, and water that is available throughout the countryside. Therefore, we've taken a strong view of the guidelines themselves and have looked at the toughest of those guidelines and feel that those are the ones that in the longer term we should be implementing in the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. DUNFORD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, to the Minister of Environmental Protection: what is the Department of Environmental Protection doing to assist hospitals as they have to adjust to these standards that have been adopted?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, number one, when we introduced the new policy, we indicated that we would not be implementing that policy immediately – in other words, hospitals would be allowed to continue to burn their wastes until such time as their licences came up for renewal – but that at that time we'd look very carefully at the waste stream and would implement those stricter guidelines. That being said, we've had two examples over the summer, both here in Edmonton at the Royal Alexandra hospital and at the Medicine Hat hospital, where the licences have been renewed for a short period of time, both three months, to deal with the issue specifically of the general waste stream, which may be as high as 90 percent of the total waste. Again, we want to focus on what we are trying to control, and that is emissions coming from the smokestacks, that being related to hazardous waste and to serious biomedical waste.

So we are trying to be flexible with this. We are trying to look at the issue of the larger waste stream and determine whether or not these guidelines should apply to the general waste that comes from hospitals throughout the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.



### Chembiomed Ltd.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The public accounts show that another fine investment of this government is a company called Chembiomed, which shows an accumulated deficit of \$54 million. In addition, for this company the government wrote down \$7.2 million on the mortgage of the land and the building. Further exposure includes a guarantee of nearly \$8 million on the lease, an additional \$7 million provided to cover operating losses. To the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: what is the minister doing to reduce or eliminate our \$8 million obligation to cover losses on the lease of the Chembiomed building?

2:30

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, some detail is associated with this matter and some history associated with the past. Perhaps I will receive an invitation from the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee that would allow me to appear before that committee some Wednesday morning and be able to deal with this kind of question, this kind of an issue in greater detail.

MS CARLSON: Again to the minister: how much of the \$7 million provided to cover operational losses in 1992 are Albertans going to get back on this bad investment?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, pending a complete and further review of this matter by the Auditor General, I cannot give a definitive statement. Of course, it is the hope that in essence we maximize the recovery of losses. I cannot give a specific figure, and I would not want to err in even guessing.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS CARLSON: Well, this one's easier. When will the government add the \$8 million exposure on the lease and the \$7 million operational loss to the total figure of \$328 million provision for losses on loan guarantees?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member didn't get the full gist of the answer to the second question. When the government has a definitive number, if in fact there is a loss, then such a loss will be added. Unless there is a definitive figure and in fact there is a loss, then no loss can be added.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

### Freedom of Information Legislation (continued)

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House in his capacity as chairman of the committee reviewing the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. I had the pleasure of watching the riveting, burning, and controversial issue of the day being dealt with in Grande Prairie, for which there was one submission of credibility and one submission of rambling rhetoric from a prior Liberal candidate. There were no media reps there, two members in the audience: the minister of agriculture and myself. I would ask the chairman: could he please advise of the number and the nature of the submissions that occurred earlier in Fort McMurray and in Peace River?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. chairman.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member certainly is correct that we just had two submissions in Grande

Prairie on Saturday afternoon. We were in Peace River the evening before. About seven or eight people had registered. There were no formal presentations, but through dialogue with the folks that were there, we did manage to gain some insight to some issues relative to the municipalities and whether in fact they should be included and how they should be included. On Friday morning and on Thursday evening we held two sessions in Fort McMurray. In the first session there was one presentation relative to the Act and one presentation that had nothing to do with the Act, and another presentation on Friday morning. Both of those were relative to the libraries and the archives and historical groups and how they would fit in under the Act and how the information that they need to operate and use in the history of areas would be released and the time frames that would be released under.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the chairman: based on the preregistration to date, what number of submissions do you expect will occur in the remaining six public meetings?

DR. PERCY: Hypothetical.

MR. DECORE: Opinion.

### Speaker's Ruling Seeking Opinions

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair heard "hypothetical" and "opinion." That's correct. The question should not ask for opinions or something that might or might not happen in the future without any basis. The question could be: has the chair received any indication of advanced registration for future meetings?

### Freedom of Information Legislation (continued)

MR. LUND: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that advice. Certainly I was going to suggest that I would just report on the people that have preregistered, because we do ask for that. In answer to that part of it, we have 16 registered in Calgary, 14 in Edmonton, two in Red Deer, one in Medicine Hat, none in Lethbridge, and two in Vermilion. Certainly people do not have to preregister in order to come and make a presentation or participate, so we will be urging once again that people would avail themselves of this opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The time for question period has expired. The Chair has received requests to raise two points of order.

The hon. Government House Leader.

### Point of Order Advance Notice of Ministerial Statements

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 1. It arises out of a comment made by the Leader of the Opposition. If there was a difference of view with respect to the ministerial statement provided by the Premier today, it's indeed an unfortunate one, because the information that I have is that in fact at 1 o'clock today a copy of the Premier's statement was delivered to the office of the Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition. The individual who had delivered the message and the copy of the statement also informed the receptionist in the leader's office that the Minister of Health would be having a brief statement;

unfortunately, however, that it would arrive late. That's the information I have with respect to this matter. If there's a misunderstanding with respect to this, I would be very, very happy to clear it, but it's certainly the government's understanding that in fact a statement was delivered.

Secondly on that point, it is the intent of the government, as we had talked about before, that in essence we would like to have delivered from members of our Executive Council to the Leader of the Opposition a copy of such ministerial statements as much in advance as we possibly can. Our definition of "as much in advance as we possibly can" is normally in the area of 45 minutes.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I rise, too, on this point of order. I cite Standing Orders, which don't really help us except to the extent that they say that ministerial statements are allowed as part of our routine.

I would like to draw the Speaker's attention to two rules, *Beauchesne* 348 and 349. Under 348 it says that

provision is made for replies by Members of parties in opposition to comment on the statement,

and 349 says that

it is the tradition and a courtesy for Ministers to advise their opposition critics when it is intended to make a ministerial statement in the House.

The rule also says that if the minister doesn't wish to provide that information, they have that prerogative.

Mr. Speaker, *Erskine May* also gives us some help. On page 297, D(1) states that prior notice of a ministerial statement is to be given to the Speaker. Now, I don't know what kind of notice the Speaker received on this matter, but I think this is an area where there has to be some cleaning up, firming up, perfecting the system. When I got a ministerial statement from the hon. minister responsible for the ALCB, a courier came right to me and gave me the ministerial statement. When I received a ministerial statement from the minister responsible for advanced education, a courier came right to me and gave me the statement. The only thing I have seen today is this document on health care. I have not seen nor heard of a ministerial statement. Now, perhaps the House leaders can get together and work out a system that satisfies the Speaker and satisfies us that there is that 45 minutes of warning and some sort of a check system that ensures that that is in fact in place. If we erred, I'm sorry, but I was taken by surprise by two speakers today giving ministerial statements.

2:40

MR. SPEAKER: On the point of order the Chair believes this is not strictly a point of order because it's not in our Standing Orders, but the Chair agrees that perhaps the House leaders could have some communication on working out the problem complained of.

#### Point of Order

#### Explanation of Speaker's Ruling

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung had also indicated that he wished to . . .

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today you ruled me out of order in the asking of my second supplemental. I rise under 13(2) to get a clarification of your ruling. I'd like to say that I've considered it and tried to come up with under what criteria you might have ruled my question out of order and began to cut me off. I thought well, first of all, of course you could have perhaps been queuing on the idea that I was using a clause at the outset of my question when I began to say: without a plan, without a labour force redeployment initiative, without distinguish-

ing between the efficiency of some rural hospitals and other rural hospitals, and so on - that perhaps it was the phrase at the beginning of the sentence that was catching in your craw. Then I reviewed last Tuesday's *Hansard* at random, and I noticed that a Conservative member, the one from Red Deer-South, asked no less than two supplementals and prefaced each one of them with a clause. I could read for your information: "Mr. Minister, there are other organizations . . ."

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. The hon. member's point of order is essentially a reason for the interruption, and the Chair does not think it very useful to refer to proceedings before last Thursday because the Chair particularly made a point last Thursday at the end of our first month of operation to point out that the Chair was highly dissatisfied with the asking of questions from both sides of the Assembly, not just the opposition side, and asked hon. members to particularly look back over the records of some time ago as to how questions are asked in this place. The Chair asked hon. members to spend the weekend doing that research. The Chair also gave warning on Thursday that today was the first day of a new month and there were going to be efforts made by the Chair to ensure that the rules agreed to by both sides, for which the hon. member and the Government House Leader were very major players - the Chair didn't make the rules. The Chair was told that for question period there would be a succinct preamble to the first question and the remaining two questions would be without preamble.

The Chair does not find the form that the hon. member was using a proper form to ask a question, because the Chair cannot tell where the question comes in. That form will not be recognized in the future. There were various hon. members of both caucuses today that really met the test very well. So check the transcript today as to where people were not interrupted and find out how the Chair feels the second two questions should be asked.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I was getting to today. The Speaker made the point that there should be a short preamble, and in fact our agreement is three sentences. I'd like to point out that my preamble was two sentences. The preamble by the Member for Lesser Slave Lake was six sentences uninterrupted. The preamble by the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti was five sentences uninterrupted when I lost count. My point is that we will play by the rules, but they have to be consistent.

The other point that I want to make is that the rule that I rose under, *Beauchesne* 410(7), relates not only to brevity in questions but relates to brevity in answers, and I think it is very, very important. It cuts both ways, Mr. Speaker. That's all we're asking for.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair doesn't disagree. The hon. member will recall that last Thursday the Chair mentioned that. But it's much harder to get some control over the answers until we get some control over the proper way of asking the questions. [interjections] Order please. If the hon. member wants to rehash the matter of preambles, I think the hon. member might analyze his leader's preambles.

The Chair tries not to be ham-handed on everything. We're going to try to do this in stages. Hon. members, do look to the Leader of the Official Opposition as to how he uses preambles, and they tend to follow the same way. The Chair will be encouraging all members to get their preambles to be succinct. Then at the same time, the Chair will not forget about the brevity of answers, because the Chair does find two or three ministers who are not very crisp and rippling in their answers, and hon. members

can look forward to something from the Chair. The Chair would also ask ministers to examine some of the lengths of their answers in *Hansard* to see if there's some way that they can compress that somewhat.

### Speaker's Ruling Items Previously Decided

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking of reasons, the Chair was also asked on Thursday to give a reason for a decision. Last Thursday the Opposition House Leader asked the Chair's reasons for the Chair's ruling on a question asked by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. That hon. member had prefaced his question about loan guarantees with references to a vote by the Assembly taken the previous day, whereby the Assembly refused to accept a motion for a return relating to that subject. The Chair ruled the question out of order as it reflected on a previous decision of the House. The decision of the Chair with respect to the question by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was based partly on Standing Order 23(f) which states that a member will be called to order by the Speaker if that member, quote, "debates any previous vote of the Assembly unless it is that member's intention to move that it be rescinded." The Chair does not agree with the hon. Opposition House Leader that this authority applies only to debates and not question period. There is no such limitation on any of the grounds for calling members to order under Standing Order 23. Reliance is placed on the verb "debates" in section 23(f). It is the Chair's view that "debates" in that suborder is to be taken in its generic sense and not to be seen as limiting the applicability to formal debates and not question period.

Furthermore, to give the suborder the interpretation proposed by the hon. Opposition House Leader would result in members being able to continually question previous decisions and nothing would ever be taken as final.

The Chair would further refer members to *Beauchesne* paragraph 411(4) which states that questions may not "criticize decisions of the House." This principle is also found in *Erskine May* at page 293.

Finally, the Chair would note that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was able to reformulate his question in such a way as not to refer to the previous day's vote. Now that the Chair has had the opportunity to share the rationale behind last Thursday's ruling, it is hoped that we will not have to revisit that issue in the future.

The hon. Government House Leader.

### Point of Order Speaker's Rulings

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, on this point. There's limited time in this Assembly afforded to government business. The question on the point of order that was raised by the House leader for the Liberal opposition in my view was a redundant question. A reading of *Beauchesne*, and particularly *Beauchesne* 71(1), I think is very important and very imperative here. The Speaker is really not in a position to have to give his reasons for it.

Mr. Speaker, I raise that on the basis that if the opposition would want to thwart the time of government business, the easiest way that it can do it on a Thursday is raise a constant litany of points of order. Now, we have government business that we want to address this afternoon. Perhaps if, in fact, these points of order were raised on a previous day, a Thursday, they might be best dealt with on the following Tuesday, which is a private member's day, rather than a Monday, which is a day dedicated for government business.

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: Well, of course the Chair is in the hands of the Assembly. The Chair was only attempting to try to deal with these matters as soon as possible, and if there is some agreement in the Assembly as to when the Chair should make its rulings, the Chair is happy to . . .

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, if that were to be the case, then clearly if the Government House Leader raises a point of order and asks for a ruling, you would have to do the rulings of his points of order on a government day. I would say that it probably washes out, and it's kind of a silly consideration. I'd just as soon that you rule when you can, as soon as you can, because it's in the interests of all members of this House that it runs smoothly. When we raise a point of order, it's because we think it needs to be raised.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. DECORE: This isn't something that's staged, that you plan for a certain day. The responsibility on us as members of the opposition is to rise on a point of order or a matter of privilege at the earliest opportunity, and I would like to suggest that the logic only follows that the Speaker must respond as quickly as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head:

### Orders of the Day

head:

### Government Bills and Orders

head:

### Third Reading

#### Bill 7

### Alberta Energy Company Act Repeal Act

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to rise and move third reading of Bill 7, the Alberta Energy Company Act Repeal Act.

It gives me great pride to put this legislation forward. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 7 read a third time]

head:

### Government Bills and Orders

head:

### Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could the committee come to order. First of all, for the benefit of those people in the gallery, this is Committee of the Whole. This is an informal part of the Assembly where members can move around and converse very quietly with one another and may even go back and forth across the way.

#### Bill 8

### School Amendment Act, 1993

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, normally when we start Committee of the Whole the minister concerned makes his or her comments, but we've been asked to make a slight deviation from that because of time constraints. There is apparent agreement that the Minister of Labour is going to begin comments. Is that in agreement?

MR. HENRY: I'm not sure the minister agrees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think this side knows better than this side what the agreement is.

In any event, with your indulgence, unless someone objects, the Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just had a few brief comments on one item. I wanted also to extend thanks to the Member for Edmonton-Centre for accommodating my schedule. I can't comment on myself being absent; that's out of order. So thank you for that indulgence.

Just a few remarks to the minister in terms of the concerns surrounding home education. First of all, I think it's good that we recognize that overall this is a fairly striking phenomenon that has hit North America over the last 10 or 12 years, maybe 15 years. There have always been elements of home education, but it's really accelerated over the last decade or so. For the most part we're dealing with very responsible parents, because they have to be highly committed to take on a process of educating their own children and all the ramifications of that. As with anything, there's always going to be those in any group who aren't as responsible as the main core, but for the most part it's recognized even by universities and colleges who accept people coming through home education programs that there's a high degree of responsibility here. So these are largely the individuals we're dealing with in terms of looking at regulation.

There also could be an argument made in terms of a dollar saving to the taxpayers, since the grant still goes to the particular area or jurisdiction in which those students reside. At the most, depending on the agreement that a student has or parents have with a board, in many cases a nonresident board, some amount of those dollars are passed on but not all. So there is a dollar saving there.

Some of the difficulty arises from the fact that our law does allow for home education to take place, which of course is only right, but there are many superintendents who have difficulty in terms of trying to assess or how to allow a home education program to go ahead in their area. I'm sensitive to the difficulties faced by superintendents, because they are charged with the responsibility to make sure that students in their jurisdiction are being educated and they need to have that responsibility accounted for. So they do take that on with some degree of diligence. Where the difficulties run in, of course, is where there are philosophic differences between, let's say, the superintendent and the parents themselves. There may be philosophic differences with the curricula that are being used. That's why it is good and important to have some clear guidelines so that superintendents can fulfill their role. They will be required of the minister to determine if students are being educated but also to be sensitive to the primary role and the primary responsibility of the parents, and that is to acknowledge that they have that primary right and that this is a partnership situation; it's not somebody lording something over someone else.

That's why in looking at regulations we need to be careful. I believe there are a number of instruments that can be used and are being used by home educators in determining growth and in determining advancement educationally. We need to be careful that we don't just narrow ourselves necessarily to – for instance, for the programs – the instruments that are used in grades 3, 6, and 9 in the public system and then directly apply those in every case in the home education system, because in fact with different rates of acceleration, with students on different curriculum those particular tests may not be valid instruments.

Home educators also have a concern that their students would be required to take the tests in an actual school setting, as unfair

a disadvantage as requiring students in a public school to go into a home where they don't know the people and asking them to write a test there. These are some things that need to be taken into consideration.

Instruments such as the Canadian test of basic skills and other generic instruments can measure growth and measure progress. That's really what we're talking about, measuring progress. I think as much leeway as possible needs to be given in those situations.

3:00

I'll just close by also saying that I know members of the home education associations around the province do appreciate the opportunity for as much input and consultation as possible and that we move carefully, because I believe there's been an advancement over the last few years in terms of home educators coming out of the closet, if I can use that term. Before they lived in fear of having unsympathetic superintendents maybe not being understanding of the program that they were using. I think there's been some development there. I think through the home educator associations there's been some advancement in terms of trust, and we need to continue to build carefully on that, not to see that bridged.

With those comments I'll close and will keep an eye on the upcoming committee discussion.

Thanks again to the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. That was a bit of a departure. Now we'll go back to the form, and that is that we'd ask the Minister of Education for his comments. Would the minister care to make any comments?

MR. JONSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take a few minutes in Committee of the Whole, as promised during my concluding remarks in second reading, to respond to some of the specific concerns that were raised by hon. members during that debate.

First of all, I'd like to provide comment on remarks made by the Member for West Yellowhead. The Member for West Yellowhead had raised a concern regarding the repeal of section 39. As I indicated in the initial comments on the Bill, school boards already have the power to determine if health service is needed. This particular section of the legislation, which is at the end of the legislation, was put in for a particular purpose several decades ago: to deal essentially with the application and administration of public health services, such as immunization. The need for that particular provision has been, I think, negated largely by the passage of public health legislation in this province which makes it clear that a school board may designate a school board or a school site as a site or an agency that is entitled to and must in fact provide the necessary public health services.

The Member for West Yellowhead also raised a point with respect to the place of employees when this particular piece of legislation comes into place, particularly as it applies to the matter of the moving of employees under the jurisdiction of another authority or school board. I'd just like to mention, Mr. Chairman, that Bill 8 is essentially the former Bill 41, and with respect to regional divisions it is identical to Bill 41. I would, however, like to remind the members of the opposition of my reference to Bill 41 as the Bill which passed through Committee of the Whole on May 3, 1993. After an extensive consultation process a number of amendments were made to Bill 41 between introduction in 1992 and Committee of the Whole debate in 1993. You will note that the reference to transfer of employees is now the subject of a regional agreement under section 208.1(c). As well, section 213

of the School Act guarantees the transfer of all teachers when all the resident students of one board are transferred to another board.

Also raised by this hon. member was the issue of supervision of home schooling students by willing nonresident boards. As I have indicated, Mr. Chairman, the regulations that follow through from this particular section of the School Act are under review. I would like to mention, though, that a couple of the comments, perhaps not intended that way, could prove to be not quite accurate. It's not quite fair to say that the supervision of home schooling students is being conducted at, I think the number was, an 800-kilometre distance. Some of the willing nonresident boards do have certified personnel who are located in local communities near the students that are being supervised. Therefore, for some of these nonresident boards the board administration offices may well be at a great distance, but there are assigned supervisors in the local area.

I do have to take some umbrage with the remark that supervision and the nature of the supervision of home schooling was not part of the recent series of meetings on this particular topic. Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure members of the committee that the topic of supervision was included in these meetings held in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge, and certainly supervision by willing nonresident boards formed a substantial part of that discussion.

The Member for West Yellowhead also asked a question as to whether the amendment dealing with section 12 and school fees is retroactive to December 31, 1988. I think this has to be put in the proper context. Students and their parents, their parents mainly being responsible, have paid fees in this province for decades and decades and decades. I think you would find some perhaps very minor fee with the very beginning of public schools in this province. This has carried on through the decades until in 1990 a technical matter was raised with respect to section 44. This was that section 44 omitted to specifically refer to the responsibility of the parent in this regard. That vacuum in the School Act was taken as a significant issue in a legal case of that year. Consequently, in this particular amendment, Mr. Chairman, we are trying to correct something which we regarded as having been a given for a long time. However, we acknowledge the ruling of the court, and we feel that it is important to make this clarification in the legislation.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Calgary-Currie expressed a concern that teachers in the Francophone regions that, it is proposed, will result from this legislation may not have the same opportunity for in-service as teachers in the public and separate school systems. I would have to acknowledge that when any new school jurisdiction is established with a different character from the existing system, there is the challenge of providing adequate in-service and related services as far as the operation of those schools is concerned. However, I think this is a challenge that the new jurisdictions will have to face. They will have in the Edmonton regional area, for instance, if a regional authority is established there, some 1,100 students, it is projected, and as many as five schools. That is as large as some of our existing jurisdictions. Once the transition is worked through, I think that adequate in-service opportunities will be available.

### 3:10

The Member for Calgary-Currie also had a question with respect to the issue of what happens to assets currently held by public or separate school boards when a Francophone regional authority is created. I would draw the hon. member's attention to sections 223.3(4) and (5) of Bill 8, which deal with the transfer of assets and liabilities when an authority is established. Essentially the Bill

envisages the two parties involved sitting down and negotiating an agreement acceptable to both parties. If an agreement cannot be reached – and we hope this will not be the case – the minister under section 223.3(5) can make an order with respect to assets and liabilities. Certainly, Mr. Chairman, I acknowledge that there will be a considerable amount of work involved in this. There will have to be negotiations and give-and-take, but such negotiations have taken place in other circumstances over the distribution of assets, and we think it is quite viable to propose them here.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Edmonton-Centre raised a concern with respect to section 39 being proposed to be removed, and I think I provided a reply in response to a previous question I referred to.

The Member for Edmonton-Centre also mentioned the whole area of private schools, but I think this was really not a technical question, and it perhaps will be the topic of more debate here in committee.

I would like to respond, if I could, to the Member for Red Deer-North. There was one specific item raised in his remarks with respect to administering testing. I have stated that I feel that home schooling students should be taking the provincial achievement tests. They're quite general tests, but they do have some references, certainly in a subject such as social studies, to the Alberta curriculum. I think, Mr. Chairman, it is quite reasonable to expect such achievement testing to take place. As far as the location of testing perhaps being in schools, I know that this is a different location from where these students take their studies. On the other hand, we have many circumstances in modern society for adults, also for young people, where they have to go to another location to take an examination or a test of some type. That can be an examination with respect to something such as figure skating, or it could be for a drivers examination. I think a neutral testing ground is not unreasonable.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat proposed that Francophone education should be funded at the same rate as private schools; that is, 75 percent of provincial grants for which they're eligible. I would just like to indicate, Mr. Chairman, that court judgments have made it clear that under the Charter such an educational system, a Francophone educational authority which would be part of an overall Francophone education system, must be paid for out of public funds in the manner of the public school system.

The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat also mentioned that he would like to see certain definite numbers established as to when the establishment of a school jurisdiction would be legitimate. I can only say there, Mr. Chairman, that the court judgments have indicated that this has to be dealt with in a flexible way. I think the term is a sliding scale. Such things as urban and rural population concentrations must be taken into consideration, and that is the position we're working from there.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

One other item that I'd like to refer to, Mr. Chairman, was a question with respect to the amalgamation of school boards posed by the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. I would just like to indicate very quickly in debate that I think any term within reason can be used to apply to a group of school boards that might amalgamate. However, it is not envisioned in this legislation that we would have superboards. I'm interpreting superboards to perhaps mean a board with a hundred thousand students or more,

perhaps five or six or so in the province. As I indicated in the initial debate, we think there is an interest on the part of local school boards in looking at this alternative. Certainly there seems to be considerable public support and for that matter support among school boards for a move in this direction. This is legislation which provides a structure for that to occur.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to express also my thanks to the minister for providing that additional information.

A couple of points. I don't have a major quarrel – I don't have any quarrel, frankly – with the section of Bill 8 that deals with governance of Francophone education. We talked about those reasons in second reading, and I won't go over them again.

I do want to reiterate, Mr. Chairman, that this Bill has a number of different issues all related to the School Act, with varying issues all contained within this piece of legislation. While some I find quite supportable, others I have some serious questions about.

I appreciate the comments the minister made – I believe it's section 39 – regarding the enabling provision allowing school boards to provide health services. I take the minister, as always, at his word that this is simply intended to reflect the current reality and not intended to try to pull something off on health unit boards or other health authorities. I'm willing to accept that explanation.

Mr. Chairman, I also thank the minister for his comments respecting the retroactivity of the section on school fees. I recognize that we're trying to correct a loophole that was in the legislation. To reiterate: our concern and my concern specifically is that we don't want to see a situation where school boards are inappropriately using that retroactivity to go back at parents and try to collect fees that have not been collected to date. I would hope that if that were to happen the minister would intervene at that point and would ensure that this is simply to allow for fees that have already been collected and not to try to send enormous bills to parents for disputed fees in the past. I see the minister nodding. I am going to assume that that's nodding in agreement, and I will hold the minister to that in the future. [interjection] The minister is going to check and get back to us. I don't think anybody in this House wants to see parents having to face thousands of dollars in retroactive bills, and we do recognize a loophole in the legislation. Again I want to be on record very clearly that in the best of all worlds we would have universal access to education without any fees at all. I recognize the financial situation that the minister is under, the government is under, as well as school boards are more increasingly under. I'm willing to accept this simply because of a reality, not in principle.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize that the minister has also addressed the issue of school boards supervising home schoolers that are hundreds of miles away. His response to that indicated that those boards did have local teachers closer to provide that kind of supervision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wonder if the hon. members could carry on their conversations in the lounges. We're having difficulty hearing the speaker.

Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would have thought all members of the House would be hanging on my every word. I'm totally shattered that that's not the case today, and I'm totally shattered that there are laughs from my own side of the House.

However, getting back to the issue at hand, which is the issue of willing nonresident school boards providing supervision of home schoolers, there is a fundamental flaw here. I pointed out to the minister that while I acknowledge that those willing nonresident school boards, if I can call them that, are hiring teachers that are closer to those students and not necessarily resident in the school district, the reality is that they are not being hired as teachers. They are being hired as home school supervisors. My understanding, therefore, from the ATA with respect to ethical guidelines and monitoring is that the ATA does not have jurisdiction. Their guidelines and their ethical standards do not apply in that circumstance. So they are not really being employed as teachers in that circumstance. Most often in those cases they are teachers who are in essence moonlighting by having a couple of students that they are supervising in home schooling. ATA tells me that their ethical guidelines and their ethical monitoring do not apply to that section when they are moonlighting, providing home schooling. I think that's a problem. I'm not suggesting that teachers who are moonlighting aren't ethical or aren't trying to provide their job, but there is a loophole there. I suggest we need to address that and watch it.

3:20

Other issues, Mr. Chairman. The minister's also addressed the issue of employees, and there is a flaw there as well. I recognize amendments to Bill 41, and I recognize that we've seen the issue taken from one of mandate – that all employees, when we're talking about amalgamation or regionalized boards, are transferred. We are now referred to I believe section 31 of the School Act. If I can take a moment to verify that. I'm wrong on that. However, there's a section of the School Act that does refer to the fact that when students are transferred, the teachers are transferred. That doesn't address the issue of the other employees: the clerical staff, the janitorial staff, the other nonteaching staff of the school jurisdictions. I'll talk about that a little bit later.

Mr. Chairman, specifically the issue of home schooling. I reiterate: if we're not ready to provide the regulation and the supervision with regard to home schooling, the revisions that are being talked about now, if we're not ready to lay those on the table, before acknowledging that we have a problem in supervising home schooling, then why are we changing the legislation to expand the supervision of home schooling to private schools when we know we have a problem? We all acknowledge there is a problem in terms of supervision and monitoring.

I recognize that the minister has indicated that he will delay proclamation of that section of the Bill. I would think a more reasonable way to go would be to remove that section of the Bill at this point, and when we see tightened-up regulations to allow for adequate monitoring and supervision of home schoolers, then bring an amendment back to the Assembly to amend the School Act again to discuss the addition of other supervisors. We have a problem. We haven't fixed it. All we're going to do is compound it unless we are sure. Frankly, aside from ideological or philosophical questions, as a representative of Edmonton-Centre I'm being asked to extend the provision of the supervision of home schoolers to private schools. I'm being asked to vote for that totally on faith that the government will tighten up the regulations and that there is a review happening. I have a real problem with that.

Again, aside from the philosophical or ideological differences, if I were a major proponent of private school operation and public funding to private schools, I would still have difficulty supporting expanding the home schooling provision to include private schools when we all know there's a problem in home schooling, and I

haven't seen the solution laid on the table. If the minister at some point during committee would be willing to table draft regulations that would tighten that up, that might help some of us on this side of the House a bit further. However, we haven't seen that. We know a review is happening, but there is a problem. We haven't seen the resolution, and we're being asked to support a measure that may in fact compound that problem significantly before we see if the problem can be fixed.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the provision expanding home schooling to private schools, I'd like to make it clear that I have a philosophical difference here. In regard to the nonresident school board supervision, I think that's wrong. I think the public school system needs to be supported. I think the public school system needs to be strengthened. I think there's room for diversity in the public school system. There are situations both in Edmonton, Calgary, and elsewhere in the province where parents who want a bit of a different education, perhaps with some religious component or ethnocultural component, are able to work with the public – and I use that term in terms of public/separate – system in our province to be able to find a home for their particular thrust in education within that public system. I think we should be encouraging people to use the public system and to strengthen it and make it work better.

I'm not about to say that the public system's perfect. There are problems in the public system, but education is fundamentally a public utility, and society and every person in it and every legislator in this Assembly has a responsibility to ensure that public dollars are used for the public good. I no more support increased funding to private schools, and I tangentially will reiterate that I'm not advocating a reduction in funding to private schools – what's done is done – but we can't be expanding the role of private schools in our province when we have a public system that is accessible to everybody and that allows for those differences.

Mr. Chairman, it is vitally important for me as a parent of three young children, one about to enter the public school system, to ensure that my children have an opportunity not only for quality education but an opportunity to be with other children who perhaps have different backgrounds than our family does, whose parents perhaps have slightly different values than I have. If we're going to build a society that goes beyond just tolerance and understanding but a society that values differences, then we have to do it with our young children. That starts with the school system or even before, if we can do it. I'm fundamentally and totally committed to that. I believe parents do have some rights in our society. I'd like to see some of those rights strengthened in some areas. I believe parents should have the right to determine the kind of education if they're not happy with the public/separate system in our province.

I'll acknowledge to you, Mr. Chairman, that in looking for a school for my children, I couldn't find one that was frankly good enough, or I couldn't find one that was exactly the match that I needed for my children. I thought, well, perhaps what I can do is choose to send them to a private school, and there are private schools that perhaps more closely reflect my and my partner's personal beliefs and values. However, I shouldn't expect you, Mr. Chairman, or other taxpayers in this province to pay for that choice. That's the issue here: whether we're going to use public dollars to subsidize a private choice.

Mr. Chairman, there is no perfect education system. I'm committed to the public education system. I want to see some reform in the public education system. I want to see some changes in the public education system. Frankly, I'd like to see some changes that more specifically reflect the needs my children

have. It's my responsibility as a parent, as a taxpayer, as a community person to get involved in that system, to talk with the teachers in that system, to talk with the parents, to talk with the school trustees and the Minister of Education to say that these are the kinds of things that I would like to see changed in our education system. However, if we are not going to build a two-tiered education system in our province, if we're not going to build a system that encourages private choice using public money, then I think we have to ensure that education is provided by the public system.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to propose an amendment. My amendment is relative to section 6 of the Bill.

I have copies that I would like to have distributed. Section 6 currently reads that section 23(1)(b) is amended by adding “or a private school accredited under section 22(2)” after the word “board.” Mr. Chairman, I would like to delete that section and add the following: in which the student is . . .

**3:30**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I wonder if we could just wait a moment while the pages circulate the amendment, and then they'll be able to make more meaning from your words.

MR. HENRY: Perhaps if I read it into the record and then sat and waited.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

MR. HENRY: My substitution would be:

in which the student is resident, or in the case of a separate school district, by that which is closest to the student's place of residence after “board.”

I'll wait until everybody's had a chance to look at it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you. Speaking to the amendment, Mr. Chairman, having read it into the record, the intent of the amendment is very clear. The amendment is designed, number one, to eliminate the proposed provision to extend supervision of home schoolers to private schools and, number two, to address the issue of willing, nonresident boards supervising home schoolers. This would require that if a parent made a choice to educate their child at home, home schooling, they would have the choice of either going to the public school division in their locale, in their community, or if they were of a minority faith and they wished to use a separate school, they could transfer jurisdictions if there was not a separate school in their jurisdiction. I hope it's clear what the intent is.

Mr. Chairman, this is to address, as I was suggesting earlier, the fundamental issue that public dollars are for public education; period. Public dollars are not for private choice. If I went and had a visit with the minister of transportation across the way here and said, “You know, I really don't use the Whitemud freeway very much in Edmonton, or perhaps I don't use Highway 2 as much as some people in this Assembly might, so could I please have a little bit of that money so that I can improve Rowland Road, which I use a bit more?” the minister of transportation may well laugh at me for that, and so he should. Provision of roads and services in our province – I see the minister smiling for the first time in a long time – the provision of a public utility is exactly that, and I fail to understand the argument about how we can take any public utility, especially education, and start fragmenting it and saying, “Well, we have a public utility, but on

the other hand we also have a private choice, which we'll use public dollars to fund." It doesn't make sense on roads; it doesn't make sense in education.

Mr. Chairman, evidence has shown time and time again that if we use public dollars to support private education, we are going to end up with a two-tiered system. We will end up with two fundamental problems. Number one, we will end up with segregation, and segregation breeds intolerance, segregation breeds distrust, and segregation breeds problems for our society as a whole. Our education system is forming the society of our future, and it is important for people to know each other, to work together, and to understand each other in order for our society to have a healthy and harmonious future. If we encourage a system that encourages segregation, we encourage problems down the road. It is important to recognize education as a public utility. It is important to recognize that when we're providing home schooling, home schooling supervision is best provided by the school jurisdiction in which the person lives. That does allow for differences in the system.

In the riding of Lacombe-Stettler, I know there are schools that operate within the public system that are quite fine and that allow for differences. I know that happens in Edmonton, I know that happens in Calgary, and I've personally been involved in some of those systems and viewed them, but they are under the jurisdiction of a public system which ensures that the maximum public good is created for the maximum dollar.

Mr. Chairman, with those comments, I will sit down and invite comment from the other side or, indeed, from my colleagues with regard to this specific amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Hon. members will note that we are on the amendment now. Those who wish to speak on the original Bill have generally indicated to me that they will not be speaking on the amendment.

So on the amendment, Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I listened with great interest to Edmonton-Centre's comments. Quite frankly, I do have a very, very large degree of sympathy for where he's coming from with respect to the need, shall we say, to maintain and to preserve public education in the forefront.

The tax dollars that we collect and earmark for various programs I suppose should go, according to most people, including Edmonton-Centre, towards providing for the majority. We are, however, in a democratic society. We have over the years encouraged people to come and participate and try to make the public system better. When I refer to the public system, just for the record, Mr. Chairman, I'm referring to both the public and the separate schools, because they are both funded equally from the same dollars.

However, the intention of section 6 appears to be, from my point of view at any rate, to extend the right to handle home schooling to all accredited schools. Now, the accredited schools that we have in this province are the public and the so-called separate, which can be either Roman Catholic or, in fact, public, depending upon how they got started. The other group of accredited schools which exist are the private accredited schools. I would suggest, then, that the issue here is one of whether we remain consistent and let the home schooling go to all accredited schools or we turn around and say, no, we are going to give different accredited schools different levels of involvement.

I think the whole issue, if you will, of how far private schools should be involved in the delivery of education is one that's worthy of debate. Were the private schools, when they asked for

private schools, indicating at that time that in fact they would be best serving the students within the confines of their walls? Are the private schools now saying that they can offer the same program or want to offer this same program outside of the buildings which they initially said are what they need? I suppose it's a philosophical point of view that can be looked at from various different points of view, and I think it's something that we should look at very carefully. However, if we're going to do that, we'd better make sure that we are addressing the issue. The amendment as suggested in section 6 is strictly being quite up front and is stating quite clearly that the view here is that if you are an accredited school in this province, then you will have the right to deliver home schooling.

### 3:40

The issue that Edmonton-Centre is bringing into it, however, is the philosophical one of whether or not private schools should do home schooling, whether or not the involvement of private schools in home schooling is going to in fact erode the public dollars more. I find a bit of difficulty with that particular argument, because if we look at the amendment as it's proposed, the one that the minister is proposing, section 23(1) states:

A parent of a student may provide, at home or elsewhere, a home education program for the student if the program is under the supervision of a board.

The minister's amendment would immediately then say "or a private school," and it goes very specifically to "accredited under section 22(2)." The amendment as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Centre would twist it. It would now read, after "is under the supervision of a board,"

in which the student is resident, or in the case of a separate school district, by that which is closest to the student's place of residence, and on and on and on.

Mr. Chairman, right now we don't have a restriction on whether or not a student chooses a private accredited school. That choice is strictly up to the family and the parents. Right now we have a situation whereby if a board chooses to enter into home schooling programs, there are no restrictions as to where these students may enlist for home schooling. I have a problem with that, and I'm sure the minister is going to be addressing that issue, likely under regulations, because we have situations where the boards are using home schooling as revenue generation, based on the fact that boards may be literally hundreds of miles from their students. That is a very separate issue, and we get back to the philosophical one as to whether or not private schools should be there.

That's really what this amendment that the Member for Edmonton-Centre is proposing. He is saying that we had better start treating accredited private schools differently, even though we've recognized that they can deliver programs, we've recognized that they are, in the view of Alberta Education, providing a program that's acceptable to the department. If they were not, they would not be accredited. These are the very same schools that have been contracted out by other boards already. There are private schools that are currently doing home schooling as sub-contractors to other boards. If I'm in error on that statement, Mr. Minister, please correct me. The minister is looking at this and looking at a reality. Should we extend the same area of activity to private schools that currently exists for the public domain? I find it very difficult to follow Edmonton-Centre's argument that this would somehow take away from the board's public moneys, because I would assume that that student may be going to a private school already. If he is not, then I suppose we should be looking at how far away that private school is, which is a different issue, the same way we would look at how far the separate school



board or the public school board that are in the home schooling business are located from their students.

I think that the Member for Edmonton-Centre's bringing up of the amendment is very good. I don't think the amendment is very good, but his bringing it up is timely in that it brings into focus quite clearly how some people feel about the relationship of the public funding of education and the threats that are perceived with respect to taking away some of that funding. Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that home schooling takes dollars out of school boards' pockets. It's quite clear that the only ones who benefit are the ones who have abused the system and have manipulated the rules to make them into revenue generators. Perhaps there should be some consideration given. How that would be done is that the supervision of home schooling students does not ever enter into a revenue-generating situation for any school board, whether they be public or private. Perhaps the policies or the regulations surrounding how a student gets into home schooling should be tightened up significantly. Perhaps we should look at other areas that deal with this whole problem of what we expect our schools to do.

I would close by stating quite simply, Mr. Chairman, that I can't support the amendment as it's written simply on the basis that it would tend to discriminate within our own system against the accreditation that we have put in place. If we're going to entertain amendments of this nature, then perhaps we should be addressing how we accredit private schools.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the amendment, West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I totally concur with the Member for Stony Plain that there is a vast need for lots of regulations in the matter of home schooling to tighten up what is at best at present a very chaotic situation. I'm sure the minister is attempting to do just that. However, this particular section of Bill 8 really doesn't do anything to solve any problems as far as I can gauge. Therefore I'm speaking – in case you hadn't noticed – firmly in favour of this amendment.

I think the problem that the minister is trying to solve is to get rid of the unseemly competition throughout the province by public and separate boards for the funds that are provided on behalf of home schooling students. They do that by outbidding one another, by promising vast amounts being rebated to the parents who sign up with them. Even though the minister has said that some of these boards do have traveling or even resident supervisors, I think the qualifications of these people are somewhat suspect. I think the Member for Edmonton-Centre has already spoken about that, quite articulately I thought.

It seems to me that the real problem that should be dealt with is the fact that we speak of willing and unwilling boards. What I don't understand is: why don't we make sure that the resident boards, either public or separate, look after these students? If by law we allow parents this particular option, then surely the resident school boards ought to look after these parents and students.

Mr. Chairman, I'm very familiar with one jurisdiction that I used to work in. It happens to be the Yellowhead school division. I know there are close to 200 students on home schooling being looked after by that particular jurisdiction. They have a supervisor, and I think they have two full-time employees, teachers, who travel around every day, visit all the students. If I'm not mistaken, they guarantee pretty well a minimum of two visits per month to each of the students. Testing is done. They extend help. If after, say, two months of nonperformance these people haven't spruced up their act, they are simply taken off the home schooling roles, and they are forced to go back to school if they are not yet 16

years old. Quite frankly, that seems to make sense. But then to allow, as at present of course, boards from all over the province to recruit these parents and students I don't think makes sense. Then to throw private schools into the fray, which means that conceivably a private school in Medicine Hat could recruit in High Level and so on, doesn't seem to solve the problem at all. I have nothing against private schools, but I don't think that we ought to throw them into this fray at all.

3:50

So this is not a desirable situation, and I think that because of all the bidding, we will see worse situations, whereby probably private schools as well as existing school boards who enter into that particular what I would call racket will up their bidding and probably promise greater rewards to parents who sign up with them. So we're no further ahead, educationally speaking. Parents aren't ahead, educationally speaking. If that is the basis for parents to sign up with a particular school board without being assured of good supervision, then the whole home schooling thing doesn't work. It's as simple as that. No. I think if this amendment isn't passed, the problem will continue and probably grow worse.

Very simply put, I don't think private schools ought to be in the business of supervising home schooling students. As I think the Member for Stony Plain mentioned, private schools are in the business of giving a special, private education within the walls of their institution, and that's where it should stay. I think, rather, that the minister should beef up the requirements that resident boards be willing, instead of allowing them to be unwilling, and deal with these people.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge members on this side and the other side to vote in favour of the amendment.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Medicine Hat, on the amendment.

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I listened with interest to the remarks by both previous speakers, and I think they both had some valid comments. I'd just like to clarify a few things in my own mind and just point out my perception of the home schooling situation.

I think both members have identified part of the dilemma that the minister is dealing with in this case, in that we have home school operators that are shopping around at the present time. This amendment would require them to stay home and shop, so to speak. Then, at the same time, if they are shopping around, why are we penalizing the private school operators from getting involved in the whole thing? I guess I've never been involved in the home schooling process, but it would seem very natural to me that if I were going to be involved in home schooling for some reason, I would be dissatisfied with the resident school board. That's why I would establish a home schooling situation, for whatever reason – there is not a private school available to me in my jurisdiction, or I can't afford to send my children to a private school, but I have a basic philosophy that I want my children educated in a certain way – and my philosophy maybe doesn't suit the resident school board, be it public school or separate school. I think that by requiring someone who, for whatever reason, chooses to educate their children in a home school environment to associate and be supervised by the resident school board really goes against the reason that they wished to set up the home school in the first place.

Now, we have a number of private schools around the province that are set up. Certainly their primary objective is to educate

children, but they also have a basic philosophy in mind when they set these up. I just attended the opening of a brand-new private school in Medicine Hat this past weekend. I was most impressed. This is a school that will offer education to children that . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Are your children there?

MR. RENNEN: No, I didn't have any children in that school.

This school is addressed to provide education for children that have experienced difficulties in learning in the standard school situation. There is a teacher/student ratio much lower than what they would get in a public school situation. They have special teaching techniques for children that have learning disabilities of one kind or another. I was most impressed with this school. Now, if I had children in another jurisdiction who had the same problems that this school was addressing, but for one reason or another I couldn't take my children to this school, be it a distance problem or any other, but I agreed with the philosophy of this school, then I should be entitled to ask this school to help supervise the home teaching of my children.

I think we have to give credit where credit is due: to the parents that take on the huge, onerous task of home schooling. This is not, I'm sure, a decision that they take lightly, so if they are involved in the home schooling situation, I think we have to give them the right to choose the regulatory authority that has the same philosophy or a philosophy similar to their own. If we didn't do so, then we would be really defeating the purpose of allowing them to have the home schooling situation, and we might as well disallow home schooling entirely.

This amendment really doesn't address that situation. If there's a basic concern with home schooling, then the amendment should relate to that: you should do away with home schooling altogether. I think what Bill 8 is proposing to do is give much greater access to people who choose home schooling and give them the ability to find a school, be it a public school or a private school, that fits the philosophy of their home schooling program.

I therefore will be voting against the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to support this amendment. I think that the amendment has two very important concepts. One of those concepts is supervision, and the second concept is place: where does that supervision take place?

I think that allowing the shopping for a supervisory board is not really taking the whole business of monitoring or program monitoring very seriously. We don't allow public or separate school teachers to opt out of supervision by their own board and look elsewhere for more sympathetic eyes, so I don't quite understand why home schoolers are going to be allowed this particular option. I think what this amendment tries to do is tighten up the Act. I think, in terms of supervision, that supervision even under the very best of conditions is very difficult, and if it is to be anything more than tokenism, it has to be taken much more seriously than what we have seen thus far in the province.

If you look at a couple of examples, the Assumption Catholic school district solved its financial woes in 1991 by registering 94 home schoolers from Calgary, Red Deer, and elsewhere in the province, and their own elementary school was down to 28 students. An official from Alberta Education said: if school boards start to use this as a way of generating revenue, then I guess we'll have to look at it, because we didn't create home

schooling to be cash cows for school districts. The Alberta Catholic Home Schooler Association went so far as to release a survey listing the most accommodating school boards, in which "accommodating" was defined as those boards who will accept nonresident students, reimburse the parents a portion of the school foundation program fund, and will be least interfering in the educational process. Well, good supervision often results in interference in the educational process. I think, again, that supervision is critical in this amendment, and it's critical to the success of the Act.

We have some examples in our province where, even under the best of conditions, supervision wasn't adequate, and most of us still look at the Keegstra affair as a result of monitoring that wasn't effective and monitoring that did go awry. I think if you look at what happens in the classrooms of most youngsters in our province in public and Roman Catholic school districts, they are under constant supervision. Whether it's principals dropping into classrooms, whether it's other teachers listening to what's going on in their classrooms, whether it's parents dropping in, nurses, other personnel in the school, they are under the eye of other people in the school constantly. That's not the case with home schoolers; they operate in splendid isolation.

4:00

To be effective, I think monitoring has to be constant, it has to be continuous, and it also has to be done by people who are knowledgeable. I take that very seriously. Schooling is a technically and intellectually complex affair, and I hope we wouldn't want people who weren't the very best in those homes making judgments about the quality of programs.

I think the other thing this amendment talks about is place. Later in the Act we're going to talk about the distance of monitors from the families they're going to monitor. But even when schools are located geographically close, it's hard enough to monitor what goes on. I think to have students strung out across the province in a variety of homes and supervisors traveling to them would be a mistake.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Bow Valley, on the amendment.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are several points I would like to bring up with regards to this amendment. The first point, and apparently the intention of the amendment if I read the amendment correctly, is to have the children involved in home schooling supervised by the closest geographic school board.

I would like to make one point. Giving a bit of background, I have five school boards in my constituency. Some of these school boards are extremely small, others are large, and others have large geographic areas. The point I would like to bring up is that many of these school boards are not set up to actively supervise home schooling. The question then arises: should there or should there not be home schooling? I think by law we now have the right for children to be schooled at home. It is my feeling that the home schooling children can be supervised best by school boards that are set up to actively supervise them at home. That may be from a distance. I've talked extensively with school boards in my constituency, and they feel they are not set up to do this. I think it's an idea like the correspondence school, where there is specialization in this type of supervision. The private school boards or public school boards that are prepared to make that commitment will do it better than the school boards that physically are geographically close to the home schooling student.

The next point I would like to raise is the matter about the private school boards versus public school boards. They do go through an accreditation process, and this process determines whether or not they are able to educate children properly. I would think, if this amendment is passed, that the private school board accreditation process would also have to be looked at quite extensively, and I don't think that's warranted.

The last point I would like to bring up is addressing the opinion of the hon. member opposite about active supervision. I'm sure many people sitting in the Legislature today who have gone to university know it is an extremely common practice to go to the first class and go to the last class of the year and write the exam. The education is done at home, with the student studying on his own. This would be an example of a first-year university student, which is not much different from grade 12, a matter of two months' difference. I therefore feel this amendment is not in keeping with the best interests of the students, the best interests of the school board, and the best interests of the education system.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm rising to speak in favour of this amendment to the Bill. I do so on a number of grounds. I certainly support the rights of parents to choose how their children are going to be educated, and I certainly support the status quo as it pertains now to home schooling. My concerns with regards to the Bill and why I support this amendment are the following. We are seeing active bidding by these school boards for children, and this bidding inevitably is going to be at the cost of supervision and monitoring. I think it's just the dynamics of that particular marketplace. When you see school boards thriving on the basis of having home schooling as their revenue base, something is sadly wrong. The issue then becomes: how can you ensure that children do get the supervision and that we have the monitoring in place to ensure that those children are ready to proceed through our society and have, in fact, received the level of education that we've promised them and that they need to be competitive in this economy?

So I think what is emerging here, sort of incrementally, is not in the best interests of the province as a whole and may not be in the best interests of some of these children who are going through the home schooling route. I'm surprised that in some sense we do not have a data base that tells us anything about the progression of children through the home schooling rate and success ratios. That would certainly give us a much better idea of which of these boards are not only friendly but not doing their job. The fact that we now see boards advertising themselves as being accommodating is, I think, frightening. I think it's just sending out the wrong signals.

The second issue draws upon remarks from the hon. Member for Medicine Hat. It may well be the case that parents do have a philosophical basis they want to pitch for their children and they view the school board as being unfriendly, but it is the obligation of that school board to meet the needs of the children in that area. There has to be either appeal mechanisms or some vehicle in place through which school boards that don't meet their obligations to parents with regards to home schooling are somehow brought to task. This strikes me as a substitute for a more direct approach of hammering those school boards that are not fulfilling the needs of students. I'd much prefer to see the issue tackled head-on: if there are boards in place that are not meeting the legitimate requests of parents with regards to home schooling, they're dealt with, and a generic appeal mechanism is put up so that issues that

deal with personality conflicts, issues of curriculum can be met and assessed on an arm's-length basis. In the absence of that, I then view this amendment as being the next best alternative, so I stand in support of the amendment.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I speak to this with some trepidation, because I recognize a number of members in the Chamber are professional educators and have served on large school boards and so on. But I want to give my perspective. One of the things I'm always concerned about is anything that in my view may tend to undermine or diminish the role of a strong public school system. I just digress to say that in my inner-city constituency of Calgary-Buffalo, there's a very, very large number of immigrant children. Those children are not able to access, for the most part, any system other than the public or separate school system.

I'm always concerned and, I guess, alive to initiatives or proposals, either by legislation or by regulation, which may amount to incremental steps to in some fashion weaken or diminish the effectiveness of the public school system. As I understand the amendment and the reason I speak in favour of it, the mischief that's being addressed here is to avoid shopping for a more receptive supervising school authority. What I'm told by members and by educators, who certainly have more knowledge than I do in this area, is that supervision of home schooling now is often spotty, irregular, and overall probably inadequate. My concern is that we've heard stories – the Vermilion school board situation, the Assumption Catholic school district – where we get into the situation of virtually shopping for students. I'm particularly uncomfortable with that. It is a step away from reinforcing support for a strong public/separate school system, and for that reason, I think there has to be some effort to address what would seem to be a loss of control. I see this as being a step backwards in the Bill, and the amendment proposed by my colleague for Edmonton-Centre is simply a modest step to ensure that we don't lose control over this important aspect. I think it's easy to defend and is logical that we would impose these restrictions in terms of accreditation, the restrictions being that we look to the area where the student is resident or, in the case of a separate school district, look to the board closest to the student's place of residence. These are reasonable steps, reasonable precautions to prevent what would be an abuse, the abuse being school boards basically head-hunting. I'm uncomfortable with that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4:10

MR. CHAIRMAN: Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Chairman, one issue I want to address here doesn't seem to have been caught very well in the discussion that's gone on so far. We keep talking about the need for protection of the public school system. What we're missing, though, is the fact that parents who have chosen to put their students into home schooling situations are making a choice that deals with their focus and their perception of what education is about in line with the criteria and the guidelines we set down at the provincial level. I would like to speak against this amendment in the sense that what we're doing is eliminating some of the choices of parents who put their children into home schooling. We've got to provide them with the opportunity to make sure they

have the options to pull together all the opportunities in selecting the education system they feel best meets the needs of their students within the framework of the guidelines we've set out at a provincial level.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I'd like to comment just briefly in support of this amendment. I'd like to say at the outset that I do support home schooling and the rights of parents and students to choose this method of education. I have supported it. I think for some students it's the very best technique. Also, I want to recognize the immense role parents undertake when they choose this method. I think all too often we don't acknowledge that.

In making our own deliberations, we must keep the interests of the students paramount, not the interests of school boards. I'm not saying that in a cynical fashion, Mr. Chairman, but simply acknowledging that there is a territorial imperative and that school boards have a desire, which is healthy, to maintain their position, particularly when resources are fragile if not seriously diminished.

I support this amendment because it will strengthen the function of home schooling. I see problems related to it now as being that the regulations are not clear. I believe they leave opportunities for inequities in program control and supervision. I think the role of the willing nonresident boards is not a clear one, and there's no real centralized administration for that. I don't believe either of those problems will be ameliorated by adding private schools as an additional supervisory group.

I am hopeful that the minister will tell us today that it's his intention to develop and make public the regulations before this Act is proclaimed. I think that's absolutely essential, Mr. Chairman, for boards and for parents and students alike, because it seems to me there is evidence that there is a real need to tighten up particularly in the area of home schooling.

Mr. Chairman, I've already said that in my opinion the problem is the absence of precision in the regulations and the requirements for program control and supervision. The question I ask myself is: would this, the inclusion of private schools, enhance or detract from home schooling in general and the needs and desires of parents and students in particular? I believe it would.

We already have the problem where parents are dissatisfied with attempts to control programs and they can simply move to another willing nonresident board. We already have the problem where boards are in competition, and I believe that problem should be lessened if possible, not exacerbated, which I think will happen unless we pass this amendment. I deplore the circumstances where we have parents shopping around for a board that will go along as opposed to a board that provides them with the necessary consultation and supervision to manage their at-home student. I equally deplore the problem we have where boards shop around for home schooling students to add to their potential resources. Mr. Chairman, I want to see a situation where all resident school boards are willing to take supervisory responsibility for home schooling students and their families.

To sum up, I think the amendment will in fact improve the circumstances, but if I were someone who was part of a private school, I would certainly want to see the regulations before going any further.

Lastly, there is that little problem of a private school board not having that same line of accountability to its constituency and community that the public and Catholic boards do in our province. While I realize they are accountable to the ministry, that other

circumstance of accountability to their constituency and their community is a significant one.

I believe this amendment is a good one, Mr. Chairman, and should be supported by every member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, am in support of this amendment. My fear and concern over home schooling is the abuse by boards, that it's a marketing money-maker rather than a concern for the individuals who are a part of their home schooling program. Furthermore, if you're a bit closer, you tend to scrutinize better what parents are doing. I'd say that generally home schooling is done by parents who really are concerned about their students, but as in anything, I've seen abuse with their children. I've seen abuse as well with children who stay at home but are care givers to younger siblings while parents work. Those things should be addressed and monitored by school boards within the jurisdiction that are around more often than school boards that are quite a distance away. So that's my concern there.

I believe if we had standards across the province as to how we evaluate and monitor these students – it's more an administration problem at the government level rather than with the individual boards. I'd like to see that addressed with this. To reiterate what the member for Edmonton-Gold Bar said about private schools, I am worried that individual boards just aren't as accountable as the public schools. They don't have to be as much as public schools do. So that's my concern there.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Centre, in summation.

MR. HENRY: In summation, and I'll try to make it brief, Mr. Chairman. The intent of the amendment is to ensure that when a parent makes the choice, justifiable many times, to educate the child at home, supervision is provided by the jurisdiction that is close to that family's residence – either the public system where the family resides or, in the case where a family chooses a separate system, the closest separate system – and not by private accredited schools or private schools.

4:20

I just wanted to go on record that I'm perplexed by the Member for Stony Plain. The last time this issue came up for debate, he said things like – and I'm quoting from page 1624 of *Hansard* – “Before we know it, we'll have anybody home schooling.” Again, quoting from *Hansard*, page 1623:

It may be a point that perhaps private schools should be in that business; perhaps they shouldn't be. But certainly to have that whole area opened up to one more step by a simple line in a Bill as important as the one dealing with Francophone education, regionalization of school boards, and user fees – and then all of a sudden now we've thrown in home schooling,

et cetera. I won't bore you. I'd be very interested in knowing at some point what arguments changed the Member for Stony Plain's mind from June 24, 1992, to October 4, 1993. Amazing.

Mr. Chairman, again I would urge all members to support this. If we had adequate regulations in place that were tried and true and tested with regard to home schooling, I think the debate from some quarters on this side of the House would be somewhat different. I urge all members to support this amendment. If this amendment is successful and the minister wishes to bring the issue back at a future date for debate after we have regulations, we can have another discussion at that point.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we're ready for the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, I'm sorry I didn't catch you before. We'll give Edmonton-Centre another chance at it.

MR. JONSON: Yes, certainly, Mr. Chairman.

I just wanted to make a few brief points in support of the amendment which is proposed in Bill 8 in this particular section. I think what has to be kept in mind and emphasized is that we're talking in the Bill with respect to this amendment about accredited private schools, and the accredited private schools in this province operate with certified teachers, they adhere to the goals of schooling and goals of education, the overall general approach of our program of studies, and Alberta Education is involved in their supervision. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I think it is not illogical that private schools should be able to supervise home schooling.

The second point I want to mention, as I've stated before – and I think there's been some good debate here and some very good suggestions – is that we are doing a review of the guidelines and regulations pertaining to the overall operation of home schooling in the province. Reference has been made to the regulations which will be developed. Certainly, Mr. Chairman, once developed, regulations would be public, and I think there will be some time to also consider the second set of draft regulations before they are in fact put into print as regulations.

Those are just a couple of my remarks with respect to the matter which is dealt with in this amendment. Although I realize the amendment has the direction of bringing separate and public school boards back in the area of the home schooler, I do not support eliminating the reference to home schooling being providing by private schools, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one point in reply to the minister. The latest list of accredited private schools in Alberta that I was able to get my hands on was a 1991 version – maybe somewhat out of date – but I note that approximately 10 percent of the accredited private schools in Alberta have one and sometimes two teachers. I would have some great concerns if we ended up with some of the smaller private schools with one teacher also having responsibility for home schooling and a potentially uncontrollable number of home schoolers.

That speaks to my amendment. I'll conclude on that, and I think we're ready for the question on the amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the amendment proposed by Edmonton-Centre, the amendment to Bill 8 relating to section 22(2), all those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed to the amendment, please say no. It is not carried.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:27 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Beniuk	Germain	Massey
Bracko	Hanson	Percy

Carlson	Henry	Sapers
Chadi	Hewes	Soetaert
Collingwood	Kirkland	Van Binsbergen
Dalla-Longa	Langevin	White
Decore	Leibovici	Zwozdesky
Dickson		

Against the motion:

Ady	Fritz	Mirosh
Amery	Gordon	Nicol
Black	Haley	Oberg
Brassard	Havelock	Paszowski
Burgener	Herard	Pham
Calahasen	Hierath	Renner
Cardinal	Hlady	Rostad
Clegg	Jacques	Severson
Coutts	Jonson	Smith
Dinning	Kowalski	Sohal
Doerksen	Laing	Stelmach
Dunford	Lund	Taylor, L.
Evans	Magnus	Thurber
Fischer	Mar	Trynchy
Forsyth	McClellan	Woloshyn
Friedel	McFarland	

Totals:	For – 22	Against – 47
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[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the original Bill, Calgary-Currie.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a few points I'd like to bring to the attention of the minister as we debate Bill 8 and put my support to it. There are a few items that I think require some expansion and clarification and issues that I think we can bring forward to the public. I'm speaking specifically to section 5, with respect to suspensions and the concept of notifying immediately if a student has been expelled.

I think this is a very key issue for parents and for the school community when there is a situation where a student, by virtue of their failure to adhere to school policy or by their own behaviour which is outside the purview of the school district, causes a situation whereby a suspension is required. By giving the attention of the immediate to the minister, it gives the concept in the sense that this issue will be dealt with in a critical fashion. Students are not usually suspended on a casual basis. As a parent and as a former school board trustee and now as somebody responsible for some of the issues facing education for the province of Alberta as the Member for Calgary-Currie, I would like to just talk a few minutes on the issue of suspension.

4:40

We have a situation where because of the fact that we want to work with our students, sometimes we fail to address the serious situations where they by their own actions cause the school community to be in jeopardy. I believe by bringing this to the attention of the minister in an immediate fashion, we are identifying to parents and to those school communities that such behaviour is inappropriate and that we will not stand by and take it lightly. The process whereby a school board comes to a conclusion that a suspension is involved may take a number of forms, whether it be consultation or whether it's a committee or a hearing or some such activity. But I think it's important that we be proactive and that the minister be made aware on an immediate basis that something

has taken place in that school community which is counterproductive to the harmony in that school setting.

The other issue I'd like to talk about has to do with section 7, with respect to the student in custody under the Corrections Act. I have a very serious concern about the young offenders who are returned to our school system and the fact that under the Young Offenders Act there is a nondisclosure component. At any given time we may have students in our school system who in the eyes of the law are serious offenders, but school districts themselves cannot publish that information, alert their school community, or bring parents to the realization that there is a dangerous situation potentially occurring in their schools. By bringing this clause under consideration, I believe the minister is identifying that we have a responsibility to those school communities. I don't know that the serious actions of one student, when it's before the courts and has not been acted on, should be identified, because we are innocent until proven guilty in the courts of law in this country. On the other hand, I am most anxious that we have students in our school community who in the eyes of the law are offenders and that we have no way of protecting the school community from their presence.

Quite honestly, I don't know whether the School Act requires more specific legislation which would make it possible for children under the age of 16 to not be in school, but I seriously believe we have to look at the health of the school community, and perhaps something of that nature should be considered. I think we've gone on the principle that education is a right and a privilege and that we know in the long run it holds the key to the success of not only the students themselves but society at large. I think in that respect we have been most generous in allowing the privilege of education to be extended to all children to the age of 16, regardless of their attitude and regardless of their behaviour and regardless of their commitment to education.

By recognizing that the Young Offenders Act is under review and bringing in this suggestion for discussion in this amendment, I sincerely hope we are able to find some way of assisting these young offenders, not denying them education but not jeopardizing the education of the school community into which they can be introduced. I'm not certain what it is like in a rural setting, but in an urban setting there's the opportunity for those students to be moved from one school to another, and no disclosure of the reason why they may be removed from a school can be made public. So I have a very serious concern about how we deal with young offenders and how we protect the school community.

In the same light, with respect to mandatory attendance to age 16, I have a serious concern about our ESL students, who arrive on our doorsteps in Alberta through the appropriate process and with all the promise and hope they so rightly deserve. Yet because our school system demands that they be in attendance from day one, we don't really have a system in place that allows them to be probably brought into the community in a more constructive way. They land on their feet in a school setting, which I would say in your elementary levels is probably a very healthy and warm environment for them to be in. The caring and the community spirit that exists at the elementary level is more than warming and more than embracing to these youngsters, who are ready to learn and eager to be in the very treasured school communities that we have. As these young people head into puberty and adapt at junior high or, more seriously, when they land in the senior high program with all its choices, opportunities, and then the frustration of a lack of language skills or social skills, I'm not so sure that we're not doing them a disservice by insisting on day one that they be in our school system as it exists for all Albertans.

I don't really know the complete answer to that problem. My sense is that these young people need linguistic skills and they need the ability to communicate within our language and culture. I don't know that they would not be best served in an isolated setting for a short period of time, with integration into our mainstream at a later date. I don't know that the children who disrupt our classes and cause difficulty for our teachers and their school communities, who have a language difficulty by reason of their recent arrival in Alberta, would not be better served in some more familiar setting, with the main emphasis on language.

I'm also not so confident that our teachers, who have a mandate to deal with our curriculum, can meet the standards that make us recognizable as a leading educational institution within the province and in the country if they have to deal with students who are not able to read and write and perform at those levels and in many respects do a disservice to the class average, upon which we are now being judged.

For me it is interesting that we have dealt with some of the issues in Bill 8 looking at amendments. I bring this to the minister's attention because I believe there is some room for movement in this area. Fundamentally, I think the fact is that we value education. We have set age limitations of when you start and when you can complete, and, as a province, taxpayers are more than willing to support those students in their endeavours through to age 19. We have opportunities for them to access a myriad and variety of programs, many of which they would never have the opportunity in their lifetime to have and at a pace and schedule they can enjoy. The fact is that we value that, and we value what it makes in terms of citizens: students who have the opportunity to debate, who have the opportunity to do theatre, to play in sports, to challenge themselves in academics, to be part of a school community via their school council, and who have a sense of what it means to work in committees and work with other young adults and with the teaching community. I know that we value the opportunity that places on our young people, and it is my hope that our young people learn to value it. When we have disruptive students, students who put the school district at risk, or students who for no reason of their own are incapable of being involved in that school community by reason of a deficiency in language and an acute shock in cultural environment, I'm not so certain that we're not doing them a disservice as well.

I'm very pleased to support the minister in bringing this Bill 8 forward, but I bring these issues forward for his consideration and will continue the discussion as this moves through committee.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Centre.

4:50

MR. HENRY: Thank you, and I'll certainly reflect on the comments from the Member for Calgary-Currie at length.

Mr. Chairman, I don't want to get into reflecting on decisions that the committee has already made. Very clearly, my proposal that home schooling not be extended to private schools has been defeated, and I certainly accept that. However, I reiterate the problems we have with the supervision of home schooling in this province and the fact that we're being asked to extend the provision for home schooling before we have regulations tightened up, before we have policies that could make a better job of policing, if I can use the word, or monitoring home schooling.

One of the major problems in home schooling has been the fact that we have students who are supervised by a willing board and that board is many miles away from that student. To that end, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to propose another amendment. I'm not

attempting, believe me, to be tedious here, but I think a point needs to be made, and I'd ask members to consider the amendment. I have copies for distribution. Perhaps what I could do, if it's acceptable, is read the amendment into the record and then sit down and let members have a chance to reflect on the amendment before we proceed.

The amendment is after section 6, which is the section that allows for private schools to supervise home schooling.

Subject to subsection (2) . . .

Subsection 2 describes who shall provide home schooling.

. . . supervision shall be carried out by the board of which the student is a resident, or the board of the nearest separate school district, or a private school . . .

And here are the key words.

. . . located not more than 100 kilometres from the place of residence of the student.

I'll wait till people have a chance to look at that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe all hon. members have now received the amendment.

Edmonton-Centre, continue, please.

MR. HENRY: Briefly, Mr. Chairman, to the amendment that I've circulated. It has been approved by Parliamentary Counsel. I might point out to members that this, or parts of it, looks substantially similar to the previous amendment. The previous amendment that I would have liked to have made would have been simply to delete the section in Bill 8 that referred to home schooling. However, my instruction from Parliamentary Counsel was that it was necessary to not simply delete that section but to propose an alternative, and I did that. Given that that's failed, this alternative addresses issues that have been raised and that I believe actually the Member for Rocky Mountain House has raised in this Assembly, I believe at second reading.

It tries to address a situation where you have a school district that has X number of students, and it has more students that are home schooling. If we are going to have private schools supervising home schooling, and I respect that decision, we don't want somebody having a private school, I believe, in one community in Alberta and supervising people from all over the province. It seems to me that there are alternatives available in most centres. I would suggest that you could quibble about whether it should be 100, 200, or 300 kilometres, but certainly there has to be some sort of control over who is providing the supervision. I think, and I believe strongly, that it cannot be justifiably argued that home schooling supervision provided from a base 200 kilometres away can be as good as home schooling provided from a base in their own community. There are exceptions, and I will grant that. I am aware of exceptions, but as a general rule I think it's difficult. For instance, we may have a private school in Red Deer, and it might be very appropriate for them to supervise a home schooler in Lacombe, in Innisfail, even in Stettler. This amendment would allow for that. But to have a school or a school district try to supervise from Red Deer a student who lives in Slave Lake or Grimshaw when there may be appropriate supervision in Grande Prairie I think is a mistake.

Again, I refer to the comments I made earlier, where it's my understanding through the ATA that the ethical guidelines and supervision provided on a professional basis by the Alberta Teachers' Association do not apply to those teachers in a jurisdiction who are perhaps employed by a Peace River school district and are moonlighting with another school district providing home schooling. So there are all sorts of loopholes here if we don't have some sort of control on this.

Again, I rest the argument about whether you should have private or not. We've decided that, and I recognize that. But, Mr. Chairman, we have to get a handle; we can't simply expand the home schooling. Home schooling in this province was meant very clearly for a specific purpose: perhaps where in fact a parent's particular desire was for a particular education that could not be provided through the school division, perhaps where a student had either physical or psychological or other kinds of barriers that would not let them participate in our school system, or perhaps where the student's parents were in occupations where they were traveling a lot or otherwise not available for the full school year. That's what home school was initially designed for, and that's a good use of home schooling.

I think we need to ensure that there's no abuse. We all know the situation of the commune in British Columbia where Winston Blackmore\* has basically refused to allow school officials, school board officials, or education officials to come in and supervise. I'm not suggesting that the vast majority, in fact almost all, of the home schooling parents are like that. They are not like that. But we have a responsibility as legislators to ensure that there aren't avenues for abuse in the system. We want to provide the ability for legitimate home schoolers to provide home schooling. There are cases where that's as appropriate, if not more appropriate, than group schooling, if I can call it that, or attendance schooling.

However, we need to tighten up the situation of monitoring, and that's what this is an attempt to do. It's an attempt to say: okay, if you choose to keep your child home, number one, have your public school division supervise; number two, if that's not acceptable to you or doesn't work for whatever reason or you have a problem in negotiating that, you can go to the nearest separate school; and number three, if that doesn't work, then you can go to a private school, as long as that private school is within a reasonable distance so there can be not only some supervision of the child but some support to the parent, because teaching is not easy. Parenting isn't easy, and teaching is just as hard some days, I'm sure. Parents who home school need that kind of support.

I recognize the hour, and I understand we want to move on to another Bill. I believe it's appropriate for me to adjourn debate, and we'll pick this up at another time. I would like to do that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's been moved that we adjourn debate on Bill 8. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no. Carried.  
Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe it's on record that the next item we will be dealing with in Committee of the Whole is Bill 5.

5:00

Bill 5

#### Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1993

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. On September 21 the Provincial Treasurer brought in amendments, many of which we viewed as being desirable: those dealing with disclosure, those dealing with a greater accountability. There were provisions, however, that we thought did pose problems because they extended the

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

control of the Treasury Board to areas that we thought potentially could lead to serious problems, and that was the issue that was debated with regard to the amendments that we brought in on the 27th. I have seen the amendment that is proposed by the government. It meets our concerns head on. I view it as being substantive, and I believe it deals with the issue that we thought was fundamental; that is, we want to see a less obtrusive government; we do not want to see a blank cheque given to government or to any department. It's not because we view them as having the intent to use that blank cheque. It's just that the potential does lie down the road under different hands. So I'm going to propose to the Legislature that I be given unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment that I brought forward on the 27th. The second amendment was never introduced to the House, and I would not bring that forward either.

So my motion that I'm bringing before the floor is that I be granted unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment to Bill 5 that I brought in on the 27th.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has requested unanimous consent to withdraw his first amendment. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no. Unanimously carried.

Hon. Provincial Treasurer.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, may I stand in my place and move an amendment that I have had circulated to the Assembly this afternoon, an amendment to section 3?

MR. HENRY: A point of order, Mr. Chairman. Could you speak up a bit? Some of us are having trouble hearing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Also, hon. Treasurer, do all members in fact have the amendment?

HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, they were circulated to the Assembly this afternoon at about 2:15, I believe. I will simply read it slowly out loud. [interjections] I'll resist the temptation because somebody suggested I do so. Section 3 is renumbered as section 3(1) and the following is added after subsection (1) and the following is added after subsection (5):

(5.1) Notwithstanding subsection (5), in exercising its powers under sections 5 and 7 as they apply to a Provincial corporation referred to in subsection (5), the Treasury Board shall make or issue regulations or directives only respecting the financial operations of, reporting by and compliance with this or any other Act by those corporations.

In a nutshell, Mr. Chairman, what we have done in the interests of disclosure, accountability, transparency, and proper authorization is put forward the original amendments. Having listened intently to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and out of respect for some preferences or positions put forward by my colleague the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development and having heard from some institutions, I believe that this perhaps slightly in a more narrow application of that subsection will meet our requirements for disclosure, transparency, proper authorization, and accountability. In the interests of ensuring that occurs, I would so move this amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question on the Bill itself?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[The sections of Bill 5 as amended agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 5 as amended be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Deputy Government House Leader, we should have a motion to report progress on the previous Bill, I believe.

MR. EVANS: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, if I merely move that the committee rise and report, that could deal with both the progress on Bill 8 and the reporting of Bill 5.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports Bill 5 with some amendment. The committee reports progress on Bill 8. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official record of the Assembly.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The Chair would like to commend the Assembly. They were so quiet and attentive that the Chairman felt moved not to call order, either that or he forgot.

head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Third Reading**  
(continued)

**Bill 5**  
**Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1993**

MR. DINNING: It is my pleasure, sir, to move third reading of Bill 5, the Financial Administration Amendment Act.

As members know, it does a number of things, primarily in the implementation of the Auditor General's reports of September 1992 as well as February 1993. It implements further the government's four-year fiscal plan, and it provides for the sunset provision on certain provincial corporations and agencies, as spelled out in the last section of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's an important next step in the implementation of the government's four-year financial plan to balance



the budget. I believe it also goes further in responding to what Premier Klein has said from day one: that he is looking for a government that is more open, that believes and practises accountability, and provides for disclosure that Albertans are looking for. I would certainly commend it to all members of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 5 read a third time]

head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
 head: **Second Reading**  
 5:10

**Bill 9**  
**Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1993**

MR. FRIEDEL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs I move second reading of Bill 9, being the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1993.

The Bill contains two proposals. First, in order to implement the government objective of enhancing municipal autonomy, we want to encourage the incorporation of as many improvement districts into municipal districts as possible. Because of their geographic location, we need to make allowances in the incorporation order in council to address the unique requirements of these municipalities. However, the present Act does not contain any provisions for the inclusion of such transitional and special conditions. Section 2 and section 3 of the Bill provide the authority to deal with the various transitional issues. Section 4 clarifies that the provincial government will still be responsible for protection against forest fires and running fires in hamlets within the forest protection area. Section 7 is intended to ensure that the provincial interests in the green areas are reflected in the municipal land use plans and bylaws.

The government is in the final stages of discussing the incorporation of several improvement districts. This amendment would eliminate the necessity for separate legislation each time an ID wishes to incorporate. Four improvement districts have requested incorporation on January 1, 1994. These are ID 14 at Edson, ID 15 at Whitecourt, ID 16 at Valleyview, and ID 23 at High Level. There will certainly be more incorporations in 1995 and thereafter. The Rural & Improvement Districts Association of Alberta has been consulted on this proposal and is in agreement with the plan.

The second set of amendments, in sections 5 and 6 of the Bill, is intended to provide increased municipal autonomy and flexibility with respect to borrowing for capital costs. The Municipal Government Act at present does not provide for a description of items which can be included within capital costs for municipal borrowing purposes. This has caused difficulty to the city of Edmonton when it needed to raise money for the construction of the Genesee power plant. The government enacted an order in council to give interim authority to the city, but this interim authority will expire at the beginning of the next legislative session. The amendment would transfer interim provision into permanent legislation and would open this authority to all municipalities. The city of Edmonton and the Public Utilities Board have agreed to this amendment.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 9.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the matter having had some opportunity to read over the proposed legislation and

speak to some former colleagues in the municipal government area.

This legislation, although it appears to make it much easier for an ID to operate as an ongoing entity, which it must, does bring to the fore a fundamental question in municipal government. The question is: when does a municipality become a municipality? With the powers that are herein contained, it leaves the situation open, again, to interpretation of the ID or MD itself, which presents a number of difficulties and jealousies in and around the municipal sphere. A case in point is in another area of the Municipal Government Act: the Sherwood Park situation that has always brought difficulty with virtually every municipality in the province; in fact, which association one must belong to.

Now, when the provincial government in its wisdom allows local authorities to make some fundamental decisions on their own about borrowing and the limits of those borrowings, you get to the same position as any urban municipality or in fact any rural municipality that has in their sphere of governance the same kind of considerations. If one has those kinds of concerns and that kind of responsibility, then they should in fact be elected by the people and for the people of that region. Most all of us here have had some experience with those politicians. In order to not do that, there is, at least in this member's view, a fundamental error in the application of what we call democracy as applied in the municipal area.

If one thinks of the situation of a farmer or a resident of a small hamlet or even a summer village in one of the IDs of this province, in order to effect some fundamental change as to how a simple thing like municipal waste is dealt with, if you have a particular strong urge to be involved with that, then the trip to Edmonton to see the municipal official involved or to the MLA is rather onerous, particularly on the MLA. Well, an MLA that represents areas where IDs are predominant has a pretty big area to cover. It's a vast area. We've heard many former members in this House speak at some length on that matter, which I have some sympathy for. To do the job of an MLA and expect that MLA also to do the job of a municipal councillor with all that entails, with the neighbours' squabbles and all the other things that that involves, is rather difficult to ask of that one single person.

Now, I can't say that I have a great deal of difficulty with the legislation as it's proposed, nor should I have a great deal in fact being an urban resident and one that has not a great deal of experience in the management of IDs in this province. However, I do have a fair bit of experience in the municipal area, and it is absolutely necessary, from this member's point of view, to have for a citizen an area where they can make a complaint or make their wishes known on a myriad of subjects at the corner store or running into their member wherever they do it, whether it be at the post office when there was such a thing in rural Alberta or any other area that they see fit.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that there's any particular haste in this matter, although this legislation should be passed in some form or other. This side was under the impression that we were not going to speak on this matter today, and therefore I shall move that it be declared 5:30 and that this session adjourn.

5:20

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Tempting as that is, in my limited knowledge – the hon. member can adjourn debate, but I'm not sure that he can call it 5:30. Are you satisfied, hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield, that you were adjourning debate?

MR. WHITE: Yes, sir.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. It has been moved by Edmonton-Mayfield that we do now adjourn debate. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. WHITE: Sir, in view of the hour, I move that it be declared 5:30.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right. It's been moved by Edmonton-Mayfield that we do now call it 5:30. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. EVANS: I'm not sure that the order's correct here, Mr. Speaker, but I would move that we do now adjourn – that's already been taken care of by my hon. friend – and that when we reconvene at 8 o'clock tonight we do so as Committee of Supply to consider the estimates of the Department of Environmental Protection.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:23 p.m.]