

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, November 9, 1993**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 93/11/09

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks for the bounty of our province: our land, our resources, and our people.

We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, seated in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon are three visitors from the eastern part of our country. As you will recall, you all received a memo indicating that Canada will be hosting the 40th annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association next year. Alberta has been chosen as the site of this function, and it will be held next October. With us today is the Hon. William Doody, a Senator who represents the constituency of Harbour Main-Bell Island in Newfoundland, who is the president of the Canadian region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. With him is Mr. Ian Imrie, the secretary general of the region, and Mr. Blair Armitage, the conference co-ordinator. They've been here this morning discussing the preliminary plans for this very important meeting involving about 500 Commonwealth parliamentarians. I'd ask our visitors to rise and receive the warm welcome of our Assembly.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I present a petition that's signed by just shy of 15,000 Albertans from all over Alberta urging the government to maintain the current early childhood services program and to maintain the necessary funding. I think it's important to note that the signers of the petition are from all over Alberta, and I'll just read a sample of the communities: Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Airdrie, Barrhead, Bonnyville, Delia, Fort Chipewyan, High River, Cochrane, Swan Hills, Vegreville, Okotoks, Olds, Lloydminster, Lethbridge, Lacombe, Irricana, and several other communities in Alberta.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce a petition signed by 85 members of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League who urge the government to continue funding the Ukrainian bilingual and other second language programs.

Thank you.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

MR. SOHAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the petition I presented on November 4 on behalf of the residents of

ward 5 in the city of Calgary regarding the review of the Local Authorities Election Act be read.

CLERK:

We the undersigned hereby request the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to review the Local Authorities Election Act in its entirety and particularly as it relates to candidate eligibility at the municipal government level.

MR. KIRKLAND: I request that the petition I presented on November 8 be read today, Mr. Speaker.

CLERK:

We the undersigned petition the Alberta [Legislative Assembly] to respectfully request the Government that Education funding not be reduced.

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask that the petition I presented yesterday be read today as well.

CLERK:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the Government of Alberta not to eliminate funding to the Ukrainian Bilingual and other second language programs.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 38(1) I'm giving notice today that tomorrow I'll be moving that written questions do stand and retain their places on the Order Paper and that motions for returns stand and retain their places except for Motion 223.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table in quadruplicate the following studies and reports: firstly, Crime Prevention in Liquor Outlets, controlling drug activity and other illegal behaviour in taverns and retail outlets, city of Portland, Oregon; secondly, a 1992 position paper prepared by the Edmonton Police Service regarding the extension of beer and wine sales to grocery and convenience stores; thirdly, the May 1, 1991, report from the Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems; fourth, the October 1993 National Union summary of the available scientific research and data on the effects of changing from public to private retail sales of distilled spirits; and finally, the Privatization of Alcoholic Beverages, September 1993, from the Alcohol-Drug Education Association of Alberta.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to provide to all members of the Assembly today a copy of the 1992-93 annual report of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. The financials were in the public accounts for '92-93, which were tabled on September 30.

As well, I'm providing to all members copies of the quarterly investment reports for March 31, '93, and for June, 30, 1993.

I am providing answers to orders for returns 161, 175, 188, 190, 191, and 193. In terms of 190 and 193, Mr. Speaker, this information had already been provided in volumes 2 and 3 of the 1992-93 public accounts when I filed them in the Assembly on September 30.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague from the Sherwood Park constituency I stand before the Assembly and beg leave to table a truly democratic paper: Health For Tomorrow, a proposal for restructuring the health care system. This is truly a grass-roots document with input by many constituents from both constituencies. I have a copy for all members of the Assembly. Constituents from both constituencies have requested in writing a meeting with the Minister of Health so that indeed the points raised in this restructuring of the health care system can be clarified if the minister needs that clarification.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to file with the Legislative Assembly 936 letters. These letters are from Albertans who are concerned about the proposed cuts to education, concerned parents that do not have any affiliation with any union or membership in any other formal group. They drafted these letters and made them available to other parents and concerned individuals. These letters were each initiated by the parents themselves and express their concerns about the proposed cuts to education.

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

1:40

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to file a report today. It's an analysis of Meeting the Challenge, the 1993 education roundtable workbook. It's a report prepared by the parents from Nicholas Sheran community school in Lethbridge. They've taken this opportunity to express their opinion and hope that the Legislature will listen.

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

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm filing a letter from the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is the MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster, to the Hon. Allan Rock, Minister of Justice in the House of Commons.

Along with the letter, I am filing a copy of two petitions that the minister has forwarded on behalf of his constituents. One of the petitions was signed by 342 people and urges that the Canadian government ban the sale of the Serial Killer board game. This game regrettably comes with a body bag, 25 babies, and four serial killer figures. The object is to commit murder and have the highest body count. Mr. Speaker, this game is not in the best interests of children and is very dangerous.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you 46 students, teachers, and helpers from Abbott elementary school. They are accompanied by two teachers: Mr. Jim Hill and Mrs. Russanne Perry. There are parents and helpers that are in the galleries as well: Mrs. Terry Petersen, Mrs. Barbara Reiter, Mrs. Diana Michel, Mr. Trevor Rae, Mrs. Beverly Wulchuk, and Ms Margaret Cartwright. They are seated in the public and the members' galleries, and I would ask them to please rise and accept a very warm welcome of this House.

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly this afternoon a couple of residents from Lethbridge. They tell me that they are here to see what goes on in the House, but I know they're really here to see the professional cowboys in a real rodeo. Their names are Doug and Shelby MacLeod, and I would ask them to stand and receive warm greetings this afternoon from the House.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly 29 students and four parents accompanied by teacher Mr. Martin from St. Stanislaus school, a very, very excellent school in the riding of Edmonton-Rutherford. They're seated in the public gallery. If they would stand up and receive the warm welcome of this House.

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly two of my constituents who are here today as part of the tabling earlier by the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan of our Health for Tomorrow paper. My two constituents are Mr. Jim Roy and Mrs. Irene Fisher. Some members may recall Mrs. Fisher. She was an assistant to the hon. Tom Chambers years ago and also worked in the House of Commons in Ottawa for various Members of Parliament. They are seated in the public gallery, and I'd ask them both to rise and receive the warm welcome of the 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 teacher Mrs. Gail Zuberbuhler and 30 students from John Paul I school in the Edmonton-Mill Woods constituency. They are seated in the members' gallery, Mr. Speaker, and with your permission I would ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last but not least. [interjections] No? One more. What can I say? I guess they're saving the best for last.

Mr. Speaker, it's my great pleasure to introduce two former Albertans and former Northwest Territorians who are now living in Cache Creek. Hugh Stevenson and Shirley Stevenson have a long history of public service and community service, Shirley being the former director of consumer and corporate affairs in the Northwest Territories and Hugh being the former director of municipal affairs in the Northwest Territories and as well the former administrator of Yellowknife. They are on their way to the sunny south but assure me that they plan to return and visit us again. I understand that they are considering moving back to our fair city. If they could rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pride and pleasure that I would introduce members of my constituency to you and through you to this Assembly. The first member of my constituency is Sharon Bilan, my right hand; also, Dixie Stumpf, whose family farms within the county of Strathcona; David Doyle, an entrepreneur; Karen Doyle, a student and also in between jobs; and Valerie Holowach and Orest Holowach, also entrepreneurs, small businesspeople who have given many, many volunteer hours to develop with other constituents the document that was tabled today. I'd ask you please to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

head:

Oral Question Period

Education Funding

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, our party supports an increase, not a decrease, in educational spending in Alberta. [interjections] Relax over there. Relax.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Touch one and the whole cage comes after you.

MR. DECORE: You have to admit that was funny, Mr. Speaker.

At least now the Premier has come down on the side of the Treasurer by confirming that education cuts could be less than 20 percent. Apparently it's now only the Deputy Premier who is in need of re-education. Mr. Speaker, in conflict with the Premier's position is a leaked education business plan that says that cuts will be 20 percent. My first question is to the Treasurer. When the Treasurer and the Premier say that cuts could be less than 20 percent, how could the Department of Education, Mr. Treasurer, prepare a detailed business plan for a 20 percent cut?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear that just like our fine new Prime Minister we have a plan, we have the people, and we have the resolve to make sure that we live up to the commitment that we made to Albertans on May 6; on June 15, when they ratified our program; and we reaffirmed on September 8.

As I mentioned to Albertans and as our government mentioned on August 19, when we released the first quarterly accountability report under the Deficit Elimination Act, we had instructed government departments across all of government, including agencies, boards, and commissions, to prepare a minimum 20 percent reduction in their spending over the four-year period. Mr. Speaker, we're serious. The members opposite may be a little confused, but Albertans know what we said: we would reduce our spending by 20 percent over the four-year period. We're doing that. We're considering it. We're asking Albertans to help us to determine whether and how it can be done. Let's have no doubt. Premier Klein has been consistent and this government has been consistent that we will reduce our spending over the four-year plan by 20 percent.

1:50

MR. DECORE: The Treasurer talks about a plan. The Treasurer's plan keeps changing on an hourly basis, Mr. Speaker.

My next question is to the Minister of Education. Why would the minister prepare a detailed business plan to specifically cut 20 percent out of education when the minister himself says: I need time to listen to all Albertans; I need time to analyze the input from all Albertans? Why, then, this detailed business plan?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, certainly I agree with the comment of the hon. leader, and that is that we are taking time to consider

the representation that has been made to us and the extensive discussion which has occurred in representation. No decisions have been made with respect to the matters that the hon. member is referring to.

Now, with respect to whatever figures it is the hon. leader is referring to, Mr. Speaker, going back to the fall of 1992, when we were doing our fiscal realities conferences around the province, we prepared a number of scenarios and figures then. We have, as the hon. Treasurer has pointed out, provided on request and also for our own use a number of projections with respect to different calculations, and this is part of our overall providing of information and considering of information.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Premier seek advice from the Treasurer as to the government's real policy on cuts so that the next time the deputy is asked a question in the Premier's absence, he can give information to Albertans that's accurate?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge never have we ever been in a position not to give information other than that which is accurate.

Mr. Speaker, there has been stuff written in the last number of days. I ran across a rather interesting little document called *Insight into Government* just published the other day. I just want to quote one thing from it:

Only wishful thinkers and fools saw weakness in this week's public exchange between Deputy Premier Ken Kowalski and Treasurer Jim Dinning over education spending cuts.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are not fools. They're confused by a confused government.

Family and Community Support Services

MR. DECORE: My next question is to the minister responsible for social services in our province. The social services minister is about to flop into one more calamity by undercutting the most efficient deliverer of social services in the province. FCSS is independent frontline help by volunteers who know the unique needs of their own communities. Experts agree that children at risk need the care of highly trained professionals, but the minister intends to order FCSS groups to make these children their top priority without any additional funding. My first question to the minister, then, is this: what services, Mr. Minister, do you suggest that FCSS groups cut to make room for the minister's newfound priority?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to advise the hon. member that there are no cuts to FCSS. In fact, this year's budget of over \$36 million was increased by \$1 million. There are over 300 different agencies that we have agreements with across the province. About 90 percent of Albertans enjoy the services of FCSS programs.

This year the million dollars that was added to the FCSS program was because of the high success rate of our welfare reforms: getting young Albertans back into the work force. To date we've advanced that by 23,000 cases, employables, healthy Albertans. Because these reforms are working so well, this allows us to redirect dollars to the high needs; in fact, \$28 million.

In relation to FCSS, Mr. Speaker, 28 new communities this year had an option to join that program. Twenty-eight new communities. To date . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Perhaps the supplemental question will focus the discussion.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Minister, what does it take for you to understand a question and give a real answer in this House? Albertans want to know, Mr. Minister. Albertans want to know. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. The Chair is going to give fair warning that if the Assembly does not get less boisterous and enthusiastic, we will have a short recess in order to have things settle down.

Please, no preamble.

Family and Community Support Services (continued)

MR. DECORE: Mr. Minister, answer the question. What programs are you suggesting FCSS groups cut in order to meet your new priority? Just tell us the programs.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. members would have given me a chance to answer and would have listened . . . [interjections] Do you want to hear the answer?

Speaker's Ruling Relevance

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. This is not a debate. Although some people tend to think question period is a period for debate, it is not a debate. It's a time for questions and answers, and time is limited. Therefore the Chair would urge the hon. minister to come quickly to the answer.

Family and Community Support Services (continued)

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, 16 new communities of the 28 communities have been funded and are under way.

Mr. Speaker, there are no cuts in FCSS. There will be no cuts in FCSS because it's a high-needs area.

MR. DECORE: No wonder we're in such a mess with that ministry.

My last question, Mr. Speaker, is this. Mr. Minister, tell us the recommendations that you relied on in the thorough review that was done by the hon. Member for Highwood. Which recommendations did you use to create this newfound priority of yours?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, all of the 45 recommendations were used in the development of the FCSS program this year. Nine of those 45 recommendations created financial implications to municipalities and local agencies. This minister would never, never impose such a move on municipalities without their approval. Therefore, those nine have been sent back to the municipalities for their prioritization and approval. If they do move forward with it and ask us to move ahead with it, we will.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning, third main question.

Child Welfare

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's child welfare reforms have raised more questions than they've

suggested answers. The document is vague, and it's inconsistent. It boasts, and I quote:

We have reduced the number of children in government care from about 5600 in 1982 to 3000 today.

Only two sentences later it states:

We now receive more complaints of child abuse or neglect and the needs of the children who do come into our care have become more severe.

My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Mr. Minister, how can you possibly measure success by lowered caseloads when by your own admission the number of children at risk is growing and their needs are becoming more severe? How can you?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we put in the welfare reforms on April 15, 1993: to make sure that the high-needs area of my department had the proper funding to do the proper job. That is why the first portion of the welfare reforms was reducing the caseloads on the side of the employables and trainables. The second phase of the reforms, of course, is the child welfare area. We will continue working very hard to make sure this area functions well in the future.

2:00

MR. SEKULIC: I was referring to the child welfare caseloads.

To the same minister. Your reform plan clearly states, and I quote, "We will keep children safe." Why, then, has the minister not focused on prevention and early intervention rather than reacting after a child becomes a victim of physical or sexual abuse?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the overall plan of the welfare reforms. If the members opposite had wanted to participate in a positive way in the development of the child welfare reforms, for an example, in Alberta, they had that opportunity. Last April 21, in fact, I asked the Liberals to assist us in the development of welfare reforms in Alberta, which includes child welfare. I haven't seen their plan yet, but they've filed other plans of private members out there. But I'm still waiting for your plan.

Now, these reforms, Mr. Speaker, Reshaping Child Welfare in Alberta: this process allows the Liberals to participate fully along with the Children's Advocate and many others to develop a plan for Alberta.

MR. SEKULIC: A second supplemental. Mr. Minister, you have 5,600 staff and a document which is recognized across Canada as the most advanced. Use them.

To the same minister: what measures have you put in place to indicate whether the program is working and the children at risk are getting the care they need? How will Albertans know?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, we have a child welfare budget of \$160 million in Alberta. We have a total budget of a quarter of a billion dollars for children's services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: How much?

MR. CARDINAL: A quarter of a billion dollars for children's services in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe you can blame this government for not trying hard to provide a program for the children in Alberta.

It is unfortunate also, I'd like to mention, that 2,300 children in foster care are native children. We are working very hard also to improve that area, but the overall plan is to make sure that

wherever possible the parents, the extended family, the community become responsible for the children, not the taxpayers or the government. The government does not make a good parent.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, Bernd Walter's report on the child welfare system was less than encouraging, to say the least, and there's no question that changes are necessary. With over 8,000 Alberta children somewhere in the system, I applaud the direction that we are taking. However, I am concerned with the creation of additional cost while they're in the midst of so many budgetary considerations. To the Minister of Family and Social Services: can the minister advise this Legislature what this plan will cost the taxpayers of this province and what additional staff will be hired to complete the project?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, our total budget for children's services – again, I'd like to repeat it, because I think it is important for Albertans to know our efforts in this government in relation to children's services. We're spending a quarter of a billion dollars in that particular area.

In particular, the commissioner for children services is basically a redirection of existing resources we have in the department, to repriorize our efforts making sure our system is efficient and effective with the existing resources, including human resources and dollars. There will be no added cost to this government.

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

MR. BRASSARD: In his long-term plan for child welfare this minister has established a commissioner to review the child welfare program. What direction and authority has the minister given to the office of the commissioner to look at these child welfare services?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, the person appointed commissioner will be announced later on this week. It is a very important job. The position reports to me directly, which allows the commissioner the freedom of being able to work and develop the plan over the 18 months that's required. The commissioner has strict time lines as to when the job has to be done and what the job should cover, including costing. The main purpose, of course, of the commissioner is to restructure child welfare services, a long-range plan for Albertans. The commissioner will work with stakeholders and interest groups, including the Premier's council on families, the Children's Advocate, native leaders across the province, and if the Liberal caucus has a plan, this person could work along with them.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, while we all agree that parents and extended families need to be more accountable and responsive, can the minister tell this Assembly just how he intends to bring this about?

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, of course that has always been the intention of this minister and this government: to wherever possible make the families be responsible and accountable and to try to keep the family together at home by providing the necessary services that are required, not like the press release that was released by the Liberals yesterday. They said, "I am calling on the Minister to scrap this ridiculous . . ."

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Liquor Control Board Privatization

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although it would seem an obvious step to review the implications for all departments of the privatization of liquor sales, last week the Minister of Justice told us in this House that he hadn't seen and wasn't aware of the numerous studies with respect to the increase that might be expected in crime and violence. Well, now the hon. minister has seen them. To the Minister of Justice: what steps will the minister take to assist our cities and towns to deal with the increased cost of law enforcement?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for providing me with the documents in fact yesterday as a prelude to today's question. Although I have not read them intently, I have paged through them. There's no doubt throughout the documents that there are statements by certain people or organizations that would tend to say that in certain circumstances privatization would increase sales of liquor, which would increase criminal problems. I take that under advisement and never questioned that there might be a link. However, the documents are also by advocates of a particular position who, in fact, even have what I would call quite a vested interest in this. I guess there's nothing wrong with having a vested interest. They come from AUPE and the National Union, which have a definite position on this. I'll take the documents as advice.

MR. DICKSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, also the Edmonton Police Service.

Mr. Speaker, since we know alcohol is involved in almost 80 percent of domestic violence cases and studies show increased availability leads to increased violence, what consultation has this minister undertaken with respect to the minister of social services, AADAC, and women's shelters?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, there is an interdepartmental committee that has been working for quite some time in conjunction with law enforcement as well, police services, to in fact address family violence. I think the hon. member might be naive if he thought you could prescribe the nonsale of alcohol and that in itself would solve the problem. We're open to any suggestions that anyone has and will work very closely with any law enforcement agency to in fact prevent family violence or overconsumption of alcohol.

I might mention that as the hon. member was sitting down or starting his supplementary, he mentioned that one of the papers was from the Edmonton city police. He is indeed correct, but it's a position document on the extension of beer and wine sales to grocery and convenience stores in Alberta, which is not part of our privatization.

2:10

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, to Albertans that wish this minister would move with as much alacrity in terms of protection as his colleague is in terms of privatization, what additional support is planned for the Check Stop program in Alberta and the media campaign against drunk driving?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, frankly I'm quite proud of the efforts that have come forward on impaired driving as a joint initiative between the government, the police forces, and the many, many private citizens and citizen groups that advocate against drunk driving, which I frankly advocate against as well. As solicitor general in 1987 I happened to be instrumental in bringing

forward the many, many impaired driving initiatives that have come forward in this province that frankly makes Alberta a leader in Canada in apprehending impaired drivers. We'll do everything in our power to continue that.

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

Native Child Welfare

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I applaud the plans of the Minister of Family and Social Services to keep more children with their natural parents and out of foster care. Many times we have heard the minister say that 50 percent of the children in foster care are aboriginal. My question is to the minister. How will he ensure that the aboriginal culture is represented through his upcoming changes?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you are aware, we've worked very hard. A portion of the large budget we have in my department is under foster care.

MR. BRUSEKER: How much money?

MR. CARDINAL: It's \$160 million.

In 1990 the foster care model was redesigned, Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with the Alberta Foster Parent Association, and the budget for foster care at this time is \$35.4 million.

In relation to the native area alone, of the 2,300 cases in foster care right now around 50 percent are aboriginal, Mr. Speaker. As part of the strategy of the welfare reforms of course in relation to child welfare, I also appointed as of yesterday a chief executive officer of aboriginal affairs reporting directly to me, and that is equivalent to a deputy minister. This individual position will concentrate on advancing native involvement in all areas in Alberta, and I think that's a wise move. In addition to that, in our department we have an associate director of child welfare services, Richard Mirasty, and the commissioner of children's services of course will be working closely with . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair will have to insist on more concise answers.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Biomedical Waste Disposal

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health has repeatedly told this Assembly that she respects the autonomy of hospital boards. Apparently, however, this isn't the case when it comes to dealing with hospital waste. Hospitals are now being forced to truck their biomedical waste at great expense to Beiseker instead of upgrading their incinerators or developing a more efficient regional model. My question: why doesn't the Minister of Health allow the University of Alberta hospital to save over one half million dollars per year by upgrading and then contracting out their incinerator services?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member should understand that under the Clean Air Act and the work done by the Council of Ministers of the Environment, the standards for looking after biomedical wastes have risen considerably. It is a matter of his opinion that it would be more economical to handle it in that way. It is our information that it would cost \$3 million

to \$3 and a half million to upgrade incinerators to look after biomedical waste. It is our opinion at this time that it is more economical to transfer the biomedical waste, which is a very small portion of hospital waste. I have said consistently that we will review this.

Alberta is very proud of its environmental protection in this province. I think the citizens of this province want us to protect the environment, and we feel that it is best handled in that way. Again, biomedical waste is a very small portion of hospital waste, but it takes a very, very highly technical incinerator to handle those particular wastes.

MR. SAPERS: Given that the hospitals, Mr. Speaker, can upgrade cost efficiently and meet and exceed all of the standards, why is it that this minister insists on giving a gold-plated monopoly to a friend of the government?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that comment is totally out of order. The private sector in this province has a very valuable role to play in many areas. I applaud a private-sector initiative to handle biomedical wastes in this province.

Again, I have to repeat that the handling of biomedical wastes in this province is very important for environmental protection. It is considered that this is the most efficient and cost-effective way to handle those wastes. We will continue to review this with our hospitals and assess the situation. We can only see that environmental standards are going to go up, not down. If we continually have to upgrade and refit these incinerators, it is not cost-effective or efficient.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, if it was cost-efficient, that would be one thing, but now that the minister has set up this monopoly, why are two million tax dollars being invested instead of insisting that Bovar invest their own money?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't have the knowledge that there are tax dollars going into the Bovar incinerator.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, followed by Sherwood Park.

Advanced Education Institutions

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many dedicated and committed volunteers and alumni and board members actively involved in our postsecondary institutions. As our postsecondary institutions continue to get national attention with respect to their programs, there is a concern with respect to fund-raising. So my question today to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development is on fund-raising through these foundations. Will there be some explanation, please, on how these statements for postsecondary institutions will be reported?

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The audited financial statements of all public board-governed institutions in the postsecondary education sector will be published in a separate volume of the public accounts beginning in the year 1992-93. I think this will be the first step in a process that is expected to see the complete integration of these statements into the consolidated statements of the province in several years. Such integration will

only be possible when the financial reporting procedures are standardized sufficiently to allow them to be comparable between the institutions and the government proper.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are there any penalties for fund-raising? Will those institutions who perform well in their fund-raising be penalized through potentially lower grants?

MR. ADY: Well, Mr. Speaker, it would certainly not be my intention to penalize institutions who go out and do the good work that's been going on for a number of years in this province to raise funds. As a matter of fact, the government over the years has had some programs in place to encourage that very thing. There was an endowment fund that was in place for a number of years to let institutions raise funds and have it matched by the government, and that served them very well to find inroads into the public area to raise funds. Since then the endowment funds have been eliminated, but certainly the institutions have carried on in that way. We would only be anxious to encourage that very worthwhile effort on their part to raise funds publicly.

2:20

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the inclusion of these budgets, can you give me some indication of how this will affect the overall government budget picture?

MR. ADY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that begs the question: in the event that an institution is very successful in raising funds, would we then penalize them in some way by reducing their budget? Let me say that the fund-raising efforts of our institutions have been very successful, and I'm pleased with the dollar amounts that they have been able to raise. But let's be clear: the funding they raise that funnels through their foundations is funding they raise for their own purposes. Over the years they have utilized those funds for a variety of things, be it programming, capital projects, or whatever they may choose. To answer the hon. member's question: no. The money could be spent on the institution's priorities at their goodwill. They raised the money, and they would be entitled to set the priorities for the spending.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Sherwood Park.

Alberta Cement Company

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a rush to move major projects along before the new environmental protection legislation came into force, the Minister of Environmental Protection determined that an environmental impact assessment was not required for the new cement plant near Rocky Mountain House. Now apparently the permit to construct says that an environmental impact assessment will be required before the plant is allowed to operate. We now have a situation where the company doesn't need an environmental impact assessment for the plant but does need an environmental impact assessment for the quarry and apparently does need an environmental impact assessment for the operation of the plant. Are you still with me? The first question to the Minister of Environmental Protection: with the new legislation why does the minister persist with a policy of build first, assess later?

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was very clear when the regulations were coming into force and effect for the new Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act that any project that had already entered into the review process was going to be reviewed fully by the then in place regulations. This is not mind-boggling stuff. It was intended that we would have a transition time and that until such time as the new Act and the new regulations were in place, those rules which the private sector were faced with at the time they entered into a review process with a proposal would be the rules that would be in place. That is it in a nutshell.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the minister is now requiring an environmental impact assessment after construction but before operation, how can Albertans believe anything other than that this is just window dressing?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did point out with respect to quarries that if the Alberta Cement Company wishes to have a quarry that has not already been approved, they must go through an environmental impact assessment process. The whole matter of operation of the cement plant will be examined by my staff to determine whether or not there is a concern about potential environmental impact. Let's be perfectly clear. The cement plant technology is well known. The impacts of cement plants are well known. Essentially the issue is particulate being emitted through stack emissions. This is not a new and wondrous concern. We've dealt with these kinds of issues with the existing cement plants in the province in the past in a very responsible, reasonable, and intelligent way, and we will continue to do that with Alberta Cement Company.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Environmental Protection: what will the taxpayers' liability be if the minister allows the plant to be built and then refuses to allow it to operate as a result of an environmental impact assessment?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Hospital Staffing

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first two questions are for the Minister of Health and the final one, I believe, for the Minister of Labour. We had a recent experience in the hospital where an immediate family member had major surgery, and I want to report that in spite of the stories from the opposite side, the doomsayers and the naysayers and the doom criers, it was as positive an experience as one can have in the hospital. On one particular visit I noticed that there were only two or three patients and four nurses. I learned some time later that another ward had considerable patients and very few nurses. The nurses, in fact, were worked off their feet. Would the minister explain the reason why . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections]

DR. L. TAYLOR: Please, Mr. Speaker. Please. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Would the minister explain the reason why nurses from one ward cannot be quickly moved to another ward when the need occurs?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we do not fund hospitals in any way that would encourage them not to use their staff in the most efficient way. I don't think it would make much sense to staff units that have few patients. However, I might say that there is provision in some collective agreements as to the number of staff members that must be on a nursing unit. To answer the hon. member's question more completely, I think I would require a little bit more detail about the actual circumstance. If it were an emergency unit, it would perhaps require different staffing as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. Does the minister realize that in some hospitals costly renovations are being done to nursing units that have a low occupancy rate to bypass staffing regulations to allow money savings?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't assume that that is done to bypass regulations. I do know that many hospitals are very responsibly undertaking renovations, I think in most cases not very costly, to ensure that they can use their staff in the most efficient way. I would agree with that and encourage efficiency. If some renovation in the configuration of a hospital that may have been built 30, 40 years ago in a different time under different circumstances can assist in providing efficiency in the operation of that hospital, I would encourage it.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. Will the Minister of Labour take action to rectify some of these regulations that are outmoded to allow the flexibility of staffing to offer high-quality health care?

MR. DAY: Regulations like this, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't fall under the direct responsibility of the Minister of Labour. These would be items that would be agreed on in a collective agreement. An employer would certainly want to allow, as far as possible, for a posting of certain nurses on certain stations, but the development in the collective agreement of where people are going to be working is up to those people in that particular facility. Most that I'm aware of allow for the employer to have the ability to move employees around. I would suggest to the member that most hospitals, as far as I am aware, have elected or appointed or a combination of elected and appointed board members. A lot of citizens aren't aware of that. We get a lot of calls about the day-to-day operations of hospitals. I would advise the member to also encourage his constituents to contact their board members and their local hospital administration to see about these concerns.

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

Education Funding

(continued)

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Depending on who you talk to in this government and, frankly, depending on when you talk to them, you get a different story about what's happening with

education funding. This had led to a lot of uncertainty, and it reinforces the need for school boards to have as much certain information, as much certainty with as much lead time as possible when planning their budgets. In response to this, the minister has indicated that he intends to announce the next year's per pupil grant prior to the end of this calendar year. My question to the minister: is he still committed to making the announcement for next year's per pupil grant prior to the end of this calendar year?

2:30

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct in that I have indicated that the Provincial Treasurer has certain goals with respect to making the general grant announcement. One area, of course, which is very, very important is that of education. As I understand it, the goal is to have the grant announcement out as early as possible and preferably by the end of the year.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, if the government is planning to make a prebudget announcement with regard to education, can the minister assure Albertans that the programs that are under some uncertainty now, such as early childhood services, English as a Second Language, and special education, will also receive their grant announcements prior to the end of the year?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the extent of coverage of the general grant announcement is something still to be determined.

MR. HENRY: So I guess the answer is no.

Perhaps I could ask the minister: when the government does made its grant announcements, if we're looking at reductions, will there be some consideration for those boards that have already locked into contracts or other financial obligations over the next year or two?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of factors to be considered when we are making what we hope will be long-term grant announcements. Certainly all the different factors that are involved in a school board's budget have to be considered in terms of our overall planning.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Macleod.

Tire Disposal

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The tire recycling management program is designed to process and recycle used tires. At this point in time used tires are piling up in small southern Alberta towns, with no apparent initiative but to throw them into landfills. To the hon. minister of environment: what is happening to deal with the scrap tire problem in southern Alberta and the \$4 collected on new tires?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Good question.

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. members opposite have stated, it is a good question. What we did about a year ago was set up the Tire Recycling Management Board, give them the authority to enforce the \$4 advance disposal fee. That money is being collected, hon. member, to allow for a transportation system to move used tires to a place where they will be recycled or managed. Certainly our long-term goal is high-end recycling in the province of Alberta.

You've talked about southern Alberta. What we have now, of course, with the cottage industries is moneys being expended to try to encourage them to go out and develop markets for their products and also to do some research into product development. We're also having a technical review of the proposal by Lafarge Canada to use the kilns that they have at Exshaw to deal with the tire problem in southern Alberta. There are a number of other initiatives that may follow out through that once we have the screening report from Lafarge.

MR. COUTTS: How would the minister then respond to tire dealers who are frustrated with the collecting and the remitting of the surcharge and having to handle the paperwork and then taking the tires to the landfill sites on their own resources?

MR. EVANS: I appreciate the concerns that have been raised by the tire retailers in the province, and I also appreciate their co-operation. Quite frankly, they have been collecting the \$4 advance disposal fee. They've been remitting it. We're looking for a level playing field here all over the province. I undertake to the hon. member and all other members in this House and to the citizens of the province of Alberta that we will move as quickly as we can to ensure that those funds that are being collected are being used for transportation of these tires and that we will again encourage the high-end recycling initiatives that will give us new industrial development in the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Cattle Industry

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each year farmers across the province turn to their local feeder associations for financing to support their cattle purchases. Because of the high prices for feed cattle this year many of these associations have reached their government-capped lending limits. A number of these associations have asked for government approval to raise the ceiling to allow cattle numbers which effectively use their facilities. My question to the minister of agriculture: are you planning to raise these ceilings?

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly a valid question considering the scope of the cattle industry within the province. We've had discussions with the feeder associations throughout the province, and they are ongoing. At this time we do provide guarantees for the feeder associations when they go to the bank. Basically, this guarantee is underwritten by the provincial government. We feel very strongly that there are other options that perhaps should be considered first, and this is what we are encouraging the feeder associations to explore. There are the options of the bank. The bank itself can lend money. There is nothing not allowing the bank to lend the money. So what we are suggesting to the feeder associations: explore all the other options that are out there first.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister of agriculture: is it the minister's intention, then, to discourage cattle feeding in Alberta by not expanding this program?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a very interesting question, because all of a sudden government is in the business of feeding cattle. It's not the intention. It's our intention to exit business. We have made that very clear, and it is our ongoing intention. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. [interjections] Order.
Hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's our intention to work with the industry. We have pointed out on many occasions that it is our intention to act as a facilitator but not be a direct participant in business.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take it from the answer we got from the minister that the farmers are going to be left to figure out what the government plans.

Mr. Minister, how do you suppose farmers are going to be able to plan their winter feeding program when they don't know the status of this program?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think it should be known that indeed this government does participate with the feeder associations to a very, very large amount: some \$280 million, as a matter of fact. Now, I would suggest that's a fairly significant amount of money that this government is involved in. To suggest that because of some extenuating circumstances that may be referred to which I'm not familiar with that indeed the whole industry is going to fail is not representative of the agricultural community. The agricultural community is not desirous of this type of input. The agricultural community can stand on its own two feet without government intervention. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The time for question period has expired.

Members' Statements

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

Community Schools

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In discussing what constitutes a basic education, there is a risk. There's a risk that we may lose sight of important programs, programs that do not neatly fit within the usual categories. More specifically, I'm anxious that we not lose sight of the community school. The community school defies easy labeling. It doesn't fit conveniently within a back-to-basics education program.

Mr. Speaker, the community school is absolutely necessary. There are two community schools in Calgary-*Buffalo*: Connaught in the west end and Victoria community school in the east end. Connaught community school was chosen the 1992 institution of the year by the Canadian Association for Community Education, recognition for which the staff and the community are justly proud. Both Connaught and Victoria Park are in inner-city communities which pose particular challenges when it comes to education. Young families coexist with prostitution strolls, a high number of transients, crime and violence at a higher rate than many other areas in Calgary. Many of the residents are recent immigrants and have a first language other than English. There is significant poverty. There are acculturation challenges. Students at these two community schools typically present social, emotional, and

educational needs which require concentrated and specialized help. These students need that help to make their educational experience effective.

For these Alberta children, Mr. Speaker, education is a much bigger challenge than simply learning to read, to communicate, or to do math. All Albertans have a stake in these children getting an education. For many of them this educational experience is their only chance to find a decent job and then to become a fully participating member of our society. We must find ways to preserve the community school. I urge all members to support the community school program. These inner-city children in Alberta need our help.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

2:40 Christmas Seal Campaign

MR. TANNAS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, each year the Alberta Lung Association raises a very substantial portion of its funding from its Christmas Seal campaign. The members of this House will undoubtedly be aware of these programs, and many of you have used the stamps for many years on your Christmas card envelopes. I would therefore like to take a moment to remind the House of the 1993 Christmas Seal campaign, which was launched on November 2, and to ask each and every Albertan to give generously to support this most worthy cause. I am proud to note that this is the 60th year of the Christmas Seal campaign in Alberta. Over the years the generosity of Albertans has made it the largest single fund-raising initiative of the Alberta Lung Association.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share with you and hon. members an outstanding volunteer example, the W.B. Way family of High River, where three different generations have served this worthy cause since the 1930s including three family members who have served as provincial presidents. Through their efforts the local Rotary Club in High River was an official sponsor for much of the past 60 years.

The Alberta Lung Association has long been a leader in the fight against tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases. Today it has a broad mandate to improve respiratory health through fund-raising, research, education of both the public and health professionals. In addition to its many research activities, the association has provided funding to help the Edmonton General hospital establish a rehabilitation clinic for patients with chronic lung disease. It has recently founded The Alberta Lung Foundation to provide ongoing financial support for its \$3.5 million Alberta Asthma Centre in Edmonton among other projects.

This year the Alberta Lung Association's Christmas Seal campaign is led by honorary chairmen Gary Roberts of the Calgary Flames and Dave Manson of the Edmonton Oilers. A word of appreciation is due to the two players and to their respective teams for their substantial contributions to the success of the campaign each year.

I'm sure that all colleagues will join me in extending our warmest good wishes to this year's Christmas Seal child, Meghan Speiss of Calgary. Meghan and her parents, Lee and Andrew, have all volunteered their time to aid in raising funds to help other Albertans.

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

Community Schools

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is currently looking for ways to eliminate its deficit. It's looking for

ways to integrate the delivery of education, health care, and social services. It need not look any further. The community schools concept is a model of such integration. Community schools not only provide educational opportunity to all that attend; they also provide an outreach focus to the community which aims to promote preventative strategies to the resolution of difficulties that children, parents, families, and communities experience.

Thorncliffe elementary school is in my constituency, and it is a community school. La Perle elementary school was also designated to become a community school when funding was eliminated. To let you know what a community school can do, it is a hub for parents, children, and the community at large. Some of the activities that Thorncliffe elementary promotes because of its current funding for a full-time community school co-ordinator are peer support groups for parents and children with difficulties, mental health relief programs, continuing education for parents, and, through its volunteer program, consulting on job-interviewing skills.

The importance of an ounce of prevention is understood by all in this Assembly. By its very definition the community school concept is saving the province dollars. When this government looks for a model of integration of health services, social services, and education in order to provide effective delivery of service, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. It exists and is working in the concept of the community school.

The vision statement of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families is:

Albertans seek to [embrace] equality, caring and mutual respect among family members to encourage the capacity for self-reliance in all families.

This government has said that its family policy grid is to be a guide for all decision-making. I urge the government to recognize that the community school is a vehicle for promoting communities and families. Thank you.

Point of Order Oral Question Period Rules

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under *Beauchesne* 417. I did note that you did intervene later on with some of the answers – and I use that term very broadly – that were being provided by the Minister of Family and Social Services.

Beauchesne 417 says: “Answers to questions should be as brief as possible,” something I don't believe the minister understands or comprehends or knows is in here, and “deal with the matter raised.” Well, clearly in respect to the question put by the Leader of the Official Opposition on programs, either the hon. minister didn't hear or didn't understand but certainly didn't deal with the matter raised. Finally, it also says in 417: “Should not provoke debate.” Mr. Speaker, I did note your intervention finally at the end as he was certainly attempting to do exactly that.

The purpose of question period, as you know, is to call the government to account. This particular minister seems only to have three answers and seems to continue looking for our support. I would suggest that in calling the government to account, which is exactly our task, the minister, seeing as how he seems unable to do that, maybe should use as a future reference “*ibid Hansard*” and give us a page reference, because he seems to have only three stock answers. As you have started to do – and I congratulate you for your interventions – I would ask that you direct this

minister to pay particular attention to *Beauchesne* 417: to be brief, deal with the matter raised, and not provoke debate.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the point of order that was raised by the Member for Calgary-North West came at about the same time that this member was going to stand to raise a point of order as well. I rise under Standing Order 1 and under Standing Order 23 as well. Today in this question period a series of things seemed to have occurred that basically degenerated, in my humble opinion, and that seemed to increase the temperature in the Assembly today.

On numerous occasions there was opportunity for the Government House Leader and for others to rise on a point of order with respect to preambles. The Speaker did rise on several occasions to basically caution members about preambles, but it would seem to me that when an aggressiveness begins in terms of additional comments and supplementary questions and third ones and preambles are added, then they only lead to the kind of exchange that may have occurred today.

Mr. Speaker, there were also interjections repeatedly when the hon. Minister of Family and Social Services was responding to questions today. In particular, the Member for Sherwood Park had almost an aggressive nature about him with respect to every time the hon. Minister of Family and Social Services was responding to questions, there were statements thrown out as well. I think it's incumbent upon all of us. The purpose of question period is clearly pointed out in *Beauchesne* and Standing Orders: basically to have hon. members raise certain questions of ministers. By the same token, ministers understand that they should try as much as they can to be brief and to come to the point with respect to their answers. When questions are raised in such a way that it leads to open-ended debate, then in essence we're going to have difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, you know, under section 23(h),(i), and (j) there are very clear rules about how provocative one can and cannot be. My only point and my only contribution I want to make is that we agreed at the beginning of the session that all members would try and attempt basically to downgrade the temperature in the House and in fact basically deal with questions and answers in such a way that the citizens of this province at least would have less cynicism about their elected people and in fact perhaps increase their respect for them. In my humble opinion our activities today contributed to neither of them.

That's my point of contribution, my point of order. I would ask, sir, that you arise on all occasions necessary to ensure that there is order in this Assembly and in fact that hon. members do respond and act in a responsible way.

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: There's not much for the Chair to say except that the points are noted but also to remind hon. members that the Chair is not superman and doesn't really have absolute control. As the Chair will point out, it takes two to tango. On other occasions the Assembly has in fact demonstrated an ability to get through question periods with much more productivity and, the Chair would suggest, much more elucidation for the people of this province without the type of behaviour that happened today.

The Chair is not going to point fingers at only one side. It took both sides to create the disorder today. If aggressive questions are going to be asked, aggressive answers are going to be given. The Chair just would remind hon. members of the various comments the Chair has made over the last number of weeks concerning this matter and to try to follow the rules, which all hon. members are well aware of if they would keep their minds on what they are supposed to do according to the rules.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than
Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading**

head: **Bill 211
Conservation Easement Act**

[Adjourned debate November 3: Mr. Evans]

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

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 211 as proposed by the hon. Member for Sherwood Park. This Bill, while it has some very interesting and good ideas in it, I must say is probably a little bit ill conceived inasmuch as it deals with a lot of issues that were dealt with in the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. As pointed out by the hon. members for Lacombe-Stettler and Calgary-McCall, in fact section 22 of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act deals with very much the same thing. I recognize that this Bill was drafted by some very honourable people, and it's quite obvious that it was drawn up prior to the drawing up of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act. It would be interesting to go back to the drafters of this Bill and see if in fact they still believe the Bill should go forward in this particular manner.

Mr. Speaker, when we come forward with a Bill like this that is a stand-alone piece of legislation, I think it is extremely important that we take the time and put the effort into going out and talking to the many stakeholders that would be affected by a Bill like this. For that reason, I'm going to have to urge members to vote against this Bill. I don't think the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert is going to find us doing what she suggested the other day, and that is that we will be bringing it back next year as a government Bill. I wouldn't hold my breath if I were her for that happening. In fact, we went through a process in developing the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act where we went out and we heard people. We talked to a lot of people. Yes, there was some support for a Bill like this. When you look at what the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act was doing, bringing together a whole number of Acts that relate to the environment, I think it would be wrong at this point or in the foreseeable future to come forward with another stand-alone piece of legislation that deals with basically an issue that is to do with the environment.

I want to just talk briefly about some of the things that I heard in another exercise that I was involved in, and that's when the Water Resources Commission went out across the province and took input from the public relative to the wetlands policy for the province of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, we heard from many landowners, from farmers that are adjacent to wetlands. We heard the importance of setting aside some of these wetlands. It was interesting, when you really assess the situation, how setting aside an area just as small as a slough, or in some cases much larger of course where we would have large areas of wetland, how the change in the use of that area could adversely affect the neighbours. One of the things we heard in the eastern part of the province is that – they talked about how the duck population of course is drawn to this. I remember one individual was really concerned because there was a wetland near an airport, and that would draw the ducks and the geese and other birds that need this wetland for habitat.

That just is in the area of other people's use of their land that's adjacent to it, but there are other issues that relate to this kind of setting aside of land. I believe some of the speeches prior to mine have indicated the effect that it has on municipalities as it relates to their tax revenue and how that would be treated. We've got issues as we get into Bill 211 where we're looking at some very severe questions as it relates to, like, oil companies. If the land is set aside and it's a large area so that they couldn't directional drill, how would they manage their resource that they have bought? Quite frankly, I think we've got to be fairly careful as we look at the economy of the province and recognize how important the natural resources of this province are.

The member I'm sure feels very strongly about the importance of protecting land. I hope that he understands where most farmers are coming from. I firmly believe our farmers are true environmentalists and they're true conservationists. Certainly being a farmer myself, I recognize how important the land is and how important to maintain the productivity of the land. I recognize all that. That's my livelihood. Certainly most farmers I talk to are extremely interested and take a keen interest in making sure we pass on to the next generations a very valuable resource in a usable state.

I relate to a situation right next to some of my land. There was a quarter section sold some years ago, and the individual since purchasing it has not allowed any kind of agricultural pursuit. The grass has grown up in the area. There are no cattle in there. It's becoming quite a concern for us. The fire situation was brought to my attention the other day. In some areas that the province has bought and Ducks Unlimited is connected with, where we have some fairly large tracts of land, they were concerned about the fire situation just this fall, because when the grass gets dry and if something should happen that somehow a fire gets going in there, it could be a major problem, especially if it should happen on a really hot day.

3:00

So, Mr. Speaker, while it sounds good to set aside specific parcels of land, I think we have to be very careful that we look at all of the other issues and we take into consideration the folks that are adversely affected that are close to it. We had a discussion in this House just this sitting dealing with the property rights and how one person's right can be affected by his neighbour, and certainly I believe this spills over into it.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should maybe just step back for a moment and take a look at all of the things that this government has done and the federal government has done in the past to set aside some land and areas and protect them. I believe to talk against that basic philosophy is something similar to talking against motherhood. I don't think anybody would feel that we shouldn't be protecting some areas. When we look at our national parks – something that was started back in about 1885 with the establishment of the Jasper and Banff national parks system; in 1895, Waterton Lakes; more recently, Elk Island and Wood Buffalo national parks. In fact, when you look at those nationally designated areas in Alberta, it accounts for 8 percent of our land area. The provincial government has gotten into the act as well with designating some provincial parks, starting back in 1932. Cypress Hills became a provincial park in 1951, followed by Dinosaur provincial park in 1955. It's rather interesting that the reason for Dinosaur park was a little different than just preserving the environment. That one was to protect the natural heritage, which is extremely important as well. In 1959 Alberta established its first natural area with the establishment of the Willmore

wilderness area, and White Goat and Siffleur followed in 1961, and in 1967 the Ghost River was designated a natural area.

I believe we can be quite proud of the number of areas that have been set aside by both the federal and provincial governments, but I'm not trying to indicate that our work is complete by any means, Mr. Speaker. I think we have to continue to set aside areas, maybe in varying degrees of protection, in order that we can leave a very good environment for the future generations.

The one that really comes very close to home, to demonstrate what the community interest groups and the government can do, was a situation that actually was within the Rocky Mountain House constituency where we have a well-known creek. It's known as Raven River or Stauffer Creek to some of us that are closer to it. This creek is a very good fishery, and once my bull trout fish becomes the fish emblem of Alberta, people will be able to come to Stauffer Creek and fish for the fish emblem of Alberta. [interjection] Well, that's coming. It won't be long.

Mr. Speaker, that particular creek was one where there were a lot of problems with the cattle along the creek and the beavers destroying the bank and the siltation that was occurring because of these activities which spoiled the spawning area. So the department along with Trout Unlimited undertook a project. Some land was purchased, and there was fencing done along both sides of the creek keeping the cattle out. There was an effort to get rid of the beavers and keep them to a reasonable level so that we weren't having all this destruction, and it's worked very well. That fishery has rebounded. It's now back close to where it was some number of years ago.

Another area that I want to touch on – and I know the Minister of Environmental Protection did touch on it a bit in his speech the other day – is Special Places 2000, which is a co-operative initiative between the departments of Environmental Protection and Economic Development and Tourism. Now, Special Places 2000 has been cited, as a matter of fact, by the World Wildlife Fund as a reason why our overall rating has gone up to a C, something that maybe we probably shouldn't have been very proud of, where we were sitting before, but it did come up to an A rating for our use of scientifically based criteria and broad-based planning, which I think is very significant.

Now, the vision in Special Places 2000 is really quite straightforward. By the year 2000 we will complete a system of protected areas that represents a spectrum of natural diversity within this province. The initiative will focus on our quality of life by paying attention to the balance that exists between the environment and the Alberta economy. We must develop a system to protect the areas with goals that would protect the outdoor recreation and the appreciation for the heritage of these various areas.

Special Places 2000 will have about six specific designations or natural regions, and those are the grassland, the parkland, the foothills, the boreal forest, the Rocky Mountains, and the Canadian Shield. Each one of these regions will reflect some unique characteristic, whether it be patterns of vegetation or land forms, those types of differences. These six regions then will be broken down into 19 subregions which will allow for even a greater diversity in the classification. The subregions are then analyzed to allow an even more specific classification of our areas. A level 1 theme, for example, features the most prominent landscape features of the area. At the most specific level, say level 3, themes such as an ice cave within a mountain range could be classified as a unique characteristic within an area.

Through this comprehensive approach to land preservation I am confident that Alberta is moving in the right direction. I see Special Places 2000 as a bridge joining our vision of protecting Alberta's natural areas with a strategy to accomplish that vision.

3:10

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote against Bill 211. I know that's shocking, since it does have a lot of good ideas. However, I'm sure my comments and all of the comments made by the hon. members on the other side – I didn't hear enough convincing arguments on the side of the House that is sponsoring the Bill to ever make me change my mind. As I kept track of the points from the side of the House that was not favouring the Bill, I think I chalked up about 15 points, but on the side that was supporting it, I believe there were about five. So based on that, I find it very difficult to go forward and vote for this Bill. If something should happen that the vote did go the other way – I can't imagine what kind of an event that would be to make that happen, but if it did, I would strongly urge the members in the Assembly to seriously consider what they are doing as it gets into committee, because this is extremely important stuff. Before we go inflicting something like Bill 211 on the citizens of Alberta, we must have public consultation. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I urge members to seriously consider this Bill and vote not in the affirmative.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was rising to speak on the Bill. I think up until about four or five years ago I had much the same attitude as the Member for Rocky Mountain House. I was always a little afraid of the government making the laws at any time. It's like sleeping with an elephant. They could roll over and crush you with some side effect.

In the last number of years I've had two indications – maybe it's because of all the white hair I have or not – of becoming a little more interested in history than I have been, Mr. Speaker. Two cases. One, my old family home in Calgary at one time was the Baptist leadership college, and it was started by William Aberhart for young people to learn how to be leaders in the Baptist church. I think a good many of the elected people over there have been in my house at one time or another in the last 20 years. Some years later I thought maybe it should be recorded as a historical resource, mainly because a lot of people, some of them Baptists, some of them good old Social Crediters, some people just interested in history – well, it could even be the Member for Calgary-Currie that could have encouraged me. She's enjoyed the House too. It's a very charming old place. What I found was that you could get it registered as a historical site, but once you rolled on or left, there was no way of keeping it so. In other words, the caveat which we're talking about doesn't apply.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in the last few years I've ended up, as you probably know, farming out of Redwater and like most farmers not making that much money out of it. I would think being an MLA has a lot more cash flow than being a farmer. About 50 percent of my land out there is old sand hills and swamp and has moose and quite a little wildlife on it. So I thought I would like to put half that land I own for posterity. I found out, very much like the Member for Sherwood Park did when he sponsored the Bill, that it was very hard to rule from the grave. This is really all this Bill is trying to do. It's quite voluntary. It's just those people that want to rule from the grave what their property will be used for down the road will be able to do so.

I don't see anything to be too frightened about. I don't see how it can interfere with the living. I suppose it could, in fact, if you have a grandson or a great grandson that had great visions of converting your moose wallow or your goose refuge into a housing ring. He could be quite brassed off with the old grandpa for doing

that, but that was about the only place that I think the Member for Rocky Mountain-House might have a point. My point, of course, is that grandson can go figure out how to make his own fortune. He doesn't have to sit there figuring out what he's going to do with my moose wallow or duck pond. I like looking after grandchildren from the point of view of providing them a framework, Mr. Speaker, and maybe law and order to go on, but material effects they're going to have to get out there and scratch like everybody else.

What I think some members of the House might miss is that under the present laws, after you pass on – and I guess a lot of us probably aren't going to have places that we want to preserve – it can be changed. It's very difficult indeed, although it can be done, I'll admit. If you take half your fortune and give it to lawyers, they can ensure that the other half will be on. It would be nice to not have to give away half of what you have to lawyers in order to structure the thing. This is really nothing more, if you want to look at it this way, than an antilawyer Bill. How do you like that? You can actually put your property away so you don't have to worry about creating a huge legal setup to try to set up all the competing trusts and all the interrelated trusts. Nor do you have to worry about grandson coming along and converting it back into a housing development or a Safeway parking lot.

Now, I know to many members here the idea of wilderness is a Safeway parking lot without stripes, so you could get lost on it. The point is, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people that want to protect the wilderness. There are a lot of people that want to try to preserve for the years ahead areas that would be very difficult to change back. Although I think many people were right in saying that this would have been an unnecessary interference – and I would have thought it off the top of my head four or five years ago – I think the way this Act is put together is quite credible. I would urge people to support it, because some day you'll be old and feeble and want to leave something for the next generations, and you would like to know that it couldn't be torn apart by some smart lawyers and a grandson or granddaughter, pardon me, that didn't like the idea.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak against the Conservation Easement Act today as sponsored by the Member for Sherwood Park. Bill 211 is not an unreasonable Bill. The approach Bill 211 uses to address the subject of conservation easements is well thought out, and I believe the hon. member should be complimented for bringing forward this Bill during private members' hour. But having said that, which is a very popular statement in this House, I must say that Bill 211 is really the improper approach to take when studying conservation easements in Alberta. I believe there are better ways to enact conservation easement legislation, especially under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act.

Section 22 of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act already addresses conservation easements. I acknowledge the limitations that previous speakers have mentioned, especially regarding private initiatives, but I feel that if we are going to bring in more regulations for the province of Alberta, we should be doing so in the simplest manner possible. Section 22 should be expanded to allow private conservation groups to participate in conservation easements. That should be the first recommendation coming from this Assembly. Enacting a stand-alone piece of legislation goes against the very principles of our comprehensive environmental laws. In speaking to Bill 211 and the principle of

conservation easements, I believe we are discussing an initiative whose time has come. Conservation easements extend the principle of restrictive covenants by providing for the creation of privately enforceable land use restrictions without the requirement of other land benefiting from the restrictions. This is the greatest difference between conservation easements and restrictive covenants.

3:20

There are problems with conservation easements that Bill 211 does not address. We must be clear in defining interests when conservation easements are registered against a parcel of land. One potential conflict occurs when more than one interest is registered against the land. One such situation is when the land is being financed by the landowner. If a conservation easement is registered after the registration of a mortgage and the landowner is served a foreclosure notice, the conservation easement would disappear with the interest in the land title.

A similar situation occurs if a lease is registered before the easement at land titles. Because the lease is registered before the conservation easement, the lessee would not be bound by the terms of the agreement unless he agreed to postpone his interest under the lease in favour of the agreement. If this situation is not intended, we must ensure that conservation easement legislation has a provision to allow compensation for interest holders who are adversely affected by the registration of a conservation easement. Failure to set this out could result in costly legal battles for landowners and land users despite the good intentions of this Assembly in promoting private conservation initiatives.

Another area that concerns me is the effects on land value. A conservation easement will affect the future marketability of the land. We should study whether the landowner should be entitled to some form of monetary consideration for giving up his rights to the land in certain ways.

We must also look at potential abuses of this type of legislation by powerful environmental groups. I am concerned that problems will result if unsophisticated landowners are persuaded by environmental groups to enter into agreements allowing conservation easements without being fully aware of the long-term consequences. While landowners may be satisfied with the restrictions on the land while they use it, they may not appreciate the long-term effects of restricting the use of land through a formal conservation easement. This is the best argument for leaving conservation easements under the sole discretion of the Minister of Environmental Protection, as set out in section 22 of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make a few comments that may perk the House up. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, could this be deep thoughts from the Deep Six?

MR. HAVELOCK: He's the shallow end.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking has the floor.

MR. STELMACH: As a very young visionary and intelligent reeve of the county of Lamont I would like to extend to the House some situations that occurred in the municipality that I had the pleasure of representing, and that is that we looked upon working with some of the environmental groups and some of the wildlife

groups in the county. One of course was Ducks Unlimited. Quite frankly, we were the first county in the area to enter into some long-term agreements.

MR. HAVELOCK: With the biggest duck in the world.

MR. STELMACH: However, where we failed was to take in the effects on the neighbouring landowners of entering into these agreements with Ducks Unlimited. In one situation we had Ducks Unlimited plow a field and leave it rough. They didn't level it; they just left it. Of course, the following year what we had were all kinds of weeds: sow thistle, Canada thistle, scentless chamomile, and the big duck. What had happened is that rather than coming together with the neighbouring landowners and being a good example of some co-operation in terms of preservation of wildlife, it created a bit of a sensitive situation, nevertheless.

I think we really have to think this process through so that if we're going to ever look at conservation easements, the party which wishes to enter into an easement with a wildlife organization or with some environmental group must appear before the municipal planning commission and get a development permit, because there is no doubt that you affect neighbouring landowners with the restrictions that may be placed on this land and you also affect the market value of the neighbouring land. It's not to say that we can't work this situation out. I think we can reach some agreements on it, but it has to be well thought out with the support of municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, it is situations like the ones I have just mentioned that concern me about the passage of conservation easement legislation, especially if they're going to be in perpetuity. I believe it would be irresponsible for this Assembly to consider passing Bill 211 to committee stage until questions such as these are answered. These issues may be too complex to deal with at that time, and I would rather proceed slowly through good sound education strategy and on good legislation rather than rush through flawed legislation just because the overall principle of the Bill was justifiable. I would suggest that if we are committed to studying the principle of conservation easements, we should explore the entire issue through a series of public meetings. [interjections] I promise a picture of a duck for everyone after the completion of my speech.

This is an undertaking that should be under the advisement of the Minister of Environmental Protection, the minister who will ultimately be responsible for enforcement of conservation easement agreements. We must solicit the experience of all interested parties. I understand the local municipalities will need a greater deal of input into the implementation of conservation easements. Enactment of legislation could lead to pressure being placed on municipal and provincial governments to make special concessions with respect to land encumbered by an easement, especially in perpetuity.

I know that the British Columbia government amended its Property Purchase Tax Act to exempt land from taxation under this Act. What taxation issues will arise in Alberta if we proceed with this Bill are difficult to assess. Conservation easements will also affect the development of towns and municipalities. We do not know if conservation easements would survive expropriation. In addition, we have no avenue for breaking a conservation easement if it became necessary to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we should not proceed with Bill 211 at this time. I would suggest . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 8(2)(b), the time allowed for consideration of this matter has concluded, and we must now move to the next order of business.

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

Tuition Fees

208. Moved by Mr. Severtson:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to consider removal of the tuition fee ceiling on foreign students studying in Alberta postsecondary educational institutions and allow the universities to determine and set such levels.

[Debate adjourned November 2]

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be speaking against Motion 208.

MR. DINNING: No. Can't you be positive?

MR. ZARIWNY: In some respects.

What I'd like to do is direct my comments to the technical matters: first, the phraseology and then to some of the statements that have been made by members on the other side so that when you're voting for the motion you know what your colleagues have said about tuition fees of, quote, unquote, foreign students.

3:30

Now, if you look at the motion itself, it deals with a ceiling on foreign students. Presently there is a ceiling, or a cap, on tuition fees for Canadian and landed-immigrant students; that's 20 percent of the operating cost. Visa students are charged a 100 percent surcharge on top of the average fees for their program. Therefore, there's no ceiling, as such, on fees charged to visa students; rather the amount they pay is determined by the fees paid by domestic students. For that reason, they will not, at present, rise above the 40 percent. So I would suggest that the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake examine that part with his counterpart from the department of advanced education.

As well, having some background with immigration law, I can tell that you that the definition of foreign students is too vague. It doesn't specifically identify who really is a foreign student. I think that it includes both visa students and landed immigrants. For the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, a permanent resident of Canada is entitled to be treated in the same way as a Canadian citizen when it comes to tuition fees. My question to the member who is sponsoring this Bill is: what does he mean by foreign students? It's very important that he define that.

Now, some time ago both the minister of advanced education and the Provincial Treasurer had made commitments not to remove the cap on tuition fees, but, in all fairness, they did not commit that the cap would not be raised. As well, at the designated supply subcommittee on September 16, 1993, in response to a question from Dr. Sohal . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Constituency.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Calgary-McCall.

MR. ZARIWNY: My apologies. Calgary-McCall. Thank you.

Calgary-McCall asked about Alberta's visa student tuition policy, and the minister of advanced education offered this explanation, and I'd like to quote it.

It has to do with the philosophy that Canadian taxpayers undoubtedly subsidize postsecondary education to, on average, 85 percent . . . It was felt that oftentimes foreign students that came to [Canada] came

from a background that could well afford to pay. On the other side of the coin, it was felt that the taxpayers of Alberta shouldn't be expected to subsidize the education of foreign students to that extent. So double the tuition seemed to be where it settled, and that's where it is today. That's the made-in-Alberta policy and the philosophy behind it.

In addition to that particular quote, there is another one that I would like to present, and that's in response to a question made of the minister of advanced education prior to the present one. He was asked to indicate what his view was on the capping of tuition fees, and this is what he said.

If one looks across the nation, you will find that many institutions set their own tuition fees. You also will notice that many governments, with regard to the public institutions, who allocate funds to the universities by grants simply adjust their grants as a net result of what those tuition fees are.

It then goes on to say:

I do believe, looking at the costs of our postsecondary system, that we probably will have to make some adjustment in the near future to put them on a more equitable footing in terms of funding. At this time I believe, judging by the participation rate, which is the highest in the nation . . . judging by the number of students, that Alberta probably has a system as good or better than any place in the country.

That's the end of the quote from *Hansard* 1992, page 886.

The then minister of advanced education went on to say:

To allow certain institutions to set their own [tuition fees] is in some ways similar to letting a youngster loose in a candy store.

As well, on August 24, 1993, as a result of a question in a standing policy committee on finance planning meeting, the minister of advanced education, when he was asked about the issue of visa student fees, pointed out that more Albertans study abroad than visa students study in Alberta; it is also noteworthy that more Albertans study in other provinces than the reverse.

Our conversations with some of the other bodies at various universities should be reported in *Hansard* as well. In regards to this motion, a representative of the international students organization of the University of Alberta was asked a number of questions. What this person said is that at the University of Alberta some visa students pay between \$4,000 and \$5,000 for graduate courses. Teaching assistant salaries cannot support a student when she has to pay this much in fees. Visa students acting as teacher assistants and researchers improve the quality of the university. The third thing that this person said was that graduate students from places like China do not have much money at all. The fourth thing is that the representative was understandably appalled by Motion 208.

We also had a conversation with Lisa McNaughton, the community and government relations officer at the University of Calgary. She had indicated that the University of Calgary's position is that the Board of Governors should be able to set tuition levels for all students independent of government influence. The University of Calgary believes that it is important to have a diverse and global university community since it adds to the learning environment. Visa students are required to meet a higher admission standard. For example, in nonquota areas the University of Calgary's minimum standard is 73 percent, but for visa students it is 78 percent. Speaking on a personal note rather than on behalf of the University of Calgary, she also said that there wasn't much financial point to raising visa student fees since they accounted for only 5 percent of the University of Calgary's student population. She expressed the view that supporting this motion would not solve the university's financial plight.

Our position on the motion is very clear: the rate of tuition increase is too high. We reject this motion for a number of reasons, one of them being inaccurate phraseology. The other is that we believe that international students are being singled out

and should not be. To deregulate visa student fees without establishing a differential fee waiver or scholarship to ensure that talented students are still attracted to Alberta will undermine the intellectual and cultural quality of our universities. We also believe that if this motion is passed, it's the thin edge of the wedge for deregulating tuition fees as a whole, something which we as a party have always opposed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking in favour of the motion, the specific examination of the way we assess tuition and costs for foreign students fits in well with the approach of this government of looking closely at the way we do things and seeing if they can be improved.

Now Motion 208 is not a cure-all. To repeat a statistic that is well known, foreign students make up about 4 percent of our total student population. While this is a significant amount, it certainly is not a huge percentage. We should consider that tuition revenue is only allowed to cover a maximum of 20 percent of the postsecondary institution's total operating budget. We should consider that wages for faculty and support staff take up the lion's share of the operating costs in today's universities. We should also consider that in other provinces who have implemented a system similar to that of Motion 208, where universities are allowed to determine fees levied on foreign students, tuition fees for foreign students have on the average gone down. These points taken together show that this motion is not intended to solve the financial stresses that our universities are currently facing. Rather, I think Motion 208 gives us the opportunity to re-examine the philosophy behind the fees we charge to foreign students and see if our method of charging them should be adjusted.

3:40

I would like to run through a few arguments we hear when discussing this issue and bring to light a few points to consider when debating this motion.

The value of foreign students. One of the first points that we find ourselves discussing is the value of foreign students to our educational system. Now this is not an issue here. I agree with everyone else that international students make a valuable contribution to our postsecondary system. They bring with them different ideas and viewpoints that enrich our own experiences. Contrary to what many people may think, they also contribute financially to the communities they study in; some studies say that the average foreign student contributes \$9,000 annually to his or her community. Being a representative of Lethbridge-West, this is a significant feature, then, of our argument, because the University of Lethbridge – I think much to my pride and hopefully the pride of people in the south – has always represented a fairly high percentage of foreign students. They often end up fulfilling leadership roles in their countries of origin, making decisions based upon the goodwill they received during their stay in our country.

I remember an interview – it would have to have been on CBC if it was Stephen Lewis, and in this particular case it was. He was returning from his stint as Canada's ambassador to the United Nations. The topic that was under discussion was very revealing. There was a point in time – and I don't have the dates in my mind, specifically, Mr. Speaker, but at one particular point there was an open seat on the Security Council of the United Nations, and Canada was in competition with, I believe, Norway, and I forget the third country. It came down to the point where the

final, resolving vote in favour of Canada gaining that seat on the Security Council of the United Nations came from an African country whose representative there happened to come from my alma mater, the University of Calgary. It was that particular situation of that foreign student having been involved in Canada, understanding somewhat Canada's traditions and some of its values, that really tipped the thing over the edge at that particular point and got us that seat.

The second point might be Third World development. Something that I would like to focus on briefly is that there is a widely-held belief that by accepting foreign students we are furthering the cause of Third World development. Studies show that, in truth, international development agencies like CIDA are sending fewer students to Canada each year. They are instead choosing to send them to countries that offer educational programs more relevant to the developmental needs in the students' home countries. In addition, many Third World countries are offering assistance to fewer students wishing to study abroad in the belief that their studying at home would be a more valuable asset to their own country's development. A final point would be that many of these Third World countries have large pools of unemployed and underemployed university graduates. These facts show that it is inaccurate for us to immediately assume that we are addressing the needs of Third World countries in our acceptance of these foreign students. Third World countries have complex needs that require immediate, practical solutions and could best be addressed through postsecondary education received in Canada.

I'm somewhat feeling that I'm under pressure. I urge all members to vote in favour of this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Actually the time limited for consideration of this motion has run out, and the Chair is now required to put all questions needing to be put for the disposition of Motion 208 as proposed by the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

[Motion lost]

Postsecondary Institutions' Boards of Governors

210. Moved by Mr. Zariwny:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to implement a system for making government appointments to postsecondary institutions' boards of governors that is based on an open nomination process and in which the final decision is made by an all-party committee of the Legislature. The new appointment process should adopt as a goal cross-representation, so that representatives from different levels of education are included on such boards.

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is my motion, and I would like to speak to it. I've placed this motion before the House because I believe it's very important at this stage in the development of universities to improve the governance of them.

Now, the economic and social circumstances facing Alberta universities cry out for improvements to be made in the higher education institutions and the way they are governed. These institutions are experiencing an ever increasing demand for educational service with an increasing limitation in the availability of funds from government. To top this state of affairs the commercial sector of the world society has been gearing up for

the last few years with a competitive sharpness never seen before. This increased competition with Canadian and Alberta economies will require greater freedom on the part of universities to design their programs, their courses, and their research activities and to meet the real needs of the public faster and more efficiently.

Now, part of the solution to this problem is better public input; in other cases, more public input in how higher educational institutions are governed and less political and management influence by the minister of advanced education.

Another social factor which these institutions have to address is the advent of the responsible, active, and highly-motivated student bodies who are demanding a greater degree of authority in the governance of their postsecondary educational institutions. This demand is justified, even if we use as a rationale the ever increasing share by students of the cost of operating a university.

The matter of the filling of governing boards of higher education institutions has not been examined properly. Only at the request of the Auditor General did this government decide to take a step and examine how members of boards are appointed. The present method and the recommended method of filling board positions are at most a farcical action where members are selected by the minister on a partisan political basis. There is no direct accountability of the board to this House at all. Rather, most matters concerning the action of boards are dealt with in secret and between the minister and the chair of the board.

What will this Motion 210 accomplish, then? In essence, Motion 210 poses the question: how can we strengthen university governance while preserving provincial government support and academic self-government? Now, there's no simple answer to this question, but I submit there are three avenues on how to deal with this, and Motion 210 presents those three avenues. Motion 210 will make governing bodies accountable to the Legislative Assembly. It will provide a proper cross-representation of higher education constituents, and it will open up the process of selection of members of boards. The government of Alberta has the major responsibility for higher educational support in Alberta. That's a given. The challenge for provincial governments is to find ways of ensuring that universities do contribute to public policy objectives and do so efficiently while at the same time enhancing their capacity to make choices. It's also a given that governing boards command public confidence, and they should be in the best position to understand the true nature and the mission of universities. Now, a board can justify provincial government support while respecting academic self-government. This government can certainly do its part in strengthening universities.

One reason for supporting this motion is clear. A board whose members are appointed by this Assembly is also accountable to the Legislative Assembly. Boards will be held more accountable to this Assembly for their actions and decisions. Appointment by the Legislative Assembly is a prerequisite of accountability. We as MLAs are regularly accountable to at least a portion of the governed at any given time. In a democracy this accountability is owed to the electorate by all of us. Accountability can be enforced through a great variety of procedures including appointments by this Legislative Assembly to boards.

3:50

The most obvious example of responsibility and accountability is the electoral process. An MLA is elected by voters and then vested with authority and power in order to achieve those goals to which he or she had campaigned for. A form of this accountability is required with the appointment to boards. I believe that before an authority like a board of governors can reflect the needs of a community, it must represent the varied

interests of that community. It must be informed of issues and problems. The present method and the method recommended by the government for filling these positions is not adequate. It does not go far enough. Also, a governing body is better informed as an agent of the government if it is representative of the interests of a community. Surely it is without question that a body representing the varied interests of the community rather than one interest, being the government, can keep in touch with local opinion and the educational needs of the community better than what exists now. Board members must be given the opportunity to conduct themselves as the representatives of their constituents. To represent means to be present on behalf of someone who is absent; that's the simple definition of it. Elections are not only the means of securing representation or ensuring representation. The economic and social status of board members is sometimes considered a guarantee that they will be representatives of their constituents. But I believe that is not true.

The present and recommended system of appointments may provide some procedural stability and accountability to some, but stability is not a representation of the elements of the public. Boards, like any government agency, must meet certain demands and standards of performance. Although governing boards have to meet certain demands of standards and performance, they have great discretionary authority and are only accountable in this case to the minister of advanced education. How can a board appointed on a purely partisan basis satisfy local demands in the provision of its services? It seems to me that the boards walk a tightrope, continuously trying to effect a compromise between the demands of the interest they claim to represent and the demands and controls of the minister.

As well, any consideration of the topic of higher education in governance must pay specific attention to the relationship between the board and this Assembly. Now, it seems to me that where the process of governance seems to have broken down is when boards have not entertained or carried out communication with the public in the academic community about what the university is all about.

DR. L. TAYLOR: To serve students.

MR. ZARIWNY: I beg your pardon?

DR. L. TAYLOR: To serve students.

MR. ZARIWNY: What is university? Unlike the minister for advanced education, I believe it has very little to do with dollars and cents for bricks. Now, through an important system focused and centred in the Legislative Assembly, the decisions of boards of governors become open to public scrutiny through us the MLAs. As well, great weight is added to the view that the appointed process recommended by Motion 210 makes accountability more meaningful because of the election element linking the board with the electorate through us. Appointment by the Legislative Assembly closes the gap that exists between the voter and the government. It provides opportunities for more public direction, again through the Assembly. Furthermore, certain fundamental procedures like appointments to boards must not be subject to frequent or arbitrary change, which I believe the minister of advanced education has the authority to do now. Democracy rests upon popular participation in government and upon disclosure and openness about the affairs of government. In this sense, appointment of members of governing boards by this body is a prerequisite of successful democracy in Alberta.

In conclusion I would ask for the support of this Assembly for Motion 210. It's my belief that the public's investment and

interest in higher education institutions is too great not to support this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what happened this afternoon that I'm able to grace debate twice.

It is an opportunity and a pleasure to debate Motion 210 this afternoon. Like much of the input from across the way this motion is a day late and a dollar short. Although this government is never against saving a dollar, I feel I must speak against this motion for several reasons. Among those reasons is the fact that the substance of this motion is already being acted upon by this government. The method chosen to accomplish the task would also be costly and inefficient. The motion depends on an open nomination process, a process that would have as its goal cross-representation so that all of the stakeholders are represented on the boards of Alberta's postsecondary institutions. This is a noble idea, an idea that is already in reality in the postsecondary boards of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we already have in place a system that is open, a system that will allow the best, most qualified candidates to be selected for postsecondary boards. In fact, the Premier recently unveiled the plan to further ensure that the appointment process supplies the ministers involved with appropriate nominees.

I would like to further explore the process to show the Assembly the extent to which this motion comes up short. I would first like to point out the problems with Motion 210 as it stands. The problem with this motion, Mr. Speaker, is that it would result in a process that would be cumbersome, costly, and ineffective if not downright harmful.

Although I am sure that the intentions of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona are the best, Motion 210 is unacceptable. While this government is continually trying to find better, more effective, more efficient methods of governing, the members opposite are content to continually try to increase the size and expense of Alberta's government. The people of this province demand that we enact legislation that makes responsible use of their tax dollars, not legislation that increases the size and complexity of the government by creating more committees.

It must be a good speech; everybody is coming back to listen.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development makes as many as three or four appointments every week throughout the entire year. This motion would require the process to come under the scrutiny of an all-party committee. The committee would then make the final decision. I have several concerns about the necessity of an all-party committee. The main problem is that it would be costly and inefficient. Departments such as the Public Service Commissioner and human resources are much better equipped to make recommendations regarding appointments. It is not necessary to bring more bureaucracy into a system that already has the necessary expertise to do the job. Further, the sheer number of appointments would require the committee to sit year-round. Members would have to return to the Legislature almost weekly to sit on this committee. This would incur the taxpayers of Alberta further costs at a time when this government is trying to reduce and not enlarge government. The responsibility for the actions of the boards lies with the minister responsible, in this case the minister of advanced education. Responsibilities should lie with that minister to ensure that individuals with proper qualifications and experience are appointed.

4:00

A third problem with the proposed system is that it may discourage quality candidates from volunteering for the positions. These positions are challenging and time consuming and require a great deal of commitment. Board members qualify for little, if any, compensation. In many cases board members do not receive any remuneration or they donate their remuneration back to the institutions. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that many of these positions are essentially voluntary. Subjecting the nominees to a legislative committee may in fact discourage many from volunteering. When one volunteers for a position, they generally do not want their credentials reviewed and discussed in an open forum. The effect of this policy may be to discourage those individuals with the appropriate combinations of knowledge and experience from being considered at all. As you can see, Motion 210 could in fact end up lowering the standard, not increasing it as I am sure the member opposite intended.

To the concern of cross-representation. The current system allows for nominations from any interested party, whether it be from members of the Legislature on either side of the House, student associations, faculty, or any member of the public. All the nominations from every source are taken into consideration in the determination of successful candidates. The minister is very concerned that input from all the stakeholders is available to the board and ensures that the board has generous representation from all the stakeholders involved. Alberta's postsecondary boards are made up of student and faculty representatives, nonacademic staff, administration, and other stakeholders. In many cases the student representatives are selected and nominated by the student body of the institution. Cross-representation is already a reality. There is no need for further regulation and restriction.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have created a scheme that, although the intent is good, is too unwieldy and impractical to implement. Fortunately, however, this government recently updated their current appointment process. The process will further ensure that each candidate's qualifications are viewed in an unbiased, fair, and open process. The new system will tighten controls on more than 90 government agencies, boards, and commissions. The department of advanced education is responsible for a great many of these appointments. The government felt that instead of making changes to the appointment process in a piecemeal way, they would completely revamp it.

Mr. Speaker, in the report on NovAtel, the Auditor General recommended that the province use

the expertise of the Public Service Commissioner to short-list suitably qualified candidates for appointments to the boards of all Provincial agencies and Crown-controlled organizations.

He further recommended

that the primary criterion for selection of candidates be proven relevant expertise.

[interjections] Sound advice, Mr. Speaker – and I'm glad somebody is listening in the House – advice that this government has acted upon. The new appointment process was created and will be implemented with one goal in mind: ensuring that appointments made by all departments of this government are made because of proven relevant experience and expertise. Instead of making changes to only one part of the process, this government has found a way to ensure the quality of appointments in every department of the government. By increasing the scope of the process, we are able to make it more efficient and effective.

Motion 210 encourages relatively minor changes to the appointments made by the department of advanced education. The new government policy makes major changes that will affect all those boards, agencies, and commissions that make substantial contribu-

tions to the economic and social well-being of the province and the people of Alberta. The boards, agencies, and commissions covered by the policy all make financial, regulatory, business, or policy recommendations and decisions. These people will directly affect the lives of Albertans, and it is important to this government that they are qualified to do the job. Examples of those affected are the boards of all postsecondary institutions, the Environment Council of Alberta, the Children's Advocate, all provincial and Crown hospital boards of governors, the Labour Relations Board, and the Alberta Liquor Control Board. The list goes on to include over 90 boards, agencies, and commissions in every department of the government.

Review panels will be created which will use professional expertise to help shortlist candidates. The Public Service Commissioner's office, the department of human resources, and private search consultants will be utilized in the candidate review process. They have the necessary human resource and personnel skills that are required to adequately develop a list of suitable candidates. The review panels will consist of technical experts, the public, and key stakeholders. The major criterion for the review panel will be proven relative experience. This government wants to ensure that candidates have the qualifications and experience necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. The process will be efficient and flexible. The review panels may look at several specific appointments or may serve for a period of time, depending on the requirements of each department. After an objective review of candidates' qualifications, the review panels will make recommendations to the minister.

Mr. Speaker, Motion 210 urges that we adopt an open appointment process. The new appointment process ensures more openness. To ensure that the public is aware of upcoming appointments, this government expanded the mandate of *The Bulletin*, in which a listing of vacant government positions is made. Ministers can now advertise for candidates in *The Bulletin*. This publication distributes 32,000 copies throughout government offices, Canada employment centres, and postsecondary institutions. This, coupled with the mandate to accept nominations from all interested stakeholders, guarantees Albertans fair access to the appointment process.

Mr. Speaker, Motion 210 is unacceptable for several reasons. It would be costly to further enlarge this government by adding more committees to the system. There are more effective and efficient methods to accomplish the same tasks. But most of all, this government has already implemented an appointment process that is open, effective, efficient, and will encompass not one specific area but all areas in government. For these reasons, I must encourage all members of this Assembly to vote against this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

4:10

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to support Motion 210, and in speaking to that support, I'd like to look at three questions. The first is: how do we view higher education institutions? I think the view we hold of those institutions is important in terms of the kinds of governance we think would best serve those institutions. Wolff, looking at university communities in particular in his book *Ideal of the University*, identified sort of four perspectives people hold on postsecondary institutions, and one view is that those institutions are corporations. I think that is probably the view closest to this government's view: that postsecondary institutions are corporations. In that view, the board

of governors operates like a board of directors. Like a board of directors, they are appointed by the major shareholders and can be appointed and removed at will. The administration are viewed as managers of those institutions, the faculty as the workers, and students as the products that are produced. Now, that particular perspective on higher education institutions I think has led the government to appoint and to remain in control of the appointment of boards of governors and governing councils.

There are other views. Related to that is the view that advanced education institutions are training camps for professionals. That, too, I think is reflected in government actions in terms of governance, but there are other contrary views. There are those that believe advanced education institutions are also sanctuaries for scholarship and need to be protected from partisan politics. There are others that believe advanced education institutions are social service stations where the social needs of the community are met through a variety of programs that serve the professionals. So I think it's important for us, before we decide on the government's model that we will support, to examine the underlying perspective we hold on those institutions and what we expect of them.

What do we expect of a board of governors, a council that governs one of these institutions? Well, they have to perform a variety of tasks. They should be involved in long-range planning. We've seen from questioning that has gone on in the last several weeks on estimates of the advanced education department that long-range planning certainly doesn't figure into much of their operation, and I suspect that's why it's not reflected in the work of governing boards. They should be occupied with establishing goals for institutions they're in charge of, and they should be occupied with trying to set priorities for those institutions. So that's a major area that I think those boards should be involved in: the planning, the very necessary planning that should go on for institutions.

At a lower level possibly, but just as important, are managing personnel matters: entering into agreements with groups of employees, hiring faculty and instructing staff, and also promulgating the kinds of regulations that will govern the institution. So the management they are involved in is also important.

For most of our institutions in an era of financial restraint, community links are extremely important. Making sure the institution's goals are shared by the larger community and involving private agencies in helping finance institutions and funding various projects is, I think, a third important factor for those governing boards.

So I think those tasks – planning, managing personnel, and establishing links for the community – occupy or should occupy the time of our governing boards.

What kind of board can best do that? I think there's agreement across North America and most parts of the world that those boards should be made up of students that are going to be affected by the decisions made by the boards; they should be made up of staff members who also will be affected by those decisions. They should also be made up of laypeople. It's that public at large that should retain ultimate control of those institutions. They're funded from public funds and should be publicly accountable for their kinds of actions. That's assured by making sure the public is well represented and in a majority position on the governing boards.

That leads us to the substance of this motion, and that's how those governing boards should be chosen. The preferred process, I think, is that enjoyed by school boards across the province, where there are public elections. There's an open nomination process, and the public at large decides how school boards and our schools will be governed. That, for a number of reasons, is not logistically possible when you look at advanced education

institutions. There are some other possibilities that are being used elsewhere: a combination of elected and appointed individuals where there is an attempt to open the process; some institutions are entirely government-appointed bodies.

In our case, we think we have the best of all worlds where we have indicated an all-party legislative committee. I think one of the major concerns has to be that public members on those boards truly represent all the public interested in higher education. It's very difficult for us to accept that government-appointed boards, members of those boards and government-appointed chairs, are really representative of the entire public. The minister makes the final decision, and that is not likely to be representative of all Albertans. What are the chances of the minister choosing as a chair for the board or an appointee to the board of governors someone who has taken a contrary position to that of the government? I suggest the chances of that happening – especially in these times of financial constraint when there is heated debate over educational affairs, I suspect that's not going to happen very often. I think we know from past experience that the incidence of those who oppose government policy being appointed to these boards is really very low.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I would ask for support for Motion 210.

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

MR. SOHAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to speak to Motion 210 this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, after considering Motion 210, it quickly became apparent that I would be unable to support the motion. I cannot support the motion because it falls far short of what this government has already put into place. The members opposite would urge the government to adopt an open nomination process. This is as far as this motion goes. It does not specify at all what mandate such a process would have or how it would go about making the appointments. One would hope that the basis for making appointments to government agencies and boards would be relevant expertise, that candidates would have proven experience and qualifications. This motion does not even mention any of these criteria.

Motion 210 urges the creation of an all-party committee to make decisions on appointments. What does the hon. member opposite expect us to make that decision on? For the sake of argument, let's assume there must be some objective criteria by which candidates would be chosen. Those criteria must include, at the very least, expertise in the area involved. The candidate must have some experience relevant to the position to be held. The nominee must also be competent enough to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities that come with the position. I would not have thought members opposite would have any problems with these criteria. However, statements made in this House by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona lead me to believe otherwise. I'm referring to comments made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona on page 947 of *Alberta Hansard*. The hon. member condemned this government for having the audacity to release job descriptions for positions on the boards of postsecondary institutions. The member could not believe that the government would require that people they appoint be appointed for specific reasons.

4:20

The opposition usually urges more responsible, more accountable government, yet on this issue it would seem that we merely pick names out of a hat. The members opposite must want this

government to appoint quality individuals to various postsecondary institutions. What criteria does the opposition think we should set before appointing them? Should there not be some guidelines as to the requirements of the position so the candidate's qualifications can be checked against such requirements? What is the point of having any appointment process whatsoever?

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's postsecondary boards have a large degree of control on the direction and vision that shapes the universities and colleges of this province. They are an important piece of the education puzzle in Alberta and should not be taken so lightly. These boards are responsible for the education of our youth. Some sort of experience and expertise that would qualify them for the job should be in order. As my colleague has explained to the members opposite, this government recently outlined a plan to ensure that this province's appointees to the provincial postsecondary boards have the necessary proven relevant experience, a process that will ensure that appointments are made so the best, most qualified candidates are appointed, a process that will ensure that their qualifications match the position.

Mr. Speaker, an all-party committee would not accomplish any of the above tasks for several reasons. First, the Members of this Legislative Assembly are not human resource officers. Departments hire professionals that are trained and are experienced in candidate searches. An all-party committee would be far less efficient and far less effective than allowing personnel departments in concert with the review panels and the Public Service Commissioner's office to do their job, a job they were hired to do. Instead of aiding in the proliferation of bureaucracy in the system, this Assembly should be trying to reduce it. The members opposite cannot really believe that Albertans want to see their tax dollars being spent on another committee, especially when there are much better, more cost-effective ways of reaching the same end. We must maintain a high degree of responsible, qualified candidates, but this motion does nothing toward that end.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General recommended to this government that the process by which appointments are made be reviewed. One of the key recommendations in that report was that the selection process focus on proven relevant experience. This government has not taken the Auditor General lightly and has acted on many of the recommendations he has made to this Legislature, recommendations that have greatly increased the effectiveness and efficiency of government. The opposition has made much of their belief that this government has in fact not been listening to these recommendations, yet in this situation when the minister of advanced education seeks to create a process by which quality candidates can be found in accordance with the recommendations of the Auditor General, our friends across the way cry foul. The cry has been – and I will quote the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona in *Alberta Hansard*, page 948, once again – that there has been an “obvious intrusion with the boards.” An obvious intrusion, Mr. Speaker, something we should apologize for. I cannot think how we would be so silly as to actually expect that a position to which many people are nominated, each with varied backgrounds, expertise, and experience, would require a job description to ascertain who is the most suitable candidate. It is ridiculous to think that such a move might in some way be beneficial to the selection process.

Mr. Speaker, this government is endeavouring to create a process by which important positions on the boards, agencies, and commissions that have a direct impact on the lives of Albertans are of the highest standard. We will not allow the members opposite to deflect us from that path. It is important that appointments are made on a sound basis. It is important that candidates have the experience and skill to be able to effectively function in

their appointed positions. A job description is not an intrusion; it is a necessity if we expect to match the talent Alberta has to offer with the positions available.

Motion 210 is devoid of any effort to create a better, more effective appointment process. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I must urge all members of the Assembly to vote against Motion 210.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BENIUK: I rise in support of Motion 210. Before I commence, I would like to just make a comment on a comment the member opposite just made. He referred to committees of this Legislature costing taxpayers more money. He seems to forget that members in this House don't get paid for sitting on these committees.

Mr. Speaker, the future of this province, the future of this country, the future of our citizens is in the quality of education we provide. The postsecondary education system in this province is crucial to the well-being of every single Albertan, of every company in this province, companies who establish their operations in an area that has a highly educated and technically trained work force. In fact, as the government's Department of Advanced Education and Career Development has pointed out, 68 percent of jobs from 1992 to the year 2002 would require postsecondary education.

Now, under the Universities Act, section 17(1), under the Technical Institutes Act, section 7, and under the Colleges Act, 9.1, there is a reference that the board has the power to manage and control the postsecondary institution's property, revenue, business affairs, and so on. It is given a lot of power and a great deal of autonomy, and I know . . . [interjection] We've got lots of time yet, Mr. Speaker. So the powers of the board are immense. It has autonomy to deal with vital issues that affect every single citizen in our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair regrets to have to interrupt the hon. member, but pursuant to Standing Order 8(2)(c), we are now required to move to the next order of business.

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

4:30 **Bill 13**
Appropriation Act, 1993

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 13, the Appropriation Act, 1993.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. Provincial Treasurer chose to start with this Bill. It's interesting, when you look at this Bill and you look at what has occurred during this session, that so many members on the other side have willingly participated in the erosion of legislative authority. For them it appears that the words accountability, openness, and transparency are buzzwords to be used at elections and then stowed away until next time.

Let's just review, Mr. Speaker, what has been occurring during this session. First, we've moved towards net budgeting, which the Treasurer has said is in our best interest, but what does that do? It allows authority to lie within departments to capture those funds, to put them in revolving funds, and then allocate them to their needs. They won't be subject to legislative scrutiny except indirectly, through questioning of the Treasurer in the revolving funds. So we've lost control, then, of a significant share of money going to departments, going to programs within the departments,

and we have to trust them. The people that gave us MagCan, NovAtel, who will give us Beatrice, who will give us community bonds: we have to trust them.

Then what happens, Mr. Speaker? Now when we look at the appropriation Bills that come before this House, what do we see on them? We see two lines for each department, operation and capital. There have been the debates on the estimates where vote by vote we assessed where those dollars went, whether they were properly allocated, whether those programs were worthwhile. Now they've been aggregated up, hidden in one line. Now the ministers have the discretion to allocate those funds within their departments as they choose, because the constraint on them is the Appropriation Bill. It is not the votes on the estimates; it is the Appropriation Bill itself that gives them that power. That's open? That's accountable? And then they say: trust us. We do not trust them to allocate those funds correctly in light of past experience. If you look at that front bench, many of them were there in the Getty years: spend, spend, spend. When you look at these appropriation Bills, no moratorium on capital expenditures, no across-the-board cuts on programs such as the urban playgrounds. No, not for them. They will in fact shut down classrooms, they will in fact close hospital beds, but not these politically acceptable types of pork barrel programs.

The issue here, Mr. Speaker, is one of setting priorities and being honest and accountable. Then the Treasurer had the audacity last night to say: we're going to send copies of *Hansard* to all the newspapers to say that you voted against it. We challenge him to do it. I wish you would put an ad in the paper, Mr. Treasurer, in every rural newspaper, every city newspaper, saying we voted against this Bill because it's bad legislation, it erodes the legislative authority of this House. I challenge the Treasurer to do that, to have his party spend the dollars and do it.

We have a sense of priority, Mr. Speaker. We think that in this period of restraint dollars should go into the hospital beds, they should go into the classroom. There should be a moratorium on these types of capital expenditures, and there should be transparency and openness in our accounts. That is not here.

If you look at Bill 13, it's two pages, Mr. Speaker. On the other hand, if you look at the estimates, which my hon. colleague has, these are the estimates we discussed, but that was just a waste of time because they're not constrained to that. Vote by vote, they're not constrained to that. What we have there is Bill 13, the Appropriation Bill, that sets out the global operating and the global capital. It does not set out vote by vote as previous appropriation Bills do. This means, then, this has been a sort of exercise to occupy our time, sort of guide marks of how they might spend the money if they choose to.

MR. DINNING: Now it's on the record.

DR. PERCY: It is on the record, Mr. Treasurer.

The issue then, Mr. Speaker, is of accountability. Vote by vote, program by program, this Legislature focuses on the spending of funds. It is the convention in the House of Commons, it is the convention in the House of Westminster that such appropriation Bills provide the specifics of those allocations and those expenditures of funds. If you look at Bill 13, it does not do that. It gives you the global figure for operating. It gives you the global figure for capital. The link between that and the votes of the estimates is tenuous at best. It relies, then, on the judgment of the individual ministers, because again let us be clear, and let us be clear for the back bench there.

AN HON. MEMBER: The private members.

DR. PERCY: The Silent Six.

The constraints on the minister are the constraints set out in the appropriation Bills, which set the global targets.

So what do we see, Mr. Speaker? We see the move towards net budgeting. We see the move to these global targets for operating and capital for each of these departments. We see now an array of independent boards being set up for these privatized entities. What do those boards do? Well, it allows the ministers to say: "Huh, they're autonomous. We can't do anything." But of course they're Tory appointments through and through.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's a sham.

DR. PERCY: So it is a sham, Mr. Speaker. Through this session we've heard them talk time and time again about openness, transparency, accountability. But when you look at the bottom line, when you look at what they're doing, it is less open, it is less accountable than it has ever been.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bill before us today, Bill 13, asks us to approve expenditures of \$11.3 billion. My hon. colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud has talked about some concerns that he has with the brevity of the Bill with respect to the estimates. I certainly must concur with his observations. When I look through the vast majority of departments here, most departments have a mere two lines allocated to the expenditure: operating expenditure and capital investment. There are a couple of departments, by the way, one of which of course is Economic Development and Tourism, that have a third line that talks about nonbudgetary disbursements. The other one that also has some nonbudgetary disbursements is Municipal Affairs.

Now, the difficulty I have with this Bill is in part related to its brevity, the fact that all the program expenditures, for example, for a department are basically outlined in two lines, which are then summed in total on the final page. There's really no indication in here as to what the government proposes to spend money on. Of course, that's the purpose or at least the proclaimed purpose. I state that the proclaimed purpose is supposed to be outlined in the estimates, on which we have spent a considerable amount of time in this Legislature and in subcommittees of the Legislature looking at different departments.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the difficulty in accepting a Bill like Bill 13 is that the Treasurer, I'm sure, will say, "Well, this Bill is brief because it's based upon all the information that has been provided in the estimates, both this particular estimate and the general estimates books as well as all the rest of the estimates books that will apply to subsequent Bills." The difficulty is really that when you shake it down and you start shaking the stuff out of the information that is in the estimates book upon which Bill 13 is based, it's still pretty slim pickings. For example – and again, I am just using this as a single example – the Alberta Opportunity Company: 17 and a half million dollars is one of the figures that comes out with respect to the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Yet all it says is that it's "provided with an operating grant and with financing for its venture and seed capital financing programs." It doesn't tell us who the programs will serve. There's no justification of why we even have this program, and I'm just using this as one example.

Mr. Speaker, you could virtually throw this book up in the air and have it open on any page and ask basically the same question. That question is: why? Why are we funding this program? Who is being served by it? You know, the big W5: who, what, when, where, why, and how. If we really ask those questions in detail, the hundred hours that I believe the Treasurer has referred to as having been dedicated to the debate on the estimates would probably prove to be hopelessly, hopelessly inadequate to really analyze and get a thorough handle on everything this book purports to support. A hundred hours to really get all the answers to all the questions is probably nowhere near significantly enough time.

4:40

The difficulty, just as I said, with, as one example, the Alberta Opportunity Company is: who is being served by this program? What is being achieved by the program? You could flip it open to the Department of Education, Departmental Support Services, or flip it open to Executive Council, and you could ask those same questions on capital investment by program, et cetera, et cetera. I mean, there's a whole long list of different programs in here. The problem is that Bill 13, Mr. Speaker, is far too short and too brief to really give all the answers.

The difficulty is that even with our increased time that we now have because most if not all departments had two rounds in the Legislature in Committee of Supply stage and some of them in fact had a round – there were five different departments that were dedicated under subcommittee stage. The problem is that we really still don't get all the answers to all the questions. Furthermore, I'm not sure how many of the – what are they called again? – private members sitting on the back benches get information. But clearly on this side of the House, until the Treasurer tables this and the other documents that go with his budget speech, we are kept completely in the dark as to what the government proposes to do. Whether it's a 5 percent increase or a 5 percent decrease, none of that information is provided to opposition members, partly because of the parliamentary tradition that the budget is a big secret document until budget night, and then the Treasurer stands up and tells us what a wonderful thing he's doing. Then we end up supposedly having to buy into – literally buy on this particular Bill – \$11.3 billion. The Treasurer asked us to buy into this program without having the background information.

Well, as a responsible Albertan, as a responsible member of the Legislature, I find it a hopelessly impossible task for me to support a Bill that doesn't provide me the information in the Bill, where the background documents that led up to the Bill don't provide, in my opinion, sufficient background information. Until and unless that whole process is changed so that the answers are given, so that clear information is given before we vote on it, I cannot support a Bill such as this one. So what I'm suggesting to the Treasurer and in fact to the government as a whole is that we have in fact made some improvement – a small step, I believe – in reviewing the budget process, but I would argue there's still a substantial way to go in making our budget process more efficient and more effective.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I suppose the one glimmer of hope on the horizon is that we do have a committee of this Legislature that has been struck to look at issues like parliamentary reform. Once we get our immediate and pressing deadline items out of the way, like the sub judge convention and so on of which I know you and other members are aware, then perhaps we can broaden our scope and look at issues like preparation of the budget. Because unless and until this government opens up the budget process, I am concerned that we will continue to see budgets which have a

severe lack of information that will continue to result in ad hoc decision-making that really is not occurring in the best interests of all Albertans, and I emphasize the word "all" Albertans.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Treasurer, who I know tries very hard, I can't support him on this Bill.

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

The hon. Provincial Treasurer to close debate.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I simply must respond. I have no choice but to respond. When I listen to my hon. colleagues – and they are two very fine gentlemen. I can't say the same for all of them, but these are two very fine gentlemen. When I think about what accountability is – these are the guys who are giving us lectures on what accountability is, and Albertans made it very clear to them on June 15 that they don't like their kind of accountability. They do like Ralph Klein's kind of accountability.

Mr. Speaker, what is accountability to this government? It begins with the creation of the Financial Review Commission that did a top-to-bottom review of our finances and came out on April 5 with a report that has been implemented in virtually every single way.

Mr. Speaker, what else is accountability? It's bringing supplementary estimates before this Assembly, not doing them by special warrant but bringing supplementary estimates for the Department of Health and the Department of Family and Social Services before the Assembly in January and February of 1993, not doing it by special warrant as those characters across the way suggested we did. Accountability is also informing this Assembly that because the Assembly was not going to be sitting prior to March 31, we would be bringing forward special warrants. We did so after advising the Assembly and telling them, being accountable and open and transparent with Albertans, saying exactly what we were going to do.

Accountability is implementing the recommendations of the Auditor General in his report on the NovAtel situation and the 1991-92 Auditor General report. Mr. Speaker, that is accountability. That's an accountable action by this provincial government. Accountability also happens to be the budget roundtable that we held in Red Deer, chaired by Dr. Norman Wagner, that brought hundreds of Albertans from across the province together to give us advice on how we would balance the budget so as to respond to what Albertans expected of us.

Accountability is the May 6 budget plan that spelled out – not after an election like the characters across the way would want to do and sort of fertilize the truth on their way to a supposed election victory; no, it was on May 6, 40 days before we went to the polls – telling Albertans the truth, telling Albertans the facts, telling them that we had a four-year plan to balance this budget by 1996-97, how we were going to do it, what the numbers looked like, and the fact that we were going to reduce spending by 20 percent. The hon. members . . . [interjections] I think I'm waking them up, Mr. Speaker. I think we've got their attention. The fact is that on June 15 that was the ultimate in accountability in that Albertans said: we like your plan.

Then we move down memory lane, as my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud suggested last night, to August 19, the first quarterly report under the Deficit Elimination Act, where we had promised – and with the support of all the Liberal members of the Assembly, as I recall, in May of 1993, complete support for the Deficit Elimination Act. We brought forward our quarterly report that showed for the first quarter, ended June 30, 1993, where we were on track, where we were off track, and the action we would take, that we did take to make sure our plan stayed on track.

That's accountability. That's the first time a provincial government has ever done that in the way we did it, in staying on track as Albertans told us to do. Mr. Speaker, we reiterated and put forward our plan, the updated budget, on September 8, after Albertans had endorsed it, and that is one of the things we have before this Assembly today.

Finally, and the ultimate in accountability, is bringing forward the public accounts of this province less than six months after the year-end, Mr. Speaker. That's never been done before. We made a commitment in response to the Auditor General's recommendations, to the Financial Review Commission's recommendations that we would bring forward the public accounts. We did so, as we tabled in this Assembly before the end of September the 1992-93 public accounts.

One other element of accountability that I would put to the hon. members across the way is that before the end of this month, we will do our second quarterly report to show where we are on track and where we were on the plan and that we are staying the course, just as Albertans told us to do on June 15 and every day since.

So when the hon. member across the way begs me – begs me – to spend taxpayers' money to advertise his objection, his opposition, his party's opposition to applied cancer research, Mr. Speaker, I will not waste taxpayers' dollars that way. The hon. members would want me to, but not this Provincial Treasurer. There's no way. The record speaks for itself. They were opposed to applied cancer research. They are opposed to all the initiatives this government has taken to try and bring its balance, its budget, its spending in line with its revenues. I can't believe the hon. members across the way would one more time advocate the irresponsible waste of taxpayers' dollars by advertising their opposition to worthy projects and good expenditure.

4:50

But the ultimate of what I've heard this afternoon is that after more than 100 hours of debate on these estimates, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud would stand and say that all we've done is just occupy his time. Well, I think that is a message that ought to go back to his constituents and to the constituents of those members across the way: that they simply sat in here and did absolutely nothing to speak on behalf of their constituents. That's exactly what the hon. member has suggested, Mr. Speaker.

The government members didn't waste their time, didn't just occupy their time. They asked intelligent, insightful, responsible questions that forced ministers to account for the spending they are responsible for in the '93-94 fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, it was a sight to behold, to see all my colleagues spend 100 hours in this Chamber, before designated subcommittees of supply, and to answer questions. I'm waiting for *Hansard* from the designated subcommittee of supply, but if I may, I want to remind the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud that as he stood, at page 1006 – if a member can stand at page 1006 on October 21 in *Hansard* – he said this. In reference to the Chairman of the Committee of Supply, Dr. Percy, it says here, and I'm going to quote. I know you don't like me to use names, but that's what it says in this *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker.

I have to agree . . . with the chairman of supply committee that our designated subcommittee meeting

. . . was a very useful exercise and that we did gain a lot of information, and it was conducted in a very collegial fashion. I would also like to thank the hon. Provincial Treasurer [no less] for his openness and forthrightness [long words, big words] in the sessions. I thought it was a very, very good start to the process of parliamentary reform in that particular set of committee estimates.

How could he stand here today and say it was a waste of his time, but on October 21 he said "it was a very, very good start to the process" and that he got open and forthright information? Flip and flop, Mr. Speaker, and all those guys across the way are a bunch of flops.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, I could and I would thoroughly enjoy going on at length about this important Appropriation Act, 1993, the first in our four-year plan to balance this budget as Albertans told us to do. I proudly move third reading of Bill 13.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the Assembly is for third reading of Bill 13, Appropriation Act, 1993. All those in favour of this Bill, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:54 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Abdurahman	Germain	Soetaert
Beniuk	Hanson	Taylor, N.
Bracko	Kirkland	Van Binsbergen
Bruseker	Langevin	White
Carlson	Leibovici	Wickman
Collingwood	Massey	Yankowsky
Dalla-Longa	Nicol	Zariwny
Decore	Percy	Zwozdesky
Dickson		

Totals: For - 46 Against - 25

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a third time]

Bill 9

Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1993

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move third reading of Bill 9, being the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1993.

I think the reason they set me up in this position is because after that fiery and eloquent exposition of the hon. Provincial Treasurer, he's going to need a little time for his batteries to recharge. We're hoping that perhaps you're going to take some time, fire some shots at me, and that way maybe we can wear down the opposition little by little.

Mr. Speaker, there are two components to this amendment Bill. First of all it defines capital costs for municipal borrowing, and it puts into legislation the interim authority of the order in council that was issued last spring. It is endorsed by the city of Edmonton and the Public Utilities Board. I have discussed the definitions in the amendment Act with a representative of the Auditor General's staff.

The second part deals with the enabling legislation for incorporation of IDs into municipal districts. It provides for the protection of provincial interests in the areas concerned. The amendment has been discussed and endorsed by the improvement districts, and it is endorsed by the Rural & Improvement Districts Association of Alberta.

I would be pleased to answer any further questions on this amendment, and I'm sure if there are any concerns that I can't answer, the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs will assist me.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had the opportunity to speak on this Bill during second reading and again in Committee of the Whole. Questions were asked during second reading. The questions were responded to during Committee of the Whole. From our discussions with the AUMA, the AAMDC, and other organizations there are no difficulties with this Bill, so we have no hesitation in supporting it.

We do, however, eagerly look forward to the broad, new MGA that's going to be introduced in the next spring session. There we anticipate it may be a bit more complex.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a third time]

5:10

[It was moved by the members indicated that the following Bills be read a third time, and the motions were carried]

No.	Title	Moved by
11	Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 1993	Dinning
17	Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation Act Repeal Act	Mirosh
18	Industrial Wages Security Act Repeal Act	Day

Bill 20

Public Safety Services Amendment Act, 1993

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on a roll now. I did so well on the last one that I'm going to make this very brief.

I'd like to move third reading of Bill 20, being the Public Safety Services Amendment Act, 1993.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 20 read a third time]

**Bill 21
Agriculture Financial Services Act**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would move third reading of Bill 21, Agriculture Financial Services Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to this, I have a third reading amendment. Well, really it's a hoist; it's not an amendment.

Moved by Mr. N. Taylor that the motion for third reading be amended to read that Bill 21, Agriculture Financial Services Act, be not now read a third time but that it be read a third time this day six months hence.

This is a bad, bad Bill, a big, bad Bill. There's no question that the Agricultural Development Corporation, which is the government's instrument in the agricultural area, is going to push its nose further and further into the whole business of agriculture in Alberta. If you recall, Mr. Speaker – I have the Blues in front of me – the agriculture minister's answers to the Member for Lethbridge-East today when he brought up the question of whether or not the cattle industry was going to continue to receive money from ADC – he said that they were thinking it over. Here's a couple of statements he made.

We feel very strongly that there are other options that perhaps should be considered first, and this is what we are encouraging the feeder associations to explore. There are the options of the bank. The bank itself can lend money.

The second question that was asked to him, he said: it's not our intention to exit the business; we've made it very clear that we're going to be staying in there. The last supplemental he answered, "The agricultural community can stand on its own two feet without government intervention." Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no question here that what we have is something highly unusual for a government whose philosophy is supposed to be to try to disentangle themselves from business.

What I feel has happened, Mr. Speaker – and of course you can't read and look into the bowels of the Conservative caucus. It's notoriously vacant. Just the same, if I were, I would suspect that this is a Bill that's been brought in by bureaucracy, and no one's had a really good chance to look at it. In effect they're saying that ADC is going to be expanded. If anything I would have thought, especially with the Deep Six down there, that they might have some deep thinking. I'd been led to believe when I read in the papers that there was a kind of a ginger group for the government caucus that had developed, that that was going to show what was wrong with Hobbes and John Stuart Mill and so on. But, no. What do we have here? I thought that they were going to resurrect the principles of Sir Edmund Burke. Of course that may be going back too far, but they could have come into this century and talked some about the principles of, say, John A. Macdonald at the turn of the century, even John Diefenbaker.

What we have is a bunch of pussycats that are going to sit back, the so-called conscience of this party, and let a government organization, ADC, which should be dissolved – I know there are

members that would like to see it dissolved. The ADC should be dissolved, gotten out of. Realize that ADC is financed by – I think it's \$1 billion the Alberta government has in the Agricultural Development Corporation. One billion dollars from the heritage trust fund in the ADC as a bank, and what it's done is gone out through the agricultural community and just frightened off and chased out any other form of bank, very much as what's happened with Gainers in the pork industry. Until the government gets out of there, we won't see any expansion in pork. In the same way, until ADC is out of the agricultural lending processes, we are not going to see alternative banking in. Why should our farming communities be caught or held hostage by only one banking institution, one owned by a government that purports to support free enterprise and is trying to get out of business. They are fond of saying: we're in the business of getting out of business. But the biggest lender in this province, ADC with \$1 billion of our heritage trust capital, is still holding sway through the agricultural sector.

The other part of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that it takes out from under the protection of the government, farmers' rights to the consumer and corporate affairs legislation. This has to do with excessive interest rates, foreclosing too quickly, and so on and so forth. Now, admittedly the minister said: well, that's the outside limit; we've always been nicer than they were. But how do you know they're going to be nicer? They might be worse. There's no guarantee. This is a government agency out there operating on its own, asking for a right to proceed.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, there was the whole question of a community development bond that ADC had the right to protect up to a hundred percent. Well, I think it was fairly clear that if there was anything in the last election, it was that there would be no more hundred percent guarantees. This is more than just a case of the ADC out there, an Alberta government agency out giving a hundred percent guarantees to investors, less interest, in projects. We also have a government organization going out giving hundred percent loans to other competing things. How do you know, when you've got somebody that's built a farm business, a machine business, a welding shop, or a bakery out there, that ADC doesn't suddenly end up funding a competitor through the community bonds with a hundred percent guarantee? So you're turning loose a dinosaur, you might call it, that's well fed by the heritage trust fund and this government in the free enterprise sector in the rural areas. I would just ask the government to think about it, think about it. This is why the motion is in there, a hoist for six months.

I know there's such a thing as blind loyalty. But, holy smoke, how can the loyalty turn you around 180 degrees? You're marching down cheering and yelling behind the Treasurer and everyone else: "Yea, yea for free enterprise. Yea, yea for getting out of business." Then all of a sudden, bang. The shot fires, and the whole bloody parade turns around and goes the other way: "Yea, yea, for being in business. Yea, yea for loaning the money. Yea, yea." How can they get away with that? [some applause]

**Speaker's Ruling
Decorum**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, the tradition of the House is that – I hesitate on this – we applaud by putting our hands to the desktop. Thank you. In moderation.

Sorry, hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it does shake me up. Of all the years I've been in this House, being applauded by the Tories is one of the worst things that's ever happened to me. I find that I am at a loss for words.

5:20

Debate Continued

MR. N. TAYLOR: I make one final plea that they look at that. If they have something that's tugging at their primeval conscience, something that's pulling at their blue thinking, surely to gosh, Mr. Speaker, it would be voting for a Bill that makes the government the biggest financial lender, borrower, forecloser, and manipulator in our biggest industry in this province: agriculture. That's something that even the NDP wouldn't have dared to put forward, yet they're doing it here.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we've got here basically is a Bill that started off with fairly good intentions, bringing together two financial institutions that have been operating in the agricultural sector. This then has been combined with other activities within the Bill that basically make the Bill an unacceptable piece of legislation to pass through.

We've got a situation where the structure of the Bill allows for the continuation of the loan practices that had been put out under the ADC in terms of support for loan guarantees and big business associated with the development of the industry. It's a possibility that we need to be able to open this up more and bring it back into a legislative position. This was the focus of some of the amendments that were proposed. We need to be able to think about the legitimacy and the commitment that we've made as legislators to the people of Alberta. We promised them financial accountability. We promised them responsible actions in this Legislature. We had an opportunity as we modified the program for the ADC, and we've basically allowed the past practices to be carried through into this new Bill. We wanted to be sure that we put forth a good view of financial responsibility, and we've lost that opportunity.

We've also moved into the program where – we were all of us elected on June 15 on the basis of getting the government out of business, no loan guarantees, no more loans, yet we end up here putting in place a new program which will bring about . . .

Point of Order

Questioning a Member

DR. WEST: Point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs is rising on a point of order.

DR. WEST: I would request if the hon. member would entertain a question during debate. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Due to the noise that that point of order has engendered, the Deputy Speaker, owing to his failing auditory nerves, is unable to hear the response of the Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: This is not a time for questions.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The answer, hon. minister, is no. Would you continue, Lethbridge-East.

Debate Continued

DR. NICOL: Mr. Speaker, again I challenge the government on their basically going ahead now and putting in place an expansion

of the loan guarantee program that's available to the businesses of Alberta. This is basically a reversal of the promises that we all made in terms of our election.

DR. PERCY: It a continuation of a trend for those guys.

DR. NICOL: That's right. It's a continuation of the way things have been working with this government. We basically wanted this Bill to form a framework for a new focus on the relationship between the government and the people of Alberta, a focus that was based on the idea that businesses had to look out for their own activities. We had to begin to deal with them on an equitable basis. We had to deal with them on the basis of . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would encourage the government Whip to set a softer pace for the hearing of the debate so that we may continue.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we've got, again, to recap this, is basically a commitment by the government to continue their program of loan guarantees, and this is not acceptable in the framework of the new environment that we're trying to create for the people of Alberta. We've got proposals now in place to allow for a continuation of opportunities for the people of Alberta, taxpayers, to be put in jeopardy, their money put at risk. This is one of the things that we don't stand for.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to refresh the members on the other side of the House. Part of paragraph 56:

to assure that there will be return on the principal amount of the bond but may assure the repayment to the holder of the bond of an amount that is not more than 100% of the principal amount of the bond.

Now, they showed self-control, Mr. Speaker. They didn't have it 130, 150.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I'm sorry. Are you on the hoist amendment?

DR. PERCY: Yes, I am.

In light of that clause, Mr. Speaker, last night we brought forward a very, very pungent amendment, pungent because they couldn't stand it. [interjection] That's right; transparency and openness they couldn't stand. What it did was very simple: it eliminated division 3. It said: no more guarantees. It left the Bill intact, but it took out the guarantees. In a standing vote, Mr. Speaker, they voted for guarantees. Each and every one of them voted for guarantees. I am speaking in favour of the hoist amendment because I do not think Alberta taxpayers can afford more guarantees.

The exercise that we have at hand now, the hoist, is to send this Bill back. Hopefully at some point, when it does re-emerge, sections such as 56 will be removed and the other elements of the Bill may be further improved.

It's also interesting that the government did bring forward an amendment. It's an interesting amendment: "The Consumer Credit Transactions Act is amended in section 5 by repealing clause (b)." What they basically did was remove the protection to farmers of the Consumer Credit Transactions Act. We never did get a very good explanation from the minister of agriculture why that protection would be removed. He talked about the index deferral program, never explained what it was, never put it in context.

So in light of this amendment, which again was passed by that side, in light of the fact that they would not accept what we viewed as a friendly amendment in light of their rhetoric to remove the loan guarantee section, we felt there was no choice but to put a hoist on this particular Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, Standing Order 4(1) requires that we now adjourn.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 p.m.]

