

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, March 15, 1994**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 94/03/15

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, we confidently ask for Your strength and encouragement in our service of You through our service of others.

We humbly ask for Your gift of wisdom to guide us in making good laws and good decisions for the present and the future of Alberta.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present to the Assembly a petition signed by over 300 Edmontonians from one single Catholic parish. They do petition this Legislature "to uphold the right of a separate Catholic school system and show its firm commitment to Catholic education in Alberta."

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

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce 1,104 signatures on a petition urging the government not to alter funding arrangements for seniors' housing until seniors have been consulted.

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

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition including still hundreds more names of those people in support of the Misericordia hospital being a full-service, active hospital.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As is the duty of a member of this Legislature, I beg leave to introduce a petition containing approximately 560 names expressing concern over exclusion of literature from school curriculum.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented on March 1 in favour of student loans now be read and received by the Assembly.

CLERK:

We call on the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to abandon the proposal to privatize student loans, and make the entire student aid system more responsive to student needs.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the two petitions I presented on March 1 and 3 concerning keeping the Misericordia hospital open as a full-service treatment hospital be read now.

CLERK:

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to maintain the Misericordia Hospital as a Full-Service, Active Hospital and continue to serve the West-end of Edmonton and surrounding area.

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to maintain the Misericordia Hospital as a Full-Service, Active Hospital and continue to serve the West-end of Edmonton, Spruce Grove and surrounding area.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented on March 2 in support of keeping the Grey Nuns hospital open as an active care treatment centre now be read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the Government to maintain the Grey Nuns Hospital in Mill Woods as a Full-Service, Active Hospital and continue to serve the south-east end of Edmonton and surrounding area.

head: **Notices of Motions**

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

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 34(2)(a), I am giving notice that tomorrow I'll be moving that written questions do stand and retain their places on the Order Paper. I also wish to give notice that I'll be moving that motions for returns stand and retain their places on the Order Paper, with the exception of motions for returns 154, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, and 177.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 14

Agriculture Statutes Repeal Act, 1994

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 14, being the Agriculture Statutes Repeal Act, 1994.

The purpose of this Bill is to repeal nine Acts under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

[Leave granted; Bill 14 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to file with the Legislature the annual report for '92-93 for Alberta public safety services.

I also file with the Legislature a copy of the Alberta Resources Railway sale to CNR.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table copies of letters headed by the president of the Canadian Polish Youth Friendship Society of Edmonton. These are addressed to the Premier and express support for community

schools in Alberta. The community asked me to present these as they anxiously await replies to the 1,500 other letters they've already submitted to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table 111 postcards from Calgary-Fish Creek constituency opposing the education cutbacks.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a number of employees of the community-based diagnostic laboratory Calgary Medical Labs. Each one of these has visited with members in their service area. Their mission in these meetings is to promote and create better understanding of the importance of issues that face the lab sector. They traveled to the capital city this morning. The group leaders are Dr. Larsen and Daphne Kuchinski. I would ask all the guests to rise in the members' gallery and receive a very cordial welcome.

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 26 brilliant students from the grade school St. Teresa in the riding of Edmonton-Rutherford. They're accompanied today by their teacher Mrs. M. Armstrong, and three parents: Mrs. Linda Devaney, Mrs. Rosemarie Humniski, and Mrs. Marlene Lede. They're in the public gallery. If they would stand up and receive the warm welcome of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly Norval Horner. I'm sure many of our members know him. He's not new to politics. He's presently the principal at Sturgeon composite school in Namao. He worked very hard to get me this position. I don't know if it's a good sign or a bad sign that he wanted me out of there. But it's with great pleasure that we welcome him here today, so please receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to the members of the Legislative Assembly Madeleine Reay. She is a grade 6 student at Lynnwood elementary school. She is an especially good student who is spending the day at the Legislature to determine exactly how the Legislature works. I know that you and each member of the Legislative Assembly will be very, very interested to see the results of that study. I would ask that she rise in the gallery and receive the welcome of members of the Legislative Assembly.

1:40

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Legislative Assembly 18 young, bright students from Allendale elementary/junior high school,

which is in the constituency of Edmonton-Strathcona. Accompanying them are teacher Larry Wadsworth and a parent by the name of Tracy Knudson. I'd ask that they stand and we give them a warm welcome.

Thank you.

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

MR. BENIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted, absolutely delighted, to introduce 15 pioneers that helped build this country and this province. They are residents and neighbours at the Viselka seniors' home located in my riding. They are accompanied by Rev. and Mrs. Brandebura. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**
Alberta Research Council

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Chembiomed lost the taxpayers of Alberta \$37 million before Chembiomed was absorbed by the Alberta Research Council. Some of the products invented by Chembiomed are now on the verge of making money. We have uncovered evidence that some scientists at the Research Council are attempting to profit from those products by setting up their own company and selling those licences or those products. My questions are to the member responsible and the chairman of the Research Council. Will the member tell the House exactly what is happening at the Research Council on this issue?

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could give you some pertinent facts, the ARC has draft plans in a number of areas that would see the ARC spin off technology and activities to the private sector. These areas include certain areas in biotechnology, electronics testing, gas and oil testing, and others. This is a spin-out, and the strategy of a spin-out has been discussed in detail with the board and is consistent with the government trying to stimulate certain activities and get out of other activities.

The biotechnology department, which this specific question relates to, has with corporate concurrence adopted a spin-off strategy. I'm pleased to be part of that, because what's happening is that we are in a situation where we are creating jobs and creating wealth for Alberta and Albertans.

MR. DECORE: Well, maybe the wealth is going to the wrong place, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to file four copies of a business plan of Aspen Biotechnology. It contains evidence of a conflict of interest at the Alberta Research Council.

My second question to the hon. member, then, is this: will he inform this Assembly as to exactly what is happening with respect to conflict of interest charges, specifically these issues of conflict of interest at the council?

DR. L. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the plan that is referred to is a draft business plan, I believe, that was drafted for and created for the Alberta Research Council. Its aim is to assess the potential for a spin-off in its fermentation facility. I would say that this draft business plan is only weeks old. It has not been assessed by the board and should, I must insist, be considered as a draft business plan and a draft business plan only. It's very clear that's what it is.

Thank you.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member continues to dodge this issue. The issue is conflict of interest. Will the hon. member stand and tell Albertans whether there's something wrong with scientists at the Research Council benefiting, perhaps benefiting at the expense of the taxpayers of Alberta? That's the issue.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, we presently have an independent review under way, as I've said quite clearly. This independent review will look at these various matters that have been raised, and we hope to have a report by the end of this week. The independent reviewer will advise us as to what further actions we should be taking. I once again want to very clearly indicate that it is an independent review from somebody outside the council that is looking at business practices in this particular department.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to continue with this spin-out that the chairman in charge of the ARC is proposing. I think it's more like a burnout. With respect to Chembiomed, the licences in question deal with 27 products. My question to the chairman responsible for the Alberta Research Council is simply this: is it the intention of this government to hand over the \$37 million worth of research done at Chembiomed to three ARC employees?

DR. L. TAYLOR: No.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, succinct if nothing else.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question. Since Aspen Biotech in the document tabled by the Leader of the Opposition projects \$172 million in potential sales on these products, will this member in his responsibility for the ARC ensure that Albertans get their \$37 million investment in Chembiomed back?

DR. L. TAYLOR: Perhaps the hon. member opposite wasn't listening to my response. This is a draft business plan and should only be considered as a draft business plan which will go to the board, an independent board that operates at arm's length from the government to make decisions. I would point out further that we have previous experience in spinning off companies. October 19, 1993, a news release: we spun off into the private sector a company that is now creating jobs and wealth for Albertans.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess from that answer he's not concerned about the \$37 million of Alberta taxpayers' money. So my final supplementary question is: why would the government pursue this privatization just when we are about to finally get back some of our \$37 million in research?

DR. L. TAYLOR: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this government wants to create jobs and wealth for Albertans. In any contract, in any situation where we spin off technology, the ARC will receive royalties back; hence the taxpayers will receive royalties back from any spin-off company.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Research Council issued a press release today attempting to give facts on the escape of the genetically altered yeast from its Edmonton facility. The fact is that this experiment was allowed to continue out of control for six days. The fact is that the Alberta Research Council decided there was no health hazard since there was no evidence of an escape. The fact is that other accidents and spills have occurred in the past at this facility. My first question to the

chairman of the Alberta Research Council: how can this facility conduct genetic engineering experiments when it has no way of testing for the escape of genetically altered organisms?

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the release earlier this year that the member was talking about, basically what happened there was: some scrubbers were removed by several employees without the permission of management and against management decision. We have had an investigation by the department of environment in Alberta, Environment Canada, as well as occupational health and safety, and those organizations were pleased with the progress and pleased with the situation and pleased with the way the ARC handled that particular release.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we contacted Environment Canada.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the chairman of the Alberta Research Council. Will the chairman of the Research Council undertake today to provide details of an accidental spill of genetically altered bacteria into the sewer system and the dumping of a fungus outside the ARC building that employees were told to call sawdust?

1:50

DR. L. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I am not familiar with those two incidents, but I will certainly find out and bring a report back.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplementary is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Is the Alberta Research Council's approach to safety consistent with the government's new self-policing on pollution policy?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, clearly that question is just intended to get a rise out of this side of the House. Now, the hon. member opposite is well aware that we have enforcement officers in the field, that we examine emissions on a very regular basis, and we demand that the industry in this province comply with our clean air and clean water requirements and levels that we have established through consultation with the scientific community. We will continue to take a proactive role, as we did in this situation which has been before the House today, where we have come to the conclusion after a review that there is no adverse impact and therefore no charge is appropriate.

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

Olympic Saddledome

MR. MAGNUS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Premier. The Calgary Flames Hockey Club has taken out full-page advertisements clarifying the aspects of the proposed renovations to the Olympic Saddledome. The question is: is it government policy that the proposal as outlined falls within the guidelines of the federal infrastructure program?

MR. KLEIN: Well, it's hard to say until we see the proposal in detail, but certainly it's my understanding of the federal infrastructure program that if indeed the project involves a publicly owned facility and the improvements to take place are in the

public interest, it would qualify. I have also said that under no circumstances would luxury boxes to be privately owned in my mind qualify under that program.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. MAGNUS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier communicate that position to the mayor and city council?

MR. KLEIN: As a matter of fact, the mayor and I had a discussion about this Sunday night. He agrees that if it is indeed defined as legitimate municipal public infrastructure, then it should qualify for the infrastructure program and funding under that program. If it's for private use - i.e., condominiums or luxury boxes - then it ought not.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. MAGNUS: No supplemental.

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

Alberta Research Council

(continued)

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier wants to go on TV for honest chats with Albertans. Now, that's not necessary. All he has to do is be honest and open in here. The chairman of the Alberta Research Council says that he won't release the report into wrongdoings at that organization until he has a chance to review it. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, will you stand up now and assure the House that you will release that report the moment it is available?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, the chairman of the Alberta Research Council, said that there is a review, an investigation of this matter under way as we speak, an independent review. I understand that someone totally removed from the ARC but very well qualified has been retained to undertake this review. I would imagine that once the review is completed, the report will go to the chairman and the board and they will decide at that particular time what to do with the report.

MR. GERMAIN: Well, you know, mutagens in the air and Liberals in your hair, Mr. Premier, and it's only Tuesday. It's only Tuesday.

To the Premier: will you alter the policy of your government and report all biotechnical incidents irrespective of whether or not the inside group says they're harmless?

MR. KLEIN: Well, these are reported as a matter of routine by the Minister of Environmental Protection. Whenever there are infractions, whenever there are control orders, whenever action is taken by the Minister of Environmental Protection, these matters are reported. Now, it would be awfully nice if the Liberals, these Liberals who purport to be in my hair, know of these things going on, rather than keeping little secrets all to themselves, I think it would be in the interests of the public to report them to the minister of environment.

MR. GERMAIN: Well, I would have thought the Premier would have been aware of the reports previously made in this area.

Mr. Premier, while the report is going on and while it's being studied, will you move with lightning speed to order an independ-

ent review of the laboratory procedures at that council until the results are implemented?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, he obviously didn't hear the answer provided by the Minister of Environmental Protection. The minister said that there was found to be nothing that could be construed as harmful to the public. Therefore, no action was taken at that particular time. Now, if this hon. member has some information that perhaps would lead the hon. Minister of Environmental Protection to believe the contrary, then I think he should provide that information to the hon. minister.

Employment Statistics

MR. SOHAL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development. Last Friday Statistics Canada released employment figures for the month of February. Due to the rapid change and restructuring that our economy is undergoing, I would like to know from the minister responsible for labour market development as to the unemployment situation in our province.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, as I stated last time these statistics came out, month-to-month statistics are not a comparison you can rely on for an annual trend. As the Premier has stated before, it is much more valuable to compare statistics on a year-by-year basis. However, having said that, unemployment in Alberta did drop last month. In fact, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined from 9.3 to 8.8, and compared to February of last year the level of employment has increased by 32,000, or 2.6, and that's good news for Alberta.

MR. SOHAL: Last month there was a lot of discussion that full-time positions, particularly full-time positions for women, were declining. Does the minister have any indication that that trend is valid?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, full-time employment was up in this province in February by 9,400 people, while part-time employment increased by just 400. Males working in full-time jobs actually dropped by 1,300. However, full-time employment for females increased by 10,600 month over month.

MR. SOHAL: In what sectors are we experiencing employment growth?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that the private sector accounted for the province's overall employment increase last month. Strong gains in business services and retail trade were the overriding sectors for increases. It's important to note that the areas demonstrating the strongest growth are those sectors that would be hit hardest by a provincial sales tax, and I hope that comes home to the members across the way.

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

2:00

Senior Citizens' Housing

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seniors' subsidized housing rents and extended care rates are skyrocketing, and seniors are frightened of the future. My question is to the minister responsible for seniors' housing. Why are you changing the present proven system of subsidized housing by deregulating rents?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, we have around 23,000 units in the province of Alberta that are considered senior housing. That's out of 240,000 seniors. We have about 15,000 of those that are in what we call apartments and manors and fourplexes that are funded by a 70-30 split with the federal government: 70 percent the federal government and 30 percent our dollars. We operate those under a cost recovery mechanism based on a formula set out by the federal government, which set the threshold at 30 percent of the senior's income. Therefore, if you were going into a manor and your income for a month was \$900, you would pay \$300.

Over the years Alberta was set at 25 percent. So we didn't go to the maximum threshold. Recently when I was in Toronto at a ministers' conference involving all the provinces and the federal government, we made a decision to move to 30 percent because indeed the federal government said: when we're funding 70 percent of this in these fiscal times, you should move to our threshold of 30 percent. All provinces in Canada are moving to that threshold. That is why we're moving to a threshold of 30 percent: 28 percent next year, 30 percent in the following year.

Now, on the other 7,000 to 8,000, which are senior lodges – that's the only component of senior housing this province controls – we have some of them that were funded also by the federal government on a 70-30 split that had a percentage of the beds at rent geared to income. The lodge foundation says that in order to continue the delivery of these programs to seniors, we should look at deregulating the rent and allowing them for certain circumstances to serve those that need it by balancing off a lower rent rate but also raising the rent rate for those that can afford it, or else we're going to lose the maintenance and continuation of these 8,000 beds.

I'll wait for your supplemental, and I'll expand some more.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why did you wait until after you put the seniors' benefit in place to start talking deregulating rents?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, we've had consultation with all the housing registries and the foundations for over a year now. The three-year plan that was tabled indicated all of this that I've just made to the Assembly as far as going to the 30 percent threshold as well as looking at a new housing Act that would look at flexibility and deregulation of rents.

I have traveled around the province to the various regions and have given talks over the last year and have indicated at every turn that we would be looking at a deregulated rent program in consultation with and on recommendation of the housing authorities. There are over 430 housing authorities and 59 lodge boards in this province. So to indicate that we waited until this other program came out is a misrepresentation. Indeed, we haven't. We've been up front. The meeting that we had with the federal government was several months ago, and when I came back, there was a news release to that effect. I guess the media and the opposition are just catching up with it today.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, will you stop playing politics and reveal your real agenda for seniors' housing here and now? Seniors need to know.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, we've been as open as we can with the seniors. I want to indicate that when the headlines state that

all seniors' housing is in jeopardy, remember that 70 percent of the seniors own their own homes and another 54,000 seniors in this province rent their accommodation. We provide 23,000 units, 8,000 that are lodge and the other 15,000 apartments and rental units. We by no means address the accommodation for seniors in this province. As we move to a half million seniors by the year 2016 or whatever that date is – we're fast moving there – the amount of accommodation controlled by the government will be minuscule to the problem that we have. We will then be following the individual seniors with resources called moneys so that they can access a fair market system but can be soft-sided to it by a rent subsidy. We cannot continue to build the bricks and mortar for a half million seniors by the year 2015.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

Students' Finance

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are to the minister of advanced education. The minister has been quoted as saying that postsecondary programs graduating students with high loan default rates will be reviewed by the Students Finance Board. While my constituents in Highwood understand that Alberta's student assistance program like all programs funded by the taxpayer must be accountable, it is not clear which programs will be affected. So my question to the minister: which programs will have student loan assistance removed due to high default rates?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, it's true in fact that the Students Finance Board has been monitoring default rates in high-risk programs over the last four years, since 1990. In our business plan we made a commitment to withdraw student support for those programs that have graduates with excessive default rates. For example, graduates of truck driving and hairdressing have had difficulty in meeting repayment obligations on student loans. They've gone as high as 68 percent default for the truck driving programs and hairdressing at some 48 percent. It's not necessarily because the students are delinquent in these areas. It's likely because they're trained for a certain job, and when they graduate, they are obviously having a hard time making the student loan payments. If an institution is offering a program in hairdressing or truck driving that has acceptable default rates, then certainly they'll continue to receive the student loans for their students.

MR. TANNAS: Well, Mr. Minister, does this also mean that if a student, then, is studying in a program that isn't considered job preparation, that student loan and that program will be cut off?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, no. It doesn't mean that at all. Many students in this province take programs for reasons other than finding a job, perhaps just the pursuit of knowledge. As long as they pay back their student loan, we're not concerned with what program they take. It's not the intent of the change to determine what a student should study or should not study. For instance, in the universities we're not finding that those students who are in the philosophy program or studying poetry are in a high default rate. They're not. So that's not the target. The target is to deal with defaults, so our objective is to withdraw student assistance where programs with graduates are excessive.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, will the minister confirm that these loan default rates may be in fact stated

at higher rates than necessary when you consider how easy it is for a bank to call in a fully guaranteed student loan even though the students may go in default, as has happened in my constituency, by accident and even mistake?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I've said many times that the current repayment system we have is not good for the student and it's not good for the taxpayer. The only group it's good for is the banks under the present circumstance. Because the loan is backed by the government, there is no incentive for the banks to work with the student and treat him like a customer or a client, like they would treat anyone in this Assembly. So I'm working hard to reform the repayment system in such a way that will allow students more options, more flexibility in repaying the loans they owe to the Students Finance Board. If students have a repayment system that is more sensitive to the income they earn, I'm confident defaults will decrease in this province.

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

2:10 Health Services Restructuring

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the day that the health region boundaries are to be recommended to the Minister of Health. Now, these boundaries are supposed to be based on community input, but we have our doubts about that. To the chairman of the health plan co-ordination project: how many submissions did you receive, and how do you know that the information gathered is at all representative of all those people concerned?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We received over 150 recommendations from everyone, from town councils, city councils, hospital boards, health unit boards, and mental health authorities representative of all areas around the province. Each and every one of their letters was looked at, and their input was utilized in attempting to draw a map.

MR. SAPERS: That's great, Mr. Speaker.

Well, then, to the member: will you table your report and copies of all those submissions in the Legislature so that all Albertans can have an opportunity to comment on your recommendations?

DR. OBERG: Mr. Speaker, our job in our health planning co-ordination project was to provide a map of health areas to the Minister of Health, and we will proceed to do that. What the Minister of Health decides to do with that map and what the Minister of Health decides to do with the input is up to her.

MR. SAPERS: So it's no, and there's no real public consultation.

Well, then, Mr. Speaker, maybe the chairman will at least tell us how many regions he's recommended to the minister, so that all Albertans can begin to plan for what she's about to impose.

DR. OBERG: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the comment about no public input, I would like to remind the speaker of something that happened in Oregon when the Oregon system went through their restructuring. At that time they had public input of around 1,500 people, and that work is recognized across the United States for its input. In our roundtables we talked to 5,500 people in the open roundtables and approximately another 1,500 in the closed

session the next day. There was absolutely no one turned back from that. The recommendations that were brought forward from the people in the community were looked at and essentially have been decided on from their input. There was plenty of input from the public.

Our job as the health planning co-ordination project is to suggest the regional boundaries to the Minister of Health. What the Minister of Health decides to do with those boundaries is up to her.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

Education Restructuring

MR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I have to switch tracks here now. As a parent I am pleased with the level of education my child is receiving in the present system. Restructuring was not meant to negatively impact a classroom or increase pupil/teacher ratio. My question is for the Minister of Education. Why are school boards making announcements of large numbers of teacher layoffs?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that in terms of the directions we've set out for the education system, we are focusing the resources that are available in education at the school and at the classroom level. We are dealing with site-based management. We are addressing and pointing out a direction in terms of reducing the costs of management and administration. Education had to be part of solving our overall fiscal challenge in this province.

I would like to point out something, Mr. Speaker, and that is that in addition to the two comments I've just made, another direction we have out there is the reduction in the compensation package in terms of wages and salaries within the education system by 5 percent. When you combine all the recommendations and directions in our plan as a package and you consider that the net reduction this year in terms of funds available for education is in the 8 or 9 percent range, we have certainly made an overall effort to focus resources at the classroom level, to minimize layoffs, and to focus the money where the students are.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental questions.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again speaking as a parent, I appreciate the job teachers do in educating my children. How can we as a government maximize their potential and flexibility in educating our children?

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, once again, in terms of the plans that have been set out in restructuring education in this province . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order.

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are as a government interested in providing a professional responsibility for teachers and providing flexibility so that they can get their job done. It doesn't seem that the people across the way are interested in that or have any other ideas.

I would like to get back to the hon. member's question. In terms of moving more decision-making to the school, in terms of site-based management, in terms of making sure that, yes, teachers are going to be responsible and accountable for what they produce in the way of performance in the classroom, they're to

have professional flexibility and the ability to apply the methods and their expertise to education. I think those things are very important to teachers and are things we intend to pursue.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Community Schools

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to be designated community schools by the Department of Education, parents, teachers, administrators, and community representatives must agree to adopt a community school philosophy and develop a charter outlining the purpose of their school. My question to the Premier is: since these schools have already signed a charter, why don't we, instead of cutting the funding, simply designate them as charter schools under your new system and fund them that way?

MR. KLEIN: As I understand it, Mr. Speaker – and I'm sure the hon. minister would like to supplement – charter schools will be introduced on a pilot basis. We have decided as a matter of policy that we would stop providing direct funding to so-called designated community schools and make virtually every school in this province a community school, with some schools being given the opportunity to enter into a charter with the government. I'd like to have the hon. minister supplement.

MR. JONSON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to note the hon. member's favourable interest in charter schools, but on the issue which I think is the issue here – that is, community school funding – we have approximately 1,800 schools in this province. In our overall direction as a government and in terms of the Education department's business plan, we are focusing on site-based management, community involvement, co-ordination of services. Our goal is to have community involvement, the community concept out there for schools all across this province. That's the direction we're taking.

In terms of the funding for this year, it is important to note, as the hon. Premier has pointed out, that we had 66 community schools in different types of communities that did receive special funding. In a time when we have to apply the funds that are available very carefully to the schools in this province, we felt that it was important to spread the funding across all schools in the province, many of which, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, are pursuing the goals of community schools.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, my calculation is about \$5,000 per school. The minister seems as confused about charter schools as the Premier has been.

I'd like to ask the Premier or the minister or whoever else would like to answer: why do they not do a value-for-money audit so we can see exactly what community schools deliver? It's in your business plan. Why didn't you do these value-for-money audits before making the decision to cut funding to community schools?

2:20

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, who's going to pay for all these efficiency audits? Mr. Speaker, if they think you need to have an efficiency audit to get rid of 40 nonoperating school boards, then I think that would be money that would not be very wisely spent. It just makes sense: if you don't have any schools, you ought not to have school boards. So we got rid of them; right?

We're also saying that we want to restructure and reduce the administration of the education system. That's why we're reducing the number of boards in this province from 140 to 60. We have also said that we want to literally make every school in this province a community school. We want to create a scenario where the teachers and the principals and the students and the parents are involved in running their schools. We want to reduce the burden of administration and put a more human face on the education system in this province.

MR. HENRY: That would prove the Premier doesn't know anything about community schools.

I'd like to ask the Premier: has he ever examined any numbers that show the volunteers in the designated community schools compared to volunteers in nondesignated community schools? It's a big difference, and you should know it.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I'm a member of the Friends of Alex Taylor, which is probably the best example in this province of a community school. This is a school with a principal who says: we don't want to depend on the government. They want to be able to develop their own resources, to go out into the business community, to involve the business community, to involve parents, to involve supporters in supporting the kinds of programs that have made that school one of the most successful community schools in the province with a minimum amount of government expenditure.

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

Premier's Trade Mission to Asia

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday afternoon the Premier tabled a report on his trade mission to Asia. During budget estimates for Executive Council and the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs the Premier was asked to identify tangible results of his mission. Can the Premier outline which specific Alberta industries were the main focus of his mission?

MR. KLEIN: Well, basically, Mr. Speaker, it was the purpose of our mission to certainly go to Asia – Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan – to sell the Alberta advantage. There is no doubt about it: the Alberta advantage is the advantage we have relative to our strengths. Those strengths of course are in energy and agriculture, in forestry, in tourism, in transportation, and basically these were the kinds of industries that we represented and participated with in those Asian countries.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier identify which Alberta companies were able to take advantage of the Premier's mission to Asia?

MR. KLEIN: Well, we participated with numerous companies from Alberta, and most of those companies were involved in the sectors that I talked about. We have developed a process of following up with these companies to identify through our contacts in these countries specific projects that might fit the requirements and the expertise of a particular Alberta company, and we'll be following up with those companies. If the hon. member wants me to give him a list of some of the companies we participated with

and what they had to say, perhaps he can ask me that in a supplemental question.

MR. PHAM: Can the Premier advise the House of his long-term plan to assist Alberta companies doing business in Asia?

MR. KLEIN: Well, yes, this is all part of a long-term plan. Of course, it has been 10 years since a Premier has been in Asia, and we felt that it was absolutely necessary to revisit certainly our sister provinces, Hokkaido and Heilongjiang, Sapporo in Hokkaido and Daqing and Harbin in Heilongjiang, and to renew those acquaintances and indicate to the governments there that we're fully supportive of Alberta companies doing business.

I would like to read just one or two if you would allow me. This is from Doug McRae, the senior water and sanitation . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Perhaps there might be another occasion when this list might be able to be made.

The hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*.

Debt Collection

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the very time that many Albertans are out of work, many more Albertans have experienced wage rollbacks, this government will allow banks and other creditors to seize assets and to do so without using a neutral government bailiff. This government is putting Albertans who owe money at risk of abuse by the repo man. My question is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, why have you decided to privatize bailiffs and ignore the Alberta Law Reform Institute?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is probably referring to the civil enforcement judgment Act which he's anticipating will be introduced in the Assembly, and it is predicated on the Law Reform Institute report.

MR. DICKSON: Well, in fact, Mr. Minister, I'm referring to what bailiffs have been told, that the process is going to be privatized.

I want to ask the minister: on what basis does the minister believe that debtors' rights will be protected, as they currently are under the system of government bailiffs, if we go with a privatized model as he wishes to do?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I think the Law Reform Institute report was a study of all the law relating in other jurisdictions as well as the history of how our debtor/creditor law has evolved and the numerous Acts that it involves in trying to bring it into one. In fact, right now there's a preponderance of favouritism for the debtor and very little for the creditor, and I think this is setting the scales more equal and protecting both of them.

MR. DICKSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, since the institute clearly rejected the model of private bailiffs, I want to ask the minister: how much extra will local taxpayers at the municipal level have to pay, since they now will have to use private bailiffs and not be able to use the government bailiff service?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand how anybody employed by the government is not paid by the taxpayers of Alberta.

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

Fiscal Year-end Spending

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Provincial Treasurer. The month of March of course denotes the coming of spring, but constituents have been phoning me to express concern about an annual feeding frenzy of buyers and sellers of supplies and programs as provincial departments dump the last of their budget dollars before March 31. Now, to the Provincial Treasurer: what mechanisms are in place to prevent this needless waste of money?

2:30

MR. DINNING: The hon. member makes a very good point, and several Albertans have said exactly that. Here we are on the ides of March, Mr. Speaker, 16 days away from the end of the fiscal year, and the concern is that government departments and even Members of the Legislative Assembly may go a little fast to make sure they've spent their full allotment and their full quota. That is not the way this government does business. We've spelled out very clearly in our business plans exactly what is required in order to get the job done. We've spelled out very clearly what job it is that we want done. So I appreciate the hon. member and especially his constituents for sending a strong admonition and a strong caution to my colleagues in cabinet, to government departments, and deputy ministers to ensure that all that is spent is necessary and that no more is spent than is absolutely necessary.

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, a supplemental, then, to the Treasurer: when will we have a system in place to reward employees for the efficient use of money and other resources?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I had the honour in my remarks, and I'm sure perhaps the Premier has commented on it as well – the personnel administration office is putting in place productivity plus, a means of compensating employees who meet the standards and help us to meet the objectives spelled out in our business plans; to reward that performance, to recognize that the hard work and the diligence of our hardworking public service is recognized and properly remunerated so that there is some sort of a bonus system.

I would remind the hon. member, back to his initial question, that when I look back in the public accounts of the province, in the last four years there was one party in this Assembly that has overspent their budget, and that is the Liberal Party of Alberta. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Final sup. [interjections] Order. Order please. [interjections] Order. Order.

The time for question period has expired.

head:

Members' Statements

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

Kindergarten Programs

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On August 7, 1851, the Prussian minister of education issued a decree that stated in part:

Kindergartens form a part of the Froebelian socialistic system which is calculated to train the youth of the country to atheism, such schools and kindergartens cannot be suffered to exist.

A century and a half later the Klein government has followed that Prussian example and decreed that kindergartens shall only half exist. What is most distressing in all this is the minimal understanding of the value of kindergarten. The power of Froebel's work was set in the notion that young children were in a very

special phase of their life. Kindergarten was to help create an environment where instruction drew from the children and helped them unfold as thinkers, knowledge-builders, and investigators through self-action. This sets the stage, the perspective for all the learning that is to follow. Froebel insisted that teachers guide children in their own learning and not impose upon them the thoughts and the results of others' investigations. The notion in this Legislature that somehow kindergartens take up part of the burden of the first-grade program, which can easily be covered in half the time or delayed, is rooted in ignorance.

Today Froebel's ideas are even more popular. Some advanced states have extended his notion to nursery schools, and even we have appropriated his basic teachings in better quality day cares. It's interesting that attempts to have the Prussian decree rescinded were futile. The Prussians wouldn't blink. It wasn't until believers in kindergartens appealed directly to parents, forming them into kindergarten associations, that enough pressure was exerted and the decree was withdrawn in 1860. The stir created by banning kindergartens gave them much more publicity than they would have received. They emerged much the stronger. Will history repeat itself? We can only hope and work.

Thank you.

1994 Brier

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure and pride today that I rise in the Assembly to pay tribute to those from the city of Red Deer and the surrounding communities who last week hosted the 1994 Brier. The 1994 Brier attracted the second largest attendance in Brier history, with over 130,000 people in attendance. The Centrium building, funded in a large part by a \$21 million contribution from Alberta Lotteries, is truly a world-class facility. But as nice as those facilities are, this tribute is to those who helped to make the 1994 Brier the success that it was.

On behalf of the government of Alberta I would like to thank and congratulate Mr. Al Gerig and the organizing committee, who have spent the past two years working on this event. Thank you and congratulations to the hundreds of volunteers who freely gave of their time. You folks simply did an outstanding job.

I would also like to acknowledge the corporate sponsors, both national and local, as well as individual sponsors. Alberta Lotteries was proud to be one of those sponsors. These sponsorships were critical to making the Brier happen, and the economic benefits to the city of Red Deer, surrounding communities, and indeed to all of Alberta are a good return on the investment.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the curling teams from the provinces and the territories of Canada for their fine display of skill and sportsmanship. Lastly, I would like to thank the fans who came from near and from afar. We appreciate your support for the game of curling. It was a pleasure to host you.

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

Access to Parks

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For many years now health care professionals and the general public have talked about the need for our health care system to focus on the prevention of illness and the promotion of health rather than treatment and acute care. Each one of us is born with either a greater or lesser potential for a long life and good health, but there's no doubt that life-style, behaviours, and the degree of personal responsibility accepted by each of us have considerable influence on the length

and quality of our lives. All of this talk simply means that we each need to take personal responsibility for doing the things that make us healthy. Social contacts, supportive families, regular exercise, and a healthy physical environment are all important, particularly for seniors.

The Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly riding I represent is blessed in many ways. The south boundary borders on the riverbank from the inner city to the eastern limits of Edmonton. The beautiful North Saskatchewan River has good trails and picnic grounds on each bank as a result of development under the Capital City parks program. Four footbridges allow entry to both sides of the bank. Hikers, bicycles, cross-country skiers, and all those people just out for a leisurely stroll are there all the time.

Our constituency has pockets of high density where thousands of people of all income levels and all ages live in walk-ups, high-rises, condominiums, as well as single-family dwellings. Most people can get to the valley without using a car or public transit, and the trails are busy during the daylight hours all year long.

Parks in this province, both rural and urban, are our priceless heritage, and they must all remain available at no charge to every citizen in this province.

Point of Order Provoking Debate

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung on a point of order.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under *Beauchesne* 417, which is the rule relating to the prohibition against answers that would provoke debate. I am referring, of course, to the Treasurer's earlier presentation in the Legislature that somehow he construed the Liberal caucus in years past as overspending their budget. I should point out to the House that this is very surprising for two reasons. The most significant reason is that it is impossible for the Liberal caucus to do that. Were we to overspend our budget, we would have to write a cheque on our personal accounts – that is, each of us as individuals – to pay for overexpenditure. Unlike this Treasurer and his predecessor, unlike the government, of which he has been a member for seven years and a member of the cabinet for seven years, we are unable to borrow against the public purse in order to pay for overexpenditure. It is logically and physically impossible for us to overexpend our budget, and if this Treasurer understood that, he wouldn't have stood in this House and made such an outlandish claim.

2:40

What's more disconcerting, Mr. Speaker, however, is that in fact he must be indicating by virtue of the argument that he made that he does not understand the set of controls that he has in place over expenditure categories like the Liberal caucus opposition, which makes us question whether he really understands whether he has controls over his own expenditure elsewhere.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, it is particularly surprising to hear this allegation from a Treasurer who was seven years a member of a cabinet that ran up a \$30 billion deficit, that brought in eight consecutive deficit budgets, a Treasurer who aspired to that position and the first year he took on that position overexpended the people of Alberta's government budget by \$3.7 billion, followed that up with a 2 and a half billion dollar deficit overexpenditure, and has predicted that in his third year as Treasurer he will borrow yet another billion and a half to overexpend. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Hon. member, the Chair has listened patiently. The hon. member has digressed substantially from his original point of order.

MR. MITCHELL: In short, Mr. Speaker, I would like to summarize by saying that we were able to transfer some funds from constituency office budgets to caucus office budget, well within the criteria that are laid out by his own controls; that the fact that we haven't overexpended ever has been confirmed by the Clerk of this House, who is in fact far less political, obviously objective and not political like the Treasurer. It is, however, very, very surprising to hear these kinds of allegations given this Treasurer's track record and his overwhelming aspiration in his wildest dreams not to be the Treasurer that he is but to be the second Sir Roger Douglas from New Zealand.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer, on the point of order.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I have to respond to the remarks of the charmer across the way. I will file this with the Assembly when I get copies made by the pages. I will go back to the '89-90 public accounts where in statement 3.1.3 at page 3.5 it clearly spells out at vote and reference 1.0.7 that the Liberal Party services budget was \$448,880 for the year. They overspent that amount by \$68,329. In the following year in public accounts statement 3.1.3 at page 3.5 the Liberal Party services were budgeted at \$525,658. They came in \$19,447 over budget. In the public accounts for '91-92 at statement 3.1.3, page 3.5 it states that the Liberal Party services were budgeted at \$551,941, and they came in at \$564,659: \$12,718 over budget.

Finally, the most recent public accounts, filed before this Assembly earlier than they ever have been filed so that the proof of Liberal overspending is on the record. It spells out in the public accounts, audited by the Provincial Auditor General, whom you, Mr. Speaker, hosted at lunch this afternoon, a very nice reception for the retirement of the Auditor General – but I noticed that the Leader of the Liberal Party wasn't invited to lunch, and we know why. Perhaps it's because the Auditor General pointed this out in his report. He showed that in 1992-93 at statement 2.1.3 the Liberal opposition services were budgeted to spend \$527,539. They came in over budget by well over \$22,000. So those are numbers that I will file with this Assembly today. They are on the record.

As for the hon. member's suggestion that we are in any way out of order, these are the facts. They speak for themselves. They speak about Liberal overspending.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater wishes to speak on the point of order.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I know you have to cut it off. It's on the point of order. The hon. members spoke twice, and we spoke once. I'll be the second one, and I'm sure Mr. Speaker will cut it off.

I wish the Treasurer would file the other side of the sheet. You know, this is rather interesting. When he files a statement, he forgets the deficit. When he files a statement from over here, he only remembers the deficit. Read the income side. It's not the budget side; the income side will show a transfer from the MLAs – there were eight at one time – and from the others over to the budget that more than equals. It's not unusual for a Treasurer to be blind in one eye, Mr. Speaker, but he is only reading one side

of the tape. I know as a right-winger he doesn't go over and read the income side. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Order.

The Chair finds this to be a classic disagreement amongst members as to facts. Therefore, there is not a point of order.

head: **Orders of the Day**

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

Bill 205
Information on Privatization Act

[Adjourned debate March 9: Mr. Friedel]

MR. FRIEDEL: This is the one you've been waiting for. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. Member for Peace River has the floor.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak against this inefficient, this bureaucratic Bill 205 that is before us. The Premier has on numerous occasions indicated that this government intends to streamline its operations, and we're doing so by a thorough examination of what the government should be doing and what the government should be getting out of doing.

Albertans want government to be more efficient and productive. Albertans know that privatization is an important component of our plan to reduce waste, and they support us. There's no part in this Bill that is defensible. The government already follows steps similar to the ones proposed in the Bill but in a much more efficient manner. Many requirements outlined in the Bill, such as reports on costs of services, are not applicable to most financial transactions. As inappropriate as it would be if we passed the Bill, we would have to pay someone to write a report saying that the cost of service is not affected each and every time that a financial asset is sold in the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. It makes no sense to add to the red tape at a time when public demands and fiscal restraints dictate that the government reduce waste and inefficiency. Not only does the government already perform many of the steps that Bill 205 proposes, but we also are introducing the freedom of information Act that will ensure that if Albertans want more information on privatization, they can get it.

2:50

DR. PERCY: You mean it's retroactive?

MR. FRIEDEL: It's coming.

The opposition know that we're introducing this legislation, and they know that the freedom of information Act will make Bill 205 redundant. It's rather incredible that in this time of fiscal restraint a make-work project like this one would be proposed, and really that's what this Bill is. It's a government make-work project.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is on record in *Hansard*, October 26, 1993, as saying: "I concur that there is a need for privatization." This Bill would in fact greatly impede privatization. Bill 205 is unsupportable unless you are against privatization. The cost of the lengthy review process would be prohibitive. Great volumes of paperwork would be added, and more regulations would be created.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill is in fundamental contrast to this government's way of doing business. The complicated system would dramatically decrease the likelihood of any privatization ever taking place. We're looking at ways to streamline, not to add roadblocks. This proposal lacks any understanding of why government must look at privatization of certain services. Reflecting on the volume of additional work that it would generate, I began to wonder if this was why the Bill was even introduced. The opposition have said that they would create more jobs if they were in government, and perhaps this is how they would do it. Projects such as this one would indeed produce more jobs but at the great cost of more bureaucracy. We're committed to increasing the number of jobs in Alberta but not by shortsighted make-work projects. Eventually someone has to say "enough" and make the cuts to waste and inefficiency.

I agree, as do all government MLAs, that we need to create more jobs through the private sector. We've already helped to create 35,000 jobs since December of 1992, and we're on track on our plan to create 75,000 more by the beginning of 1997.

Perhaps some research would have shown that this Bill is not necessary. I cannot see Albertans supporting the tremendous increase in paperwork and expense. I don't think that the public would believe that this Bill is a step toward increasing information. It would be duplicating information. In fact, this Bill is not about increasing information or about privatization; it's about creating inefficiency in government. It's about creating more work for government. It's about creating red tape. If Alberta is going to continue to thrive, we need to have the strength to say "enough": enough coasting along trying to avoid the tough decisions, enough waste and inefficiency, enough bureaucratic red tape. That's what this Bill 205 is. It's the red tape Bill.

I'm going to say "enough" by voting against Bill 205, the red tape, the inefficiency that it promotes.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I've had the privilege of working with the last speaker, the Member for Peace River, on the freedom of information panel. I respected that hon. member as being a plain-speaking man, a pragmatic man, somebody who comes with some experience in business, and someone who's interested in terms of solving problems instead of creating obstacles. That's why I'm all the more surprised with the comments we just heard.

Mr. Speaker, if there's anything that those who support privatization should be sympathetic to, it's a Bill like Bill 205. The reason I support it is not because it's going to give jobs to analysts and people in the government bureaucracy. It's not because this is a way of delaying privatization initiatives. It's simply because my constituents and I think those folks that live in Peace River also expect government to be efficient. That means that if you decide to privatize something, you first had better have a darn good plan. That's what Bill 205 is all about. When I read this Bill, this isn't a question of saying that if it's privatized, it's automatically good. It says we have to assess: is there going to be an advantage to Albertans? That's ultimately always the test.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to ask the Minister of Justice a question earlier about his latest proposal. That's one of privatizing bailiffs. It seems to me that provides probably the best example I can think of that I'd give to the Member for Peace River and all other members of why we need a Bill like Bill 205.

Just before I deal with the specific situation with bailiffs, I'd make this observation. In this country we've had 126 years of experience recognizing that we have a role for the public sector – a role for the government – and we have a role for the private sector. I think that over the last 126 years we've found, because Canadians are pragmatic, creative people – yes, even people in Peace River are creative and pragmatic as well, Mr. Speaker. What happens is we bring to these issues a sense that we may trade off. We may say that some things that typically, historically have been government initiatives can be private initiatives, and maybe there are some things that are private initiatives historically that we should move and say are the responsibility of government. Even though the line may change, there still has always been an acknowledgement that each of these two sectors has a legitimate role.

I think what we see with a number of the past adventures and misadventures of this government, certainly since June 15, is the fact that the government and particularly the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs want to rewrite Canadian history. They want to eliminate that 125 years of Canadian experience and say in effect that the government's unique role is raising taxes, and beyond raising taxes, everything else will be privatized, and, what's more, somehow we think it's a good thing if everything else is privatized. Well, I think that's just nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

Coming back to the question of bailiffs, I expect that maybe few members in this Chamber have had the experience of having to deal with a bailiff because they owed a creditor money and the creditor went to the point of getting a judgment and then filing a writ of execution and then enforcing that judgment. You know, whether many members in this Chamber have had that experience, I can tell you a very large number of Albertans have gone through that process. What we've always had in this province is a recognition that when creditors are going to exercise the remedies that are available to them, they use the sheriff's office. Why? Well, I'm going to suggest, I think, some compelling reasons why the sheriff's office is being used.

Firstly, it's a neutral person. This isn't somebody who's an agent for the bank. It's not somebody who's an agent for the collection agency. It's a government employee. It's a public servant. What you find – and I can say because I've seen this in my previous professional life – is that there are times when you had a creditor. Let's say it's a bank or a large collection agency. If those people had the opportunity, they'd remove everything from the debtor's house. If the debtor were to say: "Hold it. I've got some protection here. There's an Exemptions Act that says that as an Albertan I've got certain rights even if I owe somebody money I can't pay." I don't want to tar all creditors with the same brush, but certainly I've encountered creditors who would have said: "To heck with you. We're going to remove everything. If you don't like what we're doing, you go to court and make an application to enjoin us."

Well, you know, it's foolish. Just as I say it, I think all members recognize that if people had money to hire lawyers to challenge an improper seizure, they wouldn't have owed the debt presumably in the first place. So these Albertans are looking for protection. Not unreasonable protection: all they want is that if their goods are going to be seized, whether it's their car or their TV, whether they're going to be evicted from their apartment, they simply want due process. Now, when you have a government bailiff do that, the bailiff goes in there, as I say, not an agent for the creditor. It's the bailiff's job to respect the provisions of the Exemptions Act. It's the bailiff's job to make sure that only those things that are properly exigible will be seized.

3:00

I don't have that same confidence if we have bailiffs who are basically for-profit people who presumably will be paid for every seizure they get. They may be paid on the basis of how much they seize. Well, I don't think it takes a particularly pessimistic Albertan to say, "Hold on; these people may err." There's a profit motive in these bailiffs. Why wouldn't they likely err on the side of taking too much? Why would they err on the side of leaving a debtor with his exempt property if they thought they could get away with more? That's one of the concerns, and, Mr. Speaker, it's also one of the reasons why the Alberta Law Reform Institute considered this.

The Law Reform Institute is the one body in this province that is charged with assessing legislative reform, testing these things, talking to people who work in the industry, talking to people who work in the field. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Law Reform Institute had no doubt about this. They looked at B.C.; they looked at U.S. jurisdictions that used private bailiffs. You know what they found? They found, and I quote:

We do believe that private bailiffs should not be used for enforcement seizures. The use of private bailiffs would require substantial supervision and quality inspection. We think that the public resources required for training, testing of qualifications, and supervision of the operations of private bailiffs would be better directed to the maintenance of high standards of competence and efficiency in the sheriff's office.

That's on page 71 of report 61 from the Alberta Law Reform Institute. So here you have people who have looked at this initiative about privatizing bailiffs that concluded that Albertans are going to be worse off, not better off.

We haven't seen the Bill, but from the response of the Minister of Justice earlier it still appears that he's going to bring in the legislative initiative, and that legislative initiative is going to privatize bailiffs. Well, if the Member for Peace River, my friend from Peace River, or any other member wondered why we're looking at Bill 205 and why my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud thought it was appropriate to introduce this, surely the bailiff example gives us at least a partial answer.

We don't have to go back a whole lot further. Members may remember that just before we broke in November of 1993 the government had introduced I think it was Bill 10. This was a Bill to privatize all of the registry services, to privatize the land titles registry service. Well, Mr. Speaker, the government didn't proceed with that Bill after the 27-hour session. Many of us thought that was useful; it hasn't resurfaced. What they've done is in fact dealt with the search people on an agency basis, and we don't hear any more about privatization of registries.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

You know, if we'd had a Bill like Bill 205, we would have been able to identify at a much earlier stage the flaws in that Bill 10 privatization initiative. We would have known, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs would not have introduced that Bill in the House and embarrassed himself in that fashion by introducing a piece of legislation that hadn't even contemplated the impact of the assurance fund with our land titles system. So that's another example in terms of why we've got a problem, why we need to have some set of criteria, some set of standards that we measure any privatization initiative against.

Let me give you another example. We had the business where it's been suggested we're looking at privatizing jails. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not an issue of whether you're for privatization or against privatization. It seems to me that what Bill 205 says:

when initiatives like that come forward, we have to have some criteria against which we measure the proposal. We don't have that now. A number of people say, "Privatization of jails: well, that sounds like a good idea, because we just believe in privatization." To me, if you had a Bill like Bill 205, the first thing you'd have to say is: "Well, hold on. Before we go any further in privatizing jails, what are we trying to achieve here?"

What my constituents want is a safer community. They want safer neighbourhoods. They want to know that seniors aren't at risk of being hurt when they go for a walk outside their apartment in downtown Calgary. People want to know that there's going to be less school violence. People want to know that in other respects their communities are going to be safer. Isn't that the test? If the argument can be made that privatizing jails makes communities safer, I'm really interested, but I haven't heard that argument being made yet, and part of the reason the argument isn't being made is because there is no set of checks, there's no set of criteria through which these kinds of initiatives are viewed. So each one is sort of managed, Mr. Speaker, on an ad hoc basis where we sort of treat each proposal in isolation from the other proposals. Surely we can do better.

To the member, my colleague from Peace River, who said that he sees this as being inefficient: what would that member call this business with privatizing jails? What would he call privatizing bailiffs, when we've just been told by the Alberta Law Reform Institute that it's inefficient and it's going to cost us more money?

I noticed the other day some interesting observations by the Member for Taber-Warner who had also spoken against this Bill on March 9. One of the things that he talked about was: "If this Bill becomes law, it will make privatizing inefficient agencies and services a bureaucratic nightmare." Isn't that exactly what we've seen with ALCB privatization, Mr. Speaker? I stood in this House on at least four occasions in October, November and said to the government, "Will you hold up your privatization until you've adequately consulted with the city councils, the local planning authorities, the police forces?" Time after time we were met with the response: "No. We're charging ahead; we're bulldozing ahead. Those people can worry after the fact about getting caught up to speed and putting in plan remedial kinds of measures."

We saw what happened. In my constituency, Mr. Speaker, we've got a situation now where there's a place called Electric Avenue. On 11th Avenue in Calgary there's a high concentration of bars and lounges. Unfortunately, this happens to be immediately next to a large residential area with many, many seniors living in high-rise buildings. Not surprisingly, we have ongoing tension between the people that frequent what's known as Electric Avenue, the owners of the bars and lounges, and seniors, residents who are having difficulty simply getting an adequate night's sleep. That's an issue in my constituency. What's happened is that now there's a liquor store that has been approved to go on the edge of what's Electric Avenue.

MRS. BLACK: Why did the city approve it?

MR. DICKSON: A good question is being posed, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Energy is musing: why did the city of Calgary approve it? Well, the short answer is that the city of Calgary has now changed its land use designation. They've looked at some use restrictions, so future applications for liquor stores would be dealt with on a different set of criteria. The problem is that this application came in . . . [interjections] It seems that there are some members that don't understand the principles against retroactive application of laws. The point is this: we've got a problem with privatization of liquor stores. It could have been

managed much better if there had been better consultation beforehand with municipal planning authorities and police forces.

That's the sort of thing that Bill 205 is designed to avoid. It's a pretty basic proposition. So far from inefficiency, as is being suggested by the Member for Taber-Warner and the Member for Peace River, this actually is a model of efficiency, because it means that you identify those problems upfront. You come up with some strategies to address those concerns, whether it's allowing the seniors in Calgary-Buffalo to get a good night's sleep and not have to worry about a liquor store that can stay open 24 hours, or whether it's a question of ensuring that when goods are seized the rights of debtors are protected. [interjection]

3:10

You know, Mr. Speaker, we've got the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, who, despite everything that's happened with the Alberta Liquor Control Board, still doesn't understand to what extent he's missed the boat. What it demonstrates is absolutely how dangerous it is when we let ideology run government programs.

Mr. Speaker, I think that in Canada we've had a long record of pragmatic governments. I'm convinced that the best government we've had in this country at any time in any province or at the national level is a government that has certain values. Yes, you have a certain ideological base, but you're pragmatic and you deal with problems in a fashion that isn't rigid and hidebound, that allows you to be reasonably flexible. I think that the problem we see every time the Minister for Municipal Affairs initiates another one of his privatization initiatives is its ideology with a capital "I" and all of the pragmatic kinds of issues and problems. Those are the kinds of things that just aren't considered. They're not assessed. That's why we need Bill 205.

Now, I take the point by members opposite that maybe this goes further than it ought. Maybe it's unrealistic to expect that this should also deal with financial dealing and financial investments. I'm going to tell those members that have that concern with this Bill that I'm going to prevail on my colleague and seatmate here to consider at the next stage maybe making the ambit of the Bill a little more modest. Maybe it's possible to roll back some of the scope of this Bill and focus specifically on what we might call privatization initiatives. I think that there's room for doing that, Mr. Speaker. I think that it's a particular treat that the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the king of privatization, is here in the Chamber and able to hear this debate, because I think if there's any member in the House that has demonstrated why we need this kind of a Bill, it's certainly the hon. minister.

With those observations, Mr. Speaker, I'd encourage all members to support this. I'm going to suggest that if it gets to the next stage in committee, we should look hard in terms of how we can pare down maybe the scope of the Act and maybe reduce it more to privatization initiatives rather than investments. I think there are some things we can do to make this perhaps more targeted, more focused. I'm anxious to work with my friend from Peace River to make sure that we're not creating a huge bureaucracy. I'm anxious to work with my friend from Taber-Warner to see if there's a way that we can target this to the kinds of needs we've identified before.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks. Thank you.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I rise to this occasion, because I've been in the Assembly for a few years and I still question what the process is. This is not a private Bill. This is a question that should have been put on the Order Paper. This is poorly worded, misdirected, misguided, and the person who developed this

probably was meaning something of outsourcing for social services rather than privatization of real issues.

I noticed that you've allowed the broadest discussion on Bill 205, and therefore I'm going to take that leeway in my discussion.

One has to define the role of government. If you're going to discuss a Bill like 205, then maybe we should get first to the definition of privatization and what the role of government is. When I was raised on the farm in Ontario, I don't know that any of my relatives or my parents ever got up in the morning and said, "What's the government going to do for me today?" I don't think we expected anything from the government whatsoever. We expected to have the freedom to work hard, live privately, get on with our lives, raise our families, enjoy the trials and tribulations of people getting married, of families getting together, of those highs and lows of the economy, but mainly look inwardly at ourselves for the responsibility of providing for ourselves and getting on with life.

Since those days in the '50s and early '60s on that farm in Ontario I've seen a transition in Canada, in Ontario, and even here in Alberta that disturbs me a great deal. We have moved to a period of time now where the expectations of people about their government and what the government will do for them are out of control.

I don't understand what happened, but it goes back to the days when a Liberal government in Ottawa started a degree of what I call social engineering. You've heard me say that before in this Assembly. They established some 600 Crown corporations that were going to do for me in the private sector what the private sector should have been doing for themselves. I can remember the day that we bought Petrofina. I can remember some of my relatives, whom I spoke about, that had never dreamed that government would be involved in service station business, saying, "Are they now going to be selling not only gasoline but other service station products to us as a government-owned store?" Of course, the answer was: yes, they are. The original intention in that Crown corporation was to protect exploration, to be involved in the protection of a resource.

MRS. BLACK: They never drilled for one barrel on Canadian soil.

DR. WEST: The Minister of Energy says that they never drilled for one barrel of oil on Canadian soil.

Point of Order Questioning a Minister

DR. PERCY: Point of order.

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

DR. PERCY: Will the hon. speaker entertain a question?

MR. SPEAKER: Will the hon. minister entertain a question?

DR. WEST: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and I'll enjoy it.

Debate Continued

DR. PERCY: You're very generous with our time, hon. minister.

Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. I hear you giving a very strong ideological defence of privatization, but this Bill does not deal with the ideological justification. It just simply asserts, Mr. Minister, that one ought to look in some instances at the margin, whether or not it's going to make economic sense and

save money as opposed to spending money. You're not addressing that in your comments, and I would hope, then, that you would.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, a point well taken by the hon. member. If he'll just listen for a minute, I'll carry what I'm discussing right into what he just said, if there was a question there.

Pointing out the mistake of setting up those Crown corporations, of invading the lives of every citizen with every type of social service and dependency is the reason why we have to privatize today. If you study those models – right from running airlines to running railways to running service stations to running Connaught labs – and you expand on that, you soon find in studying those that they are 30 to 40 percent more inefficient, maybe higher, than those companies in the private sector delivering the same service. Therefore, when you come to this Bill, which says, "Lay it all out beforehand to see if it saves us money," I'll make this boldest of statements: there isn't a government operation, a government business, a Crown corporation that is as efficient as the private sector, and indeed they're 20 to 40 percent less efficient. You don't have to do a study. You can guarantee it because of the structure in the way they run their economics. Therefore, you don't have to do a study to save the first 20 to 40 percent.

3:20

Now, if you want to gather up more than that, and that's what you want us to report here, then of course we can do that after the privatization, because I'll guarantee you that I'll show you the first 20 or 40 percent economic return back to the state and maybe more. Therefore, that Bill's redundant, because the premise that it makes says that you'll do a study; you'll report to the Assembly; and you'll find out that it's better to keep the service than privatize it and then continue on. Yes, that's indeed what liberalism has done in this country. They do their study. They do financial audits. They pick the team they want to do that with and come back and prove that government does a better job of it, set up a Crown corporation, and piddle away millions of my dollars. [interjections]

MRS. BLACK: You can't use "piddle."

AN HON. MEMBER: "Piddle" is unparliamentary.

MRS. BLACK: Take "piddle" out.

DR. WEST: "Piddle" is a new parliamentary expression. [interjections] I meant twiddle away, Mr. Speaker.

Now, let's go back into this Bill and take the premise that perhaps it's made in good faith. If you could present to the Assembly facts and figures that wouldn't harm the privatization, that would indeed help it and enhance it, and that would create some value that could be shown later to the taxpayers or to the people that own whatever you're privatizing, say you could do that without harming the privatization, then you could support this Bill.

DR. PERCY: A business plan wouldn't have hurt the ALCB, Steve.

DR. WEST: "A business plan wouldn't have hurt the ALCB." Thank you. It leads right into what I was going to say.

If you were to lay out prematurely a business plan, you would of course have every individual on the face of the earth that is doing well by the status quo immediately raise their heads and stop you. That is one of the fallacies of this Bill. When you put your plan out and tell everybody and block it into blocks,

politically then the process starts. If you were privatizing or selling something in the real world, you would have to formulate a business plan, go out to your marketplace and do the best job you can. That's the challenge I and this Assembly have been given on behalf of 2.7 million people.

Who are those groups that would try to stop you from privatizing ALCB? Well, first, there are 2,400 people working for ALCB, and in some sense they have a vested interest because they have a job. I don't criticize them whatsoever, but the union would certainly say, "Don't privatize this; we do a better job," and they would mount any type of efforts to stop you from doing that in any meaningful way. Then all of the people that have a protected position within it, 70 years of a controlled program, all of the breweries and the distillers and the people that work inside the ALCB who had protected shelf space, who had agent's listing that said that nobody from outside Alberta, except the ones the ALCB says so, can sell their products here. All of those people would stand up and say: "I like the status quo. Keep out the distillers from B.C., from California. Keep out the breweries from Ontario. Don't let Moosehead beer in here. I like it just the way it is."

Is that over?

MR. SPEAKER: Regretfully, Standing Order 8(5)(b) requires the Chair to intervene after 120 minutes of debate have occurred, which have now occurred. The Chair must now also put all questions necessary to conclude the second reading portion of this Bill.

Would all those in favour of second reading of Bill 205 now please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed to second reading of Bill 205, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion fails. Call in the members.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:27 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Beniuk	Henry	Sapers
Bracko	Hewes	Sekulic
Bruseker	Kirkland	Taylor, N.
Carlson	Leibovici	Vasseur
Chadi	Massey	White
Decore	Mitchell	Yankowsky
Dickson	Nicol	Zariwny
Germain	Percy	Zwozdesky
Hanson		

Against the motion:

Amery	Friedel	Paszkowski
Black	Fritz	Pham
Brassard	Gordon	Renner
Calahasen	Haley	Rostad
Cardinal	Havelock	Severtson
Clegg	Herard	Sohal
Coutts	Hlady	Stelmach
Day	Laing	Tannas

Dinning	Magnus	Taylor, L.
Doerksen	Mar	Thurber
Dunford	McClellan	Trynchy
Evans	McFarland	West
Fischer	Mirosh	Woloshyn
Forsyth	Oberg	
Totals:	For – 25	Against – 41

[Motion lost]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**
Strategies to Reduce Violence

506. Moved by Mr. Dickson:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to review its role in the strategies developed by the cities of Edmonton and Calgary to reduce violence in families and the community at large and determine what further steps can be taken by the provincial government to implement such strategies.

[Debate adjourned March 8: Mr. White speaking]

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

MR. WHITE: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I'm taking such a lengthy time to continue on.

MR. HENRY: Yeah, don't waste our time.

MR. WHITE: Yes. Unlike some of the members opposite I prefer not to waste this House's time with any frivolous information.

I rise, sir, to speak to this very important motion. It's really quite serious. As much as we like to have some fun and enjoy ourselves in this Chamber, there comes a time when you really have to be very, very serious, and Motion 506 in fact is so serious that I'm reminded by my friend that introduced the motion that in fact he should be the one to initiate debate.

3:40

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the support from colleagues the other day when this matter first appeared in the Chamber. Motion 506 speaks to a problem in every neighbourhood and in every community in this province. What's more – and I regret to say this – this motion also speaks to a problem in far too many Alberta families. You know, in Calgary when the study was done in that city, they estimated that there was family violence in 20,000 Calgary residences in the space of one year. Twenty thousand residences. Seventy-five percent of male batterers have witnessed their father assaulting their mother.

I want to start off by saying let none of us think – and I certainly don't want to suggest for a moment – that only our large centres, Edmonton and Calgary, have the answers to family violence or to community violence. My motion references Edmonton and Calgary not because that's where the problems are and certainly not because that's where all of the solutions and answers are, but because there have been two excellent initiatives undertaken there, initiatives that I think are useful to look to and learn from. But I think the same problems and in fact many of the same strategies can be found anywhere in this province.

I want to stand back from Edmonton and Calgary and those two reports and mention that I think the most useful lesson for me was an opportunity I had in 1993 to go to Wabasca-Desmarais and attend an aboriginal justice conference. Attending that justice conference were representatives from the RCMP throughout northern Alberta, representatives of the bands in northern Alberta, and what was a special treat for me, two native elders, two women, Rita Auger and Clara Yellowknee, who were in fact the two women responsible for starting the native sentencing panel in Wabasca-Desmarais. I can tell you that the chance to talk to those women and to see the kind of initiative that was shown in that particular area and in other areas where we have native sentencing panels I think showed to me what the Calgary and Edmonton studies show us. It's a question that's as simple as this: communities and people in communities taking responsibility for local problems. It's not a question of waiting for somebody, a lawmaker in Ottawa or Parliament or the Legislative Assembly, to solve problems. It's local initiative and local creativity solving local problems. The kind of energy that I was able to see talking to those women and other aboriginal activists in Wabasca-Desmarais – I mean, you find that same sort of energy in different parts of the province as well. I say, Mr. Speaker, to members that the Edmonton and Calgary studies are useful, but the problems that they identify are not unique and they're certainly not exhaustive.

I also want to say that it's important that members look beyond the Edmonton and Calgary studies. I think in Duluth, Minnesota, they have a program there that deals with spousal violence that's probably one of the finest I've ever heard of. They have another program in London, Ontario, run by the London family court. It's an excellent, excellent initiative that shows what can be done if you start co-ordinating agencies, if you ensure that information is shared, if you ensure that you have a lot of different parts of the community all trying to work to achieve the same end.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, before I go further, that it isn't all bad news. You know, when we talk about family violence and community violence, there have been some really positive initiatives. I'm delighted that after the Calgary study came out, the General hospital was able to find funding to reinstate their program for batterers, for men that can't control their anger. That's a big problem. There are still too few services, but there have been moves to reinstate programs like that.

The notion of community sentencing panels. Alberta has been, I say, slow to go beyond the three original community sentencing panels we had in the far north, simply using a native model, but I'm delighted to say that the Minister of Justice and this government have now put together a model which they are starting to promote far more effectively at municipal government levels right across the province. That's a success story. That's a good news story.

I think I'd also be remiss if I didn't acknowledge at this point, Mr. Speaker, what an excellent job the Attorney General, Minister of Justice has done with his agents throughout the province. While I've certainly been critical of many things that this government has done or failed to do in the area of family and community violence, I want to pay tribute to the effort played by the Attorney General's agents in terms of addressing particularly battering situations, spousal assault, and what we see now is a much reduced turnaround time. We've seen increased sensitivity on the part of the prosecutor's office in dealing with victims of spousal abuse. We're seeing a better provision for child witnesses in incest cases. Overall I just say that that's a success that we can be proud of, that the Minister of Justice should be proud of. That's a positive story and one that we should recognize.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to look at the two reports, the Calgary report and the Edmonton report, we have a unique opportunity here in this Chamber and one of the reasons I'm hopeful that all members will be able to support this motion. We have two members of this Chamber who were instrumental in putting together the two reports that I tabled. There were four documents that I tabled yesterday. The two members are my colleague for Edmonton-Glenora – that member had been the vice-chairman of the Edmonton task force looking at safer cities – and my friend from Calgary-Cross, who was then an alderman with the city of Calgary, was a serving member on the Calgary task force. I'm hopeful that each of those members will have an opportunity to speak to this motion, and I'm hopeful that other members, before this comes to a vote, will go to each of those members, because we've got a tremendous resource in this Chamber and it would be just foolish and a waste not to talk to those people and get some benefit from the kind of experience they've had.

In dealing with this, Mr. Speaker, and in dealing with the Calgary study, what was recognized by the chairman – and it's part of the introduction in that report – is, I think, the fact that violence is more pervasive in our homes and our communities than we too often acknowledge. The other thing that comes through so clearly from both of the two reports is the fact that the \$7 billion we spend in this country on law enforcement and jails and penitentiaries and apprehension isn't doing the job. We still have too much violence. So simply spending more money at a time we don't have more money to spend isn't the answer. I think that if there's no other message one gets from reading these two reports, it's how important it is that we look to reallocate some of that \$7 billion and find ways of spending it more effectively.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the provincial government has a huge role. I started off saying that what's exciting is to look at what happens when communities take responsibility to do these things on their own, but I think it's the provincial government, of the three levels of government, that has the greatest opportunity in terms of programs and encouraging communities to start programs, sharing information, providing statistical backup. We've got to make better use of that.

The Calgary report was chaired by now Senator Ghitter. It was created in April of 1990. I think what's interesting is that the full cost of the report – it didn't cost any public money – was underwritten by corporate sponsors. It's the kind of spirit that I think the ladies I mentioned before who work with the community sentencing panel in Wabasca-Desmarais would understand, because it's the same business of simply starting to deal with a local problem with local resources.

3:50

In the Calgary study in particular they talked to a hundred different Calgary professionals, they had 12 informal focus groups, 70 public submissions, and did a survey of 4,000 Calgary households to get an understanding of what people knew about violence in their community, the extent to which people had experienced it firsthand. The Calgary report talks about the importance of family and community support services. I think it's particularly appropriate in this Chamber that we look at FCSS and recognize that that's the vehicle through which we've been able to provide support to Wood's Homes in Calgary, which provides a whole series of services. We can go on listing the Y and other agencies that receive money from that important government funding vehicle. The motion's an easy thing to support, Mr. Speaker, because it talks about things that I think all Albertans would support, but I think we have to do more than simply

provide more rhetoric. I think we have to find ways also of backing up the rhetoric with the appropriate financial commitment.

Recommendation 1 in the Calgary report was to convene a provincewide conference for the provincial government and funding agencies to look at ways that funding agencies could provide needed services in the area of family and community violence. There's still a need for that sort of organization and that sort of focus. What I take that's particularly important from the Calgary study, Mr. Speaker, is the comment that's made on page 19 of the report, and I quote:

Effective prevention outweighs the ongoing costs of providing shelters, counselling abused children, or charging and incarcerating the perpetrators of violence.

I could probably spend the rest of my time just repeating that, because I think that's perhaps the single most important message that comes through from both the Calgary and Edmonton studies.

Of course, the difficulty is that at a time when we see all kinds of government cuts – and that's important, and I think clearly there's a majority support in this province for getting the deficit under control. But that's not the sole aim, and it can't be the sole aim of the government. We have to find a way of making our communities safer. Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage all members, whether in government or opposition, to support those kinds of initiatives to be able to provide prevention and to look at programs and services to deal with violence. Now programs and agencies tend to be too fragmented.

One of the most impressive things about the Duluth, Minnesota, model is that there they've identified all of the different agencies that deal with family violence, and they insist that all of those agencies have some communication. So they share their resources. They share their programs, and it means that instead of having agencies offering competing programs or identical programs, they're able to rationalize their resources in a way that means each dollar gets stretched a little further. It means the impact of the service being provided is that much more effective. And simply the cataloguing of services at the community level is critically important.

The Calgary study – and I'm going to spend much of my time talking specifically about that, because I know that my colleague from Edmonton has some particular perspectives on the Edmonton report, and I don't want to presume to give that an extensive treatment. I think spousal abuse is one of the issues raised in the Calgary report that's of prime importance. I think what we've seen in studies in Alberta and in Ontario is the fact that typically a woman is assaulted as much as 35 times before there's actually a police intervention. Thirty-five times. Keeping in mind what I said before, children seeing their mother being assaulted in the family home stand a huge risk of growing up themselves to be either victims or perpetrators of family violence.

I want to also applaud the initiative of the Minister of Family and Social Services. It's not just the Minister of Justice who has shown some leadership in this area. The native women's shelter in Calgary is an extremely positive move. There was a need for that. It was identified by a group that the Member for Calgary-Cross was part of, and that's being addressed now. So I compliment that particular minister for supporting that initiative.

I have to tell you as well that I'm a bit frustrated. On last Friday morning I had the opportunity to be part of the small committee dealing with the estimates for Family and Social Services, and I asked the minister at that time – I put to him the list of recommendations that had come from the Calgary and Edmonton reports – to respond on behalf of the provincial government in terms of which of those things that the province was to do have done and those that have not been done, why not.

The minister refused. The minister was there with his senior people in his department and he said: no, I choose not to answer that question. I'm still puzzled. Now, it may be I'm just a bit thick, Mr. Speaker, and there are reasons that are apparent to all other members, but it struck me that why wouldn't the minister want to share that information with us.

There have been very extensive efforts done in Edmonton and Calgary and other parts of the province. Now I think the focus shifts on the provincial government and what the province is going to do to respond to those ideas. I'm not suggesting and I think it might be foolish to say that we have to take each one of those recommendations without any kind of critical analysis. I think it's fair to assess them further, but I mean, the point is that that's the starting point we should be moving from. The reports have been out there for a considerable time, and surely at this point we're ready to move. As now Senator Ghitter said in his report: we've had enough studies, we've had enough task force; it's time for action. I think that's absolutely what has to happen.

In the Calgary report some of the other things focused on dealt with child welfare, and the report looks at youth violence, focusing on 16- and 17-year-old children and the particular problem that exists there. We have things like the exit program in Calgary, but the exit program, frankly, is overwhelmed. We have an increase in teenage prostitution, and this is a problem that's growing, and the resources to address it are shrinking. So we have to be able to do better there.

The Kerby Centre in my constituency, I'm proud to say, is involved in a project looking at elder abuse. That also is one of the recommendations that came from the Calgary study, and that's being implemented and worked on. But once again the study only gets us partway, Mr. Speaker, and we already have a pretty good sense what the problem is. It's only useful, really, as a prelude to action.

The Calgary study looked at immigrant women and the kind of double jeopardy that they're in too often. It looked at urban design and safety, looked at prevention through education and programs, a justice system which has been characterized often as being a cycle of inattention to problems of violence. But as I say, already the Minister of Justice and his agents throughout the province have been working hard to improve that. In Calgary the victims' assistance unit and the crisis branch of the Calgary Police Service I think provide an incredibly valuable service, and that's the sort of thing I think we want to see more of not just in Edmonton and in Calgary but in other places as well.

I think with respect to the Edmonton report there are others that can speak to it, as I've said, more knowledgeable. I hope that other members will participate in the debate, but most importantly I ask members not just to support this motion, because that's easy to do, but secondly support the initiatives that come from these recommendations in Committee of Supply, in different private members' Bills and initiatives that come along and provide the kind of action that's necessary to follow up with these great ideas.

Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

4:00

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon in support of Motion 506, sponsored by the Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*. Few would disagree that violence, whether in families or in the community at large, is wrong. Family violence, in particular, is recognized by this government as a major social issue of broad scope and significance. We as a government understand that the cost can be wide reaching and pervasive. The

implications are especially serious when one takes economic, human, and social costs into consideration. Many academics and professionals have concluded that family violence has been demonstrated to perpetuate itself intergenerationally. Child, adult, and senior adult victims can be afflicted by trauma which can last them a lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, family violence carries many economic costs, not only to victims and their families but to society as well. These include lower productivity in the workplace, absenteeism from work, company benefit plan expenses, hiring and replacement costs, and it doesn't stop there. One must always consider the countless hours and moneys which are spent every year on police, the justice system, health care, and social services. However, all of these are neither positive experiences or have a positive impact on the individuals affected. When one looks at spousal abuse, one should not interpret the violence in the context of who the principals are, a husband and wife. Rather, it should be recognized by members of this Assembly and the rest of society for the illegal behaviour which has occurred. Violence, whether against a loved one or a complete stranger in public or private, is still violence, and it is wrong. This need for improved intervention between victims and perpetrators has led police and many helping agencies to analyze new means by which they can create a more effective, concerted model of intervention.

Mr. Speaker, this government is fully committed to its campaign against violence in families and the communities at large. While there are no easy solutions to these problems, this government has and continues to pay particular attention to devising measures which can prevent violent behaviour before it cultivates itself into a much more complex problem. After all, families are the foundation of this province, shaping who we are, how we feel about ourselves, and how we approach the challenges of life.

The Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families provided a presence in government for the family focus. Established by a ministerial order in 1990, the council advises the provincial government on how its policies and programs affect Alberta families. The council undertakes initiatives that contribute to creating opportunities which will enhance family life and reflect the values that are held by the people of Alberta. While it is recognized that many programs, policies, and law play an important role in the lives of individuals and families, the government of Alberta continues to assess them on an ongoing basis. The council accomplishes this by seeking practical advice from all Albertans on how government can strengthen families, recommending ways to encourage partnership amongst public, private, and volunteer organizations that serve families, helping to create public awareness on matters of interest and concern to families, advising the minister on how proposed government initiatives may impact families, and assisting the government with other activities deemed important by the minister.

The task force on safer cities demonstrated this government's willingness to work with local authorities to find and implement solutions which are tailor-made to that particular community. The progress made and confidence exemplified by this government illustrates its willingness to listen to and to consult on local government finds and implement community-driven solutions compatible to the needs and concerns of the residents they serve.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus the rest of my speaking time this afternoon by making reference to the Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities in Edmonton and Calgary. I will make specific references to the task force in Edmonton to illustrate to my colleagues across the way that the provincial capital, hometown to most opposition members, has not been ignored by this govern-

ment; rather, the province has been quite accommodating to this city.

The safer cities task force in Edmonton and Calgary grew from a 1989 European and North American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention in Montreal. The conference examined all issues and solutions to violence in terms of restructuring social development and environmental design. It was a forum for delegates from the two continents to share their concerns and ideas for making their cities safer. This was particularly useful when one takes into consideration that Canada is a community of many cultures. The purpose of this conference was to produce a concrete program of action to prevent crime and decrease the feelings of insecurity in our cities. It was following this conference and the municipal election that year that representatives from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the federal government approached cities like Edmonton and Calgary to translate much of the dialogue from the Montreal conference into action. [interjections] I must be boring some, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry. [some applause] Thank you.

Some members of this Assembly were actively involved in this decision to get both Calgary and Edmonton involved. As you will recall, the members for Calgary-Cross, Calgary-North Hill, and Edmonton-Mayfield were aldermen on their respective city councils at the time. In the city of Edmonton more than 50 people from the local nonprofit organizations and government departments attended local meetings which addressed the concept of crime prevention through social development. These follow-up meetings led to a proposal by Edmonton city council to set the Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities. In addition to the mayor 15 citizens were appointed. The priorities for the task force were set for the context of a time frame of two years in order to make recommendations and to put them into a motion. Mr. Speaker, these citizens came from every major social, cultural, economic, demographic, and professional background which could be found in this city. Members of the task force were organized into committees and worked to identify priority areas of concern and developed action for addressing them. For the city of Edmonton alone the committee of the mayor's task force centred around five major concerns: family violence; unemployment, particularly amongst young adults; housing; urban design; children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, as the concept of social development meant different things to different people, each committee conducted much of its own research. This information gathering assisted the committees in the design of community-driven solutions. In the instance of the family violence committee, its committee members began to immerse themselves in the issue. The committee met with abused women and front-line workers. It also toured facilities like shelters for battered women. Each committee was similar in this respect.

Submissions by concerned individuals and findings of the committee were put together and made public to the residents of Edmonton. In order to hasten a plan of action, reports for all the committees were published immediately following the completion of consultations. Mr. Speaker, not one member of either of the cities' task forces wanted the report to just sit on the shelf and become a dust collector. Everything published in the task force final report was oriented towards action. In Edmonton, once all five reports were released on their own identity, the task force final report was compiled and approved by city council in September of 1992.

Edmonton city council in December 1992 created the Safer Cities Initiatives Advisory Committee and appointed a manager of safer cities. They would oversee implementation of more than 200 recommendations which were contained in the final report

over a two-year mandate. The purpose of the advisory committee was fivefold. It was to advise the city council on matters related to the status, priority, and implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities on directions for future actions. The advisory committee also advises the staff of the safe initiatives offices on how it can encourage community participation and crime prevention throughout social development. Staff for the safer cities initiatives offices would be advised as to strategies, priorities, and contracts for implementation of the task force recommendations. Quarterly and final reports on the advisory committee activities and progress would be given to city council.

Finally, the advisory committee would assist in public relation efforts in addition to assisting orientating other volunteers involved with safer city initiatives. I should add, Mr. Speaker, that there was another connection that the safer cities initiatives in Edmonton had with the present Legislature. The present Member for Edmonton-Glenora served as the advisory committee's vice-chairman. In September 1993, less than one full year after the committee was created, 83 percent of the recommendations from the family violence committee's report, breaking the cycle, were acted upon. As well, almost 60 percent of the recommendations contained in the report have already been completed. Another quarter of the suggestions are under way and expected to be completed by year's end.

4:10

Similar success has been achieved for the Action Committee against Violence in the city of Calgary. The city of Calgary organized its task force in three subcommittees which examined domestic violence, urban safety, as well as child and youth work. While some of the changes were made within the municipal governments and the school boards in both respective cities, many were achieved through deliberations with the ministries of this provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, mechanisms like provincial involvement with the encouragement of processes such as the Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities reaffirm this government's policy of caring and listening to Albertans. I feel that when we as a government decentralize decision-making, we are in a sense giving the government back into the control of the people it is privileged to serve. After all, is that not why we are all here?

While I support the government's endeavour to eliminate family violence, it is only conditional. What I mean is that the government may not only care and listen; it must continue to nurture community-based antiviolence initiatives and monitor their effectiveness to make homes and streets safer for all.

Thank you.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the fact that many members in this Assembly are familiar with the reports from Calgary and Edmonton, and I certainly appreciate hearing the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek relay some of the history of that particular initiative in Edmonton.

I would like to take the Assembly back just a little bit further than that for just a minute or two and talk about what it was that both the Calgary and Edmonton initiatives were truly based on and what led to the international Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention being called for in Montreal in 1989 in the first place. That was a recognition, Mr. Speaker, that family violence and domestic violence were eroding the quality of life in urban centres all over the world. There was a recognition that at the root cause of much domestic violence were a number of social

conditions and social problems that were in common no matter where they were found.

Now, some of those problems, Mr. Speaker, include poverty, unemployment, lack of affordable decent housing, and an unresponsive education system. Furthermore, it was noted by many people looking at domestic violence throughout the world that there was a growing underclass created by blocked opportunities for employment and education. The disintegration of communities and their families has been exacerbated by ineffective parenting or inadequate parenting, often because parents find themselves in this cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. The problematic circumstances in which people find themselves often lead them to migrate to cities to begin with and even between countries. We've seen a systematic and systemic destruction of native cultures all over the world and, unfortunately, right here in Canada and particularly in Alberta, and this has contributed to this problem.

Changes in the physical environment in our cities often contribute to crime, and both task forces recognized this and suggested that we have to take a look at the construction of cities, we have to take a look at the operation of cities, and we have to take a look at how it is we build our physical environment. It was noted that because of many of the modern societal problems, the difficulties that individuals have in connecting with their communities, with their young people, with each other – in short, Mr. Speaker, the difficulties people have in establishing relationships – have led to increased crime and increased disintegration of community values. All of this of course is not unrelated to drug abuse and alcohol abuse and other kinds of addiction problems. These are the issues that the task force in Calgary and the task force in Edmonton based their studies on.

Now, I'd like for a minute to turn to some of the assumptions that people have about violence and why it is so important that we all support this motion together. One of the things that we know for sure is that violence is a learned behaviour, and as such it can be unlearned. We also know that violence is not to be accepted. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we see tacit approval or acceptance of violence in so many ways in our society.

Violence in families can often be perpetuated through generations. We know that family violence encompasses many forms of violence, including violence against children, against elders, against spouses, but predominantly – and I can't state this strongly enough – family violence is men perpetrating violence against women and children. It is overwhelmingly a problem of women and children being victimized. Now, a violent family environment often encourages those people in the family to resort to violence in order to resolve disputes or settle problems. We also know that family violence even in one family is not at all isolated to just that family but spreads throughout the entire community.

The vast majority of family violence, as I said, affects women. We know that studies in this country estimate that, at a minimum, one in eight women in Canada lives in an abusive relationship. In 1987 – that's the best, most scientifically correct study we have for Edmonton – it was found that around 14 or 15 percent of all women over the age of 18 were involved in a physically abusive relationship; 69 percent of mothers of sexually abused children were themselves victims of sexual abuse. Mr. Speaker, we know that reports of assaults against women are increasing. We see that 55 percent of women who are in abusive relationships grew up in homes where they themselves or their mothers were abused first. We know that on average Canadian women leave their abusive spouses five times before they have the support to make a permanent break from those relationships. This, I think, is frightening.

For children we see that the average age of abuse or incest begins when the child is at age six. Over 25,000 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported in Alberta in 1989. The Edmonton Police Service in this city investigated 597 cases of child abuse last year alone. Now, children may even be more severely affected by spousal violence than we're aware of. We just don't know, because it's never really been looked at, Mr. Speaker, but we do know that there is growing recognition of the relationship between children who were involved in leaving school early, children who were involved in criminal behaviour, children who were involved in addictive and other self-destructive behaviours at earlier ages as the violence in their home environment increases.

For men, Mr. Speaker, we know that more than 60 percent of the men whose female partner stayed in a transition house have been abused as children. So men who were sexually abused when they were children grow up to be abusive spouses and parents. Men typically require considerable social and legal pressure before they are ever involved in treatment. Voluntary treatment is not really an issue for male abusers. It usually has to be somehow coerced. Some men, we know, are also themselves victims of abuse.

Last year one person a day was charged by the Edmonton Police Service for physically assaulting their spouse in the first quarter. All of these were men; 13 percent were repeat offenders. On average, Mr. Speaker, four people per day are now charged with a family violence related crime. Police estimate that they are involved in only 10 percent of the cases; 90 percent of the cases of family violence in this city, the police estimate, go unreported. In Edmonton 25 percent of all homicides over the last three years started off as domestic violence situations. That's one-quarter of the murders in this city.

Now, we know that early intervention is the key, often with children. As if that wasn't important enough, Mr. Speaker, to stop the hurt, the pain, and the suffering, we also know that effective early intervention can also save \$75,000 and more for every case that we manage to successfully deal with. Those cost savings accrue as a result of lower court costs, police costs, mental health costs, hospital costs, and social service costs.

4:20

Mr. Speaker, we know that it's time for us to do something about this problem. We know that it's an escalating problem, yet we still are faced with a situation where family violence and the response to family violence is characterized by jurisdictional confusion, administrative confusion, denial really about the extent of the problem, and a situation where the boundaries between departments and agencies responsible for different parts of the family violence solution tend to be reinforced and made more rigid all too often instead of being bridged. As successful as some initiatives have been, it's about time that we as legislators got serious about recognizing the role that we have when it comes to responding to family violence.

I was going to go through some of the key recommendations in both the Calgary and the Edmonton reports. I think instead what I'll do is I will simply commend them to each and every member of this Assembly for their reading. Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that there has been tremendous progress made, please keep in mind that sometimes the action that the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek and others have spoken about really has amounted to no more than preliminary discussions or an exchange of correspondence. We are nowhere near the completion of the task that we set out on in this city, in Calgary, and in every other community of this province where people have turned their attention to

dealing with this plague in our communities. Please don't be complacent with the numbers: 83 percent being acted on or 60 percent somehow being complete. There is still much to be done, and it's about time that it happened because the women and the children and those others who are being abused simply can't wait.

I know that each and every member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, as individuals would do whatever they could to stop violence in a family that they were close to. I'm asking each and every member of this Assembly to act together and as an Assembly do all that we can to stop family violence. A first step would be passing this motion and ensuring that the province lives up to its full responsibility in dealing with this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo advised earlier, I was a member of the Mayor's Task Force on Community and Family Violence while I served as an alderman in the city of Calgary. I'd be remiss if I didn't stand in the House today and speak in favour of Motion 506. I did have a very long text that I had given some considerable thought to in addressing this motion, but given that there is approximately five minutes left here, I would like to read to you a part of the Calgary task force letter that the Hon. Ron Ghitter, who, as mentioned earlier, was MLA previously for Calgary-Buffalo, had written to the mayor of Calgary. This is part of that text:

Until we, as a society, take the firm and irrevocable decision that violence will not be tolerated; until we tell our TV and movie producers that we have had enough violence on our screens; until women are empowered to stand equally with men, economically independent and with equal opportunity; until our police forces and judicial system recognize that violence of any kind is a crime, that there are no excuses, no shades of grey, and no acceptable violence; and until our politicians at all levels recognize the gravity of such violations, then, and only then, will we be able to strike at the very heart of the violence that exists in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask as well that all members of this Assembly give support to a motion that I see as being reasonable and well thought out and commend you for bringing here today. I would ask that we support Motion 506.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion is a quality motion, and I feel moved to speak to it. It's certainly not a threatening motion. It's my suggestion that it's simply attempting to seek improvement for all Albertans. It will work not to the detriment but to the positive of Albertans, and we as MLAs are elected here to work for the common good of all citizens in the province of Alberta.

I think the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo clearly indicated that when we look at incarceration or we look at jails or the likes of that, that is not doing the job. It's a very costly method. When we look at the Bill itself in combatting family and community violence, I would suggest that if we move into a preventative role and a very aggressive preventative role, we will see positive results many times over, Mr. Speaker. I think every study that has been alluded to in this Legislature and every study that I am familiar with certainly indicates that prevention is the correct path to take when we're attempting to deal with problems of violence in the family and in the community, and undoubtedly it has been shown time and time again that the dollars saved when we move into the preventive aspect for the long term are substantial.

I think commensurate with the prevention aspect, education fits into this picture quite nicely as well, Mr. Speaker. If we are to ensure that we have well-adjusted and successful citizens, citizens that feel fulfilled and feel they are major contributors to our society, it will be achieved through our education system. This is one of those preventative areas that I would suggest we have to deal with very carefully. There's a clear relationship between dysfunctional families and individuals and a lack of education. So this is one area that certainly we have to move along into to save these dollars.

We are into, I would suggest, some stressful times ahead for Albertans. That being the case, we certainly have to look at the resources and the facilities that we presently have in place and expand them. We have to meet the challenge before it becomes a crisis. We have to give people the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to feel safe within their families and safe within their communities.

If we are to listen to the debates and take up on some of the very positive ideas that come forth here, we will arrive where we have to be. Society will be a much healthier place, and a healthy society will certainly be the Alberta advantage that's required, Mr. Speaker. It will be a large part of the entire picture to attract industry as well as professionals that will be involved in those industries.

I won't belabour the point. There can be no question that prevention has proven to be the best step we can take to deal with this particular matter. It's an area that we should not squeeze in this Legislature. It's an area that in fact we should probably attempt to find more resources for.

4:30

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. KIRKLAND: I'm getting some direction from some very hon. members here, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. This is perhaps the opportune time for the Chair to advise hon. members that the 55 minutes allotted to this item has now expired, and the Chair is required to put the question.

All those in favour of Motion 506, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries. Call in the members.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:31 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Amery	Germain	Percy
Beniuk	Gordon	Pham
Black	Haley	Renner
Bracko	Hanson	Rostad
Brassard	Havelock	Sapers
Calahasen	Henry	Sekulic
Cardinal	Herard	Severtson
Carlson	Hewes	Sohal
Chadi	Hlady	Stelmach
Clegg	Jonson	Tannas
Coutts	Kirkland	Taylor, L.
Day	Laing	Taylor, N.

Dickson	Leibovici	Thurber
Dinning	Magnus	Trynchy
Doerksen	Mar	Vasseur
Dunford	Massey	White
Evans	McClellan	Woloshyn
Fischer	Mirosh	Yankowsky
Forsyth	Mitchell	Zariwny
Friedel	Paszkowski	Zwozdesky
Fritz		
Totals:	For - 61	Against - 0

[Motion carried]

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

Bill 8
Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1994

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise to move second reading of Bill 8, the Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 1994.

Mr. Speaker, what this Bill quite simply does is provide for interim supply for the operations of government beginning April 1, 1994, and to run approximately until June of 1994 to provide supply to Her Majesty's government for expenditures from the general revenue fund, from the Alberta heritage savings trust fund, and from the lottery fund.

Mr. Speaker, we are right now going through the process of Committee of Supply, and I have to look to my colleague the Government House Leader for advice as to how many departments have actually been before the Committee of Supply, including the designated Committee of Supply.

I recall one Liberal member across the way commenting upon his pleasurable experience sitting with or as part of a designated subcommittee of supply where, I am told, there was no shortage of answers in response to no shortage of questions. That kind of full openness and accountability in providing so much information in response to members' questions is something that this government stands proud of and will continue to do to the best of its ability.

So as not to excessively accelerate the review process of the entire provincial budget, what the interim supply Bills do is simply provide for the supply for a short term so that the operations of government can carry on after the end of the fiscal year at midnight on March 31.

So, Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the need for brevity in this Assembly, I would simply move second reading of Bill 8.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, I've been waiting to speak ever since I heard the hon. Treasurer speak earlier this afternoon. The Treasurer is the only person that can go to New York City - I know people who have gone there and been mugged. He comes back with a suntan.

Well, it's interesting. As we come, Mr. Speaker, to this Bill 8, the appropriation Act, we're looking here at providing approximately 28 percent of the provincial government's funding. When you go through the days on which we're going to be debating the estimates, the earliest we could be done would be about April 21. So it certainly is a large appropriation Bill, considering that the budget itself will be passed sometime in mid to late April, probably early May at the very latest. In terms of magnitude it's large.

I want to address some larger issues, Mr. Speaker, issues related to track record and performance. I'd like to sort of review some of the records of some of the key players on the government side, the front bench. The hon. Provincial Treasurer, for example, has been under the dome before. In 1982-83 the hon. minister was the manager of provincial government affairs for Dome. When he was there, in terms of track record and expenditure and accountability Dome managed to rack up net losses of \$369 million in 1982 and a billion dollars in 1983. But there's more. The years before the hon. Treasurer joined Dome, they actually made money. They did. They made a net income of \$287 million in 1980 and \$200 million in 1981. But then the man with the touch of lead joined Dome. What happened? They lost their shirt. Then to the misfortune of the province of Alberta he decided he had politics in his system. It was a bug. So he joined the government, and he was elected in 1986. When did the deficit start? Let me ask you: when did the deficit start? In 1986.

Now, earlier this afternoon we had a discussion by the hon. Provincial Treasurer about overexpenditures. Well, let's look at the record. Let's look at the hon. minister's tenure as Minister of Education, the office budget: in 1989-90 an overexpenditure in the minister's office of \$84,176. Yes, Mr. Speaker, \$84,176. It's a fact. It's in the public accounts, Mr. Treasurer, your overexpenditure of \$84,176 in 1989-90.

We come to the next year. You'd think in fact he'd have learnt the rules of the game. In 1990-91 - well, he got it a little under control - \$48,281 he lost. [interjections] It's relevant, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about accountability, track record, and interim supply. We wonder if this is sort of a taste of what will come down the road. In 1991-92 the hon. minister overexpended in his budget by \$22,899. In fact, over the three-year period when he was Minister of Education, the total overexpenditure was \$155,436. It's a fact. It's in the public accounts.

Point of Order
Questioning a Member

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

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer rising on a point of order.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member entertain a question?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer is wondering whether the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud would permit a question.

DR. PERCY: No, Mr. Speaker.

Debate Continued

DR. PERCY: So, Mr. Speaker, it's a fact; it's a record. It's on the public accounts: an overexpenditure of \$155,436 by the hon. minister. How much is that in percentage terms? Well, it's about 17 percent per year that he overexpended, an average of \$51,812 per year while he was Minister of Education. It's a fact: \$51,812.

The hon. Provincial Treasurer had brought up other facts early in the afternoon, but he only had half the ledger. He didn't have the revenue side.

MR. DINNING: Did we touch a nerve?

DR. PERCY: No, no. We're just putting all the facts on record in *Hansard*.

So the next time, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Treasurer gets up and gives us a lecture on financial stringency, we should ask: what about his tenure at Dome, when they lost money hand over fist? He goes out from under one Dome to another dome, and then we start losing money hand over fist. Then in his office: losing money, overexpending hand over fist.

4:50

AN HON. MEMBER: There's a real pattern there.

DR. PERCY: There's a pattern. You're right.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the issue at hand, the appropriations Bill, the interim supply Act. This Bill requests, then, \$3.55 billion in interim supply. As I'd mentioned in my remarks to begin, this is 28 percent of total expenditure in '94-95, and we think that is excessive in light of the fact that by the third week of April we will be completing the estimates.

MR. DINNING: Guarantee it?

DR. PERCY: It's the time limit set in legislation, Mr. Speaker. We know how the time limits kick in with the appropriation Bills.

So the first point, then, is that this is a lot of money, given that the latest we're going to be debating the budget will be late April, early May. This magnitude gives sort of just a blank cheque. The second point, Mr. Speaker, brings us back to a point that we have raised earlier with regards to the level of detail that is provided in the Bill. Again let me just refresh the hon. members on both sides of the House. We have now gone to a level of detail where there is a single number for each department for operating and for capital investment. The members on the other side will say: "That allows us to streamline. That allows us to shift money wherever we think it ought to be." We think the principle of program by program vote is appropriate because that sets out the constraints, but that is not what will be voted on either in the interim supply Bill nor in the appropriations Bill when it comes forward.

MR. DINNING: You voted for the DEA. It's in there.

DR. PERCY: I presume you heard, Mr. Speaker. There was an interjection from the other side about the . . .

I will refresh the hon. minister's memory. I will quote from *Hansard* the comments when we put our objections to this on record. It was by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, now known as Edmonton-McClung, on May 10, 1993.

So now there won't be the restriction of not being able to transfer money between and amongst seven or eight votes in the department. . . . They'll simply be able to now have much, much bigger groupings of expenditure, and so the transferring of money amongst and between these subgroupings within a vote will be much, much more easily done. . . . In fact, what it is is a backdoor release for the Treasurer to be able to squirrel money away and scoop it up without anybody ever seeing what's being done until it's far too late to see the consequences of it.

So we were on record, Mr. Speaker, as highlighting this as an issue.

In their normal style, Mr. Speaker, what they do is they package a little good with a little bad. For example, let me refer the hon. members to Bill 21 – merely housekeeping, but a hundred percent loan guarantee – or Bill 2, the consolidation of the Alberta Sport Council with the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Consolidation and streamlining, yet it allows for the appointment of an MLA to the board: direct political interfer-

ence. So there's sort of a history, a tradition, of this government packaging a little of this, a little of that.

On its merits we thought the Deficit Elimination Act, in terms of getting the deficit under control, was a good idea. So we had to hold our noses, Mr. Speaker, and vote for something that we thought was repugnant. We see it coming to fruition now, just a blank cheque for shifting funds within operating by government members. So we're on record as highlighting this as an issue that we viewed with some trepidation, but because of the larger concern of getting the deficit under control, we were willing to vote in favour of this.

The third point I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, relates to the issue of – and this is why I made my comments with regards to previous performances of ministers – having performance targets and benchmarking within the appropriations Bill itself. A number of U.S. states – and we heard comments about Oregon earlier – actually in the appropriations Bills provide benchmarks and performance standards. Not only does the appropriations Bill say that this is how much we're going to spend, but more importantly it says that this is what we're going to get for it in tangible, specific benchmarks. There are governments who are not afraid to go on record as saying, "This is what we strive to achieve," and give you a quantitative figure for it, something you can get a handle on. This government, unfortunately, provides mush in terms of its business plans and no quantifiable targets or performance measures, no benchmarking. They ask for a blank cheque to . . .

MR. BRACKO: Blow again.

DR. PERCY: Yep, blow again, whether it's overexpenditure in a minister's office or it's just a slippage among operating funds of various votes.

We look at this, Mr. Speaker; we have concerns. We have concerns about the magnitude of the interim supply Bill, we have concerns about the form of the interim supply Bill, and we certainly have very severe concerns about the absence of any demonstrable performance targets, numbers that say: this is what we're going to get for the money we're going to spend. At least if you're going to ask for a blank cheque, tell us what we're going to get for it. Don't make it so vague.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to rise today and speak against this Bill. [interjections] I think I'm tall enough and everyone in this House can see me.

The reasons why I speak against this Bill are quite similar to my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud's. I just want to say that this government has used the loopholes within the Deficit Elimination Act to . . .

MR. HENRY: Did you say used or abused?

MR. CHADI: Well, they've used the loopholes.

MR. HENRY: Okay; not abused.

MR. CHADI: Well, they continue to abuse the Deficit Elimination Act.

What can happen now is money can be transferred by a department, at a whim, between the individual programs within

the departments. Certainly this is not accountability. This is not the accountability that we were elected to provide.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the way I see it, spending must remain as budgeted. If we budget a certain amount of money and we say that we target it for a certain area, a certain program, we ought to be able to say that is the amount of money that we expect we will spend there, and that's it. No more. If there is anything that remains in that program, I think it ought to go towards paying off the debt that was created, the debt that was created after the 10 deficit budgets that we've seen over the past 10 years. Again, we're going to be faced with a couple more deficit budgets before this is over, in accordance with the Deficit Elimination Act. So it's not all over yet, but I think that's what we ought to be doing.

I know that within our own households and within our own companies what we do is we say: this is the amount of money that we will spend, for example, for donations. I know that when charities comes to us and they ask us for certain amounts of money and could you help us out, whether it's the heart fund or the liver foundation or the crippled children or mental health, what we do is try to prioritize. We say: which ones do we want to support this year, and how much are we going to support them by, within our budget? We do that and we do it effectively, because we cut a cheque for each one of these different charities and that's it. Once it's over, we haven't got any more to hand out within that program of our company or our households.

Now, that's the way I think a government ought to run. So when we look at the different programs – and that's the way it used to be prior to 1993, the incorporation of the Deficit Elimination Act. We had our appropriation cut out for us and defined by program how much money we were spending within each program. I still think those funds, if any are left over, ought to be used to pay down the debt and not be used at the whim of the government to just move it over to another area within that department and use it.

5:00

I know the other day when I was sitting in this House, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities said: heck no, if there were any funds left within the Department of Transportation and Utilities, they would never go back to the general revenue fund; it would not go back to pay down debt; it would go back to pave roads and fix potholes. That leads me to believe that the budgeting process is flawed then. We've got a problem. I mean, if we can't estimate how much it's going to cost us to run our departments each year and if we have an overexpenditure, or even an underexpenditure for that matter, I think we ought to say that we can't pave that road on Highway 22 in Mayerthorpe; we can't do it this year because we haven't got the money. If we did in fact pave that road and still had a little extra money, why not use that money to go toward the debt, the debt we so desperately need to pay down because we're paying a billion and a half dollars? When you look at the total overall deficit in this province, it was 3 and a half billion dollars or \$3.7 billion. I've even forgotten now because the numbers have been juggled around so much. That's almost half the deficit going toward paying interest to service this debt. It's ridiculous. We've got to start to realize that we have to do this and we have to do it strictly. We cannot just hand out our money as though there's an endless supply of it.

Mr. Speaker, I have another concern, and that is that the system is somewhat flawed. The system is flawed inasmuch as we come to this House and we're asked to vote on appropriation before we've even finished discussing the estimates and debating the estimates. I find it very difficult that I should stand here and

defend an appropriation Bill when we haven't even finished debating the estimates. I don't know. There's got to be a mechanism in place that covers this sort of thing. We can't say that we're going to debate the estimates but at the same time go out and say, "This is the amount of money we need; go ahead and get it." Just borrow it or get it from wherever we're going to get it from, take it out of the GRF, and we haven't even finished the debates. It just doesn't make sense at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say to you that the reason I'm up here today speaking against this appropriation Bill is not because we're not going to eventually get the funds to cover these expenditures. We will. But I think it's wrong. I think the timing is wrong. I just want to say the first reason is that that loophole within the Deficit Elimination Act ought to have been plugged, and that is of course that the government can have the ability to transfer money between the programs and within the department at their will. I find that very difficult to accept.

The second, of course, is the fact that here we are today asking for about 28 percent of the total expenditures before we've concluded the debates on the estimates; \$3.55 billion in interim supply apparently, and according to our calculations it's really not required to deal with the amount of money we would have to expend until such time as the debates on the budget estimates have been concluded. My hon. colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud made that point, and I believe it to be true. I mean, why are we doing that? I still think we ought to be able to conclude the debates, vote on the amount of money we need in the appropriation, and then proceed.

Thirdly is the fact that we created these three-year business plans and the need to promote effectiveness of program and service delivery. When we look at the three-year business plans and look for performance measures and benchmarks and the fact that individual departments should be included as line items in the appropriation Act itself, similar to what happens in Texas – you see, Mr. Speaker, in Texas . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: In Texas?

MR. CHADI: Yeah, in Texas. In Texas they've got a tremendous – if I can, Mr. Speaker, I'll read for you from the appropriation Bill that is in Texas and what they vote upon. It's something quite similar to what we had prior to the Deficit Elimination Act, because in 1992 what we had was program by program. For example, in Energy we spoke about the departmental support services and the amount of money that was required; we spoke about mineral management again and then subprograms and the amount of money that would be appropriated within those subprograms, and it made an awful lot of sense. Again, after 1992 what happened was that the capital was split out – and that's a great start – from the entire estimates. I think it was a good move. It made it a lot easier for us to try to measure the different costs: how much of capital versus how much of the other expenditures that were taking place, operating, et cetera.

So when we look at what they do in Texas – and I'm going to read for you just briefly right out of their appropriation Bill, Mr. Speaker – they firstly define the goal. For example, the department of agriculture, they define a goal and say that this is what they were going to do. For example: to enable Texas farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses to expand profitable markets for their agricultural products while protecting public health and our state's natural resources. Then they go on to the next level. Within that appropriation Bill itself they say: these are the objectives. The objective, for example, would be to expand market opportunities while protecting public health. They go on another step and say:

these are the outcomes. They go on to something else and call it strategy. They go one step further and call it efficiencies. And each category is highlighted with a number. This is how much they expect to achieve. These are the outputs, these are the efficiencies, this is their strategy, these are the objectives, and this is their goal. Those funds are set within those programs; they're budgeted, and they stick by them. If there are any funds left over, they ought to be going to pay down debt; they ought not to be going back into that department.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals were the ones, when the Deficit Elimination Act was first introduced, that flagged the area of this loophole. We were there and we argued against it. Now, I heard the Provincial Treasurer say earlier: well, you guys voted for it. Yeah, we did vote for it, you bet, because there isn't a soul in this province that would say we need a deficit. I think what we voted for was the elimination of that deficit, and we said we were going to do it within this period of time. Lo and behold, we tried to introduce amendments to that Act, decent amendments, ones that would put teeth into this Bill, but to no avail. They weren't passed. So when we speak today against appropriation at this point in time, I speak in context of the fact that we haven't got any teeth in the Deficit Elimination Act. The loophole exists in there to allow them to manoeuvre with these funds back and forth through different programs.

Mr. Speaker, I think we ought to be the stewards of Albertans' money, funds, like we were elected to do. We've got a job to do, and we ought to do it right. I don't think we have to do it haphazardly. I don't think we have to do it just because this is the way it used to be or just because somebody wrote a book on it and used somebody's opinions. I think what we have to do is look at successful states, successful countries, successful jurisdictions and follow those ideas that apply to us. Not all apply to us. We can't just follow a certain model and say that this is exactly what we are going to be doing. Lord knows it may not apply to us. So we have to give and take. We have to take some things we may be able to use from certain states within the United States. We may be able to use certain ideas from different provinces across this country. That's healthy, and I think that's good business. I think it's great for our Legislature to be able to go and look at what other jurisdictions are doing and only take those parts that are good for those jurisdictions and may apply to us. Some of the good things that are going on in New Zealand may not apply to Canada because we may not have changed another segment of our economy. If we didn't do that and they've got something different, then it just wouldn't fit. If it doesn't fit, it won't work for us here in the province.

5:10

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I'd now like to allow some of my other colleagues to speak on the appropriation Bill.

Thank you.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm fascinated to look at the schedule appended to Bill 8 and specifically the allocation for the five legislative offices. I sit as a member of the Legislative Offices Committee, and just going back to first principles, I've always understood that in this province, going back to the days of the Ombudsman, back in 1970 or whenever we started that office, we talked about the importance of the independence of those legislative offices. What that means is that the legislative offices are not treated like another government department. They have a special status, and they're

answerable to the Legislative Assembly not through the cabinet, not through the Lieutenant Governor in Council but rather through the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices.

I'm fascinated to see the five legislative offices shown here with entries, dollar amounts to get us through this period whether it's two months or three months. These items certainly don't come from the Legislative Offices Committee. We've approved a budget for the Auditor General, we've approved a budget for the Ombudsman, we've approved a budget for each of the five legislative offices, but it was a budget for a full fiscal year. When I see this item, the \$13,997,000 – that's the aggregate sum for the five legislative offices – I guess I ask myself: who has determined that this is the appropriate cost for the legislative offices? Some may say that there's a process issue and I'm a first-time member on this particular standing committee, but I'm concerned that through the budget process we're starting to erode that most important of qualities that characterizes our legislative offices, and that's independence from the executive branch. It seems to me that if we were to respect the principle of independence of the five legislative offices, that would mean it would be not the government coming forward with this supplementary interim appropriation but the Legislative Offices Committee making a recommendation.

I have no idea that \$55,000 for the office of the Ethics Commissioner – is that one-twelfth of the budget for next year multiplied three times or two times? I can say the same thing for the office of the Auditor General. Where does the \$3,075,000 come from? If I missed this at the Leg. Offices Committee, I'm sure the Member for Olds-Didsbury or some of the other members I recognize who are also on that committee can set me straight. But, Mr. Speaker, on the face of it, it seems to me we have another example . . . [interjection] The Minister of Energy, I see, is anxious to speak, so I'll be as brief as I can and afford her at least ample opportunity to raise her concerns in a way where we can all hear them, not just those of us in the front row.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that if there's some specific basis for these numbers coming – and hopefully it's not just arbitrary – then I expect the Provincial Treasurer would join the debate and clarify that or at least have a member of Executive Council clarify that issue, because it's certainly a mystery to me as it stands.

The other question I guess I have, Mr. Speaker – I look at Justice: operating expenditure, \$121,926,000. I guess the questions it begs when I look at that are: how much of that is going to be for departmental support services, how much for court services, how much for legal services? What portion of that is intended for support for legal aid, how much of it for the Public Trustee's office, how much for fatality inquiries, how much for crimes compensation, how much for correctional services, how much for public security?

It seems to me that there are some principles here, and whether it's three months or 12 months I'm expected to make some kind of a reasoned decision on behalf of my constituents in terms of where the priorities are, and the priorities determine where the dollars go. Well, I have no way of knowing where the minister responsible for that department plans on allocating these dollars. I think I need that information. Without that information this is really a pig in a poke. It's wholly arbitrary.

It's one of those questions again, it seems to me, where the Provincial Treasurer says: trust me; take it on faith; the government knows what it's doing. Well, to me that's wholly inconsistent with the philosophy we've heard in this Chamber expressed by the government, different agents of the government, who said that we're embarking on a new era of openness, a new era of accountability. Well, accountability should be the same whether

it's three months or a full fiscal year. The accountability issue is still there. You can't have accountability without information and knowledge in terms of the component parts. We don't have that information, so for that reason I'm unable to support this.

I just come back and say again that there's a serious concern in terms of addressing the independence of legislative offices. This isn't perhaps the appropriate forum to resolve that issue, but I simply have to sound the warning that's apparent to me that we're starting to encroach on the independence of those important legislative offices. If we look a little further down the road, when we do that, it's not simply a question of putting the nose out of joint of a particular legislative officer; it's a question of starting to undermine independence. Once we start undermining the independence of those five key legislative offices, we impair their effectiveness, and I don't think that's the kind of consequence that members in this Chamber would lightly countenance, Mr. Speaker. I don't think they'd countenance it at all, lightly or not.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my observations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments in the time left this afternoon. My colleagues from Edmonton-Whitemud and Calgary-Buffalo have spoken about the size of this interim appropriation Act compared to what the obvious needs are. Hopefully the Treasurer, when we next deal with this Bill, will give us some of the necessary answers as to why he is requiring a great deal.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to address my comments to the notion of the business plans. This government has insisted all along that there is a grand plan for controlling the deficit and that it's related to the budget, and to be sure, we got the budget, a document detailing some detail, minimal perhaps for the most part, and the business plans arrived. I looked at this document, and the business plan for one department had no similarity whatsoever to the business plan for another department. There is no consistency in those business plans, so one assumes that they must have been written in haste and perhaps with very little communication from one department to another.

AN HON. MEMBER: Desperation.

MRS. HEWES: One of my colleagues says "desperation." Perhaps that in fact was the case.

In those business plans, Mr. Speaker, they're described in very grand terms. They're described in terms of vision statements and mission statements, and then there are sections in some of them on strategies. But strategies in some look like what are called goals in another, look like what are called visions in another. So there's again no consistency in how they are presented to us. In some business plans we have sections called outcomes and measures, but there's no indication of how on earth we're going to achieve them.

5:20

Now, one would have thought that those business plans would have had some relationship to this interim supply Bill, sir. These were the business plans that we'd all waited for and that the government had bragged about to the people of Alberta, that were going to give us the means to measure whether or not there were in fact goals in mind and whether they could be met and how the government planned on meeting them. But nothing could be farther from the truth. We find a very vague document once

again set out for 28 percent of the budget for the year, a huge amount, more than necessary, yet no definable measurements.

Let me just give you a few lines from the budget. The budget document in fact said: "Programs and funding will be results-driven. Albertans will receive value for their tax dollars." Now, that's in the budget of this year. Well, how, pray, from this interim supply document are we supposed to figure that out? Now, I've suggested before that maybe the hon. Treasurer, with the tan, will get up tonight and give us the information, but I don't have an awful lot of confidence in that. Mr. Speaker, if in fact the information was there, wouldn't you think it would have been supplied along with this document? One would assume so.

Another quote from the budget, Mr. Speaker, says:

- The government will be accountable to Albertans for how their money is spent. Progress in meeting identified goals will be reported in clear, measurable terms.

Well, what are those measurable terms? Where are they? They certainly aren't here. There is no way from this document that any Albertan could figure out how they measure why those amounts are required.

Mr. Speaker, another statement from the budget says: "Clear objectives . . . Effective strategies [set]. Performance measured. Customer service improved." Sounds like something you'd read in one of those shiny flyers that come to the door. There's no way in this Bill that we can possibly measure whether or not this government is or will become accountable, and as I say, I have no confidence.

Let me just look for a minute to the very thin detail that's here on one part of the supply Bill that I'm particularly interested in. That's the section on Family and Social Services, a huge amount of money. It looks like close to \$600 million, Mr. Speaker, just from my quick addition. At our recent meeting of Family and Social Services, the budget meeting, the minister admitted that nobody knows whether or not their measurements in fact indicate where the people are. The only measurement they're using is whether they can knock people off the welfare rolls. Is the count down? We say: well, maybe it is down, but where are the people? Where did they go? Are they in school? Are they on unemployment insurance? Where are they? The minister doesn't know. One has to assume that the minister not only doesn't know; the minister doesn't care where the people are, as long as they no longer are on his account.

Mr. Speaker, that is not one of the business plan's measurable goals. I suggest to you that there are thousands of children who are now knocked off that, and we don't know where they are. Now, I think that is unconscionable. If we are in fact going to put \$600 million more on the table to be spent in Family and Social Services, we ought to be sure that in fact the children of this province who are living in poverty are being looked after. I don't know that, and I suggest that not one member over there knows it either. I don't think you know where they are. If you do, then perhaps you'll suggest to your minister that he should tell us and should tell the people of Alberta where the children are.

Mr. Speaker, I know other members of my caucus are just dying to add their remarks to mine, so I'll give them an opportunity to do so, but I will have some questions for the Treasurer.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, we've heard some interesting comments this afternoon. That would be debatable in itself. However, in keeping with the enthusiasm of the afternoon, I move that we call it 5:30 and do adjourn until 8 o'clock this evening, when we will reconvene in Committee of Supply for the department of public works.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Could we take the hon. Deputy Government House Leader's motion, first of all, to adjourn debate on this matter?

MRS. BLACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader has moved that debate be now adjourned on Bill 8. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

Hon. Deputy Government House Leader, we'll have the next motion.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I now move that we adjourn until 8 o'clock this evening and come back in Committee of Supply for the department of public works.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader has moved that the Assembly do now adjourn until the Committee of Supply rises and reports. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:29 p.m.]