

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 16, 1994**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 94/03/16

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition signed by 200 individuals from the St. Hubert elementary school in Huntington Hills in north Calgary. They're expressing concerns about the proposed restructuring of the educational system in Alberta.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I tabled on March 7 regarding the education cuts that I just referred to earlier on be now read and received.

CLERK:

We respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to refrain from introducing legislation which would enable

- the provincial appointment of superintendents
- and
- the seizure of locally levied school residential taxes.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition regarding Alberta Hospital Edmonton be now read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned hereby request the Legislative Assembly to urge the Minister of Health to suspend the Board of Management of Alberta Hospital Edmonton and appoint an administrator to replace said Board of Management, or immediately replace the existing members of the Board of Management.

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I filed on March 7 concerning community schools be now read and received.

CLERK:

We petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to endorse the advancement of community education and community school concepts.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Assembly today a report titled The Economic Impact of West Edmonton Mall, a report prepared by Western Management Consultants, The Strategy Group, and Econometric Research Limited.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the Premier's commitment on salary disclosure for the public sector, I am filing with the Assembly today the annual salary rates for deputy ministers and other senior officials of the provincial government for January 1, 1993, and January 1, 1994.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I am filing with the Assembly a directive under the Financial Administration Act spelling out the format and the content of salary and benefit disclosure for the provincial government as well as for all of those agencies of the provincial government such as the universities, our colleges and technical institutes, our provincially administered hospitals. This information has also been provided by way of press release today, and I'm filing this with the Assembly.

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

MR. L. TAYLOR: Yes. I'm pleased to file a report that was mentioned in the House yesterday about some incidents that happened prior, I must say, to my appointment as chairman of the ARC, in spite of what was suggested opposite. I would also point out that in *Hansard* yesterday it was said that the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly 83 bright grades fours, fives, and sixes from St. Catherine school in beautiful downtown Edmonton-Centre. They're accompanied by adults Dorothy Helie, Derek Gove, Betty Phillely, and Reg Kastelan. They're in the public gallery and the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly 35 members of the Sears Plus group, a group of former employees of Sears who continue to meet every month on a social basis. They are accompanied today by Leo Maltais, the president; George Abma, past president; Ken Bell, treasurer; and Mrs. Dolly Ashe, program director responsible for arranging this trip. I wonder if they would stand and receive the very warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you Brandon and Lorelei Thomas. They're seated in the members' gallery. Mrs. Thomas is a former teacher of the year in Alberta, and Mr. Thomas is a young professional at the Alfred Egan Home in Bow Island. They're young professionals in Alberta committed to doing their part for Alberta, and I'm pleased to introduce them to this House.

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly two hardworking women from the tourist industry. We have Karlen McDonald, who is the general manager of the Chinook Country Tourist Association, and her associate Jayne Kremenik. They're in the members' gallery, and I'd like the warm welcome from the House, please.

head:

Oral Question Period

Private Hospitals

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the hon. Minister of Health. While the government is gutting our public health care system, four Alberta doctors want to buy closed hospitals and run them for profit. We've also learned that a private firm needs special legal protection against lawsuits that non-Albertans might bring to serve in yet another private enterprise proposal. Despite evidence to the contrary the minister continues to write letters to the editor saying that we will not Americanize our health care system. Madam Minister, what information have you given to Dr. Dennis Modry about buying closed hospitals that the rest of Albertans don't have?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I have not given any information to the said gentleman that any other Albertan wouldn't have access to or have. I have not received a proposal from said doctor for purchasing a hospital. I am not sure whether anyone else has, but there are very few vacant hospitals in Alberta to indeed even consider purchasing.

MR. DECORE: Madam Minister, is it your intention to give special legislative treatment to these new hospitals to protect them against malpractice suits that Americans may bring when they are treated in Alberta?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that's a very hypothetical question. I think I made it very clear in my first answer that I have not received any proposal to operate a private hospital. I should remind the hon. member that hospital is a term that is within the Hospitals Act, and it is very clear what a hospital in Alberta is. I think the hon. member should know that.

1:40

MR. DECORE: Will the minister confirm that not one cent of taxpayers' moneys will go into these for-profit hospitals that look like they're looming and are going to be part of the Alberta scene?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I have not received a proposal from anyone to have a private hospital, which I've already explained would not be possible. But simply the answer is that public funds indeed would not go into a private facility in this province.

Alberta Research Council

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I want to start by tabling documents involving a Japanese company bringing a lawsuit against the Alberta Research Council. The \$6 million dollar lawsuit alleges that the Research Council did not live up to its obligations involving products originally developed by Chembiomed. These products involve the same technology that is mentioned in the Aspen Biotechnology business plan that I filed yesterday. My first question is to the minister responsible for the Research Council. Madam Minister, how can a patent lawyer doing a

closed-door investigation be sufficient to look into the safety and management of the problems at the Research Council?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, a patent lawyer has been hired to investigate the possibility of a conflict of interest only. Maybe the chair of the ARC would like to supplement the answer.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I would respond in terms of the safety regulations. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we operate at higher standards than required. We are a safe organization.

MR. DECORE: Well, Madam Minister, you're the minister responsible. You say that the lawyer is looking only into the conflict of interest issues. Explain how matters that are being dumped into the sewer system and how employees being told to put things out the door and call it garbage or sawdust aren't safety issues and why you're not looking after those issues.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member across the way hasn't paid attention to what was just tabled in the House. All of those issues of how this is dealt with was tabled and will be on your desk, and all of the requirements and safety protection will be well spelled out in the document that will soon be circulated in this House.

MR. DECORE: Madam Minister, normally when problems involving conflict of interest and alleged windfalls occur, the Auditor General is called in to do an investigation. Will you tell Albertans whether you have asked the Auditor General to do a complete investigation of what's going on at the Research Council?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are waiting until the final report comes in. I'll examine the final report, and if the Auditor General needs to be called in, we will do so.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current review of the biotechnology division of the Alberta Research Council is not the first, but it certainly may be the shortest and most informal to date. One was undertaken in 1989, and in the fall of 1993 the Alexander Consulting Group was hired to review management practices of the biotech division at a cost of \$70,000. Neither study is public. My questions are to the minister responsible for the ARC. Since the Alexander report highlighted problems in style and structure of management just last fall, what steps were taken to correct the problems identified?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I've had a meeting with the president of the Alberta Research Council, and he's outlined in detail the process that has taken place. I'm quite satisfied with the action the president has taken and also with what the chairman has done, and perhaps the chairman can supplement.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: since the biotech division does extensive contract work for international biotechnology firms whose stocks are publicly traded, what rules does the council have in place to deal with potential conflict of interest or insider trading?

MRS. MIROSH: Well, we're not convinced yet that there is any insider trading, Mr. Speaker, but certainly we are dealing with the

creation of wealth in partnership with the private sector and ARC, and we will continue to do that. There is money that ARC is recovering as a result of partnership with business, and that's what we'll continue to do.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, since the taxpayers already shelled out \$70,000 for an investigation just a few months ago, since the problems are still apparent, what is the minister going to do to get to the bottom of it and solve the problems?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I've already explained that I have met with the president, and we are dealing with the issues and the possibility of conflict of interest. We have an investigation in place, and it is not \$75,000 currently. We are following all of the policies that have been laid out by ARC.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. chairman of the ARC wishes to supplement?

DR. L. TAYLOR: I'd just like to add one thing. The Ethics Commissioner will be asked to review any spin-off companies. These will be fully reviewed by the Ethics Commissioner, and any recommendations he makes will be followed.

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

Senior Citizens' Housing

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Municipal Affairs recently announced that his department is selling residential properties held by Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. At the same time, there is ongoing discussion of private-sector involvement in seniors' housing, and the minister has indicated that he intends to deregulate fees in seniors' lodges. Many seniors in my constituency are confused and concerned with these discussions. They are afraid that the minister intends to sell seniors' lodges to the private sector. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Does the minister intend to sell seniors' accommodations to the private sector?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

DR. WEST: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question because there is confusion out there following some articles that had indicated that we were selling off social housing. The statement I made was that since 1990 we have been downloading some 110,000 units of what we designated nonsocial housing. We have been selling those through a division called Municipal Affairs Sales Ltd., a division of sales through the Department of Municipal Affairs. We are not selling the senior housing in this province. They're run by 430 housing authorities and 59 lodge boards in the province of Alberta. They're nonprofit. Some of those authorities are nonprofit groups such as the Good Samaritans and what have you and are doing an excellent job in running them. We are not selling those. I clarify that again. We are selling the designated nonsocial housing, which are mortgages for CHIP and MAP programs from the late '70s, as well as some of the land holdings we have and some of the other real estate properties. Once again, no, we're not selling the senior housing.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. RENNER: Thank you. My supplementary question is to the same minister. What steps has the minister taken to inform

seniors of changes to seniors' programs, particularly with respect to deregulation of fees?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, communication is always one of the most difficult things for a government because there's a tremendous amount of sometimes misrepresentation as it gets down through the different shops and areas of delivery of these programs. We have sent out some thousand copies of the description of the changes in the program in senior housing and in other senior programs. We have sent those to 385 municipalities which indirectly sit on a lot of the lodge boards and a lot of the senior programs in the province. We have also sent it to the 430 housing authorities that are there, the 59 lodge boards. We've sent it out to 230 other stakeholder agencies. We've sent it out to the major housing corporations in Edmonton, Calgary, and the other cities. We will continue if there hasn't been communication to extend that information as we're doing this afternoon to all of the media that we can find in the province so that they can read it, too, so when they're relating it back to the public, we get a consistent message.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. RENNER: Thank you. My final supplemental question goes to the Minister of Health. Could the minister please explain what steps she has taken to inform Alberta residents of long-term care facilities of changes in their per diem rates announced in the budget?

1:50

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the long-term per diem rates, as members know, are indexed in this province. They're indexed to a combination of OAS, GIS, and Alberta assured income supplement. A senior who is occupying the long-term care facility in this province pays a percentage of that index depending on whether they're in a standard room, a semiprivate room, or a private. We announced on February 24 that we would be increasing those rates to bring them more in line with the costs of lodging, which is really what those rates cover. They are only designed to cover room and board, lodging type of rates. We immediately faxed to all of the auxiliary and long-term care facilities that information. We have made it known to all of the groups that we can. I have met with the long-term care association. I sent a letter to each facility in early March, and we have endeavoured to ensure that people did get the correct information so that the seniors who are occupying those understand that they are still paying the lowest rates in Canada in long-term care and to ensure that they understand very clearly what those rates will be when the new rates come into effect.

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

Breast Cancer

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Women in Alberta over the course of their lifetime have a 10 percent chance of developing breast cancer. The reliability of past research done on breast cancer is now in question. My question is to the hon. Minister of Health. What reassurances can you give Alberta women whose treatment has been based on an inaccurate study?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we have a very aggressive program in Alberta for breast cancer, both research and treatment.

We were very pleased to have been chosen in Alberta to participate in the federal research dollars that were approved last year. We would hope that our physicians who are working in the treatment of breast cancer are certainly apprized of the very latest research, but I am quite confident that the physicians who are treating our citizens in that area are using very tried and true and proven methods of treatment in that area. Obviously they have to use the very best information they have, and as I understand it, this research project was a federal project, and I am sure that Health Canada is doing everything they can to ensure that this does not occur.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With a focus on prevention, will the minister guarantee that all Alberta women, not just those over 50, will have free access to screening mammography?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we've had a breast screening program in Alberta for a little over two years. It began as a pilot project, and it does not extend over the province today. Because of some concerns that were raised as to the validity and the value of breast screening, I enacted a breast screening advisory committee who had in fact, in the first instance, proposed the breast screening program they pilot. That committee is comprised of experts from all areas, and they are developing a report to me as to the best way to proceed with this program. If indeed it is their expert advice that we should expand that program, I will look at it very carefully, because obviously we're very concerned that the very best use of diagnostics and screening is used, but we are also very conscious of ensuring that we expend our very precious health dollars in the best way. So I will wait for the results from that committee and make the decision from their advice.

MRS. SOETAERT: One of your benchmarks is that women under 50 aren't considered in the screening, so I would ask then: why would the government even think about denying women access to screening mammography when such preventative techniques not only save lives but money as well?

MRS. McCLELLAN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that no person has been denied access. If a woman under the age of 50 has requested that procedure, she has indeed received that, and I have no knowledge that that hasn't occurred. However, there are studies that do say that there is little or no value. That is the question, and that is why I have put together a very expert panel to bring us back that advice as to how best to handle this. Breast cancer is a leading cause of death in women by cancer. We're very concerned, and I think we have a very aggressive program in Alberta. When I receive that advice, we will proceed with that knowledge.

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

Vehicular Damage to Legislature Grounds

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In southern Alberta where drought can be problematic, good stewards of public land pride themselves on caring for the land they farm and ranch. Long-term damage can be done to fragile grassland by the irresponsible use of motor vehicles over this property. To the minister of the environment: would the minister indicate to this

Assembly how long it takes for this fragile grassland to fully recover from vehicle traffic?

MR. EVANS: Well, certainly, Mr. Speaker, depending on the elevation where the grass is growing, certainly dependent upon the amount of abuse that the grasslands take, it requires differing lengths of time to restore those native grasslands. But this is a serious issue, and it is a problem in southern Alberta where water is often in short supply and where the residents of southern Alberta have come to the recognition that native grasslands must be protected and that there must be a conscious effort to deal with them responsibly.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday afternoon past these same public land issues moved into the city of Edmonton, where damages were caused by the disrespectful use of a four-wheel drive vehicle across the Legislature Grounds. To the minister of public works: are damages recoverable for the work it will take to repair the grass, or will charges be laid to recover the costs of these damages?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, I was informed of this incident that took place last Friday afternoon. There was some damage done to two vehicles and a large stretch of grass torn up in our manicured lawns. I might just remind the Assembly that we have one of the finest parks in Alberta, and the largest usage of that park is probably the Legislature Grounds and the grounds that surround the Legislature Building here. I was informed of that, and there is some damage that may be able to be reclaimed on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I believe we've got very beautiful grounds here that taxpayers have all paid for.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question. Question.

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: are there regulations restricting vehicle access across these beautiful grounds as well as other public grounds?

MR. THURBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I might add at this time that this is a very serious subject. Yes, there are regulations. There are walkways. There are places for people to jog. There are places for people to picnic within these grounds. I am deeply concerned about an irresponsible action like this that could have hurt somebody if they happened to be jogging by there at that time or, furthermore, in the summertime happened to be laying there on the grass or picnicking there on the grass. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to maintain this facility here for the good of the Alberta public, and access is not restricted to anybody on foot, but we do restrict it to vehicles. This kind of action is reprehensible, and the people should be reprimanded. If it were a government employee, they would be reprimanded to the point of being terminated from their position.

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

2:00

HIV-tainted Blood

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The legal blackmailing of victims with tainted blood continues. While some Albertans have been coerced into accepting the inadequate compensation package prior to yesterday's deadline, we now learn that this deadline has been extended in some special cases. Will the Minister of Health please tell Albertans about these special cases? Which people dying from AIDS are special, and which are not?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the way that question was posed was very helpful to get true information out. The deadline for the acceptance of the assistance package that was agreed to by eight provinces and the territories in Canada was March 15. That was set in September in very close consultation, I should say, in Alberta with the hemophiliac association. It was felt that that was a reasonable deadline. However, the question was raised that there could be persons who would find out after the date that they did acquire the HIV infection from blood. It would be extremely unfair to exclude them from that program. Now, if that is what the hon. member is referring to as a special case, then indeed there are.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, then, maybe the minister can explain why this government continues to demand that Albertans waive their legal rights just to get compensation.

MRS. McCLELLAN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that this is an assistance program. It was designed and implemented by eight provinces and the territories in Canada. Part of the negotiated agreement was a waiver. That was agreed to by eight provinces and the territories. It is an assistance package. It was put together to assist people who were facing financial hardship. Those were the terms that were negotiated and agreed to by eight provinces in Canada and the territories.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister of Justice can help. Mr. Minister, do you think it's fair that people have to waive their legal rights before they can get this compensation?

MR. SPEAKER: That is strictly a matter of opinion.
The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Energy Prices

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Budget '94 document makes some key energy and economic assumptions, one of them being that the price of oil would be at approximately \$16.50. To the Provincial Treasurer: can he tell us, with oil now trading at around the \$14 mark, what impact that will have on our revenue projections?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Red Deer-South is correct. Oil actually opened this morning at \$14.72 U.S. Our budget assumptions beginning April 1, 1994, assume \$16.50 oil for the year and \$1.88 per mcf for gas. Clearly with oil trading below that rate, we are possibly in jeopardy, but we are confident that if oil actually came in at \$15.25 for the entire year, we would meet our budget target. There is optimism in the market. Certainly when you look at the budget documents as we provided the estimates, the forecasts of some 18 forecasters on

page 124 of the budget, they estimated an annual price of about \$17.11. So our \$16.50 amount is still reasonable.

I would remind the hon. member that we are benefitting significantly by the volume increase and the price increase on the natural gas side. Two years ago, in '92-93, our gas to oil revenue was a ratio of about 1 to 1. In '93-94 it was more like 2 to 1, \$2 in gas for every dollar of oil. This year we estimate, especially with a very robust economy in the United States and strength in the Canadian economy, that our gas to oil revenues could be as high as \$3 gas for every \$1 of oil. So notwithstanding a low price currently, Mr. Speaker, we are confident that we will come in at or perhaps slightly above our budgeted target.

MR. DOERKSEN: Well, given the volatile nature of gas and oil prices, has the government considered using a technique commonly known as hedging in order to stabilize the impact of price fluctuations on the province's revenue?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the idea of hedging or buying and locking in a price with certainty, especially in this case for our oil products, at a higher rate than we're getting today, whether it's \$15.25, \$16.50, or as high as perhaps \$20, is a very attractive notion in a time when oil prices are unstable. It is something that my colleague the Minister of Energy and I are considering. We've certainly had a number of representations from those in the industry, in the financial and oil and gas industries, who engage in this kind of business. So to protect the downside risk of those low oil prices, it is something that we would consider. It is not something that we have made a decision on at this time by any means, but clearly to enhance the value of the product that is owned by Albertans for the future, it's something that we must consider.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West. [interjections]

Western Heritage Centre

MR. BRUSEKER: Oh, already. Jeez, ahead of myself. I was busy reading the note from the chairman of the Alberta Research Council.

Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Deputy Premier and the minister responsible for tourism. The western heritage centre in Cochrane was supposed to open two years ago, and it has now ballooned from a \$9 million project to a \$15 million project. Now, incredibly, instead of allowing their \$3.3 million grant to simply expire at the end of 1993, the Klein caravan charged right in and extended the funding commitment for another three years. So my question to the minister: what would possess the government in these economic times to extend the offer of \$3.3 million in grant money to a society that has no money in the bank and where all of the original proponents of the project have jumped off board? [some applause]

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the western heritage foundation in Cochrane is one that's been under review for some period of time. In fact, there is some construction on site; construction has been undertaken with respect to the particular project. It's one that a commitment was made to several years ago. We honour our commitments. There's an active group in the Calgary area working on that. There's a very active chairperson. In fact, my colleague the Minister of Environmental Protection meets with the group on a regular basis, and we're quite satisfied that they're going to attain the goal they set out for

themselves. They're involved in a public subscription campaign now. We made this commitment several years ago, and it will be met. Perhaps my colleague the Minister of Environmental Protection has some additional information to add to this particular file.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to supplement my colleague. This is an important project from a cultural point of view in this province, and there is money in the bank. The Western Heritage Centre Society, the advisory committee, has in excess of \$400,000 in the bank. They have decided, and quite appropriately so, that they will not proceed any further until such time as they have enough money to finish the next phase of this important project, which will for all time promote the cattle industry, promote the ranching life of this province.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I guess the decision's been standing for two years, because no construction has happened there in two years. What we've got is a basement that goes nowhere.

My supplementary question to the minister responsible for tourism: professional fund-raisers take about 40 to 50 percent of the funds raised, so how much will Haines Elliott fund-raising have to raise in total to get the \$3.3 million in matching grant money?

2:10

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker. I don't know the answer to that question. The government is not involved in negotiating any contract with any private fund-raiser. We've had no discussions with them.

I should point out again that construction has started on this particular site. There are dollars in the current fiscal year, which will end March 31, 1994, and there are no dollars committed thereafter. The profile for the new budget beginning April 1, 1994, contains zero dollars for the western heritage centre.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question then: how can the government believe this project will ever be self-funding when in fact the centre proposal, the business plan, requires that one in two Calgarians visit this on an annual basis?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, I look at a rather significant infrastructure built in the community of Drumheller called Tyrrell, which within one year after its opening some 600,000 visitors attended. Now, the population of Drumheller is - what? - only 5,000 people, yet within 12 months of the opening of the Tyrrell 600,000 people visited Tyrrell. It's become a world-class destination point. I look here in the city of Edmonton. West Edmonton Mall attracts nearly 1,800,000 visitors on an annual basis, yet the population of Edmonton is only 600,000. So we follow the adage: if you build it, they will come. That will be the success story with the infrastructure in Cochrane, Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wainwright.

Provincial Credit Rating

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Last week you made a trip to the heart of the finance and investment world in New York. Provinces and states all over North America are watching with keen interest the steps Alberta is taking and the progress they are making in

accomplishing their legislated balanced budget. I know that you met with a number of financial institutions and credit rating agencies. Would the minister enlighten this House on how these institutions view Alberta's credit risk?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member. My visit to New York last week had two primary objectives: one, to meet with the credit rating agencies, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, and to advise them and bring them up to date on the progress that we have made in achieving our four-year balanced budget plan and, secondly, to meet with investors and to meet with investment banks who provide assistance to us as we go out to finance our deficit over the next two years to give them the Alberta story so that they're up to date on the progress we have made. I can report that in both types of meetings the people we met with were impressed and they are impressed with the progress that this government and this province and the people of Alberta have made in attacking this serious problem of our deficit. I could report to them not just the promise, not just the plan, but I could provide them with evidence and with proof that we had made some nearly \$1 billion worth of progress in achieving our objective. So clearly there was an impression that we left that we are doing something that is significant in Canada, but it is also significant across North America.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you. How does Alberta compare with other provinces in Canada, and when can we expect to see an improvement in our credit rating here in Alberta?

MR. DINNING: Well, two things, Mr. Speaker. Compared to other provinces, Alberta has the second-best credit rating in Canada. B.C. is slightly ahead of ours. But it should be of interest to all hon. members that today the province of Alberta is able to borrow money at a better rate than any other province in the dominion of Canada. That is because the market has expressed confidence in our plan but also in the evidence, the proof, the progress that we have made in achieving our plan.

Mr. Speaker, as for the judgment that the two rating agencies will pass on our plan and on our progress, today we stand with both of them at a double A credit rating. We've provided them with the story. They know the facts. They asked a number of questions. We will probably have to answer more questions in the days ahead, but that is their judgment now, and I look forward to receiving their reports sometime, I expect, over the next six to 10 weeks.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

Consumer Protection

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, ever since the current Minister of Municipal Affairs was given the responsibility for consumer affairs, it's been open season on buyers. Even in death we see scams taking place. To the minister: why has the funeral regulatory board failed to provide the consumer protection it was set up to provide?

DR. WEST: It has not, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, what steps is the minister prepared to take now to prevent further scams in funeral services?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the Acts, some 37 that we have in consumer and corporate affairs, are scrutinized on an ongoing basis and will be updated in the next few years. I'm going to try to bring 37 Acts down into about nine. To answer his question, we will look at the funeral services regulations and Act. We'll also look at the Cemeteries Act. We look at all of those on an ongoing basis. If he has a specific concern, an individual concern with one of his constituents or somebody that he knows in this province, please bring it to me personally.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, for the minister's information, he did an interview on this subject yesterday.

To the minister: when will the minister get his priorities in order and put the interests of people first?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I think that was a statement rather than a question.

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

Forest Management

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back almost a year, there have been requests by bona fide timber companies to have the government allocate deciduous timber. Over this period of time and particularly last fall there have been many statements by department officials and in some cases by the minister of the day. We're talking about a project that's going to be at least \$100 million, important to this province, important to this constituency. My question is to the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: when will the request for a proposal be issued?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the current Minister of Economic Development and Tourism is working on two projects in northern Alberta: one would be in the Grande Prairie area, and the other one would be in the High Prairie area. The answer to the very specific question would be: it will be very, very shortly. In fact, we're on the final detailing of the agreement that would go out, the request for a proposal, in dealing with the Grande Prairie timber development area, and hopefully we're only a few days away in tying up a few of the loose ends with respect to the High Prairie timber development area.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: will that request for a proposal provide for an approval date by this government that will ensure construction starts in 1994?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the proposal that we've got basically will be time finite; there will be dates put into it. We'll in essence be looking at a date sometime in May whereby requests for proposals for the development of whatever entity it will be in the Grande Prairie timber development area would be submitted to the government. We would then basically set up a time frame for a decision in essence by cabinet in early July, and that would allow time, depending on the type of project identified, for the necessary environmental impact assessments and/or other requirements to be undertaken. Hopefully, if all goes well and the project is viable, then in essence there could be construction in the ground in the early fall of 1994.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary, again to the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism: will the call for a proposal ensure or provide for any third-party evaluation in terms of developing any recommendations or advice to government on which proponents should be recommended?

2:20

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the process that will be taken is that we're going to be going out to the world market with a request for proposals to deal with a timber berth south of the Grande Prairie area. In essence those applications will come to the government. It would be my intent to set up a panel to work with me to evaluate these proposals that do come forward from an independent point of view from government. In essence I'll be asking this particular panel - I haven't designated who'll be on it yet - to come forth with a recommendation to me as the responsible minister so that I can have it further evaluated as the next step before I bring it to my colleagues for final approval.

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

Prescription Drugs

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week a number of pharmacists from all over southern Alberta met, and they showed extreme concern about the new Blue Cross prescription payment proposals for seniors and nongroup subscribers, which is set at a maximum of \$9.70 for the dispensing fee. This increases the out-of-pocket costs paid by the majority of seniors and eliminates the top two tiers from the pharmacists' dispensing fee. My question is to the Minister of Health. How does the minister justify the negative impact that closure of some of these pharmacies may have on small towns in rural Alberta?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I should perhaps clarify for the hon. member a couple of points in his preamble. Yes, we do propose to move to a maximum dispensing fee of \$9.70. Today the copay is 20 percent of the cost of the drug and 20 percent of the dispensing fee. For a lower cost drug it is true that that would be a saving to people, but there are a number of people, including seniors quite often, who are on very high-cost drugs. They can run up to \$200 and \$300 for a prescription. Obviously this would be quite a saving to those people who are in that area. One of the principles that we have really been working on is to protect low-income seniors, so that was certainly a consideration in that area. I would remind the hon. member that that is a maximum dispensing fee. The fee could be any amount up to \$9.70.

The second thing that he mentioned that I should just correct: under the agreement with the pharmacists we do pay them an additional fee for the higher cost drugs. Alberta Health will continue to pay to the pharmacists that extra amount of dispensing fee. That will not be paid by the consumer, but we will pay it to the pharmacists.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Minister of Health: when covering prescription costs, would it not be more responsible to maintain a cost-shared funding process which keeps users, pharmacists, and physicians involved in the selection and use of drugs?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the decision to move to a dispensing fee for seniors and those people in that area was made with all items under discussion. One was certainly, as I indicated earlier, a concern for seniors who are by necessity on higher cost drugs and how to protect them. There are a number of initiatives that we can look at for savings. One we implemented last fall, certainly on advice received from the pharmacists themselves, was to put into place the least-cost-alternative decision. Under that where there is an alternate least-cost drug, it must be prescribed. Those are made on the decision of an expert panel and listed. So we have looked at some ways to ensure that those cost containments are there, but we are also concerned about protecting seniors against those very high cost drugs that I spoke about.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In many cases the seniors are being asked to discuss with their physician the possibility of extending the number of treatments they can get on one prescription. Would the minister explain what procedure she's going to use to make sure that we don't end up with a lot more dead drugs as physicians change their prescriptions?

MRS. McCLELLAN: There are a couple of areas in that question that we should talk about, and I should indicate to the members that I also will be meeting with the pharmacists' association to discuss some of those issues. One is on trial prescriptions, and indeed in some cases a physician may wish to try a prescription for a short period of time. We're going to talk about how we would handle those. Secondly, most prescriptions are at a 34-day period now. There is a list of prescriptions that may be given for 100 days, Mr. Speaker. Those are clearly listed, and they are the only ones that can be given for that hundred days. Anything that is given for over 100 days has got to have prior approval from Alberta Blue Cross.

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

Olympic Saddledome

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The national infrastructure program, a federal artificial job-creation program, has polarized the very community it was intended to serve. The Saddledome Foundation, in fulfilling its mandate to the citizens of Calgary, has negotiated an agreement involving the Calgary Flames and the Stampede board which does not require any injection of moneys from the municipal government. Further, the agreement would enable . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question. Question.

MR. HAVELOCK: Three sentences, gang. Just hold your horses. [interjections] Just stay in school; don't be a fool.

Further, the agreement would enable the Stampede board to pay down \$20 million of its accumulated \$34 million debt, a portion of which debt, I might add, is guaranteed by the provincial government. To the Deputy Premier: if city council approves the inclusion of this project in the national infrastructure program, would the province reject the project if it was not deemed to be in the public interest?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it could.

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you, Deputy Premier. If city council did not approve the project and in light of the Saddledome

Foundation putting up the city's one-third share of the \$12 million, would the province still approve the project to protect its guaranteed loan position?

MR. KOWALSKI: No, Mr. Speaker. The provisions of the program are very clear. It would require, first of all, a resolution of the local municipal council before we would even look at a list of proposed projects. In this case, the city of Calgary would have to pass by resolution of its council a unanimous motion that would include this particular project on their list. Secondly, the debt of the Stampede board has never been at question. It's not at risk, it never has been, and I don't ever believe it will be.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the city is not required to inject any capital into this project, have the mayor or other city council members indicated to this government why council would be adverse to the project's approval?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I personally have had no conversation with the mayor of the city of Calgary or any member of council on this particular item. I haven't had a chance. I haven't had a request for such a discussion. I've had no contacts with anyone, so I can't answer the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired, but before calling Orders of the Day, would there be consent of the Assembly to revert to the presentation of petitions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Presenting Petitions**
(reversion)

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

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition from 1,135 Albertans from locations throughout Alberta, 40 of which come from Calgary-Varsity, urging the government "not to implement the plan to restructure the educational system" and requesting that all Albertans "have the opportunity for input and involvement in future plans."

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

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to beg leave to present to the Assembly two petitions from residents of my constituency. One is signed by 54 Calgarians from Guy Weadick school, and the second petition is signed by 126 Calgarians representing Cecil Swanson school. Both petitions express concern over the restructuring to education and request the government to support local school board autonomy.

head: **Orders of the Day**

2:30

head: **Written Questions**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places, with the exception of motions for returns 154, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, and 177.

[Motion carried]

Schoolchildren's Medical Needs

M154. Mr. Henry moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all reports and studies used during the ongoing discussions between the departments of Education, Health, Family and Social Services, and Justice concerning the medical needs of children attending school, referred to on page 17 of the School Amendment Act, 1993, Bill 8 information package, and the minutes of any interdepartmental meetings held on this matter.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, this specifically refers to documents, reports, and studies that were used by the government in making a major change to the School Act last fall. The worry and the concern that's been expressed to me from members in the community, and specifically parents who have children with special needs and community groups who are associated, is that the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education have not quite got all the mechanisms in order in order to be able to transfer the responsibility for provision of the services to children with special needs from the budget of the Department of Education to the various budgets that are funded through the Department of Health. We've had some instances whereby there's been a lack of co-ordination at the service delivery level, and individuals and groups would like to see the studies and the plans that went into making that decision so that in fact they can see who said they would take responsibility for which services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Education, I can report to the Assembly that I have been advised that no such reports or studies exist, and indeed that when requesting minutes of interdepartmental meetings – I should also advise that the minutes of those kinds of meetings are considered internal documents. *Beauchesne* would back that up. They are used for working purposes. They are not documents to be filed in the House. As a result of those two pieces of information in my hands, I would recommend that the Assembly do reject this motion.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to express profound disappointment on behalf of many groups that the hon. Treasurer in his previous incarnations has dealt with and families and individuals who would like to see this information. I think the Assembly needs to be very clear that the hon. Treasurer on behalf of the Minister of Education has provided us with two pieces of information. Number one, there were no studies, there were no reports that went into the government's decision to remove the ability of school boards in this province to provide for the medical needs of the students attending in their jurisdictions. That was a major decision. It shifted the enabling power from school boards over to health units and other health authorities, yet obviously there were no discussions, there were no studies, there

were no reports that led to this decision. I'm glad the hon. Treasurer has made that clear for us.

Secondly, I want to be clear – I know the hon. Treasurer did not refer to a particular section of *Beauchesne*, but there is no section of *Beauchesne* that would apply to this. We are not asking for minutes of any meetings that would have been held by ministers, but rather this is a departmental civil service committee that has been ongoing. The question that's out in the community, that's been raised several times at forums, that people have written to the minister and not gotten a response on is specifically: are these issues being dealt with? Is this the committee that's actually dealing with these issues? What is this committee doing?

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members of the Legislative Assembly to support this motion for a return. Thank you.

[Motion lost]

Maintenance Enforcement

M169. Mrs. Soetaert moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing in maintenance enforcement the collection rates for the total number of files, the number of files in arrears, the amount owing in each file, the length of time each file has been in arrears, and the number of files that are current for the periods April 1, 1990, to March 31, 1991; April 1, 1991, to March 31, 1992; April 1, 1992, to March 31, 1993; and April 1, 1993, to February 10, 1994.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do I address the amendments now?

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, is there an amendment to be proposed?

MRS. SOETAERT: Yes, there is.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, yes, the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert has graciously accommodated us with an amendment, which has been circulated. It should read amendment to Motion for a Return 169 rather than just Motion 169. It reads, for the record:

For the maintenance enforcement program the total number of files, how many received payments in the last 90 days, the number of files in arrears, the average amount of arrears, and the number of files that were current as at March 31, 1991, March 31, 1992, March 31, 1993, and January 31, 1994.

The amendment has been submitted because of the way we keep our data. We were unable to provide it in the form requested, and I so move the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice has moved the amendment as outlined. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the amendments that have been made. There's just one part missing

that I was interested in, and that's the length of time that each file has been in arrears. I think if we're trying to go by benchmarks and see if we're really improving as we go, that was one of the things I am sure I wanted to know and other Albertans wanted to know and certainly the department would like to know and at least be made aware of to see if progress is being made. So I do appreciate the amendment, but I am disappointed that that one section is not included.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice to close debate on the amendment.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, yes, that's one of the difficulties with providing the information. It would take a monstrous amount of manual effort because it isn't tracked through technology in that way to determine that, and that's why it was not included. Otherwise, we'd be happy to give it.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion as amended carried]

Contaminated Sites

M170. Moved by Mr. Bruseker on behalf of Mr. Collingwood that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the report of the multistakeholder task force assisting Alberta Environmental Protection in the implementation of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act with respect to the liability for contaminated sites that was referred to in part (c) of a written response to a question raised by the Member for Sherwood Park during debate on the department's budget estimates in Committee of Supply on September 21, 1993, *Hansard* pages 406 and 407.

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This motion deals with the contaminated sites advisory committee. I've recently met with the advisory committee, and I want to publicly thank them for the tremendous effort and the focus they have given to this important issue. It is an important issue because there are contaminated sites in this province, contaminated for the most part before there was an awareness of the impact of a number of industrial applications in this province. We have a question of liability, and we have a number of other questions associated with contaminated sites. The work that the task force has done has been exemplary. I have their report, and I will be making that report public. Accordingly, on behalf of the government I am very happy to accept Motion for a Return 170.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried]

2:40 Education Transportation Costs

M171. Mr. Henry moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any reports or studies prepared by the Department of Education's task force reviewing possible changes in the regulation of transportation costs between January 1, 1993, and November 1, 1993.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, the government has made some changes with regard to the transportation grants that are provided to local school jurisdictions, specifically elimination of some and reduction of others. I assume that's because the government has some sort of studies or some sort of indication that the costs to the school divisions have gone down because of efficiencies, because of better co-ordination, or because of costs of input. So I would ask that all hon. members support this motion for a return so that the government does indeed have the opportunity of showing to all Albertans the information that led them to making those decisions.

Thank you.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, in reply on behalf of the Minister of Education, I'm in a bit of a dilemma here. I could recommend to the Assembly that we accept this motion, and then the Minister of Education could go back to his department and have various people go to work and prepare a document that says: there are no reports or studies that were prepared that dealt with this issue. Then he would have to come to the Assembly, you would have to recognize him, and then he would have to stand up and file that in the House. Then he'd have to hand it to the pages, and the pages would take it away and file it in the Assembly library and give it to the Clerk. There seems to be a great deal of work involved in accepting this motion and then advising the hon. member that there were no such studies or reports prepared. So I would like to recommend that we take perhaps a more paperless approach, a less bureaucratic approach to this and recommend to the Assembly that we reject the motion because no such studies or reports were done.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that should come as no surprise. It simply reinforces and verifies the notion out there that decisions such as this are made without rationale, without studies. One hopes that decisions of this kind are made based on something, and I assume they are. Now, somebody someplace made a report and said, "Listen, we can do this, and there will be no hardship," or "There will be hardship, but that hardship can be passed on to parents who can't afford to do it or to school boards who can't manage it" or whatever.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one more of the pieces of evidence that say we have to have some freedom of information. I believe the hon. Treasurer knows full well that there has to be something to have arrived at this decision. He speaks for the minister – and I appreciate that – but he doesn't give us any reason for his answer except to say: my goodness, this would make paperwork, and we don't want to create paperwork.

MR. DINNING: I answered the question for you.

MRS. HEWES: You didn't answer the question. You said, "There are no reports." So I say to you that I don't accept that answer. Mr. Speaker, I don't accept the answer because I believe there are reports.

MR. DINNING: Oh, so now you're saying something; okay.

MRS. HEWES: I said it before, Mr. Minister. Read the *Hansard*. I believe that the Department of Education did look at this and decided that there was money to be saved. They must have decided there was money to be saved, and that would override the problem of hardship in their minds. I think that's how that decision was made, and I'd like to see the report that verifies it.

MR. HENRY: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's really clear that decisions are being made out of thin air and with little regard, if any, for what happens out in the real world. I'm sure the individuals affected by the various changes in regulation of transport costs will be interested to know that there were no reports; there were no studies. There may have been some stories, there may have been a couple of conversations over a coffee or a beer or something, but the decision was not based on sound information, was not based on any sort of consultation, and in fact no reports or no studies showed that in fact they were able to do the job with less money than previously.

MR. DINNING: Ask the question then. Write the motion then.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Treasurer would like to have the floor, and I'm afraid he's already spoken to the motion. I understand I close debate; otherwise I would ask him if he wanted the floor.

I want to point out to all the individual members of this Assembly who ran in the last election saying that we were all going to operate an open government, a free government – we were all going to operate in that manner, yet we very clearly have the old boys on the front bench making the decisions one more time. I'm sure Albertans will be glad to hear that.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

Lottery Funds for Schools

M172. Mr. Henry moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a complete list of the recipients and a list of criteria used in choosing recipients of the \$30 million allocated from provincial lottery revenues in the school year 1993-94 to less wealthy school jurisdictions, showing the exact amount each jurisdiction received.

MR. HENRY: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, Motion 172 asks for a complete list of the recipients and the criteria used in distributing the \$30 million from lottery funds that was dedicated towards assisting boards in the equity problem that we've had in this province for some time. I want to state really clearly that I urge all members to support this motion for a return. I hope the criteria for allocation of this money was based on something like average per pupil assessment or revenues of boards or some other objective criteria. I would also hope that the government does indeed have a list of the recipients of the \$30 million. This is a case where we need to have information out there for people to be able to examine and in the Legislature Library for people to be able to answer any questions they may have.

Mr. Speaker, I've had it put to me by individuals that the \$30 million was distributed not on any objective basis but rather on some political basis. I have chosen very specifically. I could have stood in question period and made some accusations or asked some questions. Frankly, I've not seen any evidence of that. I've not seen any evidence that it's been distributed on a political basis, and I would hope never to see that in this Legislature. I think we as legislators have the responsibility in this Legislature to ensure that citizens in our province, who may not be quite as trusting as some of us, have the information. They can come to the Legislature Library, look it up, and say: yes, there was some criteria that said here's who needed to have this money, and in fact here's how it was distributed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, in rising on behalf of the Minister of Education, I appreciate the graciousness of the member's remarks on this motion where he has acknowledged that and hoped. I think the answer that will be filed by the Minister of Education will show very clearly that the criteria and the formula that would determine the amount of an equity grant available to school boards across this province is a well-known formula, well-known criteria that I can recall from days past.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise the Assembly that the Minister of Education would want this motion to be accepted and would recommend same to the Assembly. Before I make that recommendation, perhaps you'd permit me to make a comment that would reflect on some of the observations made by the hon. member as he closed the debate on a previous motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Only if it's relevant to this motion.

MR. DINNING: It is, Mr. Speaker, because in the interests of providing information that's requested of a minister under a motion for a return, where those studies are available, where that information is available, I believe we should be able to. Just as the hon. member said that all people who ran in the last election had an opportunity, have an obligation to exercise civil behaviour in this Assembly – I think that was a word that he used – openness, accountability, free speech. I'm glad to hear the hon. member, this Vietnam war protester across the way, finally stand up and say that in this Assembly, because if there is perhaps one example in this Assembly of someone who represses the freedom of speech during question period, it is the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre. He is the leader of the Yakety-Yak Gang when members on this side of the Assembly are trying to answer questions. They don't do the courtesy to this Assembly to listen to the answers, and I would so recommend, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair does believe that the hon. Treasurer is straying somewhat from the motion.

MR. DINNING: Perhaps I'd better get back on topic, Mr. Speaker. In the interests, on the government side of the House, of openness, of accountability, and of protection of free speech, I would recommend to the Assembly that this motion be accepted.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add a few words to the motion. Let me say I'm pleased that this particular motion is to be complied with and that the information provided will be the information that has been sought by the Member for Edmonton-Centre. Now, the Provincial Treasurer made references that went a little beyond what was specifically requested in Motion 172. To kind of touch on that same hedge just a wee bit, at times members of the gallery may wonder why, even though the odd time the government may comply with the request for information, there is such a degree of hesitation on this side of the House when it comes to feeling comfortable that information is going to be forthcoming. Well, Mr. Speaker, all one does is look at the past performance. All one does is look at the record. All one does is recall that every day we come into this House screaming for the freedom of information piece of legislation, for example, which day after day after day doesn't appear to be there even though it was promised last year, the year before, the year before that.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. In the same manner in which the Chair talked to the Provincial Treasurer, the Chair must now also make the same comments to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford that really those comments are not germane to the motion before the Assembly.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. Likewise, as with the Provincial Treasurer getting back on track, back on the particular subject we're dealing with, that is the call specifically for a listing of recipients that were provided a total of \$30 million allocated from lottery revenues. Of course, when we talk in terms of revenues, period, it's one thing, but when we talk in terms of lottery revenues, it becomes something very, very special to this side of the House.

**Point of Order
Relevance**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy is rising on a point of order.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. Provincial Treasurer gave acceptance of this motion to the House on behalf of the Minister of Education. I question the relevancy coming from the opposite side. Hopefully we could get on with this afternoon's business of the House.

MR. WICKMAN: Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much hearing that the Provincial Treasurer is going to comply with that request and is going to provide that information. Hopefully when the next motion for a return comes forward, the same procedure is followed and after that again and again and again and that eventually this government will accept the fact that freedom of information is a normal part of government business. On that note I will conclude.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MRS. BLACK: A ruling on Standing Order 23(b), please.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the question of order is probably academic now because the hon. member has concluded his remarks.

Debate Continued

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater wishes to participate.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I know they've been sitting over there with bated breath, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't help, though, because the Treasurer – you know, sometimes a government complains about the criticism they get, but they opened the door to let the tigers in, and I'm going to be one of them.

**Speaker's Ruling
Relevance**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Before the hon. member commences, the Chair hopes the hon. member is going to be addressing Motion 172 and not engaging in further debate about behaviour of hon. members on either side of the House during another stage of our processes.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Oh, yes. I was, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to give them a chance to settle into their seats and be ready.

Debate Continued

See, what's wrong here is the lotteries, the question of lottery money used to help out what they call poor boards. Now, one of the things about it, Mr. Speaker, and it causes a great deal of concern to anybody that's running education: education of our youth is something that's a duty. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: In anticipation of the hon. Deputy Government House Leader's point, the Chair is also wondering how these comments are relevant to the issue, the question before the House, as to whether or not it should accept this motion for a return, which apparently is being accepted by the government.

MR. N. TAYLOR: But, Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the Treasurer in accepting it put a proviso in there explaining why they use the system. He's on record now because of saying the system they use. I just wanted to get on the record that the system of using lottery moneys on an arbitrary basis to finance something as important as our children's education has to be a very retrograde step. It's also, well, I guess you might say it . . .

**Point of Order
Relevance**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy is rising on a point of order.

MRS. BLACK: Again, Mr. Speaker, I must ask that you rule on relevancy, please. We're trying to get on with Motions for Returns and the business of the House today, not to go into a long debate on who said what and when, et cetera. We've put forward the government's position, and certainly the question at hand is whether the government accepts the motion or does not.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, on this question the Chair does not like to unduly limit debate. The particular question before the House is whether this motion should be accepted or rejected. It does not deal with anything the government is doing in the future. This motion for a return deals with something that was done in the 1993-94 fiscal year, which ends in a couple of weeks, and is based on a budget that was passed at our last session. The Chair really doesn't feel very much time should be spent reflecting on what was done by the Assembly previously with regard to the spending of lottery money.

The hon. Member for Redwater.

Debate Continued

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the Treasurer was the one that introduced the idea of commenting on the side. I'd think when the government opens the debate, whoever moves a motion, whatever they say in the motion probably has to be answered. I know if you could have read his mind, you could have probably stopped him. I've been in this House for years; I know how unrewarding that effort is, so I don't blame you. I thought I'd bring across the point that using lotteries to finance education is a very bad system indeed.

They were complaining about the noise. The other thing: the Treasurer complained about even having to answer the question, that people were bothering him. Well, as a student of the classics, you will be quite aware that the Greeks said the opposition was there to create friction. Friction creates heat. Heat creates light. The Minister of Energy should know that. When you get light, the public has the light to be able to use their

reasoning. So friction is a normal, healthy thing. Whether they know it or not, the universe is unfolding as it should, not as they would want it to be.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre to close debate.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To close debate on Motion for a Return 172, I am pleased that the government has seen fit to provide this information, which some would have expected to have already been filed in the Legislature or in the Legislature Library. Mr. Speaker, I know it would be inappropriate for me to go back over the years to when the hon. Treasurer was minister and describe the history of the equity problem and how we got to the situation where we had to dip into lottery funds to do it, so I won't comment on that. And I know it's not proper to comment on a member's absence – I won't do that – but I do hope the hon. Treasurer does read *Hansard* because I have one suggestion. To quote somebody much more eloquent than I after encouraging all members to support this: if the hon. Treasurer can't stand the heat, perhaps he should get out of the kitchen.

3:00

MR. SPEAKER: The question before the Assembly is the acceptance of Motion for a Return 172 as proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Centre.

[Motion carried]

CLERK: Motion 173, Mr. Collingwood.

MR. HENRY: We heard some noes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the Chair regrets to say that the next motion was called before three members rose.

Provincial Parks Contracts

M173. Moved by Mr. Bruseker on behalf of Mr. Collingwood that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all contracts between the government and operators of services at Crimson Lake and Pigeon Lake provincial parks that were current in 1993.

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have circulated an amendment to motion 173 as proposed by the Member for Sherwood Park. I would like to read it into the record and then give a brief explanation as to why I am making a suggestion for these changes. I am moving that we strike out the words

all contracts between the government and operators of services at Crimson Lake and Pigeon Lake provincial parks that were current in 1993

and that we substitute the words

all campground operator agreements between the government and campground operators for Pigeon Lake provincial park and Crimson Lake provincial park current in 1993, excluding, however, schedules or appendices outlining the operator's personal and financial information.

Now, firstly, Mr. Speaker, if I may, all the private-sector agreements we have with respect to our park campground operations are known as campground operator agreements. I want to get that on the record and make that correction so that the next

time the hon. member does have a question, he will be accurate in the description. I think it's important that all hon. members are aware of this.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I have asked in my amendment for an exclusion of personal and financial information, and I believe that's very appropriate. In terms of the kinds of information we can receive in a proposal that comes in from the private sector, there can be and often are personal résumés, financial information, and credit references. Now, anticipating a comment that might come from one of the hon. members opposite, who may want to blow this out of proportion and say, "Well, the minister is refusing to provide information that would be available under freedom of information legislation," I would like to say for the record that it is my understanding that the proposed Act, that has been before this Assembly previously, and also the suggestions that have been put in the report from the legislative committee, that is made up of membership from both the government side and the Liberal opposition side, would exclude this kind of information, again on very appropriate grounds.

Accordingly, I would move that the amendments be approved, and then certainly on behalf of the government thereafter, assuming they are approved, I would move acceptance of the motion for a return as amended.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. To the minister. The amendment excludes "schedules or appendices outlining the operator's personal and financial information," and I certainly agree. Personal and financial information should not be there. But if it's associated with bonding or a damage deposit, that should be in there. I think a liability deposit is an important thing. Would that necessarily be excluded? I'm not interested in knowing how much the person or their spouse has in a bank account, but I think we're interested in knowing whether the operator is either bonded or insured in some way for damages or liabilities.

MR. SPEAKER: Before the minister replies, is there anybody . . . He would close debate on the amendment.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have just a couple of comments. First of all, I'd like to thank the minister for his intention to accept this as amended once we get to that stage. Certainly I have no difficulty with the exclusion of personal information. I think that's a reasonable proposal that the minister is making. A question I do have, though, with respect to the amendment deals with the last two words that talk about financial information. Of course, part of what we would be interested in obtaining are the payments from the government to the campground operators. That is part of the information we are looking for. I agree that personal information certainly need not be provided in the House. I wonder if the minister could address that issue when he closes debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Anything further on the amendment before the minister closes debate?

The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. EVANS: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, dealing with Redwater's concerns, in appropriate circumstances, of course, their may be a bonding requirement. If that is a requirement, that would be included in the campground operator

agreement, and as a result of that, the hon. members opposite would certainly come to understand that that indeed is the case. I have no problem whatsoever in stating that a bonding requirement would be in a standard campground operation agreement.

Now, with respect to the question from Calgary-North West, again, any of the fees that are paid pursuant to a campground operator agreement are in the agreement. Obviously the agreement wouldn't be enforceable between the parties unless those kinds of terms were in the agreement. So yes, indeed, that kind of information will be made known. What we are talking about in the amendment is very personal information about the operator or the potential operator. I think it is appropriate to exclude that kind of information, because quite frankly it's nobody's business, other than the operator who presents that information, to show financial viability, and we don't want to create a situation in this province where unfair advantage can be given to competition by having free and ready access to financial information that's specific to a proponent.

I think the questions that were asked are legitimate questions, and I think they are covered by certainly the intent and the wording of the amendment to the motion for a return.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. SPEAKER: On the motion as amended, anything further?

MR. BRUSEKER: On behalf of the Member for Sherwood Park, I'd like to express our thanks to the minister for accepting this motion for a return.

[Motion as amended carried]

Employment Standards

M177. Moved by Mr. Beniuk on behalf of Ms Leibovici that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any documents regarding employment standards resulting from the government symposiums on employment standards and the employee review of the Employment Standards Code, as referred to by the hon. Mrs. McCoy on May 15, 1992, *Hansard*, page 954.

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

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with open government and a government that is willing to provide what we can, and on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Labour, the government will accept Motion 177.

[Motion carried]

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

3:10 **Bill 206**
School Amendment Act, 1994

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

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Prior to debating Bill 206, I'd like to beg leave from the Assembly to file two motions of endorsement and support, one from the Calgary public teachers' association and the second from the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, and to thank the organizations –

in particular, Mrs. Lynn Nishimura, who is the president of the Calgary public teachers, and as well, Debbie Poffenroth, who is the president of the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta – for their support and interest in the Bill. I'll file these then. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill 206, we know that youth violence in schools has become a major concern for Albertans. Every day more kids are showing up with weapons, and they are using them to intimidate, frighten, and be confrontational. I regard the issue of school violence to be urgent. Given the increase in public concern, the fear that many students feel in schools, and the trend toward increased school violence, I believe it is important to amend the School Act in a way that will foster safer and more secure schools in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, violence that occurs in schools is the exception and not the rule, and I want to make it very clear that the majority of Alberta's young people, in spite of the pressure of school, are there for the purposes of learning and becoming educated. Bill 206 addresses a portion of the school population that is relatively small, yet their profile is disproportionately large.

Bill 206, the School Amendment Act, 1994, became a reality because students, parents, and educators are publicly expressing concern for their safety in schools. Educational institutions are cornerstones of our society, and they symbolize all that Albertans hold to be important. In spite of this, more and more a widening set of indicators is being reported that relates to school violence.

The hon. Minister of Education organized an invitational forum on student conduct and violence in schools in November of 1993, and the proceedings document was filed in this Assembly on the 16th of February of this year. The amendments recommended in Bill 206, Mr. Speaker, mirror many of the recommendations that were identified for actions in the proceedings document as well as in the revised policy 6001 school discipline passed by the Calgary board of education in January of this year. There is a need to define a list of actions that are not acceptable and will not be tolerated by our school systems. Educators and parents across the province have recognized this need and demand action. Bill 206 outlines a range of behaviour that is not appropriate in Alberta schools.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in relation to a motion before this House that related to violence in families and communities, we heard a wide range of definitions, and the list I'm going to provide today is in relation to that which occurs in schools. Included in this list are the possession of weapons, threats, obscene or abusive language, assault, vandalism, harassment whether it's personal or sexual, extortion, and gang related activity. All these areas must be addressed if violence in our school systems is to be prevented.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to discuss the two major principles that are addressed in Bill 206. The amendment is simple and reasonable. First, Alberta schools must be safe and positive learning environments. Children and youth cannot achieve their full potential if they live with the fear of violence or harassment when they go to school. Some students live literally in fear of other students and are terrorized. There is common support for the opinion that fear itself contributes to the increased potential for violence. Recent studies suggest that between 40 and 50 percent – that's half – of high school students surveyed did not feel safe at some time over the last year in their school. Many young persons bring weapons to school in order to protect themselves, and one study suggested that over one-third of students bring weapons to school for protection. This can lead to a harmful and dangerous student environment.

Mr. Speaker, there is denial by many. That's one of the first steps when you discuss this area of school violence. Partly that

denial can be overcome, but people can backtrack and deny the phase once again.

It should be stated that school violence crosses all geographic, socioeconomic, and rural and urban boundaries. No child is any less or more immune to violence anywhere in this province. School violence can be perpetrated by a student, a group of students, or young trespassers. The victims are most often other students but can include teachers and other school authorities. There are really three victims, Mr. Speaker, when you speak of school violence. The first is the person who has been assaulted or injured; secondly, the safe school; and finally, the perpetrator themselves. The acts include a wide range of behaviour patterns from the typical school bully to intimidation directed at individual students or teachers.

Violence has changed. In the past it was one on one; now it's group attacks and bullying. The acts quickly move from angry feelings to angry behaviour. We've seen a number of incidents in all schools that quickly escalate. It is no longer if it's going to happen but when.

Unfortunately, a new form of violence is also becoming more popular. This is something which is known as swarming. We've had incidents reported publicly and through the media where students intimidate other students into handing over their personal belongings such as Walkmen, calculators, and clothing. In fact, a group of girls bullied and intimidated a fellow student into surrendering her clothing, leaving her in a public place with nothing to wear but her underclothes. I understand they did that because they did not like the way she'd looked at them in the hallway that day. Imagine if that were your daughter. This is something that's realistic and true and has actually happened in a school setting.

In a similar incident, a carload of young males beat another male student simply because they wanted his leather jacket. The student was injured because he did not want to give up his jacket, something he had worked hard for. It should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the kids in the car were very affluent and could have easily afforded their own jackets.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, the threat of violence in our schools came home to my community rather dramatically. A young teenage girl, whom I've known since the day she was born, was assaulted and badly injured by a group of more than 20 students. This unprovoked attack, I believe, was an example of swarming and was not an isolated incident. The young student did not immediately report the violence, unfortunate evidence that many violent acts do not in fact get reported. The student was frightened, embarrassed, and feared that she would be hurt further if she complained. Reports suggest that many of these incidents, possibly as many as 80 percent, do not get reported for these very same reasons. This incident was eventually reported, and sadly the students continued to attend the school along with the victim. Later these same students assaulted yet another young teenager.

The amendments to the School Act in Bill 206 address the problem of a student code of conduct by underlining the basic principle that it is reprehensible to use violence to solve problems. I believe the School Act must be changed to coexist with this principle. Standards across this province must become more explicit and allow for a consistent approach to this problem. Victims have to go back to the same schools. They have to go down the same hallways. It is frightening and very intimidating. These children live in fear. They have been assaulted or injured, yet in some cases their attackers remain in the same schools. Parents and students alike need to see policies put into place that do not tolerate violence. Students that are behaving inappropriately must be dealt with so that the victims do not have to suffer

twice, once in the attack and again each day the attacker remains in the same school.

3:20

Mr. Speaker, violence is clearly not just a school problem. One only has to watch television a short time to see that it is very pervasive in our society. Many researchers believe that violence in schools is a reflection of the violence in society. Violence permeates almost every area of our lives and is particularly glorified by the entertainment and news media in movies, theatre, videos, and print. Many experts suggest that certain factors may contribute to school violence. These factors range from the acceptance of violence as a means of resolving differences, clashes due to cultural differences, feelings of isolation and alienation, low self-esteem, too much television, and poor and sometimes abusive parenting. Any policy with regard to school violence must recognize this fact.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to discuss recommendations of the Invitational Forum on Student Conduct and Violence in Schools which recognized the need for policies like those in Bill 206. The forum consisted of educators, parents, students, and representatives of different communities who were very interested in the need to formulate policy with regard to student conduct. Many of the recommendations that were made by the committee seem to support the need for a specific policy focusing on violence in schools. The report stated on numerous occasions that school policies and rules of student behaviour may not be clearly understood. The report saw a need for students and parents to know exactly what actions are inappropriate and the consequences of engaging in such activity.

The report, however, goes much further than just analyzing a need for consequences, which brings me to the second issue that Bill 206 addresses: the need to assist students involved in violence and other unacceptable activities to be counseled in order to reinstate them in the school environment without placing other students at risk. This counseling can be informal with the guidance counselor, the school resource officer, or educators the student has developed a trust relationship with, or it could be more formal, Mr. Speaker, using community facilities such as AADAC, Alberta mental health, and social service agencies. This collaboration and co-operation between schools and the community will benefit everyone, including the perpetrator.

Mr. Speaker, counseling for many students is their last chance. Simply suspending or expelling students does not deal with the cause of the behaviour; rather, it moves the student out into the street for the police to deal with. Expulsion is an aggressive sanction, whereas counseling and rehabilitation of the student deal with the issues, problems, and causes. Bill 206 assists schools in setting limits and acts as a guideline to assist in the changing of behaviour. Bill 206 enhances the ability of school boards to ensure that students and parents get the assistance they need to deal with the problem.

When I was developing this Bill, educators at the Calgary board of education told me they needed the ability to ensure that students get the help they need. By requiring that counseling be undertaken before the student is reinstated, it was felt that the school boards would have that ability.

Mr. Speaker, schools are expected to provide a nurturing learning environment, to teach social and moral values and protect students. Parental responsibility is essential and cannot be understated or taken for granted. The goals and objectives of the schools and their educators can only be realized with the full support and co-operation of the parents. Parents need to realize that a close working relationship with local school educators will enrich the well-being of their children.

Tragically in 1992, Mr. Speaker, Alberta experienced its first homicide on school property. The second day of this year's school term saw several shots fired at students in front of the school door. Although one bullet went through the pant leg of a student, fortunately no one was killed. Four weeks ago on a Friday afternoon a student victim was stabbed by a fellow student. The child was hospitalized for injuries to his liver. Finally, as recently as two weeks ago, six shots were fired across the street from a high school, presumably by students over an unresolved dispute.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, that these incidents are happening frequently, and the potential for serious injury or death is very real. We can deny the problem exists or we can be proactive in passing legislation that will assist educators and enhance the safety of schools.

Mr. Speaker, I urge every member of the Assembly to support Bill 206.

Thank you.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for bringing forward Bill 206. I want to make several comments, specifically to section 3 of the Bill. The member's Bill talks about conditions of reinstatement after expulsion or suspension. It also talks about the board being able to require a student to undergo certain rehabilitation programs or treatment programs. I just want to raise some questions with the member that perhaps we can deal with more specifically if and when we get to committee stage on the Bill. I think with some of the moves that are happening in education generally and with some of the roles being ill-defined between education, child welfare, social services, and health care, we need to clearly define if a board is going to have the ability to say that certain kinds of treatment or rehabilitation are a condition of re-entering the school system. Then who's going to pay for that needs to be clear. Is the board responsible for paying for that? Is child welfare? Does the Solicitor General's department have a mandate, or are the parents required to pay for that? I think we need to be clear about that down the road.

We also need to be able to address the situation and I would hope the boards would be able to address the situation where perhaps the young offender – if I could put it in those terms – or the young person who is deemed to be requiring treatment or rehabilitation by the school division is willing to undergo that but perhaps the parents are not. We all know those kind of situations. If the board says that the individual and his family must go for family counseling and the father or the mother say absolutely no way or say yes and don't do it, does the young person get penalized? We all know that in some instances of violence the perpetrator at one point has been the victim. We need to also look at treatment strategies, and I know the hon. member knows that quite well.

As well, we need to review the appeal mechanisms. We have the departmental/ministerial review appeal mechanism. If we're going to have the school board being able to prescribe a particular treatment – we've run into problems with that with the courts, where the courts have prescribed specific treatment and there's been disagreement between the courts and social services with regard to whether one program equals another program. Perhaps we need to look at: should there be an independent review to determine whether this program is the same as that one or whether in fact the child has met the conditions the board has set out? The board in Calgary might name the Canadiana program and perhaps that program doesn't have space or the parents or social services

or whoever is not willing to pay for it. We've run into that problem. I know the hon. member knows the kinds of situations I'm talking about.

I want to also speak about some of the violent situations. I think the hon. member alluded to this and talked very specifically about violence in our society. I've said in this House before and I'll say again and again and again that until we adopt a very determined philosophy that violence under any circumstances will not be tolerated by our society, we are going to continue to have violence. That can be applied to violence against children, violence against women, violence against elderly individuals, and I've seen all of that in my constituency. I know the hon. member knows very well the kinds of situations I'm talking about, and we need to send a very clear message out.

I think it's fair to say that this Bill isn't perfect, and perhaps there's some fine-tuning that we need to do with it. We talk about section 4 of the Bill, talking about harassment. It made me think of a situation not long ago in my own riding where a father came to me, who's a longtime friend of mine, and said: "Michael, what do I do? My daughter's in junior high, and she's getting harassed on the playground and at school. There's a particular group who follows her around calling her a Jew whore." There was no touching. There was no physical violence. This father, who happens to be a lawyer, went to the school to talk to the teachers, went to the school to talk to the principal. They tried various things, and finally the principal says: "I don't know. Try the courts." That shouldn't be tolerated, and this section that the member has put in her Bill will allow the school division more leverage in terms of dealing with that kind of situation, which I know very well the hon. member would not want to be tolerated, and I hope no member in this Assembly would tolerate it.

3:30

We all know with regard to violence and with regard to criminal activity associated with violence that we need to do better in our society, and the message that I've given before and will give again to the hon. Justice minister is that one of the principles of rearing children is that if we're going to teach children the difference between right and wrong, the consequences of a child's behaviour, whether that child be two years old or 15 years old or 16 years old, must be as close to the event as possible. We have a backup, a long backup, in our youth court system, and I'm aware of situations – again I could speak for a family friend whose child unfortunately became a young offender. The family was very concerned, because by the time the consequence, by the time the person got through the court system and actually got a court date and actually got sentenced, which he deserved for committing the crime that he did, over a year had passed and the young offender had offended two or three more times. If we're able to find a way to back that up and still ensure due process but ensure in the criminal justice system that the consequence of an action is closer to that action, then we have a chance, especially for first-time offenders, of being able to intervene, to give a very strong message that that behaviour is not acceptable, that there are consequences to that behaviour, and that you need to learn from this experience. We might have an impact.

We also need to deal with the broader issues – and I know the hon. member knows this – the issue of poverty and its effect on criminal activity and on violence and its effect on dropouts in the schools, which is associated.

I don't want to belabour those points, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to point out that several behaviours that can be dealt with without expulsions or without suspensions are in fact listed here. I know the hon. member means this to be an enabling piece of

legislation, allowing school boards some more flexibility with regard to how they deal with young people in their system who are violent or who are perpetrators of vandalism. Certainly I'm sure I would be disappointed if at one time in an adolescent's life they did not defy authority. It's part of being an adolescent. I know the member doesn't mean that a child who initially defies authority in the junior high system will be automatically suspended or expelled, and I understand that, but this does allow the school board the flexibility in extreme circumstances for that small minority that the member did talk about to deal with that situation. We have to recognize that our school systems are for every child in our province, in our country. There's always a struggle for schools to achieve the balance between ensuring that every child who wants to be there is there, yet at the same time ensuring that that child being there does not prevent the other children from having a quality education. I know very well that the member has knowledge of that.

Again, I would hope that we would ensure that at committee stage of the Bill we do talk about whether the current appeal process through the department and the ministerial reviews is adequate to deal with some of the issues. We wouldn't want "involvement in, or association with, criminal gang activity," which is 2(1), to be misused and to be used in a situation where a young person is walking to school with somebody who the principal knows belongs to a gang and all of a sudden the student is expelled. I would hope that no principals and no school officials would ever misuse this section of the School Act to harass or to inappropriately deal with a young person.

Just to guard against that, we have to make sure that there is a form of appeal for the young person, because certainly there are situations where, "involvement in, or association with, criminal gang activity," you would want the principal or the school division to have the authority to remove that child from the school, because we don't want gang violence in our schools. It can't be tolerated. I believe it's a good provision. I'm just again pointing to the need to ensure, as we go through this Bill, that the appeal procedures in the School Act are adequate enough to ensure that it's not misused for individuals, and I don't think the hon. member in principle would disagree with that statement.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on about the various problems we have with violence in our schools and violence in our communities, but I know that a number of other members want to speak to this Bill. I just want to sum up by saying that I don't believe this Bill is perfect. I don't believe it addresses all the issues. I think there are lots of things that the government can do and we as legislators can do to address the issues of violence that perhaps are not covered in this Bill. I do want to commend the hon. member for bringing the issue forward, for providing, I think, some very constructive direction in terms of where we need to go, and indicate that we do operate on a free vote, certainly in our caucus, on private members' Bills. As the member representing Edmonton-Centre I certainly will be rising in support of this Bill.

Thank you.

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

MR. HERARD: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to rise in support of Bill 206. The debate on Bill 206 is centred around one overriding concern: we all want to ensure that our schools are safe and positive environments in which our children can acquire the skills they need to succeed in this world. I'm pleased that we have the opportunity to take the initiative in this important area of concern, and I want to congratulate the hon. member and colleague from Calgary-Cross for bringing forth this

private member's Bill that addresses those long-standing concerns that we've had in this province and a Bill that I know we can all support.

Bill 206 is about allowing schools and school boards to maintain the learning environment as fits their particular situations. Bill 206 is about equipping schools and school boards with the tools to do that job. Bill 206 is about creating a standard guideline for conduct that applies to all students in this province. Bill 206 is about ensuring that every student in Alberta can go to school in an environment free of violence and intolerance. Mr. Speaker, Bill 206 is about enhancing the peace of mind for parents, teachers, and students.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should preface our discussions with a little background information regarding the School Act. The School Act defines the code of conduct in simple terms. Section 7 of the current Act requires that students "reasonably comply with the following code of conduct." They must:

- (a) be diligent in pursuing [their] studies;
- (b) attend school regularly and punctually;
- (c) co-operate fully with [the educators who provide] . . . programs and other services;
- (d) comply with the rules of the school;
- (e) account to [their] teachers for [their] conduct;
- (f) respect the rights of others.

Sounds just like every normal good Alberta student; doesn't it?

Mr. Speaker, this code of conduct is very weak on specifics. Section 7 does not provide any information regarding what behaviour is considered inappropriate in our schools. There is no mention of violence in any form. Sadly, our society is confronted with many forms of violence, whether it's in our homes, on television, in the news, or in some of those barbaric video games that are now produced for children. Violence is very pervasive in our society. To think that our schools are not affected by this problem is more than a little naive. As legislators we have the responsibility to ensure that the educators of this province have the tools to deal with violence in their schools. The current legislation is silent on the matter, and this will change.

3:40

The current legislation is set out in positive language. The School Act tells students what they must do to comply with the code of conduct. However, there's no mention of what would constitute a breach of the code of conduct. While one does not want to preach to students with a list of thou shalt nots, it's important to set limits on student behaviour. Students need to know not only what is expected of them but what would be considered inappropriate as well. They need to know what is unacceptable behaviour in today's society and in today's terms.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 206 expands the code of conduct to incorporate a substantial list of potential breaches of conduct. This list, though not exhaustive, covers as wide a range of inappropriate behaviour as possible. Possession of weapons and drugs, harassment, theft, assault, gang-related or other criminal activity, vandalism are all examples of behaviour that cannot be tolerated in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, in the current system individual school boards are left to deal with student discipline on their own. While I don't dispute their right and responsibility to deal with student behaviour, a provincial standard is important. Students should have a standard of behaviour available to them that applies to every student in the province. They need to know that certain patterns of behaviour will not be tolerated in any school in Alberta.

Students who learn how to drive and pass their driver's licence soon learn that there are rules for the safe operation of motor vehicles and that there are consequences for breaking these rules.

Similarly, we need to have rules of conduct in schools and appropriate consequences for breaking those rules.

Mr. Speaker, a provincial code of conduct will alleviate concern amongst parents and children that they are being treated fairly across this province. Parents who are concerned about the safety of their children can look to the legislation as to the forms of behaviour which are inappropriate. They can demand that action be taken if students fail to live up to these expectations.

However, Mr. Speaker, individual boards may have specific concerns or policies that are not necessarily addressed in this Bill. Bill 206 is designed to augment, not override, the policy decisions made by individual boards. This government stands by its decision to place the decision-making at the local level. These amendments to the School Act will serve as a basis upon which school boards across the province can build effective discipline policies in consultation with parent groups, schools, communities, and other stakeholders. Bill 206 acts as a starting point, a foundation from which policies can be formed to fit the needs of different school boards in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to discuss some of the important issues mentioned in the report of the Invitational Forum on Student Conduct and Violence in Schools. This forum was held on November 19 and 20 of last year. The forum brought together a variety of groups and individuals including parents, educators, and students so that they could share information and viewpoints. One of the key issues brought forward at the forum was with regard to school policies and rules. Participants felt that school policies and rules of student behaviour may not be clearly understood by students, parents, or the community. Bill 206 will deal with this problem by setting forth a clear guideline covering behaviour that is considered inappropriate in our schools. The report also acknowledges the need for students to understand that their actions will have consequences. Bill 206 clearly states that serious breaches of conduct may result in suspension or expulsion.

Another key issue touched on in the report is the need for cooperation and consultation. Parents and students as well as educators and the community should be involved in the formation of school board policies. This Bill acts as a foundation to be built on by the school boards. The list of offences is meant to be an extensive but not exhaustive guideline.

School boards still have the final decision on whether or not to suspend or expel students. School board policy must be made in concert with the communities to reflect community concerns. Mr. Speaker, Bill 206 sets a guideline, a starting point so that schools can arrive at consistent policies while recognizing the need to accommodate the needs of individual communities.

Mr. Speaker, I support Bill 206 because educators want and need the tools to create and maintain positive learning environments for our children. Bill 206 will accomplish this goal, and I urge all members of the Assembly to vote in support of this Bill. Thank you.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: He can't find his speech.

DR. MASSEY: I found it.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the member opposite for bringing forth a Bill that addresses a concern shared not only by parents but by the community at large. Unfortunately, I question how effective the proposed legislation will be as it attempts to catalogue misdemeanours and set appropriate sanctions. It sets us down a

path that once started has no ending. You cannot make enough rules. You cannot establish enough penalties to curb those who act violently in our schools. That we need strong, clear codes of conduct for student behaviour cannot be argued. For most of the student body those codes will be enough. What many of us find distressing is that in schools where violence has occurred, those codes are most often in place. Instead of more rules, what is needed is a long, hard look at the underlying reasons why individuals choose to act violently and the environment in which those acts take place.

Now, just what is this situation? As citizens we have done much to create conditions under which violence in schools can take place. For example, at a time in their lives when peer pressure is greatest and family influence most difficult to exert, we send our teens out of their home neighbourhoods, away from their neighbourhood schools, away from their home communities to large centralized high schools. In the name of cost savings, in the name of efficiencies we have placed them in these large school settings where they are, for the most part, personally known by no one. They're not known by a teacher. They're not known by a counsellor. They're not known by a principal. They're not known by members of the community in which the high school is located. They become anonymous. They're identified more often by a computer ID than by their own name. Think of the impact on those young people: the freedom to do, to say as you please or, and most importantly, as your peers please under such conditions. No neighbours to reprimand you. No neighbours to talk to your parents about your out-of-school behaviour. No teachers who know you intimately enough to speak to mom and dad on a regular basis about your actions. No principal capable of monitoring the personal behaviour of 1,200-plus students.

So we have, Mr. Speaker, in pursuing some laudable educational goals, created some rather unintended consequences. In the interest of specialization, in the interest of making available a wider program choice for students, in the interest of providing a wider range of resources for students, we have also created a setting where they can be free of personal responsibility and community pressure.

3:50

We are also responsible for developing a community mind-set, if you would, a way of thinking about schools, a way of thinking about schooling. We are responsible for creating a way of thinking about teachers and instruction. I think the current government has played a large part in shaping the current view of schools that is less than positive. One suspects, if you are suspicious, I suppose, that it is a deliberate strategy undertaken in support of the current government's budget slashing. Whatever the reason, there seems to have been a concentrated effort to build an image of public education that is, to say the least, unflattering. Plans for so-called restructuring education seem to have been predicated on destroying public confidence in the system as it now exists.

Let me offer some examples. For years in this province the government, teachers, and parents have sought to improve the quality of instruction in Alberta schools. It's been an ongoing concentrated effort by hundreds and perhaps thousands of Albertans. Part of this effort has been aimed at putting better prepared teachers in our classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, the advances have been very impressive. Great strides have been made. Over a 30-year period we moved from elementary teachers with primarily one year of training to a point where all of these teachers now hold at least one university degree. One of the brave new acts of the newly elected Lougheed

government was to mandate that all teachers be required to hold a bachelor's degree, and it was risky business in those days. There was great fear of a teacher shortage and the impact of moving to at least a minimal bachelor's degree for teachers and what that kind of impact would have on classrooms. The fears weren't realized, and I think our students are better for that move.

Over the years local boards have worked with their teachers, and they've also worked with ratepayers, and they've worked hard to maintain ratepayer support. We've reached a point in time where teachers' salaries, if not rich, are at least respectable enough that we can expect them to make teaching their sole occupation. As an aside, Mr. Speaker, we should remember that during the boom years teachers were scoffed at for staying in their classrooms and earning ordinary salaries while their graduates fled to places like the oil patch for much more generous compensation. Now when times are tough, they are vilified for earning those same reasonable salaries.

With government support teachers have gathered in an association that pursues both economic and professional goals. That association is still evolving, but it has moved us from the days when a teacher was fired for rapping the knuckles of a board chairman's son or hired on the promise that the insurance purchases would be made from the board secretary's firm; or as was the case in World War II when a board promised the war effort a percentage of the teachers' salaries, neglecting to tell the teachers until after the commitment was made; or as was the case of one rural school district, cutting salaries from \$450 a year to \$300 a year from one September to the next without consulting teachers.

Over the years there has been a general consensus that our children have deserved our best teachers, and considerable sums of money and effort have been spent in pursuing that goal. But let's look at recent events. A Bill is introduced in the Legislature that would destroy the ATA, portraying it as a greedy union. You just heard the comment from across the aisle. Local school boards are abolished, ultimately forcing provincial bargaining and again weakening the position of the Teachers' Association. School administrators are singled out and attacked as being overpaid and responsible for the high cost of education. Teacher attendance is incorrectly taken at a convention and the opportunity seized upon to attack teacher integrity. Kindergarten funding is cut in half and the value of kindergarten denigrated and undermined. Teachers are chastised and used as scapegoats when they won't readily agree with the government's cost-cutting measures.

Unfortunately, it's to these same teachers and to these same administrators that we send our children and our adolescents the next morning. We then act with amazement, we act with outrage, and we act with consternation when our children and our adolescents refuse to respect those same teachers and administrators. When those same students feel that the school environment is not to be respected, is it any wonder, given the climate being established by the government, that some students feel it is quite acceptable to violate peers and teachers? If the province's leaders have no confidence in teachers and schools, why should some misguided youth? Turning to the Legislature and attempting to legislate a new list of rules for teachers and administrators that they don't respect, to be put in place and effectively undermine the system, seems somewhat cynical.

I would have been more persuaded had that same government spoken out in strong support of public education. Strong schools flourish in a climate of respect and a climate of trust. Threats of increased testing to control teachers and as a measure of their performance does not build strong schools. Demand for wage rollbacks does nothing to enhance professional confidence. Failing to work with teachers to come up with better solutions to

current problems does little to improve governance. The government should pause. They should pause and reflect on their contribution to the current problem. Just what have they done to set expectations that might deter potential disruptors?

I would be much more persuaded that this Bill was a worthwhile Bill, Mr. Speaker, had that same government seen fit to support our Bill calling for a task force to look into the future of education in the province, a task force that could have taken a serious measured look at our schools, a group that could have sought underlying causes and develop serious solutions. Viewed from this perspective, Bill 206 can be seen as no more than a superficial reaction that I am afraid will do little to solve the underlying problem.

Thank you.

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

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Young people in our society are confronted by violence at virtually every corner. The media glorifies and sensationalizes some forms of violence on virtually every broadcast. The movies that make money are those that have the largest number of violent acts. The video games that are hustled on our children portray acts almost too gruesome to watch. Many young people are subject to or witness violence regularly in their own homes. Is it really any surprise that young people today seem to solve their problems with violence?

Mr. Speaker, I mention that the media is extremely responsible for the massive amounts of violence that our students have to deal with. Even at the Olympics, where our athletes gave us so much to be proud of, the overriding incident that the media fed upon was about violence, not about the Olympics. When we should have been enjoying the sports, the competition, and the national pride, the media showed us how the use of violence can be the answer to one's problems. I think we all know the incident to which I am referring. How can our youth not take from this that with violence you get what you want?

Mr. Speaker, it is also a sad reality that family violence is a well-recognized root of violence in schools. Many estimate that over 1 million women a year are battered in Canada alone. As witnesses and as victims themselves children suffer greatly from family violence. These circumstances lead children to believe that violence is acceptable and a useful means of resolving conflict.

Mr. Speaker, violence surrounds and has invaded our schools. Some reports suggest that more than 40 percent of students live in fear of some sort of violence all year long. You would be hard pressed to find a student that has neither been a victim or has a friend that has been a victim. The time has come for legislators to act in a positive fashion to address the problem, part of which involves making the schools safer and more positive learning experiences.

Mr. Speaker, on May 11, 1992, a young boy was in the yard of his junior high school. With little reason and with no thought for the child's life, another youth stabbed the young boy in the chest. The child, who was only 13 years old, was found by some other children and bled to death on the way to the hospital. The incident did not happen during a riot in Los Angeles or over drugs in the projects of Detroit. Ryan Garrioch was stabbed to death at Thomas B. Riley junior high in northwest Calgary. There is little evidence that supports anything other than the fact that Ryan was murdered because he was a little overweight and a little bit of a loner, hardly reason to die. Many say that this was an isolated and unpredictable event that is a devastating tragedy for the entire community.

4:00

However, I do not think it was unpredictable, as some might think. Mr. Speaker, at least one educator warned several years before the tragedy that violence, television, and/or parental neglect would ultimately lead to serious injury or death in our schools. Other experts have said that differences are increasingly being resolved through violence. As a mother of two children who attend school, I cannot even imagine receiving a call and the anguish, shock, and anger that Stu and Margaret Garrioch must have felt.

Mr. Speaker, Stu and Margaret Garrioch sent me a letter which I would like to file with the House. They express their support for the principles expressed in this Bill. In their words,

Education can only be gained in a safe and secure environment. Schools should be a safe place for our children to gain knowledge and understanding of others, in order to become upstanding Albertans and Canadians . . . Five percent seem to be there to rule, by violent acts, or some other disruptive means, causing some Educational Decay for all.

The Garriochs understand that these violent children may not be thrown aside. If I may quote the Garriochs again, "These young people need to learn that everyone is equal and deserves respect." Bill 206 brings a little hope to the Garriochs and to Ryan's memory that these things can be achieved and make the future a little brighter. Many school incidents like the death of this well-loved little boy are being viewed as a wave of change crashing into the classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, that was two years ago. This year alone there have been beatings and stabbings on numerous occasions in both Edmonton and Calgary. In some cases we have been very lucky not to lose another life. The situation has not gotten any better. We must act now to change the way that schools treat violence in our schools, and we must change the way that our society handles violence in the media and in their homes.

The school boards of this province have already begun to fashion their own policies with regards to student conduct. Under the current Act it is their responsibility to do so. Bill 206 will not impair that ability; it will enhance it. The goal of this legislation is to be a foundation on which student conduct policies can be built with the co-operation of the entire community. In fact, the recommendations brought forth at the forum on student conduct and violence in schools also encouraged co-operation and consultation between students, parents, educators, and the community in developing standards of behaviour that suit the school boards' particular situations.

Mr. Speaker, the forum, which was attended by a cross section of parents, students, and educators, also indicated the need for policies that are fair, clear, consistent, and apply to everyone. The report indicated on numerous occasions that standards of behaviour should be equally applied throughout the province. The consequences of these offences should also be clearly set out and applied.

Bill 206 clearly accomplishes this task. A clear set of offences are listed under section 7(3), a list of serious breaches of conduct that cover a wide range of behaviour patterns. It is also clear that this list is not exhaustive and serves only as a basis for school boards to work from. Obviously, it is the school boards with the co-operation of the community that should make the final decision regarding this policy.

School boards in consultation with schools make the decisions on how to discipline individual students. This will not change. School boards have, however, recognized the need for legislation. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote the background to the resolution passed unanimously by the Calgary board of

education. The motion put forth by the chair of the board confirms the endorsement and support for Bill 206. It reads:

Bill 206 will serve as a basis upon which school boards across the province can build effective discipline policies in consultation with parent groups, school communities and other stakeholders.

The motion went on to say that the Bill "would serve to strengthen our recently revised school discipline policy."

This is not the only positive response that we have received. Principals and superintendents from other schools have indicated their support. The government is delivering the decision-making process back to the local level. Bill 206 enhances the ability of local school boards to effectively deal with the problem of violence in their schools.

Mr. Speaker, while I support Bill 206, I feel it needs more consideration before proceeding. Therefore, I move that the motion for second reading be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting:

Bill 206, School Amendment Act, 1994, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day 10 months hence.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Has this motion been circulated? [interjections] Well, perhaps we'll get the circulation started.

Would the pages please get those things distributed to all hon. members as soon as possible?

Is the Assembly ready to deal with the amendment?

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the amendment. I had been listening, I thought, attentively to the mover. I listened to her comments, and I'm still not able to connect the proposed amendment in front of us with the thesis of her presentation. I'm even more puzzled because it's quite inconsistent with the very eloquent, I thought, and effective commentary from the mover of the original motion.

I'm speaking against the amendment because I think, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that came out very loudly yesterday when we talked about my motion on family and community violence was the need for action now. The theme was heard time and time again that we've had enough studies, we've had enough commentary, and we've had enough analysis and think tanks and workshops. When problems have been identified, what Albertans expect and what they want from their elected members is action. I think to support the amendment is simply another example to Albertans of MLAs with timidity and fearfulness and an unwillingness to address concerns and problems.

As a Calgary MLA I take most seriously and am most impressed with the support – and I compliment the Member for Calgary-Cross for filing the evidence of support – from the Calgary board of education. I have a lot of respect for the people on the Calgary board. I have a lot of respect for the administration. We have the finest public school system and the largest one in Canada, I think, in the Calgary public board. When the leaders of the Calgary system come forward and support this initiative by the Member for Calgary-Cross, I think it would behoove all members of this Assembly, whether they're one of the 20 Calgary MLAs or not, to listen to that sort of request and match the request with action and responsiveness.

4:10

I'm actually quite astonished that this amendment would come in. I know the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek to be somebody who has expressed in this House publicly and privately impatience with government inaction, impatience with legislative log jams, impatience with paralysis of talk, yet the amendment provides

surely just those things. It provides a kind of paralysis. It means that instead of dealing with an issue that has been defined to some extent – we've got some strategies, and I think we should be looking at dealing with that. This to me is abdicating responsibility; this amendment is ducking the issue. This amendment means that we're shrugging our shoulders collectively and saying that as a Chamber we're not listening to Albertans, as a Chamber we're not prepared to show some action or match action with rhetoric.

If we were to support this particular amendment, what would we be saying? What kind of a signal would we be sending to Albertans? What kind of a signal would we be sending to parents that want to send their children to a school and have confidence that their children are going to be safe? What kind of a message do we send to educators? You know, my colleague had spoken just a little while ago about the fact that the role of teachers has been undermined by actions of government, that the role of teachers has been shown disdain and disrespect rather than honouring these essential people. Well, these very same people, many of them, see that Bill 206 is a constructive, responsive way of trying to make professional educators able to do the job that we as parents and we as legislators expect. So what kind of a message? If we were to support this particular amendment, aren't we in effect saying to those parents, to those educators that either we're not listening or, what's even worse, hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, that we're listening and we don't care?

Well, I'd hate to think that any member in this Chamber would be prepared to have their name associated with an initiative that says that we don't listen or we don't care. I think everybody in this Chamber wants to see some action on these kinds of initiatives. I know the Member for Calgary-Cross – it's a custom from her time on Calgary city council. Municipal councils don't spend nearly so much time talking and usually more time moving to action. I assume that when she brought this thing in today in good faith, that was because she was responding to a need and she wanted to see action, not in 10 months' time. I have to ask the member: what's going to happen? What intervening events are going to happen in 10 months that are going to make it more appropriate, more timely to deal with it 10 months hence than to deal with it now? All I see is the criticisms I've cited before. I don't see us being able to deal with the issue any more constructively. What is there in Bill 206 that has to mature as an issue and then come back in 10 months' time? I looked through Bill 206. It talks about giving educators and school boards and school superintendents some extra arrows in their quiver. Well, nothing is going to change to make that a wiser or a less wise decision 10 months hence.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I think when I look at section 2 in Bill 206, as somebody that has some concern with civil liberties kinds of issues, I might quibble with my friend from Calgary-Cross in terms of to what extent we want obscene, abusive language necessarily to be a basis for expulsion. I know the mover of the original Bill to be a reasonable, pragmatic person. I think what in effect she is encouraging us to do is repose some measure of confidence in school superintendents, some measure of trust and confidence in school administrators to not abuse these provisions, and I understand that.

As I say, in committee I would hope that there might be some way of tightening up the wording, that there might be some way of ensuring that the focus continues to be children that are disrupting the education experience for other children. I think some of the wording – for example, "association with criminal

gang activity" – may be problematic. I think the words in section 2 – that is, the amendment to section 7(3)(g) – "active contact with alcohol" is a curious phraseology. I'm not quite sure what "active contact with alcohol" means. I expect there are some science labs that use alcohol for experiments and so on, and I don't know what active contact is. If it means somebody being drunk on school premises and intoxicated, well, maybe that's what we should say in plain language, hon. member.

If the amendment were to carry, we'd not be allowing our school administrators and our school principals to have that extra kind of power. They've told us they need it, and I for one am anxious to see that they get it not 10 months from now but now, right now.

All members have had a chance to look at the Bill. It's pretty simple. You know, I say to my friend from Calgary-Fish Creek: this is not a complicated piece of legislation; this isn't a surprise. In fact, the member who moved the amendment cited conferences that have gone on one, two years ago specifically dealing with these things. So what new is going to happen in 10 months that we don't already know now?

You know, when I look at Bill 206, I'm in mind of the Alberta school trustees' convention that I had the opportunity to attend. This would be, I think, Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 1993. At that time there was a panel that talked about violence in schools. In fact, one of the speakers was Sgt. Lanny Fritz of the Calgary Police Service. Much of the focus of those speakers at the Alberta school trustees' convention was on the fact that we have a problem in schools; it's important that the problem not be blown out of proportion, but it's important to recognize that we need a whole arsenal of tools to be able to deal with it. One of them is Bill 206, but only one. I didn't hear the mover of Bill 206 reject the notion that there are other things required. We've heard some of them from my colleague from Edmonton-Centre, who talked about some of the other needs and some of the other kinds of tools we have to be able to give school boards and school superintendents. I don't think members disagree with that.

I think it's important when we look at this that we look at things such as the model in London, Ontario, that I spoke of the other day when we were talking on the motion on family and community violence. In London, Ontario, they've had a pilot project that's been in five schools now for almost two years, and the focus is: how do you make those schools safer? What they've done through peer governance is they've involved students in the school and they've encouraged those students to come up with strategies to deal with violence and abusive behaviour in the school. Mr. Speaker, it works. If this amendment were to carry, it would be 10 months before we'd be able to see those kinds of strategies married to this kind of power. So that's another reason why I encourage all members to not only vote but to speak against this amendment, because it just seems, I say with respect, so wrongheaded.

4:20

I think we've seen other things that can be done. If Bill 206 were to carry instead of being deferred 10 months, if we were to move on it in a responsive way today, maybe what we'd find, Mr. Speaker, is that it would be an impetus to other things we could do in our schools. Maybe we could take the kind of initiative that we've seen in Calgary. The School Watch program was brought into John G. Diefenbaker high school and, I'm proud to say, another initiative pioneered in the city of Calgary. It works. It can be demonstrated that it made that school a safer place for the children who attended John G. Diefenbaker high school. Maybe if we moved on Bill 206 now and rejected any delaying motion,

we'd be able to use this as an impetus to that kind of initiative. Why can't we have a School Watch program in every school, in every high school in this province?

You know, some people may say, "Well, that's a big commitment; limited school resources, funds, and so on." But this really puts us to the test, Mr. Speaker, in terms of whether we are hypocrites or we mean what we say. If we're hypocritical, we say the words, we vote the easy things that don't mean a commitment of resources, and then we go away patting ourselves on the back collectively and saying what tremendous leadership we're showing the people of Alberta. Well, on the other hand, there's a more meaningful approach where we say: "There are some real concerns here. We're going to respond to them with action. We're going to clothe educators, we're going to clothe school administrators with the kinds of resources and the kind of power they need." I'm persuaded on that score by my colleague from Calgary-Cross. I'm persuaded by some of the other people that have spoken to this particular Bill. So all of those things would be frustrated.

You know, if we don't proceed with Bill 206, it means another reason why we don't deal with immigrant youth. Mr. Speaker, the city of Calgary is the third busiest port of entry for Asian immigrants in all of Canada. The third largest port of entry: an astonishing statistic. Many of those new immigrants reside in my constituency or at least often live there for a period of time before they go to other parts of Calgary or other parts of the province. I think one of the things we find is that there are unique problems with immigrant youth, unique challenges that those children face. Maybe if Bill 206 were to be passed now . . . I see the Minister of Municipal Affairs is anxious to speak, hopefully in opposition to the hoist amendment, so I'll move to conclude my remarks in a briefer fashion than I would otherwise.

I'm looking forward to what he's going to say, because I've always taken tremendous instruction from the distinguished Minister of Municipal Affairs. From his past time when he was Solicitor General, I found, Mr. Speaker, that this was a man who had strong views on making communities safer. He and I may not have agreed on many of those things, but I respected the fact that at least he was consistent, even when I wished he were flexible. I'm sure that he's got much to add to this debate, and I'm sure he's got much he would be able to contribute. I'm hopeful that a man of action such as the Minister of Municipal Affairs . . .

Point of Order Relevance

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order, hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

DR. WEST: Relevancy is what I'm asking about in reference to this Bill. I don't know what relevance it has to go on and on and on in some fashion about another member of the House. Just get on with it, end it, and stay on topic, because this incessant berating of somebody else's character or direction in this Assembly isn't needed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I'm sorry; the Chair didn't sense the berating part of it. I thought the hon. member was trying rather tenuously to tie in his anticipation of your talking to this hoist motion. As I say, somewhat tenuously, but I didn't catch the berating part of it.

In any event, hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, could you, as you've alluded to several times, conclude your remarks on the hoist?

Debate Continued

MR. DICKSON: Well, I'm happy to, but it's an important issue, and as long as the bell hasn't gone off, I wanted to be able to fully explain the reasons why I'm so strongly opposed to the hoist amendment. I think the other point I'd make, Mr. Speaker, is that you're quite right. I thought I had been damning with faint praise the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and I do so only because he's such an active participant every time I speak that I'm simply anxious that he be able to join the debate in a way that all members, not just those of us within earshot, can appreciate.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at the reasons – and I still haven't heard any cogent explanation in terms of why Bill 206 should be put on the shelf for 10 months – I'm reminded of other initiatives that might be spurred and augmented if we were to pass Bill 206, maybe in a revised, amended form. If we were to pass this, maybe what we would see would be the kind of leadership that we're looking for on a nationwide basis. We have a National Crime Prevention Council that's been set up by Mr. Rock, the new federal Justice Minister. From speaking with him and his office, it's clear that they're interested in a myriad of strategies to deal with violence in schools as well as other parts of Canadian society. Bill 206 is the sort of thing I'd like to see passed so I can fire this off, send this off to the hon. Minister of Justice and invite him to see if this is a useful kind of addition when we're looking at amending the Young Offenders Act, a Bill that many members in this Assembly have concern with. So once again the hoist amendment prevents all of those things happening. I've only enumerated a few of the things that come readily to mind, but there may be some others that come before I'm cut off by the bell or other objections.

Just to come back again, Mr. Speaker, we're looking for action. Albertans are looking for action. I don't want to disappoint them. I think we shouldn't even consider a hoist amendment like this unless there are clear and compelling reasons. We haven't heard any such clear and compelling reasons, and until we do, I'm going to urge every member in this Chamber to reject this hoist amendment, to deal with this on its merits. If you don't like the motion, let's deal with it on its merits here and at the next stage. I encourage people to support Bill 206. Let's stop talking and see some action on this.

Thank you very much.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in favour of the hoist amendment, and I would also just like to indicate, before time is up and it is necessary to adjourn debate, that I certainly . . . [interjection] So we are not at the deadline?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. JONSON: Oh, he ran out of time. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill 206, I certainly commend the Member for Calgary-Cross for bringing a Bill of this type forward and also the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek and any others that have spoken for providing their input into this particular debate.

I think a few things need to be said by way of background to this particular Bill. Some months ago it was recognized by the Minister of Education and many others on the government side of this Assembly that there was a growing concern in this province over the fact that there should be, and every effort should be made to maintain, safe and secure environments in our schools, and a focus was placed, a priority was placed on that particular matter.

An invitational conference was held last year, which I think was a very productive one. There were two or three messages that came out of that conference that I would like to just focus on here. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, the full report of that conference has been produced and distributed widely across the province. First of all, it was indicated that across this province there are many initiatives that are being taken in terms of the operation of schools and school systems which are working in a positive manner with respect to this overall problem. We need to disseminate that information. We need to share it across the province. I think this to some degree was accomplished by the initial conference, and we will be having a follow-up conference this year.

4:30

Secondly, a very important message was that the really effective initiative in terms of dealing with the whole set of problems which surround this Bill and this overall problem area, the really key thing is that the school community, working with the school and the teachers and the students and the administration of the school, need to form a common front to adopt a code of conduct, to enforce it consistently, and to support it in the school and outside of the school. This is the most effective, I think, recommendation or direction that came out of that conference and many other discussions that have been held on this particular topic.

The third thing that I'd like to mention though, Mr. Speaker, is that at the conference, as the Member for Calgary-Cross knows, the invitation was extended to school boards across this province to put forward any recommendations they might have for changing legislation or changing regulations. We wanted to see people putting forth recommendations that they regard as important and workable if they were put into effect, and we wanted that coming forward from the school level, from the community level, from the overall school jurisdiction level. In Alberta Education we have been considering some alternatives here, but to date I've only had one general recommendation come forward from a school board in terms of legislation. I would like to once again commend the Member for Calgary-Cross for actually looking into this further and taking the initiative to bring forward Bill 206.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I speak in favour of the hoist amendment because there is a problem with the Bill in terms of the way it is laid out. This problem is relative to its interrelationship with the Criminal Code, and I think the Member for Calgary-Buffalo might have acknowledged that, he being a person of legal background, a little more prominently than he did in his remarks. When we are passing legislation, it is important to pass legislation such as this in terms of its general message, but the legislation we pass in this Assembly must be workable. It must not, if at all possible, be in conflict with other pieces of legislation, be they provincial or federal. Otherwise, I think it is doing a disservice to the legislative process and to the topic being dealt with.

The previous speaker on this particular Bill indicated that a hoist of 10 months was not an appropriate motion, but I think it is, Mr. Speaker, in this context. Amendments to the School Act will be introduced later this session. It is the intention to introduce amendments which would address the very important initiative that the Member for Calgary-Cross has put forward in Bill 206 and also address, as I said, what would have to be, to this Bill, rather extensive amendments to deal with that problem of possible conflict with the Criminal Code of Canada.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of the general thrust of the Bill, and I certainly will be making every effort to follow up on this. I think that certainly credit for the initiative with respect to later amendments to the School Act should rest with the private member who put forward the Bill.

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

MRS. HEWES: Sorry. Did I pre-empt? Mr. Speaker, I'll make it brief so the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert can have some comments as well.

I'm very puzzled by all of this discussion and even more puzzled by some of the comments from the minister. I appreciate his input, Mr. Speaker, but surely Bills from private members on both sides of the House are vetted through Parliamentary Counsel and we make sure that they are in conformity. Certainly if there were some problem, the Bill could have been withdrawn and we all would have understood. I see no reason whatsoever that it can't move on, hopefully – because I intend to support it – to the second stage, when we can have the benefits of debate in committee and make the amendments that the Minister of Education has suggested to us or even delete certain sections if they are offensive.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that when I first read this Bill, I wasn't sure whether I was going to support it. I had some ambivalence about it because I wasn't sure that it really accomplished what the intent was designed for, but now I want to support it, and I don't want to see it hoisted.

I was also further persuaded to support it by the Member for Calgary-Cross's circulation earlier of testimonials in support that she read into the record and tabled with us today from Peggy Valentine of the Calgary board, from personnel, from teachers, from the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, from the parents of one youngster who was tragically injured in a school yard, and from others. So I was compelled, then, to support this Bill, because I felt we have to do whatever we can to get into action, and I see no reason to delay that.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday – was it yesterday we had some discussion about family violence? – I think a number of members spoke about the excellent reports in both the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary about safer cities and about violence in our cities, in our communities, and surely that extends to violence in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that really brought me forward to the point where I felt I must do something and why I feel today that I am committed to seeing this Bill pass on to the next stage was a visit to a school. It was an elementary school, and the students were talking to me about things that they believed I should be doing. I said, "Well, what are the things that you think confront us in schools today that I as a representative should be doing and dealing with?" These very young students said, "Violence in school." It was their first and immediate request to me, so we began to talk that day about violence in schools and where it comes from. They related to me many of the things that the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek mentioned: the violence on TV, the violence in video games. They even talked about things that happen at home, and we talked about what to do about it. What should we do about it? These youngsters, one of them a young boy, said, "We should have a policeman in the school with a metal detector." So I said to the students, "Well, would that help?" Some of them said, "Yes," and some of them said, "Oh, not really." So we talked about where the violence came from and how it erupts when you can't manage your anger or your aggressive behaviour, when you can't manage those feelings and those emotions that crop up in every one of us. These very young students then began to talk to me about the things that they thought we should do.

It was interesting, Mr. Speaker, to read a document that I have here, and I'll be glad to circulate it. It's from the Canadian

Education Association study, *Violence in the Schools: Programs and Policies for Prevention*. One of the paragraphs in it says, and I quote:

Many students are aware of violence-related issues, and have practice in skills foreign to their parents. Family violence, media violence and issues of sexism and racism are familiar terrain to students exposed to violence prevention programs. Conflict resolution, mediation and anger management skills are practised by increasing numbers of students to counter bullying and fighting.

That's exactly what I talked about with these elementary school students. We talked about the importance of their taking control of their own school. They related to me the many ways that they felt they could use their own skills in peer groups, in the school yard, in the classroom to deal with youngsters who could not control their anger.

So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members here that we aren't just talking about teachers and parents and administrators and school boards. We're talking about elementary school students who are ready, willing, able, and prepared and have a desire to work in this, have a desire to work in their school system. Why would we then in this House, with that kind of knowledge from youngsters, hesitate? Why would we want to set aside further discussion on this most important issue?

4:40

There are a number of things that I believe we can talk about that would aid and that I've been concerned have been reduced, things such as the family and community support services, income supports, community policing. Those are the things that I would want to talk about if we get to the Bill and that I think we could perhaps massage a little further in possible amendments or in how we make application of this Bill.

Having said that and with the information that we've had here today, I think it would be reprehensible for us simply to delay further. I think we owe our communities, we owe the students in our schools the obligation of dealing with what they have told me. I feel personally responsible here, Mr. Speaker. They have told me that they want to deal with this. They've told me that we need to get on with it.

Just to reinforce, the minister has correctly stated that there could be some problems. I say that we can solve those. I say that those problems are not impossible to solve. I hope that there is no other agenda at work here, that there's nothing else I should know about that has not appeared or been spoken to. So I take it at face value exactly what the difficulties are, but I don't see any reason why we can't resolve those, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, if we can get to that in the committee stage of the Bill. I think our communities expect us to deal with this. As I say, I had some hesitation to begin with, but I thank the Member for Calgary-Cross for putting the matter before us. I hope that members will agree to continue our discussion and debate and support our communities to get on with this most important activity.

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

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would just like to add my support to the hoist of this Bill and the delaying of it. Certainly it is an issue that is brought forth that's dear to our hearts. I'm sure that each and every one of us doesn't want to see violence anywhere in the school, and we want to have it so that we can discipline our children in the school.

I believe, though, that when we put a Bill in place, our private members' Bills especially, they must go through a difficult scrutiny before they are put through this House. If this Bill is impacting some of the other departments and certainly if it's

impacting on our Criminal Code and we put it in so that it's not proper, then we have much more trouble. The minister explained to us pretty well the impact that it would have. If we can have a little bit more time with that Bill and then put it in and put it in right and review a few more of the things, then I really believe that it's an important Bill to this Assembly.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was sitting here pleased that members had generally spoken in favour of Bill 206, though I saw some flaws in it that I hoped we could address in committee, and then suddenly the hoist came up. So I sat back and thought, well, obviously something's happened that now we want to hoist this Bill. In fairness, I think what the minister wants to do – I'm hoping that he wants to do – is give it some teeth, because talk is cheap, although I appreciate the member opposite proposing this and we all have great concerns about violence in schools. We need strong guidelines, but more than guidelines we need affirmative action. So that's why, I'm assuming, this hoist is in place. I'm not totally in favour of it, because I thought we could address it.

You know, when you look at violence right now – we used to have communities. In some places we still do, but in larger cities we lose it. If you went to the church or the corner store or the neighbour's house, everybody knew everybody else's children. They talked about their problems. If you stole something from the store, by golly, your mother heard about it. Things were addressed because the community cared and families cared, and we all worked together. Regretfully, that doesn't happen all the time, especially in bigger cities, so we have kids who are lost in the shuffle. I think that's often where our problems arise from. Because of this, more and more pressures are put on schools to address those needs that used to be addressed in the family and in the community. So we're asking schools to do much more than they used to have to do. Now they have to deal with guidance and discipline that used to be dealt with at home.

What our government needs to do rather than just give more guidelines is put money into the system. Maybe that's why this Bill has been hoisted, because in order to follow through with some of these recommendations which say that the government may ask parents to go for counseling or may ask children to go for counseling, you've got to have money. We have kids who don't have the money to get counseling.

I'm thinking about a student I had last year. He never came on time. His homework was never done. He kind of just existed in school, and he stole once in a while. So I phoned home, and I said, "What's going on here?" What I heard was, "Well, I don't know and I don't care, and I don't know where he is." So the burden of raising this child comes on the school. Later I found out from his friends that he'd slept in a culvert. Now, do you think this kid cares about homework? No. When they've slept in a culvert, they're hungry and they really don't care what that teacher has assigned.

What we have to do is put money into our school systems, especially at the counseling level, more than ever before. Guidelines are good, but guidelines are cheap, because it's easy to write out some rules. You've got to be able to help these kids get through it, and not just by punishment. We've got to look at what the root of the problem is here and deal with it.

I'd like to say that I appreciate this member bringing forth the Bill. We need more of a vision in dealing with the violence in

schools. I realize the hoist is probably because it would end up being a commitment of money. We can't keep bashing the system or bashing teachers, which I've heard from members opposite. I resent it; I'm sick of it. Local boards are losing their autonomy and their control and can no longer hire their own superintendents, kindergarten funding has been cut in half, teachers' integrity has been questioned, and then these same teachers are asked to deal with these children and to handle all these violent cases. How are they going to have respect when some members opposite in here question their integrity?

I do think the present code of conduct is in some ways adequate if the Minister of Education would support the decisions made at the school board level most of the time, because they've looked at it, they've lived with those children. In turn, those school boards appreciate the decisions that the principal and the teachers have made about certain students.

While I do endorse this Bill and I question the hoist – I figured it out though. It would take money to enforce this Bill, and it's something we're not willing to have: a great vision of counseling and the need for more counseling at the school level. So regretfully, though the Bill falls short of dealing with all the violence in schools, I still question the hoist.

Thank you.

4:50

DR. WEST: I'd like to make a few comments on Bill 206. I support the hoist because we do need some sober second thought on this and concentration on many of the good points brought up by all members of the Assembly but concentrating on what is the real issue at stake here; that is, all of society and its social direction.

Calgary-Buffalo made reference to me that when I was Solicitor General, I came across as somebody who believed in law and order and that he didn't always agree with me, but he agreed in principle that we should have a stronger society as far as law and order. Well, entrenched in this Bill is not just the school system but the very heart of our society, as we have moved slowly away in our social engineering over the years to allowance of all types of behaviour in our citizens without consequence.

When I was a boy being raised, and many people in this Assembly, we tested the system. I call it the wall. We knew what the consequences were if we went this far. If we went too far in the classroom – we were all filled with character, and we all tested it by expressing ourselves. Everybody reaches out when they're growing up. We'd flick things and do things on the school buses and that sort of thing, but we knew where the wall was. And when the disciplinarian hit and said, "You're off the bus; you go see the principal, and we're going to talk to your parents," a chill came down my back. I said: "First of all, the last thing I want you to do is talk to my parent. I don't want Dad to ever know that I was throwing orange peels in the classroom." As we went through that, they even had corporal punishment. But in the social engineering this is terrible; this makes victims out of children. Some of the kindest things ever done to me while I was in the school system was the discipline.

There is such a thing as discipline and not punishment. Punishment should be left for when you go across the wall. When you breach that and you get out into the courtyard of the school and you get into the weapons they talk about, bullying teachers – absolutely insane that that should happen, because at that point in time the wall should come down on top of your head. That's why the Young Offenders Act is part of the problem in the schools today, because we're abrogating our responsibility to self-discipline. We have no consequences for our actions, and 5,085

lawyers plus legislation like the Young Offenders Act and others will reinforce in our young people that there are no consequences.

Now, section 19(9) of this Bill is why I say sober second thought. Look at section 19(9) – and you said: let's spend more money on counseling. Nobody can go into a classroom and counsel a student to get results, then leave at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and send that child back to a home and parents in a society that has no consequence itself and have any results.

MRS. SOETAERT: That's not true.

DR. WEST: That is true, because in the young offenders centres that I was at, they were known as the swinging doors. One thing that the young people get to know: if I can get into the young offenders centre and tell them that I'm a victim – and I read the résumés of hundreds of young people that were going through the young offenders centres. They would go in and right away they knew: "If I tell them I'm a victim, that my parents have abused me, that I can't live in that environment, then I'll get counseling. They'll send me to the psychologists, the psychiatrists, and I'll get involved in a whole bunch of programs. If I tell them I'm sorry, I've drug abused, and I drink too much, when I'm 15 they'll get me in that program." And they'll concentrate on those programs rather than the discipline or the punishment that that individual should be receiving. As a result, after they get in there and they spend so much time, they get good behaviour, they get a third of their sentence, they're back out on the street, and they go like this to the system.

MRS. SOETAERT: No, Steve.

DR. WEST: The individual keeps saying: no, no, no.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Can we address our remarks through the Chair. If an hon. member has already spoken, then perhaps they could speak at some later time. I'm not calling anyone in particular . . . [interjections]

Point of Order Questioning a Member

MR. SPEAKER: You have a point of order?

MRS. SOETAERT: Can I just ask a question, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert is asking if she could ask the speaker, Mr. Minister . . .

DR. WEST: No, Mr. Speaker. No.

Debate Continued

DR. WEST: I've listened to the member speak on this Bill, and I said I supported most of the things a lot of people there intend, but I'm saying you can't buy your way out of a social problem that's deeper than what is involved in the classroom. Spending more of the taxpayers' dollars to correct a system that has nothing to do with the classroom – it has something to do with what's going on at home or on the street and in our society in general. Trying to correct it in the classroom is wrong. We've got to start right back – if my friend here is a good lawyer, he likely will say: "Well, we shouldn't go too far on the Young Offenders Act, because I think it's a good Act. It just needs to be tightened up a little bit." Well, it's useless when you apply all of our legislation today against a Liberal thing called the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There is no consequence for your actions in this

society, and you can challenge anybody under our legislation and say, "My rights have been abused." Pretty soon the students, the very thing this is about, will challenge this Bill under the Charter of Rights and find that this breaches their rights. [interjection] What is that?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I was endeavouring to, without interrupting you – but now that you've invited me to interrupt you, I am taking that as tenuous as others have been on certain topics, this is explaining your position on the amendment, which is the hoist?

DR. WEST: Exactly, Mr. Speaker, and I have made reference to the fact of the sober second thought, that the hoist should be moved out, let us look at this, and we've got the amendments to the School Act coming forward. All I was trying to say is that there's nothing wrong with the intent of this Bill, absolutely not, but you better have another look at it to see how you're going to approach the depth of the problem that isn't in the classroom. Get rid of these dangerous students out of the classroom. That's fine. What do you do with them when you've got them outside? I guess I've made my point, but I'm saying let's go back in time and let's correct what we're doing. Let's give consequences for our actions.

You know, when I was Solicitor General – and this doesn't approach it here – I said: you know, we have problems with them touching cars, vandalizing cars, high-speed chases, stealing vehicles. When I was a boy, that was called grand theft larceny. You didn't touch vehicles because that was big time. Now the Young Offenders Act and the things going on here . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. minister, the Chair apologizes. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford is next on my list, and I thought he was letting me know that that's what it is, but I'm a little slow today.

You're now wanting a point of order?

MR. WICKMAN: No, not a point of order. I just want him to finish; that's all.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, I'm not sure that waving your arm will effect that.

Sorry, hon. minister. You may continue. I thought he was on a point of order.

DR. WEST: Well, I was getting at the point that many years ago if you touched a vehicle, it was an ultimate thing. You knew what the consequence could be, because you were taught when you were raised, when you were this high: don't do that sort of thing. Now, I know – and I was exposed to young teenagers that have been in court three to four times for car abuse and theft and vandalism – they go back out on the street almost saying, "They can't touch me because I'm 16, and they can't mention my name, and you know, it's just a little misdemeanour." Well, I think that tied into this is that when you abuse your right to education or you threaten or abuse other things or you're involved with cars, put an absolute consequence. I would say that if you're in a high-speed chase and you're 16 years old with a car that you have stolen, you don't drive your car until you're 25 years old. Make an absolute detail to it. Absolute. None of this, "Well, if you go in and promise not to do it again and it's your first offence, it's okay." What we need is some absolute law brought back in so the consequence is written up and you can't get away from it if you do the act.

5:00

You can blame your parents, you can blame your teacher, you can blame anybody you want, but that doesn't make an excuse for reaching out in a society and beginning anarchy. That's what we're talking here. In our classrooms and many of our schools there's a form of anarchy taking place, and it's being done through the student. I agree with them that the teachers shouldn't be held responsible for correcting that attitude in those children. They must have help from the law, from the families, and from our legislation that starts coming down hard on the individual for their actions rather than trying to blame somebody else, blaming the parents. You always blame somebody else and let the action go unpunished.

So I'm going to end there, but the hoist on this is wise. Let's have a look at it. I don't think the solution is raising taxes on taxpayers so that they can pay for counseling for somebody else's problems. Mr. Speaker, I'm having a very large difficulty in continuing because the chatter over here is incessant. They accuse me once in a while of saying something, but I usually make one very clever remark. They just continually chatter on, and it's very hard to debate.

Thank you.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. How much time do I have?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members are entitled to speak for 20 minutes. However, the time will run out halfway through that.

MR. WICKMAN: So we shut down at 5:10? It'd be two hours?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Two hours. As we calculate it, it will end at 5:15.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to keep my comments then very, very short, because the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly and the Member for Edmonton-Mayfield still want to speak. Speaking to the hoist amendment that is in front of us, the hoist amendment of course delays any action on the Bill for a period of time. In this particular case, I believe it's meant to hoist it until the next regular session, which takes us into 1995. Now, if there are concerns with the Bill, if there is a need to refine it, if there is a need to link it to other departments, as some of the comments have indicated – and there have been many, many good comments on the Bill coming from both sides of the House – the opportunity to first attempt to do that is at committee stage, where actual amendments can be brought forward, and based on those amendments, then, a determination is made as to whether the Bill should go from there on to third reading.

What this does here on the second reading, Mr. Speaker, to remind all members, is simply the opportunity as to whether there is agreement in principle with the thrust of the Bill. Every comment I've heard has indicated that there is general agreement with the thrust of the Bill, which is basically to ensure that there are some more meaningful methods of dealing with specific instances, disruptions and such, that do occur by a small number, by a small percentage within the school system.

So I speak very, very much against the hoist and very much in favour of second reading to advance it to committee stage, where

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would now move that we call it 5:30 and that we adjourn to reconvene at 8 p.m. and that when we do so, we reconvene in Committee of Supply to consider the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader has moved that we now adjourn. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:26 p.m.]