

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, May 4, 1994**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 94/05/04

[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. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition from people from the St. Albert and Redwater constituencies asking that the Sturgeon general hospital, which they contributed so much to, be included in the health area north of Edmonton rather than in with Edmonton. I'm filing today 516 signatures. This brings the total to 5,122. Maybe the government will listen.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce a petition that urges the government to take the Sturgeon general hospital out of the Edmonton region. This is signed by 1,556 people in St. Albert and surrounding areas, and this brings the total to 6,678 names that we hope will be heard.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting a petition from 1,593 residents from St. Albert and surrounding area, bringing the total to 8,271 who have signed the petition, who urge the government

to reconsider the inclusion of the Sturgeon General Hospital within the Edmonton Region and to allow the Sturgeon General Hospital to serve its customers from the city of St. Albert, the MD of Sturgeon, the Town of Morinville, the Village of Legal, the Alexander Reserve, the Counties of Athabasca, Barrhead, Lac Ste. Anne, Parkland and Westlock.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if I could now ask the Clerk to read the petition that I tabled on the 20th of April that deals with the Alberta Children's hospital and that it be received, sir.

CLERK:

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the government to maintain the Alberta Children's Hospital on its current site and as it currently exists as a full service pediatric health care facility.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, may I request that the petition I presented on the 13th of April regarding the continuation of the Misericordia hospital now be read and received.

CLERK:

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

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your leave I wish to have the petition that I tabled on April 19 in regards to the Alberta drug benefit list now read and received.

CLERK:

Wherefore, the undersigned urge the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to rescind the changes implemented by the Alberta Health Drug Benefit List in the Alberta Family and Social Services Drug Benefit Supplement, effective November 1, 1993, and thereby reduce the expenditures imposed by this change.

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask that the petition I tabled on April 18 signed by the seniors of Bateman Manor be now read and received.

Thank you.

CLERK:

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the Government not to alter the level of support for all benefits for Alberta's seniors until seniors have been consulted and have agreed to any revisions.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would ask that the petition I presented on April 19 requesting that the Grey Nuns hospital remain an active treatment centre now be read and received.

CLERK:

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

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented on April 19 with regard to keeping the Grey Nuns hospital open as an active care centre now be read and received.

CLERK:

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

head: **Introduction of Bills**

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

Bill 30

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Amendment Act, 1994

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 30, the Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Amendment Act, 1994. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of the Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and its regulations came into force and effect in September of 1993. Since coming into effect, a number of amendments to the Act have been proposed by Alberta Environmental Protection, by other government departments, by multi stakeholder groups, and by Legislative Counsel. Amendments to the Act will be implemented in a way that I believe will deal with a number of concerns that have been raised, firstly, by expanding the scope of the environmental protection and enhancement fund; secondly, by streamlining our procedures for stakeholders under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act; thirdly, by addressing legal issues arising since the coming into force and effect of the Act; and fourthly, to provide administrative clarity throughout the Act. The majority of these amendments that are contained in Bill 30 fall within the first two categories. The Act itself supports the government's three-year business plan and implements our overall deregulation initiative.

[Leave granted; Bill 30 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with my undertaking given to this House yesterday, I am pleased to table with the Assembly today four copies of the Alberta Seniors Benefit Review Panel Report, and as has become my practice, individuals wishing to obtain a copy of this report may do so at my office.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table copies of a paper entitled Economic and Social Restructuring: The New Zealand Experience, written by Joanna Beresford. [interjection] The government members may find it funny, but the paper describes the situation in New Zealand after 10 years of economic reform.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to file with the Assembly today 15 letters from Albertans from across the province expressing their opposition to the inclusion of sexual orientation in the human rights protection Act and also requesting the government to appeal the recent Justice Anne Russell ruling on the Delwin Vriend case.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. ROSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly nine of our corrections officers from around the province. These are people who are charged with the care and control of prisoners and ensure public safety, which we all thank them for. They are seated in the members' gallery. They're all executive members of local 3 of AUPE. There's Dan MacLennan, vice-president; Gerry LeBlanc from Grande Cache; Linda Laminman from Red Deer; Brent Keller from the Calgary Young Offender Centre; Earl Thompson from Fort Saskatchewan; Mike Boyle from the Edmonton Remand Centre; Gil Laflamme from

Peace River; Dale Perry from Lethbridge. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

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

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to the elected members of this Assembly a constituent of mine who just completed his term as the administrative vice-president of NAIT: Mr. Troy Shostak. Will he please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to introduce to the Assembly some 80 visitors from Whitecourt. There's a group of grade 6 students from the Percy Baxter school in Whitecourt. They're accompanied by their teachers Jim Ferguson, Michel St. Louis, Wade Newbury, parents Doreen Govenlock, Dave Yeomans, Roxanna Miller, and Jari Pesonen, and bus drivers George Ritchie and Albert Koenig. They're situated in both galleries, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure of having two introductions today. First, I would like to introduce a group of four students from the English Language Training Centre in my constituency. They've spent part of their day visiting the Legislature today and I'm sure are interested in the debate that will ensue. They are in the public gallery. I'd ask that they rise and receive the very warm welcome of this House.

My second introduction, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to members of the Assembly is Ms Joanna Beresford, who is the assistant secretary of the New Zealand Educational Institute. Ms Beresford is here in Alberta touring our province and talking to people in Alberta about the realities of what has happened in New Zealand over the last 10 years. She's accompanied by Ms Macdonald and Ms Russell from the Alberta Teachers' Association. She's in the public gallery, and I would ask that they all rise and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly Susan Zsoldos. Susan is a student at Athabasca University completing a degree program there, and she's joined us to listen to question period this afternoon. With your permission I'd ask her to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Paddle River Dam

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Albertans have now learned that Opron is just a small part of a much bigger scandal. Opron needs to be redefined, and perhaps the best way to define it is now to call it the Paddle River scam. The Premier knew that ministers were interfering with contracts. The Premier knew of a cover-up. The Premier knew it when he was first made Premier, and he knew it when he was the minister of the environment. Mr. Premier, I'd like you to tell Albertans why you did nothing – nothing – for five years to deal with these issues when you knew

as minister of the environment, and you knew because you were briefed on Opron.

**Speaker's Ruling
Parliamentary Language**

MR. SPEAKER: Before the Premier is asked to respond to the question, the Chair would remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the word "cover-up" has been ruled unparliamentary in this Chamber on many previous occasions.

**Paddle River Dam
(continued)**

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, all of those assertions are absolutely false, and if this member would make those statements outside the House – outside the House – I'll tell you I'll have him in court so darn fast. [interjections]

**Speaker's Ruling
Decorum**

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Perhaps the Assembly would like to use up about 15 minutes reconsidering their attitude and behaviour before question period begins, and then they'll be left with about half an hour to ask questions. Would they like to do that? Would hon members like to do that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there any opposition to that?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yeah.

MR. SPEAKER: There is. Well, that is likely what's going to happen, hon. members, unless you get a grip on yourselves and behave like appropriately elected representatives.

**Paddle River Dam
(continued)**

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair did not hear the answer of the hon. Premier. If he wishes to repeat it, he may. Otherwise, we'll have a supplemental question.

MR. KLEIN: I'd be glad to repeat it, Mr. Speaker. If this hon. member would make those statements outside of this Legislature Chamber, I would be very, very glad to respond to him at that time, and it would likely be through the courts, because what he did is he told an unright lie.

**Speaker's Ruling
Parliamentary Language**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. [interjections] Order please. The Chair is required to request the hon. Premier to withdraw the use of the word "lie."

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw the use of the word "lie." He told an absolute untruth.

**Paddle River Dam
(continued)**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the truth hurts, and there's lots of pain showing in the Premier today.

I want the Premier to tell Albertans why he limited in a very narrow way the review that's going to be done by somebody from Saskatchewan on this big scandal.

MR. KLEIN: Well, the only one who is, as far as I know – and again this is so typical of Liberal research. I just assumed that the hon. leader of the Liberal Party was up watching television last night, and now he's all hot and bothered and heated up because a television station said and alleged that something might or might not happen. Mr. Speaker, when I was minister of the environment, I worked quite diligently to try and reach a settlement with Opron. I wasn't made privy in any way, shape, or form to the details relative to the contract and the subcontracts and so on. There was one issue that was out there, and that was the fundamental issue that went before the courts, and that was: was there a supply of gravel where that gravel was said to be? That was the only issue that I became involved with.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, when the Premier admits on national television in front of every Canadian that he was fully briefed on this scandal, why have no heads rolled?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, there was a court action. There was a court action, and the judge ruled. The judge said in the judgment . . . [interjections]

**Speaker's Ruling
Decorum**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Premier will have the opportunity to answer the question. Hon. members, you can take as much time as you want, but the Premier's going to be heard in answer to the question. [interjections] Your opinion and your opinion as to the quality of the answer is not germane to our proceedings today.

1:50

**Paddle River Dam
(continued)**

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in the judgment there was reference made to what the judge referred to as, I believe, fraudulent behaviour. We have sent that issue to the Justice minister in Saskatchewan to achieve an independent adjudication as to the course of action this government should take relative to those very specific allegations.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Paddle River scam has disclosed that two ministers, that one and that one, interfered with contract awarding, interfered with the regular process of awarding contracts. My first question to the Premier is this: why would the Premier reward that minister and that minister by putting them back into the cabinet when he knew about that interference?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, it is his opinion that there was interference. Secondly, I wasn't made aware of any such memos. As I've said, I was addressing the much, much larger issue of trying to attain a settlement. Indeed I had numerous meetings with Opron and had numerous meetings with our own officials and with lawyers from the Justice department, but those kinds of details were not passed on to me, Mr. Speaker. Certainly they probably and obviously were in the department somewhere. As to the specifics . . . [interjections] I know where I was in 1981. I was the mayor of Calgary at that particular time. As a matter of fact, I didn't even know there was a Paddle River in the

province of Alberta. I know where it is now. I will tell you that notwithstanding what went on . . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Again the Premier will have the opportunity of completing his answer but is not going to be subjected to this barracking. It's very hard to describe the type of behaviour that is going on here, but for anybody who sits on the other side who has ever been a schoolteacher, I wonder how they would feel if something like this was going on in their classroom. If you could cast your minds back, I wonder how the schoolchildren who are in our galleries today, think . . . [interjections]

MR. CHADI: Fifty million dollars, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper . . .

MR. DECORE: I wonder how the taxpayers of Alberta . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you may rise on your feet to apologize for that outbreak.

MR. DECORE: I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: Then behave yourself.

Paddle River Dam (continued)

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I didn't finish my answer. Notwithstanding the dispute with the contractor, Opron, the simple fact is that the dam was built. It performs a magnificent job in terms of flood control on the Paddle River. We have saved literally thousands and thousands of acres of valuable farmland. The simple fact is that the dam is working. Yes, there was a lawsuit. There was a judgment. The province was awarded damages. We accept that. There was some reference made to the activities of those in the public service. We have that particular situation under review. I think that we've done everything we possibly could relative to this situation and to make sure that it was all out there in the open.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question. [interjections] Order please. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has a chance to ask a supplemental question if his so-called followers would allow him to do so.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my next question is to the minister of transportation. I'd like the minister to tell Albertans whether he still uses the policy of awarding contracts in the same way that he awarded contracts on the Paddle River scam.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, let me respond this way. When we have a contract, the contracts are let out by public tender, and no one is involved. When you have day labour and you hire these people on an hourly basis, which was done in a number of cases, then they're done with the people involved from the local level. Let me give you an example in my Department of Transportation and Utilities. We set out contracts on paving jobs across the province where we're requested to make sure that 50 percent of the contractors are local content, and we do that. That's done on

a regular basis. So on a contract we are not involved, but when you have day labour, yes, then we take local people.

MR. DECORE: Seventy-five percent on the Paddle River scam. Mr. Minister, you're not even telling the truth here today.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please reconsider the language you're using. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to recast his question, the Chair will not allow it as being totally argumentative.

MR. DECORE: I'll recast the question, Mr. Speaker.

Paddle River Dam (continued)

MR. DECORE: My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, is it the policy of your government to allow the awarding of contracts so that special, in fact great favouritism is given to certain regions, 75-25, and it's done without the contract being tendered like it's supposed to be?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. minister explained it well. This involved day labour. It had nothing to do with the primary contract. That was tendered. Indeed as I understand it now, there was quite a bit of bidding on that particular contract, and as we all know today, Opron got it and there was a dispute. It is not uncommon, and I think the hon. Deputy Premier will tell you that relative to the Oldman River dam, another very, very worthwhile project that by the way is working very successfully despite the previous protestations from the then environmental critic. It is working very, very well. Indeed part of the contract and part of the agreement for the construction of that dam was to employ as many people as possible – and I don't know what the percentage was – from the Crownsnest Pass area because of the extremely high unemployment situation there.

Independence of Judiciary

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, judges have started to adjourn cases in Alberta. Judges are hiring lawyers and threatening a lawsuit against the government. The president of the Law Society says that the Premier's comments could shut down the whole Provincial Court system, and the Premier still continues to say: if we hire them, we can fire them. My first question to the Premier, then, is this: is the Premier trying to bully – he likes bullying – Provincial Court judges so they can't speak out in the way the Queen's Bench judge spoke out on the Paddle River scam?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the only bully in this Legislative Assembly is sitting right across the way. His actions and his demeanour today clearly prove that this man is indeed a bully and an unfair one at that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wonder out loud. I'm going to wonder out loud because I can't ask the question, but I will wonder out loud, and maybe sometime down the road the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition would like to respond and tell the Alberta public if he thinks it's fair that people should be paid taxpayers' dollars and not work for it?

MR. DECORE: It's usually when you think out loud, Mr. Premier, that you get into trouble.

Mr. Premier, how many more cases have to be put on hold in the Provincial Court system before you do something, before you acknowledge that you went too far and you made a mistake?

2:00

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, far be it for me to get involved in the administration of justice. I have said on numerous occasions that I have no intention of getting involved in any way, shape, or form in the influencing of the legal system, especially the courts, but I have said on a number of occasions that I think it is entirely unfair for the taxpayers of this province to expect to pay the salary of a person who refuses to go to work.

MR. DECORE: Bravado, Mr. Premier, got you into trouble on this one. Bravado got you into trouble.

Mr. Premier, will you admit that you made a mistake and apologize before this becomes a very big problem, a crisis in Alberta?

MR. KLEIN: Apologize to whom? Apologize to the judge who apparently stayed off the job because he didn't like the pay that he was getting? No, I won't. I will still ask the question and wonder out loud and challenge the hon. member to tell all Albertans that he thinks it's proper, Mr. Speaker, for someone to earn a salary and not work for it.

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

Foreign Students' Tuition

MR. DUNFORD: Gee, Mr. Speaker, this is going to be a little anticlimactic.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development. Last Friday at the convocation at our community college the question of foreign student funding arose. I know that we're having roundtables on the draft white paper in both Edmonton and Calgary. I would want to ask the minister if there have been formal presentations regarding this topic from Lethbridge.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, the issue of foreign students and the rate of tuition they pay is of some concern among Albertans, and perhaps there's not a total understanding of exactly what does take place. Presently foreign students pay twice the tuition that Alberta students would pay. True, there is a proposal in the draft white paper that would call for a discussion on whether foreign students should pay full cost recovery for tuition when they attend a postsecondary institution in our province. That discussion is ongoing, as the hon. member indicated. Yesterday it certainly was discussed, and there were presentations put forward on it. I'm looking forward to the next two days, being Thursday and Friday, when those institutions and stakeholders from across the south half of the province will be in attendance and will put forward their position on that fairly important issue as it pertains to its impact on institutions and on foreign students.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: given that the cost for a foreign student may be upwards of \$25,000 per year, will the universities, for example, be allowed to provide bursaries or scholarships that might be able to then feed back to the student so they could attend Alberta universities?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, when the member mentions \$25,000 per year, that would certainly be in some graduate course that would be very expensive. An undergraduate course would be more in the neighbourhood of \$10,000.

To answer his question specifically, as a department or government we've never precluded the opportunity for institutions to offer bursaries or scholarships to graduate students they wanted to attract for a specific reason into one of their programs in the province. Under whatever scenario may evolve out of these discussions, we would certainly leave that opportunity available to institutions to do that. In fact, it would allow them to attract the very specific student or students that they saw would be valuable to a program in their institution.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: does your department assist the postsecondary institutions in the recruitment of foreign students?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, not in a definitive way. Certainly we encourage institutions to take whatever action they see fit that will serve the institution well and the students well and the programs well. If they find it in their best interests, with those parameters, to attract foreign students, then certainly we encourage that. But let's be clear. Foreign students go to institutions primarily because of the quality of education they can receive there. Consequently, we have a high percentage, a significant percentage – let me put it that way – of students in our graduate courses in the universities in this province. I believe they're here because of the types of institutions that are here and the programs that are available to them. Certainly it does beg the question as to what level of tuition they should pay. Out of these discussions I'm sure we'll be able to evolve some reasonable direction to take on this issue.

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

Paddle River Dam

(continued)

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Paddle River scam is much bigger than the Opron court case.

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

MR. DICKSON: There were many other records involved which were not produced as part of that lawsuit, including records of former ministers. We believe many of those records are stored today in this very building. My question is to the hon. Premier. Will the Premier confirm that all of the records related to the Paddle River scam will be kept and not destroyed?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, since there is no scam, there obviously are no records related to such a purported scam. There might be records related to a dam but not a scam. No.

MR. DICKSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's not play with words. Will the Premier confirm . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order. The hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo* has been recognized for his supplemental.

The hon. member.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier confirm that his government will pass the freedom of information law before summer?

MR. KLEIN: That was a reasonable follow-up. Yes, Mr. Speaker, if they will allow us to let that legislation flow through smoothly, I would be more than pleased to have this legislation passed by this summer.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, in that same co-operative spirit I want to ask the hon. Premier: will he commit that those sections in the freedom of information law that make it a penalty to destroy documents will be made effective as soon as the Bill is passed?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, it would be my intention to move as quickly as possible to have those sections of the Act at that time proclaimed. Certainly that would be one of the more important components, and I would like to see that section proclaimed as soon as possible. As I see it – and I think the hon. member would concur – the first order of business will be to get the commissioner in place and to get the administrative framework in place and then identify the priorities in that Act relative to the order in which they should be proclaimed.

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

2:10 **Alberta Pharmaceutical Association**

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions all go to the chairman of the Council on Professions and Occupations. Recently in a meeting in my office with a local pharmacist there was some current concern expressed about the pharmaceutical Act. In fact, it was suggested that the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association is controlled by employees of pharmacies and that their interests are represented to the detriment of pharmacy owners. Does the association only represent employees?

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

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the Professions and Occupations Bureau wants to ensure that all professionals are represented in their associations. With respect to the pharmacy association there are 2,200 members in active practice in their 700 pharmacies in the province. As a regulatory association the APA is expected to focus on standards for safe and competent practice but not on employment issues or on the business interests of pharmacy owners.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. My next question is: are pharmacy owners subject to the quasi-judicial authority of the Pharmaceutical Association, and does it have the right to discipline pharmacists? To quote from the member opposite: answer yes or no.

MR. SMITH: In fact, Mr. Speaker, that's the whole concept of having a professional organization that is self-governing. Yes, indeed they do. In fact, with the passage of a new statute there will be increased public representation on the group that will act in the public interest as well as in the regulatory interest of the pharmacist. So for the second time to his question: yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. Should the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association follow the pattern of other professions? For example, the College of Physicians and Surgeons monitors the professional side, and the AMA monitors the business side. Should it be split into two associations?

MR. SMITH: Well, Mr. Speaker, yes and no. The policy does not require separate organizations; however, functions must be functionally independent. One of the reasons the policy is not to make formal separation mandatory is financial. So, in fact, we look forward to the representation from the public members of the pharmaceutical group as well as the practitioners of the profession, and we will take the lead from them.

Ottawa Office Appointment

MR. GERMAIN: Mr. Speaker, nothing makes the Alberta blood boil more than patronage appointments, yet the Premier's appointment today of a new executive director for Alberta's Ottawa office raises the same old questions. A Klein supporter managed to parlay a bachelor of arts degree into a job in Ottawa paying up to \$100,000 a year plus benefits. My questions today are to the Premier of the province. Mr. Premier, can you explain to the Legislative Assembly what open advertising process went on to fill this position?

MR. KLEIN: None, Mr. Speaker, and I'll explain why. Of all the positions relative to offices outside of the province of Alberta the Ottawa office is purely a political position, and I have to have someone there I can trust absolutely, implicitly. This appointment involves a very fine young man who has had vast experience in federal and intergovernmental affairs. He is fluent in both French and English. He knows the Ottawa scene inside and out. He is a remarkable employee and will serve this province and this Premier's office with great distinction.

MR. GERMAIN: Well, Mr. Premier, why didn't you, then, announce this wonderful employee's actual salary when you announced that he had been hired for the job?

MR. KLEIN: Well, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker – and I'm going to have to have a chat with Gordon; I see him sitting up there – if he expects to get \$100,000, then he'd better reconsider taking the job in Ottawa. As to whether this is a reward, there are many who might say that sending anyone to Ottawa is punishment.

MR. GERMAIN: In the Premier's humour, Mr. Speaker, he forgot: plus benefits.

Can you tell me, Mr. Premier, given the deficit situation in the province of Alberta, why you just didn't leave the job unfilled and save the taxpayers the money?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has been listening lately, there are a great many situations that involve federal and provincial government negotiations. I would suspect, notwithstanding our reluctance again to get involved in the Constitutional debate, that it is going to rear its ugly head. We see things now taking place in Quebec. Mr. Bouchard, of course, was recently in our province talking about separation and so on. We want someone in Ottawa who is knowledgeable with respect to these issues and all other issues that involve relationships between the province of Alberta and the federal government.

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

Electronics Test Centre

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Contracting out, deregulation, and more efficient ways of doing business to better serve Albertans is the key business of this government. In the Economic Development Authority in Calgary a new business has emerged in Calgary-Varsity. This high-tech company can do work faster, better, and cheaper with a marketplace orientation. My question is to the chairman of the Alberta Research Council. I would like to ask that gentleman: is the Alberta Research Council intending to privatize the Electronics Test Centre?

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand here with a good news story today, a good news story from ARC, what we believe to be a real opportunity for private business. As part of the three-year ARC business plan a number of sectors of the ARC will be spun out to the private sector to create wealth and jobs. Currently the Electronics Test Centre has established itself as one of the premiere test labs in the whole of the country, in fact in North America. It has gained official recognition and accreditation from the Standards Council of Canada, Department of National Defence, as well as many private companies who use their facilities.

In response to the second part of the question, there has been no direct decision made to move it to Calgary, but that will be a decision made by the ultimate buyers or purchasers of the ETC.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, in reporting this good news back to my constituent, what guidelines are there to prevent any conflict of interest, potential conflict of interest, or in fact a sweetheart deal?

DR. L. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've advertised publicly for something called requests for information, and a number of different companies are and will be providing requests for information and have expressed interest in the ETC, or Electronics Test Centre. The purpose of utilizing this public process is to ensure complete and due diligence in securing the most appropriate purchasers.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, how will the final location of the site be determined?

DR. L. TAYLOR: Well, the selection process that will be used for both the site and the buyer will be an independent selection process. An independent committee will be established to review the expressions of interest received from the requests for information. The committee will include representatives of the private sector, ARC, and the provincial government. A clear set of independent guidelines will be established to examine all of the requests and all of the proposals that come in.

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

2:20

Senior Citizens' Programs

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With broken promises and delays, seniors' anger increases. Clearly, in its report the seniors' panel does not support your proposals. To the Minister of Community Development: Mr. Minister, will you now implement these recommendations?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity to take a brief perusal through the report, which I received yesterday. There are a number of recommendations in it which appear to me to be very good. There are, however, some issues respecting the amount of money where suggestions have been made by the panel. In essence, the cost of accepting all of the recommendations as set out by this report would be in the range of about \$85 million. To find perhaps \$10 million in flexibility out of a \$916 million envelope would be a challenge indeed, but to find \$85 million in a \$916 million envelope is not reasonable in my view. However, the matter will be taken back before caucus and before cabinet, and I'm certain that all of my colleagues will have an opportunity to look at this and will make decisions in the next couple of weeks.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will you now on the strength of this report scrap your proposal?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, there has been no majority recommendation made in this report to scrap the program.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If you add to the seniors' benefits in any area, does it mean that seniors will lose in other areas?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, very clearly from the very outset we've said that if there needed to be changes to the Alberta seniors' benefit program, we had some flexibility to do that. However, whatever money was used to apply to the Alberta seniors' benefit would come from the overall envelope of government spending for seniors' programs of \$916 million.

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

Health Region Labour Relations

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposed establishment of regional health authorities has been applauded by health care providers and users in my constituency as a logical approach to rationalizing and improving our health care system. However, some concerns have been brought to my attention about the many labour legislation implications facing health care providers involved in regionalization. My question is to the Minister of Labour. How does the determination of the employer for labour relations purposes affect the operation on a regional basis?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, there will be some significant impacts on the operational side for employers. For instance, if you have a regional area and a regional authority but you're dealing with agreements that are on a site-by-site situation, then they're going to have to look at how you move people from one site to the other. That's going to have to be worked out. If within the region you have one collective agreement within a group of caregivers, then movement from one place to another of people or programs would be fairly easy, but if you have a number of collective agreements, again there's going to be some operational challenges there. So there are going to be some impacts. Add onto that the Labour Relations Code, some employees under that and some under the public service employee relations situation,

and, yes, there are going to be some impacts that have to be considered there.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How, then, will regional certification impact voluntary organizations or services such as mental health that are planned to be on a functional basis across the province?

MR. DAY: Well, there's good discussion going on right now on some of the mental health questions, but I can say that for the voluntary organizations, what we can see now is that they still have their legal recognition. So again there's going to have to be some good discussion going on to see how people are moved around there when they have separate agreements.

I might add that there's been a good example between the children's hospital services in the northern region here and Edmonton and area regional hospital services. There's been good progress made on reciprocity, where they have agreements between them on moving back and forth. That may be a model that could be used.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS CALAHASEN: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. My question, then, is to the Minister of Labour again. Would you mind, please, outlining how these issues can be resolved on an ongoing basis?

MR. DAY: Well, they are challenging issues, but I'm somewhat confident to report that there's good discussion going on right now on the labour implications between employers and employee groups. Myself and the Minister of Health have been meeting with these groups. We've asked them to define the areas and the challenges, as the member has brought out, and there's good commitment on both sides to looking at working out those issues.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Kindergarten Programs

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has said repeatedly that half a kindergarten program is as good as a full one. In rural areas some kindergartens have had their funding reduced by as much as 70 percent because of the elimination of transportation grants, small centre assistance grants, and disadvantaged area grants, so they can't even offer half a program. I'm tabling a letter from one of the affected areas. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education why he is making it impossible for some of these kindergartens to even offer half a program.

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I acknowledge that the instructional grant for ECS has been reduced by 50 percent and the transportation grant reduced, but the other grants the hon. member is referring to, as I recall, go back some 10 years in history and were gone some time ago. In any case, the feedback that I have received from rural areas of this province is that many are coping quite well. In fact, there's one jurisdiction, Camrose, where they are offering, as I understand it, a 400-hour program and not charging any fee. I know that in my own area of the province, my own constituency, early childhood services are going ahead. They are becoming more efficient. They are coming up with creative ways of organizing. They are going ahead without substantially increased fees. I could go with many

other examples across the province. I think the rural areas have responded rather well.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the letter I tabled indicates that these other grants were paid out as late as this year.

To the minister: will the minister extend the enhanced opportunity fund to assist kindergarten in rural areas who clearly need it?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, the rural areas of the province seem to be getting down to the challenge facing them and are working rather well in the whole area of early childhood services and adapting to the new funding realities. With respect to the enhanced opportunity grant, I have previously responded to that in the House in some detail. We will be circulating the information as to the criteria and the means by which that operates. That particular grant is to target high-needs students in major urban areas of the province, and we are going to go forward with that particular important initiative.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I take it that a quarter kindergarten is now as good as a half a kindergarten or a full one. With all this patchwork, Mr. Minister, how are you going to make good on the promise that all students have equal access to education?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, we are providing funding for all students across this province of the age for early childhood services with funding for a 200-hour program, and that is the case for every student in this province. As I indicated before, early childhood services has always been a program where there's been a great deal of flexibility in terms of arrangements and scope of offerings and so forth, and that will continue.

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

Child Welfare

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The meetings between the new children's commissioner and child welfare professionals have left many of them uneasy about the working groups and about the process and wondering if this is simply an exercise designed to keep them quiet and busy while the government does what it wanted to do in the first place. The perspective of many is that this is just window dressing, just for appearances sake. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Will the minister ensure that the recommendations made by these professionals are acted upon and are not simply ignored, as was the case in the Bernd Walter report?

2:30

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, of course, all the recommendations made are very important, because it is a critical review of a very critical area of my department, a very important area of my department. I do get an update on an ongoing basis from the commissioner as to the progress of the review and the recommendations made by various groups. Of course I will at the end look at all the recommendations, and they will be, hopefully, part of the final report that will be submitted at the end of June.

I would hope that the hon. member also participates with some good recommendations, because it is open for all Albertans.

Therefore, if they have good recommendations on the process, please move forward with those recommendations.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister table in the House all of the submissions made to his Commissioner of Services for Children through these working groups?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, the whole review will be completed at the end of June. At the end of June the commissioner will report to me, and I will file that report. The report will include what the findings are. Not only that, the report will also include an implementation plan, including costing, as to what action we're going to take. Therefore, to file recommendations at this time would not be the appropriate time to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS HANSON: Thank you. Mr. Minister, will you give Albertans, the public of Alberta, an opportunity to review and comment on the report prior to any final decisions?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, that is what the review is all about right now: so Albertans can participate along with the Liberal opposition. I'm still waiting for their three-year plan of child welfare reforms, and I would hope that they submit it before we design our plan so we can incorporate their good ideas in reshaping child welfare in Alberta.

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

Regional Health Authorities

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Southern Alberta has had a voluntary regional health planning authority for about a year now. This board is currently debating the structure of the upcoming regional health authority. The main concern that is creating community conflict is the special interests of proposed members, especially their geographical and institutional representation. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: what is the minister doing to alleviate the residents' concern about appointed members on this board being on the board to serve the special-interest groups which nominated them rather than the overall needs of their community?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the process for accepting nominations or applications to be a member of the regional health authority is just in place. I'm sure the hon. member understands the process, that the applications or nominations will go forward to the steering committee. They will view them for eligibility, ensure that they are within their correct region, and provide a list of nominations to the minister. So I think it's important that each area within a region submit names for board members that are anxious to serve on that. The selection will occur from those applications.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why will the minister not support elected representation on these boards when many community members feel this is the best way to fill the boards: based on persons' objectivity rather than their special interest?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's an inference in the member's question that the minister would support special-interest groups. I'm sure he did not intend that.

However, we've clearly stated and the steering committee stated, Mr. Speaker, that the process for election of the first boards was not appropriate. One, there is no mechanism in place for election. It is important that the regional health authorities begin. I believe that the process of communities submitting names, of them going to the steering committee, as I indicated, for their review, for ensuring their eligibility, and providing a list forward will ensure that the regional health authorities will have a very good, balanced representation. I also am confident that people who put their names forward will have the best interests of health delivery in their areas at heart when they put their names forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How is the minister going to eliminate the potential conflict between the regional planning authority and the institutional boards, which have mandates to serve the institutions they represent rather than the regions?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, there is no preclusion of people who presently sit on boards or agencies today from having their names submitted or from them submitting them. However, the steering committee's recommendation, which we have accepted, is that should a person be chosen that is presently sitting on a board, they would have to resign that position at the time of accepting a position on the regional health authority. Again, I believe that people who put their names forward will have a commitment to the regionalization of health services and will be concerned with delivery of health services to their communities. I think that is what I have heard from people across this province, and I believe that we can ensure that we do have quality people put their names forward with that interest. Certainly the hon. member should be promoting that aspect of membership to this board.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

Question period did generate some requests for further discussion. The Chair has a point of privilege by the hon. Deputy Premier, also a point of privilege by the Minister of Transportation and Utilities, a point of order by the Government House Leader, and a point of order by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West. With regard to the points of privilege, the Chair would propose that the hon. Deputy Premier and the hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities state their questions of privilege but that we defer consideration of those points until tomorrow.

The hon. Deputy Premier.

Privilege Accusations against a Member

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I rise on a point of privilege, and I rose shortly into the question period this afternoon. I would like to point out at the outset that a point of privilege is the most serious point that can be raised by a member in the Legislative Assembly at any time and is certainly not one that should be viewed as anything less than that at this point in time. I cite Standing Order 15 and sections in *Beauchesne* from 24 to 125, and I'll make specific comment about three sections in *Beauchesne* in particular.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of question period the Leader of the Opposition – and that is the individual that I am raising the point of privilege against – uttered words: this "minister inter-

ferred with . . . contracts." While the Leader of the Opposition did not mention the name of the minister, from where I was sitting, he clearly looked at me and pointed at me. There's no doubt at all and the Blues will verify that the Leader of the Opposition made the statement: this "minister interfered with . . . contracts."

In raising this point of privilege I'm going on the assumption that the gentleman was pointing at me. If the gentleman says he was not pointing at me, then it can only be inferred that the gentleman was pointing at either the Premier or the Minister of Labour. Perhaps when it's appropriate the Leader of the Opposition will really verify, because I'm working on the assumption that I am the minister that he was referring to. He clearly looked at my eyes; I saw that. He clearly pointed at me. There is no minister that sits behind me, and so it's only one of the three. Needless to say I'll not have a point of privilege if the gentleman who is the Leader of the Opposition disclaims that he was talking about me, at which point in time either the Premier or the Minister of Labour can choose to do what it is that they want to do with respect to that.

2:40

Now, Mr. Speaker, the words were used in context with a question dealing with Opron Construction. Again, the words were: this "minister interfered with . . . contracts." Now, Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 62 is very clear. I quote:

The Speaker stated: ". . . in the context of contempt, it seems to me that to amount to contempt, representations or statements about our proceedings or of the participation of members should not only be erroneous or incorrect, but, rather, should be purposely untrue and improper and import a ring of deceit."

Now, I have never interfered with a contract dealing with the construction of the Paddle River dam. In fact, the Paddle River dam construction was announced in 1978 before I was even elected to this Chamber of the Legislature. It was announced by the then minister of the environment, the hon. David Russell. I was elected in November of 1979. Construction occurred on the Paddle River dam from the year 1979 and concluded in the year 1984. Mr. Speaker, I did not become a member of Executive Council until 1986. I was at no time involved as a minister of the Crown.

Now, the hon. gentleman is learned. He's not without experience in this House, and he's apparently schooled in the law. Section 62 of *Beauchesne* clearly points out "purposely untrue and improper and import a ring of deceit." I'll make it very clear that I was not a minister involved at any time. Secondly, I want to make it very clear that at no time even when I was a minister did I participate or deal with interfering with any contracts. Now, it's up to the hon. gentleman to prove to this Assembly that such was the case. In the eyes of the hon. member I am guilty, presumably, with his uttering of the statements. It is up to him in the rules of this Assembly to prove my guilt that I have interfered with contracts. It's not up to me to defend my innocence. Under the point of privilege, that's very, very clear in terms of the precedents and the establishments.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, there were no contracts to be interfered with on the Opron or the Paddle River . . .

Speaker's Ruling Brevity

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair hesitates to interrupt the hon. member, but the Chair believes that the hon. member has stated his question of privilege. It arises out of something that the Leader of the Opposition did. The Chair was proposing that the debate of this point would be deferred until tomorrow. The Chair

really feels that the hon. member is presenting his case relating to the point at this time.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I have a difficulty with that. I will not be in the House tomorrow, nor will I be in the House on Monday or Tuesday. This matter will then . . . [interjection] I will not be in the House tomorrow because of other commitments in my capacity that I have as a member of Executive Council. I will not be in the House on Monday or Tuesday because of similar capacities.

A charge has been levelled against an hon. member of this Assembly. If it's the Speaker's ruling that he will await until Wednesday upon my return, that's fine with me. I'll abide by whatever decision the Speaker makes with respect to this. But when an allegation is made, there is no defence for a member other than for him to have an opportunity to in fact ask for justice to be served to him.

Debate Continued

MR. KOWALSKI: Now, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude very quickly. There are many more citations that I want to give. I do not rise frivolously today with respect to this. Quite frankly, the imputation of reputation and a whole series of other things in essence is something that will be questioned. I do not believe that it's appropriate for an hon. member to make such outrageous allegations as the "minister interfered with . . . contracts", when it can be clearly shown that it isn't.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will rule this case as a point of privilege. I would welcome an opportunity to have the trial in this Assembly before the standing committee on privileges and elections, at which point in time I will be asking for the measures which are outlined in section 125 of *Beauchesne*.

Thank you.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I also wish to give notice that I will not be present tomorrow; I will be on Monday and Tuesday.

I want to start by perhaps dealing with both issues because it will preclude me from standing up twice, unless you want to listen to the . . .

Speaker's Ruling Relevance

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, the point raised by the hon. minister of transportation is a separate thing, and you will be able to participate in that.

The Chair gathers that the participants in this point wish to have this matter argued now. The Chair will not be giving a decision today, but if both members feel that their positions should be aired today, the Chair will accommodate them. Then the decision will be deferred until both members are back.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Debate Continued

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to rely on *Erskine May* pages 84 and 200, *Beauchesne* 31, page 13. I'm going to start by reading from the transcript of evidence that pertains to the Opron case and, in particular, its application to the government. It starts by Mr. Redmond saying:

Sir, with regard to your answers to Undertakings Nos. 151 and 152 in Exhibit D-527, you were asked who made the notes on pages 1 and 2 of Exhibit D-272, and your answer in both cases is Peter Trynchy. And I wonder if you could tell me, sir, what Mr. Trynchy had to do with the matters that are dealt with in Exhibit D-272, which is a memorandum from Mr. Melnychuk to Mr. Bradley, the Minister.

MR. DAY: Point of order.

**Speaker's Ruling
Relevance**

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition could – it sounds like we're dealing with something to do with the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. As the Chair understands it, we're dealing with a point of privilege raised by the hon. Deputy Premier. So if the hon. Leader of the Opposition could connect these two things, perhaps we could understand the context.

MR. DECORE: If the hon. Speaker would just bear with me, what I am attempting to do is show that contracts are in fact a part of this Paddle River situation, scam. The Deputy Premier said that contracts weren't part of the scene. This evidence clearly says that they were, and I'm going to go on and show how they were. I need some time to be able to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Debate Continued

MR. DECORE: "Mr. Trynchy is the MLA for the area where the Paddle River Dam is being built." That was the answer given by Mr. Nicolson.

Question:

Why would he be involved with a document that describes equipment that the Department proposes to use for the next stage of earthwork on the dam?

Answer:

He probably had some interests or information from local contractors, just providing an input.

Question:

Providing input as to which local contractors should get which pieces of the work?

Answer:

Yes, that's part of the input, yes.

Question:

By "local," I take it you mean within his constituency?

Answer: "Yes."

2:50

AN HON. MEMBER: It's hearsay.

MR. DECORE: Hearsay?

Mr. Speaker, the next thing I want to refer to is exhibit D-272. That's the exhibit that was referred to in the examination for discovery. This is a document, a memorandum between Mr. Peter Melnychuk, assistant deputy minister of environment, to the hon. Fred Bradley. In this document it says, "Subject: Paddle River Dam." It's dated July 19, 1984. There are a number of situations that are set out. It says, for example, "621 Cat motor scrapers owned by Wilpetro Contracting Ltd. of Evansburg," and then there's an "OK" beside that. It goes down with another "OK" in somebody's handwriting and another "OK" in somebody's handwriting. Then there is a notation when it comes to "D8K Cat . . ."

MR. DAY: Yeah, you'd better take a look there.

MR. DECORE: This is serious, Mr. House leader, and I don't think it's the sort of requirement for your interjection.

It says: "D8K Cat tractor and pushblock owned by Reynolds Construction of Mayerthorpe." A notation on it says, "Share work with Komatsu Mijay." Now, it continues on with some more notations, and the notations then are identified in the transcript as the notations of the now minister of transportation.

I think that shows contracts. I think that shows that somebody – I don't even know what his involvement could be. He's not the minister of environment, but he's okaying who gets certain work, who gets certain contracts. Now, I think that's quite extraordinary.

So there are contracts. There is something that is happening with respect to the Paddle River dam that requires earthwork to be done, requires people like Thompson Bros.(Constr.) to be hired, Wilpetro Contracting Ltd. to be hired, Reynolds Construction to be hired, Almo Cat Services of Sangudo to be hired, with notations that seem to suggest that other people should do this or that this is okay. We know, then, that these are the notations of the now minister of transportation. So contracts were part of the Paddle River situation.

Then we learn from the judge who heard the Opron case that in his judgment there is deceit and fraud and negligence on the part of the government. Those aren't words the courts use lightly: fraud and deceit and negligence.

Now, during the course of a presentation yesterday on national television not only is this document referred to – that is exhibit D-272 – but so is the court case and so is the fact that the hon. member who has just spoken was part of an understanding, an arrangement, a situation where not 60 percent or 50 percent was given to local contractors, but a split of 75-25 was somehow determined.

**Speaker's Ruling
Relevance**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair suggested several minutes ago that there should be some connection of these documents with the hon. Deputy Premier. That's the point of privilege that we are hearing information on. The Chair did advise the hon. Leader of the Opposition that he would have the opportunity to deal with his concerns about the Minister of Transportation and Utilities later. The Chair would urge the hon. Leader of the Opposition to explain the relevancy to something that the hon. Deputy Premier has been complaining about.

MR. DECORE: Well, the hon. Deputy Premier said that there were no contracts. Clearly that wasn't correct, because there are contracts and the court dealt with contracts. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order please. The Chair distinctly heard the Deputy Premier say that he had been accused of interfering with contracts. Now the Chair wants to hear something from the hon. Leader of the Opposition about the hon. Deputy Premier interfering with contracts.

Debate Continued

MR. DECORE: Yesterday on national television – national television . . . [interjections] Well, I don't think this is funny. I'm surprised that the government is laughing at this. I can't believe that people on the Conservative side find this funny.

Yesterday it was reported by CBC national television that the hon. Deputy Premier and the now minister of transportation were part of a situation where contracts were allotted, allocated, given to their regions on a 75-25 split. That to me is interference.

Now, if the Deputy Premier is saying to me – I'm prepared to accept, Mr. Deputy Premier, that there was no 75-25 split. I'm prepared to accept that you had no hand whatsoever. If the Deputy Premier says that, I will retract my statements as to the Deputy Premier. I want to make that clear, Mr. Speaker. I will retract my statements with respect to the Deputy Premier if he says he had nothing to do with the 75-25, nothing to do in any

way with the allocation of these contracts. I make that clear at this moment. [interjections]

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, this point of privilege that I brought forward is premised on the citations that I gave, particularly section . . . [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: I think the hon. Deputy Premier should resume his seat until his colleagues and the members across the aisle . . . [interjections] Order. It's disgraceful for hon. members on the front bench of the government side to be heckling the opposition, and it's disgraceful of them to answer back while the hon. Deputy Premier is trying to make a point.

Debate Continued

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, a point of privilege is, again, a very serious point. It's not a frivolous matter. When a member, in this case the leader of a political party, the Leader of the Opposition, makes the statement that this "minister interfered with . . . contracts," and then he stands and gives a citation which has nothing to do with me and then says that if the Deputy Premier says it is so, then he'll retract it, that's not good enough. That's not the purpose of a point of privilege. I could have gotten that in a point of order.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to deal with this matter in a point of privilege for the leader to prove that this minister interfered with contracts in this matter. I'm asking you to rule that this is a matter of privilege. I'm asking the Speaker to refer this to the standing committee on privileges and elections. I'm asking for justice to be met under section 125 of *Beauchesne*.

MR. SPEAKER: Unless there is anything further that can be shed upon this matter, this matter will be deferred until both members can find their way clear to be present in the House.

The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

Privilege Accusations against a Member

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of privilege, section 15(5). I won't repeat the comments of the Deputy Premier, but they follow suit.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the leader of the Liberal Party accuse me of lying. He made a serious allegation. Then he went on to say that I interfered in the tendering process on the Paddle River dam. Both of those accusations are false. I did not lie. I will not lie. I was never involved in interfering with the tendering process and contracting of the Paddle dam. I have never been involved in the tendering process, will not be today and in the future.

3:00

Mr. Speaker, the member went on to say that I was involved in contracts. Then he goes on to say that those people that allegedly worked on the dam on day labour were under contract. That again is false. There was no contract. Day labour is hired by the hour. There is no contract paper signed, contrary to what he says.

Mr. Speaker, how do you arrive at people being involved in day labour? In my capacity as the MLA for Whitecourt, where the Paddle River dam is situated, I was asked by a number of local contractors: would you put our name forward should there be some jobs in regards to day labour? Not tendering, not contracts, but day labour. I did that. I submitted a number of names of people that came to me. Some got some jobs on an

hourly basis; some did not. There were no contracts issued. There were no contracts signed. They were all there on an hourly basis. If they worked for a day or a week or whatever, they were terminated on that basis and not on a contract. So when I was asked by my local constituents – and I've done that for years and will continue to do it; I represent them – I said, "Here are the people that have submitted their equipment to myself," which I passed on to the department of the environment.

Now, they've got some documentation that says that there's some handwriting on it. Well, whose handwriting is it? Whose is it? Did Trynchy sign anything? But, Mr. Speaker, when any department asks an MLA, "Who do you have in your location that can provide us with the material or the equipment close at hand?" then we'll put the names forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this point of privilege is not a light matter. I just want to close quickly, because I know you'll take it forward on Monday or Tuesday, and I'll be here tomorrow and Monday and Tuesday. I would suggest and I urge the Liberal leader – as a matter of fact, I beg him – to go outside the House and make those allegations against this member. I'd like to see that happen.

AN HON. MEMBER: The CBC did. Why don't you sue them? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the CBC will be looked after in a different venue.

I am urging the leader sitting across there – as a matter of fact, I beg him, so I can clear myself with my constituents and Albertans – to go outside the House and accuse me of lying and interfering with contracts that are tendered, tendered documents with Opron. I have never been involved with Opron Construction in the tendering or their contracts and never will be. But day labour, yes. I've submitted some names, and if those names were used, I think I'm doing my job as an MLA for my constituents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the hon. member would attempt to make it appear that there are no contracts involved in this situation. A contract is when you offer certain services and somebody pays you for those services. That's what a contract is. It could be in written form; it could be in verbal form. A contract is a contract.

The other thing that has quite frankly taken me by surprise are the statements made by the hon. minister just moments ago which seem to imply that the notations that are made on exhibit D-272 that I referred to – whose notations are they? as if to imply, as if to suggest that they weren't his. The clear evidence in the trial is from one of the chief engineers, who says that the notations are the notations of Mr. Peter Trynchy, the MLA from that particular constituency. Now, this appears to be pretty clear to me, Mr. Speaker. A letter, a memorandum that's going from an assistant deputy minister to a minister that deals with the Paddle River dam, that's talking about government paying for services, that has notations on it that okays a contract to Wilpetro Contracting Ltd. and okays a contract to Thompson Bros (Constr.) Ltd. of Barrhead and okays a contract owned by Thompson Bros and then says "share work with" another company when it comes to Reynolds Construction is most extraordinary, to say the least. One can only interpret this as an intervention by the hon. minister into the contract process when he wasn't even the minister.

Then, we learn – and, yes, it's true that I heard it on CBC, Mr. Minister – that contract . . . You know, I thought that Albertans

were supposed to share fairly in all work in Alberta, that there wasn't a particular region that would get favouritism over others. What do people in southern Alberta think about that kind of process when only your contractors or your contractors in your constituency can get certain work. That's not the way I've grown up to believe in fairness.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to *Erskine May*, page 84 and page 200, and to *Beauchesne*, page 13. Yes, privilege is a serious matter, but it should not also be used lightly like some people in this Assembly like to use privilege. Privilege in *Beauchesne*, section 31 on page 13, says: "A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege." I note with some interest that whenever something happens that the Deputy Premier doesn't like, he uses privilege all the time. We've dealt with that, and that matter will be considered, but Mr. Speaker, this is now very clearly in the court of the minister of transport. There is contracting. There is payment for services. There appears to be a clear involvement by the now minister of transportation, and there now appears to be a wiggling away that the hon. minister is attempting to do.

MR. TRYNCHY: Say it outside.

MR. DECORE: He keeps saying to me: run outside. I'm proving my case right here, Mr. Minister.

If you'd like to take a look at your notes, Mr. Minister. I'd like to have the minister look at his notes to see if they are his signatures or his statements or his notations, because that's what Mr. Nicolson from the department says. Clearly, somebody got some instructions on how this thing was going to work, and those clear instructions were known in the bureaucracy, in the civil service that serves the people of Alberta. It's supposed to serve them fairly and honestly, and it doesn't look like what was being done. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter. Treat it seriously on this side.

MR. SPEAKER: This matter will be deferred for a decision.

The next matter is a point of order raised by the hon. Government House Leader.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, citing Standing Orders 23(h),(i), and (j) and referring to comments made by others but specifically by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. In his questions – and the *Hansard* will clearly show – there's a deliberate attempt to tie in this government, these members sitting here with a purported scam. He used that word on more than one occasion over protestations from yourself and from other members.

What I'm asking for a ruling on – I know it will be difficult, but there's a strategy here. It's a very deliberate strategy. The Member for Calgary-Buffalo, being a lawyer, knows that if he used that particular approach that he did in a court of law, he would be thrown out of the courtroom. What he's doing – and I'll use (h),(i), and (j) – is making allegations against members, imputing false or unavowed motives to other members, and also using insulting language. In a court of law he would be turfed out without ceremony.

It's a clear strategy used by people who stoop to it. It's like asking somebody the question in public, "Do you still beat your wife?" or "In fact, do you beat your wife?" The strategy there is not whether the person ever has or hasn't. The strategy is clearly to plant in the minds of people listening an imputation of guilt. It's something the member does without any regard to the

democratic process or the legal process. It's difficult because you have no way of anticipating when those comments are going to come, Mr. Speaker, but I would ask if you could rule on members deliberately using that strategy, with total disregard of whether there's any truth or fact or basis for it, that imputation of false motives for the purpose of raising questions in the public mind about the honesty and legitimacy of members here. I would ask if you could give some consideration to that ruling.

3:10

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to what is obviously not, indeed, a point of order. The term mentioned by the hon. Government House Leader, "scam," that was used by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo: we have to go back to what precipitated the whole sequence of questions. The judge in this case decided that the government acted in a fraudulent and deceitful manner. Now, these are words that came out of the court. These are words that are part of a judgment.

That the member opposite doesn't like our strategy quite frankly is of no concern to me or to him. He is certainly not invited to our caucus meetings to discuss our strategy. To imply that you should attend also is also entirely inappropriate. So the fact that he doesn't like our strategy quite frankly is irrelevant. If he's raising a point of order, although he didn't think to raise the issue with respect to *Beauchesne* and unparliamentary language, if he's concerned about unparliamentary language, it is a word that is not mentioned anywhere in the list of unparliamentary terms. So in terms of casting unavowed motives or making allegations, all that the Member for Calgary-Buffalo did was repeat those words that had been said in the courts of this land already.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. This point of order raises the question as to whether or not "scam" should be declared an unparliamentary term. This occupant of the Chair feels that there are already many, many words that have been declared unparliamentary that on the surface really one wonders why they were declared unparliamentary, and the Chair is hesitant to add to that list.

The basic principle is that words that are used that can reasonably be expected to create disorder in the Assembly have to be discouraged. Now, how they get discouraged is probably by banning them. There doesn't seem to be any in-between. The Chair wants all hon. members to know that it has a predisposition against banning words, but if they are used with the intent to create disorder in the Assembly, the Chair will really have no alternative but to follow the procedure of other occupants of the Chair who have used that remedy on many, many occasions. I think what the Chair will do now is conjure over this day and the use of that word and also defer that till we deal with the previous questions that have been raised.

There is another point of order raised by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

Point of Order Fivolous Questions

MR. BRUSEKER: Indeed, Mr. Speaker. My citation is *Beauchesne* 409(4) and (5). *Beauchesne* 409(4) says: "It ought to be on an important matter, and not be frivolous." Subsection (5) talks about: "The matter ought to be of some urgency. There must be . . . present value in seeking the information during the Question Period." Mr. Speaker, I'm referring to the two questions earlier this afternoon, one raised by the Member for Calgary-Varsity of the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat and the other one raised by the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat of the

Member for Calgary-Varsity. The two members referred to are located side by side in the legislative Chamber. The questions that were asked probably could have been asked in a quiet conversation with the two of them side by side and quite frankly ate up time of Members of the Legislative Assembly that had serious questions. If they really had an urgent need to exchange this information, as they are seatmates literally rubbing elbows, there's no need for not only the first set but clearly also the second set of questions, which were designed simply to eat up the time of question period and should be ruled out of order.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I received a note from Parliamentary Counsel asking me to file the documents that I was . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair can't proceed to that one until we dispose of the next one.

The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Yes, certainly I would like to respond to that, Mr. Speaker. When we bring forward a good news story, the members opposite do not like to hear it. That's what this is all about: the Alberta Research Council privatizing part of its business, getting a private company out there that's going to create jobs and wealth for Albertans. Good news. They're doom criers. They're naysayers, and that's all they care about. Good news they do not care about, and that's why the hon. member is objecting.

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

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's clear that the hon. Member for Calgary-North West is not addressing the key as to why the questions are asked. We, as has been stated, are representing our constituents, and clearly there is a need for constituents in both Cypress-Medicine Hat and Calgary-Varsity to know the answers to these questions. If because of my seating order I am being refused the right to represent my constituents and get that information out in a public forum, then that's more obstructionism. That's oppression from the opposition.

I guess one of the reasons in the boundary redraw that I am now representing areas where the member was formerly is for that same reason. He didn't in fact get the information out to his constituents. I don't care where the Chair would sit me. I will continue to ask those questions in a public forum to ensure that my constituents in Calgary-Varsity are well represented.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, many of those constituents he's now able to represent is because the deck was stacked with Tory members, who didn't allow input from this side of the House and stacked the deck both in the case of legislation and in the case of the ultimate boundaries that were drawn.

MR. SPEAKER: First of all, the Chair believes that one of the reasons this point of order was raised was because of the seating arrangement in the House. Probably if the hon. members had not been sitting adjacent to each other, the point would not have been raised. The Chair has to say that the seating arrangement cannot be made an issue or a basis for a point of order.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I've been requested by Parliamentary Counsel to file the documents that I was referring to, and I wish to do so at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Before proceeding any further, might we revert to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?

The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

head: **Introduction of Guests**
(*reversion*)

MR. SOHAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to introduce to the Assembly 18 members of Yamburg Gas Production Russia. The visitors are here in Alberta to learn about our natural gas industry. They are accompanied by a friend and prominent member of the Sikh community of Calgary, Mr. Moni Minhas. The visitors are seated in the members' gallery. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would request that visitors rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Orders of the Day**

3:20

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places with the exception of motions 199 and 200.

[Motion carried]

Kindergarten Programs

M199. Mr. Henry moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all studies and reports obtained or prepared by Alberta Education between March 28, 1993, and March 28, 1994, which indicate that 200 hours of kindergarten are sufficient to prepare children for grade 1.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I placed this motion for a return on the Order Paper at the request of several of my constituents and members of the public across Alberta. This grew out of the policy change by Alberta Education to reduce the funding for early childhood services from 400 hours to 200 hours earlier this year. At the time that decision was announced, there was a cry from the community saying: "How can we do this? Why should we do this? What basis do we do this on? What evidence do we use?" When I first posed that question, I heard the deputy minister indicate that there was research that said that reducing funding from 400 hours to 200 hours in ECS and being able to achieve the objectives of ECS was supported by empirical evidence. I'm anxiously awaiting that evidence. We then asked the minister to produce that evidence. The minister again reiterated that that evidence did exist. We did not see that evidence come forward, so we asked the Premier, and the Premier said that the minister would be coming forward with that evidence that would show that what you can do in 400 hours is accomplishable in 200 hours, looking at the same objectives.

Mr. Speaker, we then pursued it because, again, we heard nothing from the Department of Education, nothing from the deputy minister, nothing from the Premier, and nothing from the Minister of Education. We continued to ask: where's the evidence that we have been told about several times in this House and elsewhere that shows that you can cut ECS in half and still achieve the objectives as outlined and that, in the minister's words, has been deemed an appropriate level to be able to prepare

children for grade 1 and in essence achieve the objectives of kindergarten? I'm paraphrasing in that.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that what we eventually got tabled in the Legislature by the Minister of Education is a list of studies that have to do with everything under the sun regarding early childhood education, including Kodály music, Thanksgiving programs, Head Start programs. I could bore the House by going on and on and on.

DR. L. TAYLOR: You're already boring us, Mike.

MR. HENRY: The significant thing, Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, is that the only clear evidence in these studies that are presented by the minister is that there is a significant difference between full-day and half-day kindergarten, and in fact there are some differences with regard to early intervention in Medicine Hat. Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere does it show that 200 hours is an appropriate level of kindergarten to prepare children for grade 1.

Again, the government went on for weeks, Mr. Speaker, telling us: we have the evidence, and we can produce the empirical evidence. It has not been produced, and I note that an amendment has been circulated that no doubt the minister will move that will allow the minister to table a whole pile of research that has absolutely nothing to do with the decision that was made.

My constituents, Mr. Speaker, have the right to know what evidence the government used in making the decision to reduce kindergarten from 400 hours' to 200 hours' funding from this provincial government. There is no evidence. The record is clear that there is no evidence. It was a political, financial decision. It is not based on what the children of Alberta need. It is not based on what is appropriate to prepare children for grade 1. Unless the government is prepared to produce that research, the government should recant and reinstate a full kindergarten so that this province does not travel backward in time but instead joins the rest of the industrial world in terms of West Germany, Japan, and other countries and increase funding for preschool education programs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I have circulated to members of the Assembly an amendment to Motion 199, and I would propose that this amendment be put forward. I can read it into the record if you wish, but if it is acceptable to circulate it, I will proceed on that basis. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would amend and accept Motion for Return 199 as outlined in the document circulated to all members of the Assembly.

Moved by Mr. Jonson that Motion for a Return 199 be amended by deleting "indicate that 200 hours of kindergarten are sufficient to prepare children for grade 1" and inserting "outline the variety of research on kindergarten as preparation for grade 1."

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will take the minister as moving an amendment to Motion 199 as circulated. Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

MR. HENRY: On the amendment, Mr. Speaker. The amendment basically allows the government to get off the hook in terms of . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Really, the minister should have the opportunity of speaking to the amendment first.

MR. JONSON: Well, with due respect to yourself, Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify that when you rose, I sat down, but it was fully my intention to speak to the amendment.

In speaking to the amendment, the amendment is designed to provide more information than seems to be targeted in the initial motion. I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is very important because there is the view that we did not consider a number of factors with respect to early childhood services, a number of factors with respect to what learned articles and research say, as well as those factors that are involved in the whole evaluation of early childhood services programs. I think that we have to keep in mind here that there is a great deal written, and there are a number of research studies – and there are still some being initiated at this time – endeavouring to come up with concrete, categorical evidence with respect to what early childhood services accomplishes. I'm sure that all of this is done for the very worthwhile purpose of providing solid information from which firm direction can be decided on in the future.

However, I want to emphasize that at this point in time there are a wide range of information and a great divergence of views on kindergarten and the whole early childhood services area as far as services provided by government. Mr. Speaker, there are longitudinal studies which deal with the time factor. Those studies refer to half day, full day, they refer to the overall length of the program, and those studies are on both sides of the question. Some indicate that there is a difference; some indicate that there is not in terms of the end result.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there are studies that deal with a very, very important item, and that is: what is the long-term impact in terms of school achievement for students who have had different types of early childhood programs or have had none at all? Once again you will find expressed in the learned articles and in the research a divergence of findings, but I would have to offer that there are several which indicate that by grade 1 or by grade 3 there is no discernable difference.

3:30

There's another area of information that deals with looking at the actual internal aspect of early childhood services programs. That is the nature of the program, the way in which it is delivered, the qualifications of the personnel involved: that sort of thing, Mr. Speaker. Here there does seem to be, in my judgment, a fairly common theme, and that is that when there is a really solid program being offered, be it for whatever number of hours or days, this is where there's a very important factor in terms of the impact in a positive way on students. In the work that we are doing in Alberta Education, that I have indicated in the Assembly, we are looking at improving the internal program aspects of early childhood services.

Mr. Speaker, there are also a number of studies and articles which look at the overall socioeconomic situation as far as schools, for that matter, generally as well as kindergarten are concerned. I'm surprised that the hon. member opposite did not think Head Start was relevant to the whole discussion of government involvement in early childhood education because it seems to have been a topic of interest to the members opposite before. In any case, I think those articles and studies are relevant too, because they along with many of the items on early childhood services do indicate that for the socioeconomically disadvantaged student in their community or home environment there is a positive impact and a case for early intervention. This is why, as I've indicated in the House before, we have maintained our

funding, albeit I've admitted with the 5 percent and 2 and a half percent reductions in grants, for the special needs students at early ages. We will also be instituting the enhanced opportunity grant to concentrate on such areas of our major centres.

There are also some articles – I would have to say more articles and learned judgments than research – referring to all the other factors in a young child's development that bear upon their future that have possibly more impact than any type of formal government-operated program could. When we're looking at addressing some of the problems of young people at a very early age, I think we have to look at those even more important factors such as community involvement, family support, and even a topic which comes up quite frequently, Mr. Speaker, the influence of the modern media on childhood learning and later development.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that here in the amendment we are proposing to provide a great deal of what I view as relevant information and indicate, as I have indicted before, that on the key questions that have been raised there is a great divergence of opinion in terms of the research that is provided. We made a decision and recognized the early intervention factor with the two items that I mentioned. We recognized that we should be looking at improving the nature of the program itself. As I have indicated – and I could go into taking issue with the hon. member opposite's paraphrasing – we made ultimately a judgment, as governments must do and as ministers must do, to offer a good 200-hour program and fund it.

Thank you.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the amendment. What's relevant here is that the Premier and the Minister of Education made an assertion in this House and outside this House that they cannot substantiate, that assertion being that they had evidence to support that cutting kindergarten from 400 hours to 200 hours would not affect the quality of education and in fact that there was evidence to point out clearly that the 400-hour program could be achieved in the 200-hour program. There was clearly no evidence being provided by this government. This is simply an amendment to negate the purpose of this motion. I can tell you that if this amendment passes, all people that I have been connected with over the last several years involved in early childhood education will understand that this motion for a return was changed in order for the government to dump a lot of paper that is absolutely nothing directly related to the decision that the government made. The government does not have what it takes to stand up and say: we simply wanted to cut, and because we cut in half the funding for kindergarten in order to help pay for the interest on the NovAtel debt and the MagCan debt and the Myrias debt, we decided five year olds in this province should pay because we know we can get away with it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: As there appears to be several more people who wish to participate on the question of the amendment, could we interrupt proceedings momentarily for the introduction of guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

head: **Introduction of Guests**
(*reversion*)

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the Workers' Compensation Board is being recognized of late both provincially and nationally for some considerable turnarounds in their fiscal position, in claims management, and overall operation and attending to the concerns of injured workers and also of the employers who actually fund the operation. It takes a lot of people to make that happen, a lot of people to recognize. Two of the main reasons for the successful turnaround there are with us today watching democracy in progress in Alberta. We hope it hasn't been too discouraging for them. I'd like to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly the chief executive officer, Dr. John Cowell, and also the chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Vern Millard. I'd ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Motions for Returns**
(*continued*)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm speaking against the amendment very simply because we specifically asked to see any research that indicates that 200 hours of kindergarten are the equivalent of 400 in terms of production and effect. Clearly, there isn't any of this kind of research in spite of the Premier's and the minister's claims to the contrary.

Now, if this particular claim were true, then it seems to me that it would be a severe indictment of the qualified ECS teachers. It's almost an inference, as if they have been spinning their wheels about half the time. What an indictment of the minister's department itself, because after all if that were true, then what a tremendous waste of money has again occurred with this government here, in addition to NovAtel, et cetera, et cetera. But it simply isn't true. Fiscal reasons, as has been pointed out by my learned colleague, led to this particular cut, no educational reasons. Let's face it; this government did not pay any heed to the chief of police of Edmonton when he said that he was afraid that a cut in kindergarten education would lead to an increased likelihood of those students eventually getting involved in criminal activities. Now, there is research for that particular conclusion that proves that pretty conclusively. On the other hand, some of the members of this government want to hang any young offenders high. Talk about contradictions here, Mr. Speaker; talk about mixed signals.

Nevertheless, I think the claim that there is that research has been unfounded. I think the Premier today used the word "untrue," and perhaps it might even be applied here. I don't know. I certainly wouldn't want to make any allegations here. I'd like to point out that the Minister of Environmental Protection made the same claim in his riding, and then when he discovered that it didn't exist, that there was no such research, he had the intestinal fortitude to apologize, Mr. Speaker, as reported by his own media. I thought that was well done.

So there is no such research. We have repeatedly asked for it, and then finally we have been given by the minister, very kindly, a whole load of papers that supposedly backed up his claim. They deal with all kinds of topics including turkeys and discipline by parents and so on. We couldn't find anything to use that was, to use that phrase, germane to the topic at hand, so that's why we came out with Motion 199, quite simply, and that's why this amendment simply doesn't cut it. I have to oppose it. We don't

need any more irrelevant research. We'd just like the straight goods, and if they don't exist, then maybe the minister can say so.

Thank you.

3:40

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

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I feel that I have to stand and speak against this amendment. The government is trying to proceed with its ill-considered plans to do away with half the kindergarten now, and Lord only knows what they have in store for ECS for the future. They've been trying to claim that it's based on some kind of research. It's clear now that no such research exists, and the amendment that's been proposed by the Minister of Education to Motion for a Return 199 is really sidestepping the issue. It's not really even a very good two-step that's being danced out here today. It actually totally guts the intent of the motion. The intent of the motion is to make it clear that there is in fact good, solid, current, Canadian, valid research to demonstrate that 200 hours of kindergarten is sufficient to prepare children in Alberta today for grade 1 and for future educational success.

The Minister of Education talks about: well, we'd need follow-up studies, and what the long-term impact will be. You know, I don't feel very comfortable with this government taking the position that it's okay for them to experiment with our five year olds. I have a son in kindergarten, and I don't want this minister messing around with his future just because he feels compelled to help a government meet a political agenda of eliminating a deficit that five-year-old children in this province had nothing to do with compiling. That deficit isn't the problem of our schoolchildren, and it's not the result of out-of-control school spending; it's the result of an out-of-control government and a series of governments that never got serious about their spending problem.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a strategy not to deal with the issue at hand. We've had the Minister of Education, we've had the Premier, we've had the Minister of Environmental Protection, we've even had the Treasurer, who happens just by coincidence to live in my constituency, tell residents of my constituency: oh yeah, we've got research. But where is it? Where is it? The research doesn't exist. The documents that have been previously tabled by the government have nothing to do with the question at hand, and this amendment is really now being put forward in a way that totally guts the intent of the motion for a return. I think if the research doesn't exist, the government should have the integrity to stand and say that it doesn't exist.

Point of Order Questioning a Member

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order. Do you have a citation for that?

MR. DAY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, 482. I want to ask him a question. *Beauchesne* 482 talks to interrupting debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader has asked whether the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora will entertain a question. You just have to say yes or no.

MR. SAPERS: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DAY: Chicken. Typical close-minded response.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, after I conclude, I'll rise on a point of order about the Minister of Labour's propensity for name-calling, but I'll continue with my . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: If you've got a point of order, do it now.

MR. SAPERS: No. I have up to nine hours now, according to the new rules of the Chair, so maybe I'll do it tomorrow, maybe tonight. We'll see.

Debate Continued

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, the amended motion is really a way of this government saying: we're only going to tell half the story to Albertans; we're not going to tell the whole story, because really we don't know what the other side of the story is. Even further to that, I would guess that what they're saying is: we don't even care what the other side of the story is. You know? Because this has got nothing to do with kindergarten. This has got nothing to do with preparing children to compete or to become educated. This has got nothing to do with the future of our labour force. This has got nothing to do with the wishes of parents. This has got everything to do with a crass political agenda, a political agenda that is going to culminate in an election campaign that says: "See, we were tough enough at any cost – at any cost – to balance the budget." We didn't balance the budget through an intelligent series of cuts. We didn't balance the budget through making a series of decisions on priorities. We didn't balance the budget because we found new efficiencies and innovative new ways to deliver services.

Point of Order Relevance

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, Edmonton-Glenora. The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

MR. DAY: I hate to interrupt again, but Standing Orders and *Beauchesne* talk about relevance. He's talking about the budget. We're talking here about some documents to do with ECS. Could he be called, please, to order on that?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The relevance can be addressed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, and then the Chair will rule.

MR. SAPERS: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister of Labour would just be patient and keep in his seat, I would be able to get to my point. The relevance is that this government has taken an action to cut funding for ECS. They've done that in their efforts to help balance the budget. They've also said that they've done it based on research. The research doesn't exist. The point is that the reason why they're trying to hide the fact that the research doesn't exist is because they really don't care. They simply want to proceed with this budget plan. It's got nothing to do with education. That is the relevance.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, hon. member, I have some empathy for what you're trying to say, but if we take relevance – almost anything that the government may or may not have done, any error or omission that they have made over the past year many years, then anything is relevant. It seems to me that the motion that we have here is an amendment that says to insert "outlines the variety of research on kindergarten as preparation for grade 1," when it was asked something more specific on 200 hours. I really think that the Chair has perhaps been more than generous in allowing the broad scope which you're at. However, there

does come a time when maybe it should be brought to the point in front of us. All of what you have said may or may not be so, but to the issue that we have in front of us, it's truly a tenuous point. So if you could contain it to the actual amendment that we have rather than all the sins of the government, then that might be able to be helpful on this small point.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your words of advice and your ruling. Of course, with all of the sins of the government laid out before us, it's hard, you know, not to try to address them when given the chance.

Debate Continued

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, the amendment that's presented is an amendment, as I was saying, that clearly shows the government is only willing to tell half the story. I think it's incumbent upon the government to either tell the whole story about kindergarten or to stand and say that no such research exists: "We can't justify it based on any kind of objective evidence. We can't justify this decision based on what impact it's going to have on children. We can only justify this decision because it was an easy target. It was a way for us to cut some money from a group of Albertans who can't vote" – yet.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DAY: There are actually two issues here, Mr. Speaker. One is the relevant issue related to studies. The other issue is the greater debate on whether a person feels ECS is required and for how many hours. These are the two separate issues. The member who is fleeing from the House at this moment – sorry; I shouldn't have said that. The member who just spoke said that there is no evidence. I asked if he would entertain a question. I can't comment right now why he wouldn't be able to, but as I look across the way, it's obvious.

There was some documentation filed here in the House; as a matter of fact, an extensive bibliography which I had the chance to look at. So for members opposite to say that there is no evidence is simply factually wrong. Now, whether they agree with the evidence or not, that's a separate issue. That's a great debate we should have one day, whether they agree with what in fact has been brought forward. But to say that there is no evidence – the libraries of Canada and the United States, the shelves have many references to both sides of the debate on ECS, huge references. So for the members to say that there is no evidence is totally false. To say that they don't agree with the evidence is another issue and the purpose and the point of what I think would be a very good debate. So I wish they would recognize the fact. What I was going to ask I'll ask all members opposite. They can reply with either a nodding of the head or some rapid eye movement to show that they're awake. I would simply ask members opposite: by a nod of the head, did any of you follow up the material that was tabled? That's a simple question.

3:50

MR. CHADI: Mr. Speaker, this isn't a time for him to ask a question. We won the right to ask questions. Sit down, Stockwell. Shame on you. Sit down.

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper, there is a procedure for properly objecting to whatever a given speaker might be saying, and one of them is not speaking so loudly that we can no longer hear the

person or adding to the din such that we can't determine which is which. When you have an objection, quickly refer to your Standing Orders and make the appropriate objection at that time. Really, in spite of what has gone on during this day, it isn't good parliamentary procedure to just shout out, no matter how indignant you might be or how righteous your cause.

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: The relevant section here is 481(e), imputing bad motives. The bad motives, Mr. Speaker, are that the House leader is imputing that I did not read the research, that I didn't even look at it. Now, I would like the House leader to know that I perused the list of titles, being earnest in my . . . [interjections] I'm explaining this. Being very earnest in my desire to acquaint myself with this heap of research material that the Minister of Education had bequeathed to us, I found therein titles such as "thanksgivings" and "turkeys." I even ploughed on.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, there have been during the short period of time that the Chair has enjoyed this position many – and that's not how long he's occupied it. There have been many points of order. Usually it's Standing Order 23, but this is in *Beauchesne*. They are imputing either bad motives or motives not avowed by the person. Someone saying that they don't believe that another member has read whatever is not imputing a bad motive. It's imputing, presumably, a lack of action, which is not a motive. It's very rare that we have had a legitimate point of order on the imputation of false or unavowed motives. It may well be that you have read everything under the sun, including all of this list that was so kindly supplied to us by the hon. Minister of Education, but somebody suggesting that you may or may not have read it is not a bad motive. If you wanted to look in Standing Orders, it may be something that's provocative, but certainly it's not a bad motive no matter how much you've read.

With that, we would invite the hon. Government House Leader to continue and the hon. Member for West Yellowhead to look at where he might find it in Standing Order 23.

Debate Continued

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To continue, then, the issue here is whether there has been anything presented. Clearly, there has been. That's a historical fact. Members opposite might not like it. They might not, as the Member for West Yellowhead said, like a particular title. They might even disagree with it. But to say that it has not been presented is absolutely not correct. Much documentation has been presented. There's much more out there. It's a very hot two-sided issue. So let's clearly separate: the debate on whether we agree with the evidence is one thing, which is not up for debate today; whether the minister has filed evidence, documentation is the other issue, and it has been.

So I close again by saying – I can't directly ask members opposite – that I would be curious to know how many of them took the documentation, the bibliographies that were filed and have been referred to, not just glanced at them, not just took somebody's word for it, but in fact went to the library and looked to see if in fact some of the documentation did indeed address the question. I would like to ask the Member for Edmonton-Glenora and others: how many of those footnotes did they follow up? It would be a fascinating discovery. If any of them did, then they would be acknowledging by the fact they did look it up that in fact

documentation was tabled – not whether they agree with it or not but in fact it was tabled. That's the issue here.

MR. SAPERS: Point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it a point of order?

MR. SAPERS: On the point of order. Mr. Speaker, the minister . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We're losing track here. We had a point of order from the hon. Member for West Yellowhead. The Chair thought it dealt with that although in doing so invited further ones. We then went on with the person who was speaking, the hon. Government House Leader. The hon. member has spoken already, so that's why I was asking: are you rising to reply to his invitation to answer his questions? If you are, then I don't think that's permitted. If you are rising on a point of order, then forgive me.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, 23(h), a point of order about making allegations against another member. I assume that because the Minister of Labour mentioned the Member for Edmonton-Glenora specifically, he was making an allegation that I perhaps wasn't familiar with the ECS research, that I hadn't read the footnotes, I wasn't familiar with the list that the Minister of Education tabled. Well, all of that of course is nonsense. I have been familiar with ECS research. I've been consulting with many specialists, including those at Alberta Education. I've been involved with providing services to children for years and years and years. I in fact have even been involved in some of the research that has to do with the impact of education on children. So I would suggest to the Minister of Labour that maybe he should go to the library. You see, the fact is that no research – zip, zero, none, nada, not one little bit – exists that says that if you only have 200 hours, it will prepare children properly, in Alberta's school system today with the current curriculum, for their educational success and for their future competition as an adult. So I would ask the Minister of Labour to withdraw that allegation, because he is absolutely wrong.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Minister of Labour wish to respond to the point of order?

MR. DAY: In my humble view there was not a point of order, but I appreciate the good graces of the Chair and the patience in allowing the member opposite to vent his spleen. But no, I withdraw no allegations whatsoever. No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: One is always reminded of the great debate that occurred allegedly in the Middle Ages as to how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. That is brought to mind. Whether an assertion is an allegation, whether a suggestion that somebody does or doesn't know something is an allegation becomes pretty problematical. In any event, I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has been able to demonstrate to the hon. Government House Leader that indeed he has read the literature pertaining to this and at least has erased that doubt in the hon. Government House Leader's mind. I don't really think it's a point of order. However, you have made your point in spite of that.

Debate Continued

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wonder if we could get on with the debate, hon. members. In case we've lost track, we are debating Motion for a Return 199 and the amendment that has been proposed by the hon. Minister of Education.

Are we ready for the question?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

4:00

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hurried back as quickly as I could when I realized what the subject matter at hand was, because it's an issue that's near and dear to my heart. My son is in grade 1 now and has gone through the kindergarten system, so I have firsthand knowledge of the benefits that this particular system has.

As a matter of fact, I don't really think 400 hours is enough. I think kindergarten should be a full day and that a half a day is not enough. I know that in other countries around the world in fact children start kindergarten at four years old. Only in the province of Alberta can children potentially not go to school – not go to school – until they are six and a half years old. Now, there are many studies that are out which indicate that the first seven years of a child's life are the most formative years, that those are the early years where children absorb things. All of you who are parents or grandparents know that children absorb like a sponge at these earlier stages. What we are doing is denying children the ability to actually have the preparation so that they can continue on in grades 1, 2, and 3.

Now, the motion says what we are asking for. This government has made a decision. It is not a decision made on dollars. It is a decision made on philosophy and policy. The decision is that children can be adequately prepared for elementary school if they only have 200 hours, and that decision originally was based on studies, on reports, on documentation that 200 hours was enough. What we are asking – and I think this is a legitimate request, because there are parents all across this province who are saying, "Either I have to pay more for the extra 200 hours . . ." We heard this afternoon from the Member for West Yellowhead that some rural schools are only going to be able to provide a quarter of kindergarten. We have seen that in other areas where kindergarten is not supported – and specifically I speak to the New Zealand situation – what ends up happening is that kindergarten becomes eliminated. If in fact that is what the government is intending to do, if that is what the intention is, then why not come up front and say so? If the intention is to prepare children and there are reports and there are studies that say 200 hours is enough, why can't we see it? That then begs the question that if we can't see it, then perhaps it's not there.

It's not sufficient to have the amended Motion 199, because that's exactly what we got, a lot of dribble. That's exactly what we got. [interjections] Dribble is not allowed? I will retract it if dribble is unparliamentary. We got documentation. We got reports that deal with discipline. We got bibliographies that do not deal with the issue that 200 hours is sufficient, and that is what decision was made. I see shrugs. If that is not the case, then there should be no problem, Mr. Minister, with Motion 199 as it currently stands. If there is no problem with indicating to us that 200 hours is sufficient, then there should be no problem with Motion 199 and there is no need for an amendment to Motion 199. That is the only thing that we are asking.

We are not the only ones that should have the ability to access this information. There are thousands of parents across this province who are seeing different kinds of kindergarten for their

children, and they have no idea, there is no idea as to on what basis the government has made those decisions.

Again, the minister seems to be upset with this trend of discussion. If there is no problem, why put forward the amendment? It's very simple. It's an innocuous request. It says, "which indicate that 200 hours of kindergarten are sufficient to prepare children for grade 1." There is nothing that is damaging. There is nothing that can be threatening to the minister to provide that particular information. If it's not there, then, yes, it is damaging and it is threatening, but if it is there, there should be no problem in providing the material as requested in Motion 199 as it stands now.

Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You're ready for the question. Just again a reminder to the Assembly that we are, first of all, voting on the amendment to Motion 199, and subsequent to that we'll be voting on the motion as it stands or as it's amended.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. HENRY: I move to close debate on the main motion as amended. It has to be very, very clear what the record is here. The record is . . . [interjection] I'd be willing to relinquish the floor and regain it to close debate if any other member would like to speak to the main motion, but I didn't see anybody rise after the amendment was voted on, so I rose. I leave it to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

DR. L. TAYLOR: That's it. Call it a day. Call it 5:30.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

The hon. Minister of Education rose to speak, and the rules on these are that once you've spoken to the main issue, then you're not permitted to speak again. With that understanding, I guess we're obliged, unless we have unanimous consent to let the minister speak.

All those in favour of letting the minister speak, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

Point of Order Speaking Twice in Debate

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you rising on a point of order, hon. Deputy Government House Leader?

MR. EVANS: Just for clarification. I appreciate that a member can only speak to the motion once; I certainly appreciate that. But once we have agreed to an amendment, then surely all hon. members should be able to speak to the motion as amended, because of course an amendment can have an impact on the debate that would be before this House. I don't think it would be fair to ask the Minister of Education or any other hon. member to speak to what may be an amendment. In fact, that would be a waste of the time of this House. But certainly once that amendment has taken place, I believe the slate is clear, and if it isn't, then I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you give that matter careful consideration, because I think it would improve the flow of

information and the flow of debate in this House. It would certainly focus the debate more on the issue before the House.

4:10

MR. BRUSEKER: Strange as it may seem, Mr. Speaker, I am rising in agreement with the hon. Deputy Government House Leader because what we now have before the House is a different motion than the one that was introduced by the Member for Edmonton-Centre. It has been amended by the Minister of Education, so now we have a different amendment to speak to.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You still have the right to speak. We're still . . .

MR. HENRY: On the point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh, you wish to speak to the point of order. Yes.

MR. HENRY: Sure. Mr. Speaker, we can spend a lot of time in wrangling back and forth. I think everything, frankly, has been said that needs to be said, and if it's agreeable to the minister and everybody in the House, perhaps we should just put the question and get it over with.

Debate Continued

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. We're looking at Motion 199. You've heard the motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre as amended.

[Motion as amended carried]

Helicopter Fleet

M200. Mr. White moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any reports and/or documentation pertaining to cost savings from the privatization of the government-owned helicopter fleet that were compiled between January 1, 1992, and March 29, 1994.

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

MR. WHITE: Thank you, sir. Speaking to it, Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple motion. It asks a very simple question. It simply asks for the information that the minister based his decision on to sell off the helicopter fleet in his care and custody under his ministry, to file that information. Now, if there ever was a simple question to be asked – and one of the simplest of all cases to prove in this particular instance that privatization does have some value, not just in philosophical statements, that it does have some value – this would be it.

He also could have easily explained and filed something in the Legislature here, a simple explanation to the employees of the government that were let go in this manner, the contractors that were let go. There was a myriad of people that this particular ruling affected, and if government is going to be for the people and by the people and explain things to the people, an open government, then one would think the display of this kind of information would be not only asked for but be demanded by the

bench from the other side. When asked, they'd say: here is a case that, yes, I can take to my constituents, lay it before them, and say, "Look, here is where privatization actually works." At least they would be able to say the before and the after. They'd be able to say: "Look, here is a report that says this is what should occur. We the government should save money by privatizing this particular service." It would show how much we've made on the sale of the capital asset. We'd be able to understand, and then we would be able to measure six months out, a year out exactly whether that worked or not. It would have been a very simple case. The limited scope of this particular issue would show clearly that here is a case where it could be done. But what happens? What do we have? We have a government that says, "No, we don't want to present this information." I think that's pretty sad, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. THURBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're going to very simply reject this because it's simply redundant and because there were no reports and/or documentation and because we simply answered the question during question period in response to a question from the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill on Thursday, April 28, of this year.

We have just recently disposed of the helicopter fleet, resulting in a return to this government of something over \$2 million. It was a further cost savings, Mr. Speaker, as the replacement and upgrading of this fleet of a further \$5 million was saved by getting out of the business of being in business, which is part of our mandate as this government. That adds up to approximately \$7 million, or a little more than that, of total savings. After doing that, of course there isn't the ongoing upkeep and maintenance that's necessary to maintain a fleet such as this.

So I just say, Mr. Speaker, that it is simply rejected. It is simply redundant. There simply were no reports. We made a decision based on the available information at that time.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to speak to this motion, particularly with regards to the minister's comments here. This question was also asked this morning in Public Accounts, and the minister at that point in time alleged that there was only a supposition that there was in fact a cost savings. He alluded to a belief that it would result in a cost savings. He could provide us this morning with no concrete evidence to this fact, and I would suggest that he would now do so.

Point of Order Relevance

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services is rising on a point of order.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, relevance. This morning, which the hon. member is referring to, in Public Accounts we were discussing public works for the '92-93 year, so it has no relevance whatsoever to the discussion that's taking place here today.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would have a hard time ruling on something that I wasn't privy to, so we would invite you to continue.

MS CARLSON: Yes. I'd like to comment to that. The minister made those comments prior to him then saying that it wasn't relevant because the helicopters were sold after that date.

Debate Continued

MS CARLSON: Well, it seems to me that this government has an obligation to do those kinds of cost-savings reports prior to making decisions which will cost the taxpayers of this province additional funds in the future. I would suggest that if he doesn't at this point have one, his department look to putting one together and tabling it here in this House.

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

MR. CHADI: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel compelled to rise to speak to Motion 200, because quite clearly I heard the minister say and suggest that this was redundant. Well, redundant, in my mind, is a word that means that this has already been done and what's the sense of doing it over again. The motion asks that

any reports and/or documentation pertaining to cost savings from the privatization of the government-owned helicopter fleet that were compiled

be presented to this House and this Assembly. That hasn't been done, and quite clearly I don't think it's redundant then.

I think the motion is a good motion. It asks for certain documentation pertaining to cost savings. It is something that his department and every department in this government today is embarking upon; that is, cost savings. We are trying to reduce costs by looking at overlap and duplication. We're looking at costs where we can go to the private sector and get it done cheaper or perhaps better, if that is in fact the case. If it's not the case, then we shouldn't be looking at privatizing. That is why when something is privatized, when something is disposed of in the fashion that the helicopter fleet was disposed of, one would think there must have been some cost-savings documentation or some analyses that were done to demonstrate that there were cost savings. Otherwise, one would not be wanting to dispose of the fleet.

I suspect that that has been done. I suspect that the minister may have that information. The motion is one which says that if you have that information, Mr. Minister, please provide it to this Assembly. If the minister does not indeed have it and his department did not get any reports that would suggest that there would be cost savings by privatizing or by using the private sector in disposing of the government fleet of helicopters, then I think the government and his department have done some injustice here to the people of Alberta.

I think it's important enough that perhaps it would have been in the three-year business plans, that this is spelled out, that there would be these sorts of reports, that we would in fact be looking at having some sort of documentation in place which would demonstrate that privatization or the disposal of the fleet would be advantageous and would give us a cost savings to the province. I suspect that it is not there, and I'm suggesting that if it isn't there, then we've done some harm to this government and to the taxpayers. So I would only say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the minister ought to come forward and tell us if there is any information. Bring it forward.

Thank you.

4:20

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield to conclude debate on Motion 200.

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government prides itself on being positive. This government says that it's getting out of the business of business. This government keeps saying that, yes, we know all there is to know, yet when they come to answer a very simple question, they have no reports: "We have nothing to file." The minister says there is no report.

Well, then how are the people of Alberta supposed to trust this government when they're basing these privatization decisions solely and completely on the basis of a philosophy? The others say: trust me. Well, I'm afraid the reason we do have Legislatures, why we do have Public Accounts, why we do have a supposed openness in government is to prove that in fact the government is competent. This is pure and simple incompetence. If you have to make decisions based on a flip of a coin, then I say there's something drastically wrong with the decision-making. If it's pure philosophy, that's even worse, because that doesn't have a practical basis.

Here we are. We're trying to be positive and say, "Lookit, here is a case where it's very easy to show that we can agree with you." We could easily have agreed with you in this case, Mr. Minister, easily, if you had filed something and said, "Here it is; here is precisely how privatization will in fact affect the bottom line of this government." And it may be so, but neither we on this side nor the people of Alberta will ever know, because you have made a decision and you will not back it up.

I urge all members to speak against the denial of this motion and speak in favour of the motion, sir.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

[Motion lost]

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

Bill 211
Economic Strategy Act

[Debate adjourned May 3: Mr. Dunford speaking]

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with a certain amount of compassion today for the sponsor of this Bill, the Member for Calgary-North West. Once again I think we've seen a clear indication of the status that members' Bills are provided, for we keep getting bounced, I guess, by some of these other matters.

Mr. Speaker, I was speaking on how the principles of Bill 211 were currently being met. I had been concentrating on the three-year business plans. I spoke about the goals, the objectives, and the measurement indicators contained in these three-year plans, and I was speaking about competitiveness and the inadvisability of annual reports being produced by government.

Companies regularly monitor their competitiveness from their own business viewpoint. It would be difficult and could be misleading, Mr. Speaker, for the government to publish a formal report on the international competitiveness of key industries. Some of Alberta's key industries are composed of a few large corporations. The report would be, in fact, on the international competitiveness of these few corporations. On top of this, there

are private companies which monitor and assess the competitiveness of a specific corporation. The government report would be regarded as an intervention into private corporate affairs.

In looking at sections 5 and 6 of Bill 211, I realize that the minister regularly answers questions regarding Alberta's economic development in the Legislative Assembly, and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism has to submit an annual report detailing the activities of the department. Submitting additional annual reports would result in costly duplication and provide unbalanced documentation.

Section 7 of Bill 211 deals with the establishment of an awards program to identify and recognize flexible networks that have developed and effectively employ high performance standards. The government on an annual basis presents Alberta business awards of distinction to Alberta businesses with innovative ideas and excellent performance. Without creating a new program requiring more expenditure of taxpayers' dollars, why not change the current program to address flexible networks? Better yet, why not allow already established business associations, like the Alberta Chamber of Commerce or other like organizations, to recognize flexible networks through their own awards programs?

Section 8 of Bill 211 deals with the development and implementation of a Mexico trade strategy. Due in large part to the passing of the North American free trade agreement, the establishment of a formal trade strategy has become a necessity. The economic, political, and social institutions in Mexico are so diverse that Alberta businesses will require assistance to enter into this emerging market. In the recent provincial throne speech a Mexico trade and tourism strategy was highlighted as one of the new initiatives to expand new business opportunities for Alberta businesses. Alberta Economic Development and Tourism is currently working on this strategy in consultation with Alberta businesses and will announce the strategy in the fall of 1994.

The four western provinces in collaboration with the federal government have been working on joint Mexico/Latin America trade initiatives. About a dozen seminars were held in Mexico, Latin America, and Canada last year for strategic sectors, including oil and gas, agrifood, and forest machinery and services, to help create partnerships. The four western provinces will complete a comprehensive plan by the summer of 1994. To formalize a Mexico trade strategy, as suggested in Bill 211, prior to the conclusion of these discussions already under way with the three western provinces might in fact act as a barrier to Alberta's full participation in this joint strategy.

To conclude my remarks on Bill 211, I support the overall intent of this Bill to bring these issues forward in the House. However, this Bill failed to acknowledge the three-year business plans in respect to the economic development initiatives brought forward by the economic ministries of Economic Development and Tourism; Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Energy; Advanced Education and Career Development; and Transportation and Utilities.

In respect to the annual reports required by this Bill, I would suggest that they may be duplicative of information already provided by the department and other private-sector interests.

In terms of the Mexico trade strategy I would suggest to the hon. member opposite that this government is taking even greater initiative than that called for in Bill 211 in regards to establishing a trade strategy with Mexico.

In terms of networking, many government departments have used networking before and are now considering using it more extensively and systematically. As I mentioned earlier, this concept fits very well with this government's new way of doing business.

Again, while I support some of the ideas contained within this Bill, I will not be voting in favour of Bill 211.

4:30

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in support of my colleague's Bill, Bill 211, the Economic Strategy Act. This Bill sets up different structures of government soft support for industry in Alberta. It's past time that we had a structure to put in place with this in mind. What it does, actually, is replace the former practice of this government of supporting industry through grants, loans, and loan guarantees. We need to get out of the practice of directly subsidizing individual businesses, and this Bill clearly addresses that need. That former practice and the practice that we still see happening in terms of this government's actions actually unnaturally and unfairly skews the marketplace and gives some businesses an unfair advantage. As a result, the government has lost billions of dollars due to bad loans and loan guarantees over the past few years.

Our position is that the role of government is to create a level playing field for all businesses and that economic development projects must be done with the full co-operation and input of the private sector for them to be effective. The purpose of this Bill is to establish a partnership between government and the private sector by establishing co-operative strategies to assist industry development in the province. That means we need to develop a common base for them, a centralized flow of information. We can provide a unified perspective for the economy. We can provide shared information on what's available within the province at all levels, not just business levels but educational levels and overseas levels, so we can talk about a truly global marketplace and being a part of that process. It helps us move towards an entire economic strategy for this province. Currently we just don't see that this is happening. There's no committed effort from Economic Development and Tourism, and we're missing opportunities.

I'd like to talk for a moment about some of those opportunities that are happening in this province that are not now being co-ordinated by the government and which should be. As a result, we're getting a great deal of duplication of service, and we continue to miss opportunities throughout the province in this regard because the left hand doesn't know what the right hand's doing.

Here in Edmonton economic development has got a program that they started called the Business Attraction Information System, BAIS. It's a data base that will set up one-stop business information. This project came as a recommendation from the Regional Linkages Task Force. This group, which is comprised of Edmonton and 18 surrounding municipalities, identified the need for establishing an on-line data base of regional economic information. Well, this is really good for Edmonton and surrounding area, but what about Calgary and surrounding area? What about northern Alberta? What about southern Alberta? This is the kind of information that the government should be collecting and having available for all areas of this province to access. Instead, they're doing nothing.

Let's talk for a moment about the achievements that Junior Achievement has made in this province. I'll speak specifically to the Junior Achievement of northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. How many people in this House know that 1994 is the 30th anniversary of Junior Achievement in northern Alberta? What we see with Junior Achievement in the '93-94 year is that they're going to put 11,500 students of this province through their

programs. Now, they don't do that single-handedly. They do that with a number of volunteers from out in the community who make a large commitment to their venture. What happens is that once those opportunities they've got arranged for the classrooms are over, there's no further progress. That information isn't shared at large in the business community. It isn't shared with the educational facilities. It isn't shared with any of the global businesses that are looking at doing business with Alberta, and I would like to know why not. We've got some outstanding programs.

How many of the people here know that in fact last Friday, on April 29, Grant MacEwan college hosted a Junior Achievement business community venture where 1,200 grade 9 students from northern Alberta participated in a process where they were encouraging all students to look ahead into business ventures and acquiring the basic skills necessary to compete in the job market? This was cosponsored with the Royal Bank of Canada, with NovAtel, and a number of other business communities, yet there was no publicity on this. This is a training format where we've seen an actual network in place between a community organization, between an educational institute, and between areas of business interest outside in a community who put out a large commitment of time towards educating these students so that when they get out into the work force, they will be contributing members of this province. Yet the government does nothing to facilitate or enhance or to in fact advertise those kinds of opportunities. This Bill clearly addresses those kinds of issues when it talks about the establishment of networks.

Let's talk for a minute about what SAIT is doing. Again this is information that should be shared with all of the other postsecondary educational institutes in this province, and it's not happening. SAIT has a very aggressive program in place for training individuals and businesses from throughout the world. What they do here is they have international training projects on site at SAIT that have an absolute immediate impact on the economy in Calgary and the surrounding area. SAIT's current international projects show that over \$5 million is being spent on training locally with this program. That's a significant contribution to the economy. In the networking format this information could be shared with all of the other postsecondary institutes in this province, and it should be. What SAIT does in this program is ensure a mix between sending faculty overseas to train other businesses and bringing foreign students to SAIT, to their campus, so that they can learn our business practices. Well, what happens when you do that? All of a sudden you have people that are already trained in the cultural needs and in the business needs of this community. I would think that if this government was as forward thinking as they say they are, those would be the kinds of projects they would be encouraging and they would be networking with that information to share it with other people, not only in this province but throughout Canada.

A critical element of this program of SAIT's is developing training programs that work with private sectors. Well, if that's not networking and that's not facilitating the need of this Bill, then I don't know what is. Training developed and delivered at SAIT allows graduates to work anywhere in the world. Well, isn't that what we need to look at in this economy?

They've got another program they're doing, and they call it: getting the edge with business and students. They have practicums and co-operative education programs that offer students, industry, and SAIT itself many advantages necessary to overcome an increasingly competitive job market. Well, the government's doing nothing to facilitate this. I can't understand why. Where are those 110,000 jobs going to come from if you don't look to co-operative efforts like this that train both education

and business? These work programs allow the students to have hands-on training which is directly meeting the needs of industry demands and allows them to apply the theory learned in the classroom and the opportunity to network in their own industry.

Well, we also see that the Lethbridge Community College has a program that does that. In fact, they used the equipment from Pratt & Whitney to train their mechanics so those people coming out of that program have a job to go to. Now, that's the kind of co-operation that we need. [interjection]

It's interesting that the Health minister just said that we didn't support Pratt & Whitney. We didn't support the loan guarantees that this government addressed in that situation. We support educational training and co-operation between industry and education.

When we talk about small business being the job generator and the employment generator in this province, that clearly falls right into the networking capabilities that this Bill addresses. But small business to date has been ignored by this provincial government, and we'll see that continue if you vote against this Bill. We certainly need to address that issue.

4:40

Let's talk about the kinds of co-operative examples that we can have. Let's talk about one that happens in Canada now that this government should be sitting up and paying attention to and following suit. The Montreal job creation initiative project, which was launched way back in 1987, has an objective to support small business entrepreneurship and to create a thousand new jobs in Montreal over five years.

The project was independently evaluated in 1990, and the evaluation revealed that the project was highly successful. Over 1,500 jobs would be created over five years, and the rate of small business failure, which typically in Canada is 30 to 35 percent during the first two years of operation, was only 6 to 12 percent. The cost per job created was between \$2,650 and \$6,000. In the past job creation programs have cost between \$5,000 and \$12,000 per job. This project provided a business centre at minimal rent to each entrepreneur and free professional, personalized management support for two years. In addition to training new entrepreneurs in management techniques, the project located existing business expertise in the new entrepreneur's proposed area of business and provided advice on specialized matters.

Now, isn't that something that we should be taking a look at in this province? By providing these networks as outlined in this Bill, you could clearly address these kinds of issues, which in the economy of this province and with the number of layoffs that this government is doing is clearly something that has to be addressed.

Let's talk about the regional enterprise agency concept for a moment here. It's a way to build on the resources in the community without central government direction. It's a way to promote regional development. We see now that too much productive effort is lost when towns can meet among themselves for economic development. A regional enterprise agency would have a number of towns in rural Alberta banding together to outsource businesses and jobs in a very effective manner. Government's role would be to assist in organizing the start-up of the agencies and in promoting the concept. Thereafter it would be limited to ensuring that the agencies have access to incubator programs. In rural Alberta that would mean electronic incubator programs to provide up-to-date information on economic conditions, available training and business support programs, and examples of job creation and community development ideas which have been successful elsewhere.

When we see the 'exodus' of jobs from rural Alberta, we see that we clearly need to address something that's going to meet those needs.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Exodus, not 'exodus.'

MS CARLSON: Sorry. I stand corrected.

I see that this current government does nothing to address that issue. Particularly when we have so many members from the government side who live in rural Alberta, I think you should clearly take a look at the direction you're taking when you don't address any of the needs of rural Alberta in terms of jobs. Now, here's a way to do it that's been done and tried before and been very successful and doesn't cost the government a lot of money.

So let's talk about improving access to training in rural Alberta. That's another form of accessing these networks that are outlined in this Bill. We could have technology for distance training and education via teleconferencing expanded beyond what it is now. Right now it's available in very isolated situations and venues. These . . .

Point of Order

Questioning a Member

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, hon. member. The hon. Member for Little Bow is rising on a point of order. Your citation?

MR. McFARLAND: Very simply, would the member entertain a question, please, Mr. Speaker?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Beauchesne* 482. All the member has to do is say yes or no, and we don't need a long explanation.

MS CARLSON: Thank you. No.

Debate Continued

MS CARLSON: Back to technology for distance education and training. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling

Decorum

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon. members. If hon. members wish to speak, there is a process that we enter into. One is that in debate we go from one side to the other side so long as there is a member from opposite sides. Catcalls across the space in between, the neutral zone, are used, but they are really inappropriate. Right now Edmonton-Ellerslie has the floor. If other members wish to speak, the Chair would be delighted to recognize them when their turn comes.

In the meantime, Edmonton-Ellerslie, please continue.

MR. SAPERS: She'd better start again now.

MS CARLSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I could start again, because I don't think you guys were paying too much attention to what I was saying here.

Debate Continued

MS CARLSON: Teleconferencing and electronic incubators clearly meet the needs of rural Alberta, and that again is a wonderful example of networking and addressing the issues that

people in this province have a concern with that we have not seen the government address to date.

I think we should be energetically supporting the development of new technologies in oil and gas, forest management, and farm management and how we can do this to encourage the growth of secondary industries in rural Alberta, such as turning raw pulp and wood into value-added forest products. We can strive to be the first in developing environmental technologies here. Environmental programs can form a base for new economic activities and jobs in rural Alberta. We're not doing that in terms of networking the technology, the research and development that we've got and actually taking it out into the field and turning it into viable businesses. There's a real link missing there in terms of what we do here.

I see the hon. Minister of Energy looking at me askew. I would have to suggest to you that the percentage of successes we currently have in research and development are substandard compared to other provinces in this country, and I think the government should certainly address that issue.

Point of Order Clarification

MRS. BLACK: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. BLACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on 23(i). The Department of Energy has focused an entire division under its restructuring on oil and gas research development. In fact, over 20 percent of the budget this year is on that division for development and research.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the point of order.

MS CARLSON: Yes, it is. I would suggest that spending large dollars does not actually result in jobs or a networking with business.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy has stood in her place on the point of order 23(i), which says, "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member." From what I understand, what we in fact have is a difference of opinion as to how much has been expended in what useful manner. I didn't catch that there was an imputation of an unavowed intention there, so in fact it's a point of clarification.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, I believe the hon. member used the term that I was looking askew at the concept. In fact I was, because if the hon. member would realize, what she was saying was not accurate, and in fact we do have employed some of the greatest technology that has been developed in our sector, in the oil sands area and in the field of conventional crude development, and it's being enhanced further by the Ministry of Energy. I wanted to clarify that, yes, I took exception to being skewed on that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair was tempted to address whether or not there had been an unavowed motive. There does not appear to be an unavowed motive, although we have clarified in the minds of the minister and hopefully Edmonton-Ellerslie the point that was really wanted to be made.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie in continuance.

4:50

Debate Continued

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to spend a little more time addressing the issue of training and retraining, if I may. When this government surveyed Albertans in early 1992 in its *Toward 2000* exercise, their response was clear. Expanded employment related to education, skills upgrading, and training programs were identified as the components most critical to a successful economic strategy and job creation; hence the need for networking.

Two years later we have no evidence of the provincial government's action to promote skill training. Rather, in February of 1994 the provincial budget proposed a 10 percent cut in 1994-95 Advanced Education and Career Development expenditure, including the complete elimination of all training grants to businesses. Well, that's in direct contravention with what's happening elsewhere in the world. I would like to point out that one of the distinctive features of Japan's training system is that once recruited from university or a trade school, businesses assume the responsibility for worker training and retraining. That is done through facilitation with the government. Again that puts a large emphasis on networking. Much of this training happens in-house over there, and it's accepted as a continuous process throughout employment. Yet what we see happening in this province is that the dollars for those kinds of projects are being reduced and reduced and reduced. So you would want to ask yourself the question of whether or not that's in fact where the dollars should be reduced.

Compared to Europe and Asia, Canada and the United States attach too little prestige to work in the trades. Consequently, we see too few resources directed to technical and vocational education. Again, if we have a good networking program with business and postsecondary education, these needs can be addressed and we can talk about people in the trades being trained on an updated basis and in a manner which is necessary for the businesses in this province. If we continue to not allow this to happen, we are certainly going to impair the competitiveness of Alberta businesses and workers, and I'm not sure that the government would want to take credit for that.

We need to see that enhanced school and business partnerships can be used to specifically assist students with the school-to-work transition in technical and vocation fields. What happens? One of the biggest complaints we see from businesses now is that when young people or people who have gone back for retraining graduate from specific courses, they in fact are not adequately trained to start work and be productive workers from day one. In networking we could certainly eliminate some of those problems.

We see that SAIT itself is well on its way to solving a lot of those problems. It's too bad the government is not in a position where it is willing to share that information with other businesses and other postsecondary institutes.

Again on the training aspect, we see that comparisons with other G-7 countries are just finding Canadians to be terrific underachievers in terms of the amount on training that we spend. While Japanese workers undertake 200 hours of formal training per year and Swedish workers 170 hours per year, the average for a Canadian worker is about two hours per year, part of which is job orientation and safety training. Well, how do we possibly expect to maintain our place in the global marketplace or to perhaps increase or even keep the level that we've got now if we don't start to address this situation? This is a situation that needs to be addressed first and foremost by government, and I find this government very negligent in what they're doing.

We have to take a look at the kinds of ways that we can support businesses without spending a lot of dollars in terms of this retraining, and that's something that the government needs to do. Putting in place this Bill certainly addresses some of those issues.

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

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me the usual pleasure to rise and try to speak against this Bill. It's really hard, because the motives appear; it's the dogma that doesn't work.

I laud the sponsor of the Bill. In fact, it was great that he had an opportunity to introduce it, Mr. Speaker, because he hadn't been asking questions for weeks. It's great to get him back talking about economic strategy in Alberta and the importance of it. Gosh, I'll tell you: to ask that this Bill be debated and to have the privilege of his name on it I think is a real testimony to the fact that clearly Alberta's economic strategy is ongoing. It really amazes me that we have to have a strategy Act in order to address a marketplace, because I know it seems that it all wants to be controlled from this room of 83, that we all know better what the marketplace is going to do, and we all know better how competition is going to allocate scarce resources and effect proper pricing provisions to take place.

The ability for us to give the marketplace free rein and to operate on a regulatory base that gives that marketplace its opportunity to prove is in fact the essence of an ongoing economic commitment from this government. In fact, how could you take a piece of legislation, which as we can all see from the long faces and the testy attitudes after day 43 and change – it's an onerous process. Legislation is an onerous process, and it's not easy for the legislative process to overload onto the marketplace. In fact, if we were to legislate economic strategy, Mr. Speaker, by the time we went through this first reading, second reading, Committee of the Whole, third reading, sit up till midnight, et cetera, et cetera, the strategy would be changed.

You know, we started here, lo, these short eight months, 10 months ago, and I think I remember words spoken in this House to the effect that we were tearing down structures, kicking in the teeth of children, gutting the health care system, and other complimentary phrases that just don't spring to mind. And that was just from the government side, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the word's out. The facts are out: between 3.5 and 4.2 percent growth, an 8.9 unadjusted employment rate. More people are working. The marketplace is healthier than ever in Alberta; it's racing ahead of the other provinces in Canada. Gosh, it's just too bad we couldn't stick in an Economic Strategy Act that could have predicted that happening. It's not going to work that way. You're going to have to let the people who can make decisions quickly and effectively indeed do that. I feel that our initiative to create a steering mechanism where government steers and industry rows is the regulatory path on which we must embark or the creek up which we must paddle, depending on how you wish to phrase the metaphor.

But in Bill 211 section 3 would require the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism to "undertake a program of key industry development activities." In real point of fact, Mr. Speaker, in February of this year the government released – released for everybody, of course, because of openness, public disclosure, fairness, et cetera, et cetera – those three-year plans of the department and agencies of the government which include that these goals, objectives, strategies, and measurement indicators were in fact done. So I think it's important to note that we've already started on this path, and to legislate a strategy would not

only be superfluous but would be in effect damaging to the marketplace which we all hold so important.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Yet I can't help but take just this tiny little bit of a political path and indicate to this House that every time we seem to get into discussion, whether it's about economic strategy, whether it's about education, whether it's about health care boundaries, there's this overabundance of state control, overabundance of legislation, overabundance of regulation coming forth from the party opposite. In fact, there is clear, clear proof that government has no effective role in that marketplace. I wouldn't want to go back to the discussion we had last night about Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Didn't he play with the Montreal Canadiens in the late '50s, Mr. Speaker? [interjection] Bobby Rousseau. That's right. Bobby Rousseau played left wing with Eggs Benedict and Dutch Elm. One of the better lines in professional hockey is one of the better lines in this House today.

5:00

The development of business plans over a period of time and the ability to put that forward is in fact an integrated economic strategy without going through the cumbersome bondage of legislation, Mr. Speaker. Industry development activities such as those proposed in the Bill are included in the major goals and objectives of the economic ministries of this government. Each department has developed strategies and programs to achieve these goals. Now, of course, the big hit comes afterwards when we take the monitoring factor on to the business plans, when you evaluate and you say: "How close did you get to achieving your goal? What speed bump did you run into? What path did you have to change? Did you meet the goals that you put forward in your business plans?" That's critical to our success.

Let me just concentrate for these few brief moments that I'm so privileged to speak in this House on examples of strategies and programs related to the industry development activities proposed in Bill 211: the publishing of industry directories by Economic Development and Tourism; the promotion of research consortia by ED and T, Energy, and Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; apprentice programs provided by Advanced Education and Career Development in co-operation with industry associations in Alberta business; product development and testing centres provided by the Alberta Research Council. We were just talking about that this afternoon. Here is an excellent example, and I was so pleased that no point of order was ruled, Mr. Speaker, because it gave me the opportunity to represent my constituent, who is indeed a player in the marketplace, and talk about a privatization or contracting out initiative of the Alberta Research Council. There's the Alberta Microelectronic Centre; the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute; the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority, soon to be not there; the Canadian Network for Advanced Research, Industry and Education, a very exciting initiative because it talks about the information superhighway, the fact we're going to get there and Alberta's going to be a key player in it. These all receive support from the Alberta government. In fact, as a marketplace player I would like to see less of this and more done by the individual groups in the marketplace. I don't think government has effective methods of being able to influence the marketplace. We can help. We can steer. But we're not players in it.

These earlier points are just a few of the initiatives that this government is involved in which are brought forward in Bill 211.

I mean, it's like carrying coals to Newcastle. You know, it's barley to Red Deer.

Several government departments have used flexible networks in the past and are now considering using them more extensively and systematically. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there's never been more dialogue or more communication or more support from a government to the overall economic community of Alberta than there is now, and it's been made very clear as to what position government is taking in this. Industry Alberta and the Alberta Manufacturing Network are organizations which promote networking in Alberta and receive support from the Alberta government. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism has already begun to train management on flexible networks.

As my colleagues have already mentioned, the reporting requirements contained in Bill 211 are redundant and can be considered a duplication of information already provided in the department's annual report and of information available from private sources. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, annual reports as they're published from this government will become more and more definitive, and it is my sincere hope that they will always include a financial statement that clearly delineates the amount of money that the government has spent in that particular support function or that particular area in which an annual report is generated.

The awards program mentioned in Bill 211 is a good idea. As we have stated, many of the ideas coming from the party opposite indeed warrant merit and have been subject to great debate in this House. I've welcomed the chance to be enriched and empowered by many of their good ideas and initiatives.

To legislate the government's involvement, as I started out in my original discussion, Mr. Speaker, is indeed appropriate. By the time the legislation takes place, it will be too far behind. We would end up being like the dog chasing his tail. I mean, we would never catch up with the tail. Perhaps that might be the doctor/nurse statement that promoted the publishing of this Bill: we'll chase it until we catch it.

The government is currently involved in a business awards program which could be adapted, or as has been previously mentioned, private business organizations could operate their own awards program which recognizes flexible networks in Alberta.

The Mexico strategy, Juan for one, Juan for all, brought forward in Bill 211 is already being developed and implemented by the Alberta government. In fact, through the three-year business plan Seizing Opportunity, the global business plan, and the report on business opportunities in Mexico this government is laying the groundwork for what should be a very successful and prosperous trading relationship between Mexico and this province.

Bill 211 would impose special priorities and requirements on the minister and again would distort the priorities set in the three-year business plan. It would reduce the degree of flexibility for the operation of the department. In fact, subsequent to the introduction of this Bill and subsequent to the introduction of the three-year business plans, the Premiers recently announced the economic development authority initiative. I look forward to this initiative becoming more fully developed. I believe that it will, in fact, pass by this Bill at warp 1 in terms of speed at which we start to again assist the economic community of Alberta and help promote the Alberta advantage throughout Canada and throughout North America.

The industry development activities proposed in the Bill are included in the major goals and objectives of the economic ministries such as Economic Development and Tourism, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Energy, Advanced Education and Career Development, and Transportation and Utilities. Each department has developed strategies and programs to achieve these

goals, and of course the business plans of all departments, Mr. Speaker, are just a little bit thicker and just a little bit more complete than what we see set forth in Bill 211.

Economic Development and Tourism has already identified priority areas in its three-year business plan and has already started working on them. ED and T, to use the acronym, Mr. Speaker, is already involved in promoting new business opportunities in Mexico and enhancing networking activities in Alberta's business community.

Bill 211, as I've stated, Mr. Speaker, expresses some very good ideas, but the fact remains that the government of Alberta representing the taxpayers of Alberta, the people of Alberta, has already incorporated them into the various economic development programs and services it offers. In fact, some of the arguments put forth by the members opposite are rather tough to buy in light of what we've heard in terms of headlines of the *Edmonton Journal*, the government's favourite newspaper. The economy is booming. We're rolling. In fact, there's strong evidence that indicates more money spent by governments in economic activities and in industrial development yields less results. That's one of the reasons why the Provincial Treasurer, whom I hold with great respect, and shows a keen sense of mind . . .

MR. DINNING: Did you say "teller"?

MR. SMITH: The fact that I would refer to him in error as the Provincial Teller would be a telling error indeed.

One the major disincentives, Mr. Speaker, to job creation and more jobs is the disproportionate amount of spending that industrialized countries have in their marketplace. As a businessman every time I hired an individual, every dollar of wage I paid I had at least a 30 to 35 percent wage burden. That meant I had to get 140 percent productivity out of 100 percent of a worker in order to get a 5 percent profit margin. It's become a disincentive for job creation. So the answer isn't more money; it's less money. The answer is for government to do the steering and the private sector to do the rowing.

5:10

In the comments from the party opposite on the G-7 nations, in fact Canada has the highest tax of all G-7 nations. It would be my suggestion that we actually put forth a private member's Bill asking to lower taxes. I think that's the kind of thing the private marketplace is looking for. That's the kind of steering initiative that we need to take forth, certainly not to go out there and distort the marketplace by inappropriate government spending. It's not something that this government campaigned on. It's not something that this government intends to do. What this government intends to do is to set the environment that will allow everybody to compete on an equal footing. In fact, it's not up to us to extend privilege into the marketplace, Mr. Speaker; it's up to the marketplace to provide its own level of excellence and to ask us about ways that we can assist them to become more profitable so in fact we can get more taxes and in fact we can spread the tax load amongst all other people.

I don't think that what we want to do with this particular initiative, Mr. Speaker, is to put increased bureaucratic gyrations on something that by definition has to move quickly and certainly even more quickly now in light of the global initiatives. I mean, you're not going to be able say: "Gee, other countries are competing at a very rapid rate. Let's have a piece of legislation that says they can't compete as rapidly in our domain as they do in other parts of the country." What you have to do is set up something that is very broad based, that sets a regulatory environ-

ment, a low tax environment, that allows the private sector to have the tools to be able to compete on an interprovincial basis, on a continental basis, and in fact on a global basis.

I was just taking more than a passing interest in Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and noticed, Mr. Speaker, that in fact Alberta is the number one producer of canola. In fact, Canada's the number two producer in the world. We produce – how many percent? – 42 percent. Yes. That passing interest has allowed me to take an even deeper look. In fact, it was last night on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno that he said, "What is a canola?" He didn't know that 40 years ago it was called rapeseed, and it wouldn't have been able to be marketed under that name. Today it is a 100 percent cholesterol free, healthy oil that is rapidly making marketing inroads into the United States. How can this Economic Strategy Act get Americans to buy more canola? I would submit to you that it can't.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the Member for Calgary-Varsity talking about rape and canola. The technology that we created here in the province of Alberta has now been hijacked, I can tell you, by the Japanese, who are now in Argentina with our technology. Shame on this very government, that spent all of that money creating the technology and just giving it away as it has. I tell you, to stand up and say with a smile some of the things that have been said by Calgary-Varsity is an absolute joke.

Let me tell you, as I listened to him here, as I listened to him, sitting in my seat, he talked about the overabundance of state control that he said the Liberals want to impose, and in this Bill he says that is exactly what we're doing. Well, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, who is it that wants to appoint superintendents? Who is it that wants to appoint hospital boards? Appointments, mind you. Who is it that wants to fire judges? Who wants state control? Come on now. And who is it that isn't going to blink because of state control? So don't start pouring it all over the Liberals, buddy.

I can tell you one thing. Their solution is to pour money on the problem, and I can tell you that if there is a problem, that's all they do. Pour money to the tune of \$30 billion over the last eight years alone, and there's no telling how high it's going to go, no telling how high it's going to go from here on in.

Mr. Speaker, in Economic Development and Tourism, business and tourism development, program 2, there's \$44 million being expended in there. On what? Industry, technology, and research; tourism, trade, and investment; policy development. And the story goes on. We're pouring more money. You see, that's where the money's going: \$44 million there. We're pouring money into program 5 as well. We've got \$11.6 million in that one. I wonder how much duplication and overlap is going on within all the different departments. Then we've got another million dollars in tourism education and training in Economic Development and Tourism.

I want to start off by saying, Mr. Speaker, that I applaud the Member for Calgary-North West for bringing forward such a timely Bill, Bill 211, called the Economic Strategy Act, for bringing this Act forward, because it's such a timely Bill. Given the fact that the North American free trade agreement is now in place, we need to develop an economic strategy. I can tell you that there is no better time than today. Each member in this Legislative Assembly should stand up and support this Bill

wholeheartedly. I can tell you that that would be the wisest thing, because three years from now – and I say three years because there is a sunset clause in here, something the government of course adopted from the Liberals and incorporated in their three-year business plans. Section 9 quite clearly states, "Within three years from the date this Act comes into force." It is a much wiser move to proceed now with the Economic Strategy Act than it is to expend all the funds that we talk about within ED and T and all the other different departments.

Now, I'm going to just talk a little about flexible networks. Flexible networks is an interesting concept, one that I think would go a long way, Mr. Speaker, to bringing together industry. It brings private-sector enterprises to work together, to do things like "manufacture, sell or market products, develop technologies or create or disseminate information." Now, it's very difficult for anybody to argue that this isn't what is required today, at this point in time, 1994.

I can recall years ago when I was selling a house of mine. The fellow now, by the way, is the deputy minister in one of the departments here in government.

Point of Order Repetition

DR. L. TAYLOR: Point of order.

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. Point of order: repetition. We've heard this same story about him selling his house three or four times before, and I can repeat it word for word. So I would request that you ask him not to repeat this story.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: On the point of order, hon. member.

MR. CHADI: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I can challenge the member. I think he just got up because he doesn't have anything to do there. He's scratching his nose for the longest time all through the debate. Now all of a sudden he's got something to say. I have never, ever in this House suggested that I had sold my house to a deputy minister who is now in the department of social services.

5:20

MR. CARDINAL: You've said it before.

MR. CHADI: No, I haven't. I can tell you that I have never, ever suggested that. So if you think there's a point of order here, then you rule on that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Hon members, I really don't feel there is a point of order. I really don't know what selling a house has to do with Bill 211, but by the same token I'm sure that the hon. member will continue and stick to Bill 211.

Debate Continued

MR. CHADI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for those wise words.

What I was referring to was the ever increasing and rapidly changing world that we live in in terms of technology, which changes so fast nowadays. When I was doing this deal years ago, there was something that – the deputy minister was out here in Edmonton, and what he suggested I do was take this document, the offer to purchase and interim agreement, over to the social

services department in town. He said that what we could do is put that on what looked like a photocopier, and by golly he could get it in less than a minute here in Edmonton. This was about 1982, so 12 years ago, if you can imagine that.

**Point of Order
Decorum**

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. member with a point of order.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe as we are in second reading of the Bill, the hon. Government House Leader is lacking some protocol in taking his appropriate seat. I'd ask that the Speaker call him to order on that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. DAY: I didn't hear a citation on the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: There's obviously not a point of order. I didn't actually hear the hon. member's comment, but I understand that the Government House Leader was somewhere, and I happened to be looking at these good-looking people over here, and I wasn't looking over there.

Hon member, continue please.

Debate Continued

MR. CHADI: Mr. Speaker, I just want to continue about how it was that 12 years ago this document could be transmitted and received here in Edmonton within one minute. Lo and behold, it could be done in the same quickness, sent all the way back to where I was in a minute's time. In those days, I could not believe

it. It looked like a great big photocopy machine. All you did was dial a number on a thing; a telephone is what it looked like. Now, of course, later on, I realize it's nothing more than a facsimile machine. But you see, 12 years ago, we'd never seen one. We'd never even heard of one. We had no idea what it was about.

Later on, what happened was that I thought I'd have to get me one of those. So I went out and I bought one, Mr. Speaker. I bought one, and I recall paying around \$1,300 for this machine. You know, it used to take three minutes to transmit a page. Three minutes. Then I thought I had the world right in my hands, because I could fax anywhere. In three minutes I could have a document anywhere in the world. That's right. That's the way it was. Then, lo and behold, I'll tell you, a new invention came along. They could do it in a minute. Then after that they developed a machine that could fax in 10 seconds.

Well, you know, times change rapidly. As we speak, technology is changing. That is why if Alberta companies are going to compete in the world today, particularly in the North American marketplace, we need a co-operative effort in technology. We need it now. That is what the flexible networks are all about.

Mr. Speaker, if I may continue my debate on second reading at a later time, I would like to adjourn for today and call it 5:30.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper has made a motion that we adjourn debate on Bill 211. All in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

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

