

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, October 19, 1994**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 94/10/19

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce a petition signed by 2,602 individuals urging the Legislative Assembly

to urge the Government to not allow the . . . development of Horseshoe Canyon into a golf course and to designate Horseshoe Canyon as a provincial park, for the viewing of all Albertans.

The signatures on this petition come from every corner of the world, and the visitors to Alberta who saw Horseshoe Canyon like it just the way it is.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would beg your leave to present a petition. The petition urges the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to recognize the importance of early childhood services and to fully support in funding kindergarten in this province.

Thank you.

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

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table a petition today representing roughly 1,200 signatures from the Lac La Biche area. The ID No. 18 South residents are urging this government to hold a plebiscite to decide the future of their municipal district.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would like to table a petition requesting the government of Alberta

to provide quality kindergarten education for our children by maintaining . . . 400 hours of instruction per child per school year.

This guarantee, according to this petition, should be by legislation.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

MR. KIRKLAND: Mr. Speaker, I request that the petition I presented on May 18 of this year be read.

CLERK:

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

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. Mr. Speaker, on May 24 last I presented a petition asking that the poor old Sturgeon general, instead of being closed down and disappearing into Edmonton, be moved into the Westlock-Morinville area. Could that be read now?

CLERK:

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to 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 St. Anne, Parkland and Westlock.

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

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I now request that the petition which I presented on May 26 regarding the Children's hospital be read and received.

CLERK:

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

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, in the ongoing spirit of co-operation and at the request of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and to assist them in accommodating certain concerns as they go through a time of transition, I wish to give oral notice of the following government motion.

Be it resolved that changes to the membership of the following committees be approved by this Assembly: on the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, that Mr. Nicol and Mr. Sapers replace Mr. Chadi and Mr. Mitchell; on the Standing Committee on Law and Regulations, that Mr. Decore replace Mr. Dickson; on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, that Mr. Sekulic replace Mr. Chadi; on the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, that Ms Leibovici and Mr. Van Binsbergen replace Mr. Dickson and Mr. Mitchell; and on the Parliamentary Reform Committee, that Mr. N. Taylor and Mr. Wickman replace Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Germain.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table calculations prepared by the Alberta Liberal caucus that indicate that if we had a hundred million dollars, instead of the Bovar loan guarantee, we might have covered the funding for – and this is quite serious. We would have had money for a 50-bed women's shelter to operate for over 91 years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. WEST: Yes. Now back to some sanity.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table today four copies of the 1993 Vital Statistics report as well as four copies of the 1993 annual report for the Alberta Liquor Control Board for the year ended January 4, 1994.

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

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table calculations prepared by the Alberta Liberal caucus that indicate the following: the \$100 million the government committed to the Bovar loan guarantee could have purchased school lunches for 216,677 needy Alberta elementary schoolchildren for every day of this school year.

MR. ZARIWNY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table calculations prepared by the Alberta Liberal caucus that show that the \$100 million the government committed to the Bovar loan guarantee could have funded the Alberta Human Rights Commission for more than 60 years, to be exact 61.31.

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

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to file four copies of an information kit which was used today in the national rollout of the "If You Drink, Don't Bowl" campaign, targeted at postsecondary students. Partners in this project were AADAC, the Association of Canadian Distillers, Bacchus, and the liquor boards of eight provinces, including ALCB, and one territory.

Thank you.

head:

Introduction of Guests

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, in the members' gallery today is a group of very distinguished visitors. Alberta was built by people who came to this province in years gone by and devoted themselves to creating the Alberta that we have today. I'm just really pleased to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a group of very distinguished senior citizens from the Westlock area who've come to Edmonton today to observe the operation of their Alberta Legislative Assembly. I'd like to introduce the group leader, Cecile Ormel, and ask all the other distinguished visitors to rise with her and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

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

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly three guests who are seated in the members' gallery. These guests are with us today to participate in the national rollout of the "If You Drink, Don't Bowl" campaign. These guests are Mr. Peter Chubb, chairman of the social responsibility committee, Association of Canadian Distillers; Ms Carmi Cimicata, executive director of Bacchus Canada; and Mr. Leonard Blumenthal, chief executive officer of AADAC. I would ask them to rise now and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to all the members of the Assembly a young man from my community of St. Paul, Mr. Marc Gagnon. Marc is a student at the University of Alberta, and he is taking political science and history. I would ask Marc to stand and receive the traditional welcome.

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 the members of the Assembly 51 visitors from Greenview elementary school in the Edmonton-Mill Woods constituency. These 51 visitors and their teachers Mme Savoie and Mrs. Howitt accompanied by parent helpers Mr. Kates and Mr. Knowles are in the gallery, and with your permission I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to Members of the Legislative Assembly 32 visitors from the Wes Hosford school in Sherwood Park. They are accompanied today by teachers Bonnie Hunka and Jane Dimitroff and parents Elizabeth Dehghani and Pam Yundt. They are seated in both the public and members' galleries, and I'd ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly two very distinguished guests from Fife, Scotland: John and Isobel Goodfellow. John and Isobel Goodfellow are accompanied by two residents of Edmonton-Rutherford, Alan and Kathleen Lymer. If they would please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you on behalf of the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung 46 students and parent helpers from Ormsby school. They're seated in the public gallery, and they're accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Vodden, Ms Hinterleitner, and Mrs. Vanjoff as well as parent helpers Mrs. Robb, Mrs. Smalley, Mrs. Husain, Mrs. Woynorowski, and Mrs. Bélanger. If they'd please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

head:

Ministerial Statements

Workers' Compensation Board

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's exciting for me to be able to announce today that the WCB assessment rates being presently paid by all businesses in the province will be reduced right across the board, which could be for the first time in history. Approximately 68,000 small and large businesses in this province will get an across-the-board reduction of 7 and a half percent. When you add this to the improved experience rating which is a result of reduced injuries, that experience rating being enjoyed by the majority of Alberta businesses this year – when you add that to the 7 and a half percent reduction in their rates, some businesses in this province will be experiencing a decrease, a reduction in their overall assessment rates of up to 77 percent.

The second thing I'd like to announce, Mr. Speaker, regards the unfunded liability of the Workers' Compensation Board. By December 31 of '92 that unfunded liability was at approximately \$601 million and rising. By December 31 of '94, some two and

a half months from now, the unfunded liability of the WCB will be zero.

Mr. Speaker, it's also gratifying to be able to say that these significant results have not been achieved on the backs of injured workers, because in fact it was just last month that it was announced that the pension increases for injured workers would be increasing 2 and a half percent and the maximum level of insurable earnings for all workers in the province would also be increased. That was announced and done last month.

Naturally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be able to take the credit for all of this, but I can't. As a matter of fact, the credit for these remarkable milestones being achieved actually flows out from under this dome, as our Premier constantly reminds us. The action and the achievements are achieved by people outside of this dome, and congratulations need to go to the chairman, Vern Millard, to the board of directors, to boards of directors of all businesses, and to boardrooms across this province, also to the industrial yards, to the shop floors, to the workers' safety committees, and to the exciting new growth of industry safety associations across the province. That's where the credit goes, to all the people who continue to put health and safety as job one as far as WCB and workers go in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it's significant to be aware that there is, I would say, a different and a new relationship that has developed between WCB and the government. On first meeting with the new CEO and president of the WCB close to two years ago, we had an in-depth, lengthy, and very frank discussion, and at that time it was made clear to WCB through their CEO that government was concerned about a number of things. Number one, we needed to see a reduction in injury rates. We needed to see a reduction in the assessment rates that businesses were paying. We needed to see a reduction in the unfunded liability. We needed to see a reduction in the length of time it was taking for workers to receive their compensation when they were injured. We needed to see a reduction in administration costs. We needed to see all of these things happen. We needed to see a reduction in inconsistency in claims management.

At that point I was assured that WCB and its partners, employers and employees, would be able to put plans together to address those needs, but there would need to be one further reduction, and that would be the reduction in the amount of involvement of the government in the day-to-day operations and decision-making of the WCB.

The legislation that we have in place clearly anticipates that WCB is arm's length from government and needs to be that way. We need to be reminded and need to underline the fact that the dollars that go into that operation, the WCB, do not come from the general revenues of this province. They do not come from taxing all Albertans. The WCB is run by the dollars that come from businesses, from all employers paying directly through their assessment rates to the WCB. That's where it comes from.

Mr. Speaker, that funds a unique relationship between workers and their employers. The employer says, "I will cover the full cost of possible injury to yourself," and the worker says, "I will accept that coverage of cost, and by that, we'll be able to avoid costs of possible court involvement with the employer." That's the basic unique social contract that exists between employers and employees, and for that to be able to be properly administered and work properly, government has to follow the lead and philosophy of Premier Klein by saying: "Get government out of the face of people. Get government out of the way so that innovation and full responsibility can take place." That is what's happened, and

that's what developed in this relationship between government and WCB, WCB being fully accountable for its actions, able to work clearly with employer and employee representatives, and get the job done without government involvement in those day-to-day operations and decision-making.

1:50

As I conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to announce, in terms of the success of that type of relationship and what can happen when people are truly trusted to do what they are given to do, that we've seen efficiency improvements to the point that now 65 percent of all workers who are injured on the job receive a cheque within 14 days of the reported time of that injury. That is no small accomplishment when you consider that WCB staff receive on average over a year some 370,000 telephone calls, 1,500 phone calls a day. They handle 7 and a half million pieces of mail in a year. That's some 29,000 pieces of claims information in a year. This last year, in '93, there were 31,800 claims filed. Of those 31,800 over 30,000 of them were settled before going to the final Appeals Commission, which is a quasi-judicial body that has the final say. Over 30,000 of those were settled. Just over a thousand did go to the Appeals Commission. Of 1,035 there were approximately 135 that actually went on to the Ombudsman for final appeal. Of those 135, four were assessed to have contained some type of administrative error that had to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, the system is not perfect. There are still workers who are hurt and who need attention. There are still businesses who have some concerns about classifications. But overall it is working. The WCB has taken the responsibility given to it, is responsible to employers and employees. In thanking them and in thanking the staff and all the groups that have made these milestones achievable and possible, we need to say and recognize with gratitude that truly the Klein approach to creating an Alberta advantage has been significantly achieved and moved along by the WCB.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be amongst the first to give some credit where credit is due. It is recognized that the statement made by the minister does point out that there is a reduction in assessment as far as business is concerned. It further points out that the unfunded liability will become zero, but let's not forget that a portion of that decline is because of changes in the actuarial assumptions.

Recognition – and the minister touched on this – has to be given to Dr. Cowell and his staff. He was recruited of course by the chairman of the board, and we owe a debt of gratitude to him as well.

While we give praise to the administration of the WCB and such, let's not forget, though, that the Workers' Compensation Board is much more than economics. The Workers' Compensation Board deals with the human element. Using terminology from the minister's own statement, the system is far from perfect. He makes reference to not doing these changes on the backs of injured workers, and let's hope, Mr. Speaker, that that's something we always keep in mind.

Hardly a day goes by that at least one injured worker doesn't approach my constituency office and approach every other constituency office here. It still is an ongoing concern that there are injured workers throughout this province that feel they're not

getting the fair system that they expect from the Workers' Compensation Board. There are complaints of ongoing delays in terms of handling things. Yes, there is some good, but at the same time there are those flaws in the system. There is an extremely lengthy period of time in terms of appeals being heard. We had two major recommendations done in recent years, one in 1988, one in 1992, and there are still some recommendations from those two reports that have not been followed through.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. We have to always keep in mind the need for us to show sensitivity to those injured workers. We've all seen, we've all read about the extremes that some injured workers have gone to as a result of the frustrations that they faced in trying to deal with their individual case as far as the Workers' Compensation Board was concerned. Now that we have some control of the unfunded liability, now that assessments are going in the right direction, let's concentrate on the human element and make the WCB as sensitive as possible to the injured workers of this province, whom it is meant to serve.

head:

Oral Question Period

Special Waste Treatment Centre

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal caucus tabled correspondence that revealed an alleged impropriety in the preparations of submissions to the NRCB hearings on hazardous waste importation. This alleged interference is prejudicial to the impartiality of the NRCB hearings. The minister of the environment, responsible for the Crown corporation, having been informed three months ago, compounded this problem by not dealing promptly and firmly with the matter. He has thus abandoned the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council and has impaired the work of the NRCB. My first question goes to the minister of environment. Will the minister now please tell the House his reasons for failing to act on the correspondence he received three months ago?

MR. EVANS: I know that this issue, Mr. Speaker, is before the Ethics Commissioner, but I'm delighted to have the opportunity to describe to Albertans what in fact happened. Back on June 29 last year I received a copy of a letter, not an original, that was sent by Chief Jim Badger to the Natural Resources Conservation Board. It was discussing a number of issues of concern to the chief and his counsel. The main ones related, quite frankly, to their firm who were giving expert evidence, UMA Engineering. Now, I was copied as a courtesy. I didn't even get a letter from Chief Badger. I got a fax copy of the letter from the lawyer representing the Indian band, and the Member for Sherwood Park yesterday in a news release made a copy of that letter available.

There's nothing in the letter that asks for any action by myself, doesn't even contemplate any action by myself, and, in fact, the last sentence of the letter says:

As a result of these events we believe our ability to fully participate in the hearing process has been jeopardized and we have instructed our counsel to review the consequences of these developments prior to the Indian Association of Alberta and Chief Badger's group making their presentations before the NRCB.

In point of fact, the issue was never brought forward by their counsel during the NRCB process. They were either on the witness stand or cross-examining through much of the process, which continued into the month of July. There was never a letter sent to me by either counsel or the chief asking for any review of this or anything else. In point of fact, as is my norm, when I

received the letter, I sent a letter acknowledging it back to the solicitor for the Indian Association and the regional council and was certainly open to anything that would come from that. I've reviewed that letter again, Mr. Speaker, and I would deal with it no differently today than I did back in July of this year.

MRS. HEWES: That simply will not wash. That's a very lame excuse. I'm embarrassed by that kind of an answer. Mr. Speaker, that man is responsible for the Crown corporation, and he's abdicated his duty. He's abdicated it.

My question is to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Deputy Premier, why would this matter be referred to the Ethics Commissioner? His mandate has absolutely nothing to do with this charge, which is one of intimidation, interference, bullying by a Crown corporation, threats. Why send it to him? Wrong place.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think the most important word that was used by the hon. member this afternoon is the word "alleged." Alleged. We've heard from the Minister of Environmental Protection. It seems that we live in a world where allegations and innuendo seem to need to be clarified, and the Ethics Commissioner is a very competent person to deal with that.

2:00

MRS. HEWES: That needs to be clarified. [interjections] Yes, indeed. Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner simply does not have the jurisdiction to deal with it.

Will the Deputy Premier now commit in this House to a judicial inquiry so that this can properly be resolved?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, in introductory comments the acting leader of the Liberal Party alleges. We've heard from the Minister of Environmental Protection. He received a copy of a fax with respect to a certain matter with speculative comments being made. Let's start dealing with some fact. We've heard fact from the Minister of Environmental Protection. He's an hon. member of this Assembly; he speaks the truth. We hear allegations from the other side.

Speaker's Ruling Clarification

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. In case the next question is a continuation on this subject, I think the Assembly should be reminded that the commissioner will decide whether he has jurisdiction or not in this matter. It's up to the commissioner to decide whether he'll accept it.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Well, now, Mr. Speaker, you're giving me rulings before I even ask the question. I'm grateful for your help.

Importation of Hazardous Waste

MR. GERMAIN: Yesterday the Premier of our province ridiculed the idea of putting hazardous substances into the ground and burying them. Yet at the same time the Premier was making that ridicule, the ERCB, with the blessing of that minister, the Minister of Environmental Protection, allowed a ruling that would allow importation of hazardous oil field waste from Saskatchewan to be buried in the ground near Wainwright, Alberta. So my first question, then, is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Why, Mr. Minister, would you approve a licence that would allow this and act in such an insensitive way when the whole issue

of the importation of hazardous substances into Alberta is very much of concern to Albertans?

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much. For the information of the hon. Member for Fort McMurray and for Albertans, we have a very strict schedule of what in the view of Albertans constitutes hazardous waste. The waste that he is talking about from the province of Saskatchewan is not a hazardous waste as defined by our regulations in the province of Alberta.

MR. GERMAIN: Supplemental, then, for the benefit of all Albertans. Since the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers gives this tank sludge a rating similar to asbestos, are you prepared to stand up and tell Albertans that this hazardous waste is not hazardous in the normal definition of that word?

MR. EVANS: I'll repeat. We have very technical staff in this province who identify hazardous waste. [interjections] The waste that the hon. Member for Fort McMurray is talking about is not deemed hazardous by our regulations, by our schedules here in the province of Alberta. [interjections] Neither the hon. Member for Fort McMurray nor I have the scientific expertise to be determining whether a waste is hazardous or not. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we go through a very careful and scientific process because we are very concerned in this province about the quality of life of Albertans. As a result of that, it has been determined in this province that this is not hazardous waste. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Would the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert please be quiet? You're disrupting the proceedings of the Assembly, hon. member.

MR. GERMAIN: Putting aside the definition issue, the Premier is on record as saying that there would be no importation of this material until the public approved it in open hearings. Tell us, Mr. Minister, why you circumvented and end run the Premier of this province in signing that licence?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that we have taken the position in this province that we do not allow the importation of hazardous waste. We made an exception on very commonsense grounds with the Northwest Territories because the waste would have been going through the province of Alberta. Even the Liberals thought it was a pretty reasonable idea to allow the waste to be treated in the province of Alberta at, by the way, Swan Hills. The rule in this province is that we do not import hazardous waste. That issue is before the NRCB. We have a definition of what hazardous waste constitutes, and we have not varied from that definition.

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

Community Surveillance Program

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has again betrayed Albertans, broken another promise. It is now releasing high-risk offenders back into the community when it said it wouldn't happen. I'm tabling two documents. The first one is the government's own community surveillance supervision program details. The second and more important one is the Edmonton Remand Centre's incident report for one Mr. Patrick

Curba. Mr. Curba's record includes, sir, a dangerous driving conviction, four convictions for drinking and driving, one conviction for escape from custody. My question is to the hon. Minister of Justice. Why ignore your own safeguards and allow the early release a man with this kind of an eight-year criminal record?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the community surveillance program is a successor to the Belmont institution that was recently closed where people who are usually on short sentences or people who have been sentenced for other crimes who are not a danger to the public are spending the last part of their sentence on a prerelease basis. With the closure of Belmont we designed two programs: one the house arrest and one the community surveillance. With public safety as priority one we have designed a program where people are given temporary absences with various conditions on them.

The gentleman he has referred to in fact was incarcerated at the Alsike institution, which is in rural Alberta. It has an intensive program for alcohol abuse. This particular inmate went through that and, by doing that, qualified to come on to the temporary absence. He has for whatever reason – and I guess we're all human and so is he – abridged the temporary absence that he was given. He is now unlawfully at large, and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. He is not a danger to the public.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to invite the minister to review his own guidelines and safeguards.

How many more high-risk offenders have been released under this house arrest program in contravention of his own guidelines and regulations?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, there are no high-risk offenders in this program. They do not qualify for the program on that basis. As I mentioned, because people, inmates or corrections officials, are human, there can be a mistake at times, but that's why the public safety is priority number one in this program, and people who are a risk to the public aren't in it in the first place.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The facts do speak for themselves.

My supplementary question is to the Deputy Premier, and my question to him would be: what will he and his government do to stop this parade of botched privatization efforts?

MR. KOWALSKI: In hearing what the Minister of Justice said, he said that priority number one is public safety; public safety, priority number two; and public safety, priority number three. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that this innovative new program is working very well.

MR. ROSTAD: I'd also like to supplement. I'd like to challenge the hon. member who just raised this, because all the way through estimates for the duration that he's been in this House, he has got on his high horse and said that we need more community corrections and less incarceration in facilities. This is exactly what that is. I have the utmost faith that in fact the corrections officers are having public safety as number one and that the program is successful.

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

2:10 RCMP Communications Centres

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. I recently met with a member of the RCMP K Division in the communications section on the matter of centralizing their operations in the province. I understand that this move towards centralization is part of their long-range plan to take advantage of new technology that's available but that it also fits into our government's business plan budget cuts. To the minister: is this centralization being done only in the communications section, or are there any plans to centralize administration and policing services as well within the RCMP in the province?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, in fact, part of this issue I guess came up in Public Accounts this morning. We have a 20-year contract with the RCMP to provide provincial policing, and it has built in it certain escalation clauses. In fact we had at one time in our budget \$83 million for provincial policing. We have scaled that down to \$79 million. As we challenge the RCMP to be more innovative and efficient in delivering their service, one of the ways they're looking at is the communications centres, one of which happens to be in Peace River. With the new technology they're able to centralize that and have instantaneous communication with the people that are phoning in as well as with the dispatch of police, and it doesn't have to be in the various locations. Regretfully for the town of Peace River there are 14 civilians that work in the communications thing, and they are looking at wrapping that into another, but it will only relate to the communications sector and not affect the subdivision and the policing ability of that subdivision.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. FRIEDEL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: is this strictly an efficiency move, or will some of the savings that are realized by this be translated into additional policing services?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. ROSTAD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Part of that was answered in my first. As we challenge the RCMP to move from \$83 million to the cap at \$79 million currently, they have to look for innovative ways. So I guess it does relate if they are able to deliver the policing services necessary without increased funding because they can find savings in this particular instance through efficiencies.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. FRIEDEL: Yes. Again to the minister: will these savings be primarily to the benefit of the province of Alberta, or will the federal government also be a beneficiary?

MR. ROSTAD: Actually savings will accrue to the province because the communications centre is part of the provincial policing contract that we have, and any efficiencies relate to our contract and not back to the federal government. So from that point the Alberta taxpayer wins.

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

Loan Guarantees

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Treasurer and the Auditor General contradicted the Premier and confirmed that the \$100 million loan guarantee to Bovar was indeed new.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to inform you that the number now is two and we're still counting. On May 10, 1993, just a week before the provincial election was called, the Premier, the Deputy Premier, and the Treasurer sat down and secretly authorized a 4 and a quarter million dollar export loan guarantee which was then accessed beginning May 19, just two days into the election. My question is to the Provincial Treasurer. How many new loan guarantees constitute a broken promise? Is it one, two, three, four? Where do you draw the line?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that there is a program provided by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism – the minister may want to comment – entitled the export loan guarantee program. The very nature of the program, as it's read in its title, is that it is an export loan guarantee program. The hon. member is absolutely correct. As it states on pages 266 and 267 of the documents that I filed in the Assembly yesterday and which were made public just about three and a half weeks ago, that 4 and a quarter million dollar guarantee was provided, but he conveniently overlooks or doesn't inform Albertans about the footnote to the statement, where it says that "the guaranteed loan was repaid by the borrower on July 26, 1993 and the guarantee has expired."

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, the issue here is one of secrecy. It is one of deceit. A loan guarantee that was done through secret Treasury Board minute, not through order in council but through Treasury Board minute: if it was so open, why wasn't it done through order in council so Albertans would know this was done? There was order in council. You didn't do that.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism may want to provide information on the export loan guarantee program. It is there for the very purpose of providing to Alberta businesses, Alberta manufacturers a program similar to virtually every other province in the dominion, an opportunity to finance the export of Alberta-made product. I know my colleague over here is chomping at the bit to inform the Assembly about the benefits of this program.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The minister may augment briefly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Oh, briefly, Mr. Speaker? This is a very large topic, but to put it in a nutshell, the export loan guarantee program was terminated as per the commitment of this government in the spring of 1993. There was a changeover period of several months when we had to deal with some cleanup of files. If the hon. member and all will want to again refer to public accounts, they'll also see how this government has dealt with the portfolio value of the export loan guarantee program. In the Budget '94 document it shows that at March 31, 1993, the value of export loans was \$20,899,000. This government said that it was going to work towards reallocating, reducing, rescheduling these things. At December 31, 1993, that figure was reduced from \$21 million to \$9 million. Then just recently in the public accounts published in June of this year, that number continued to be whittled down to \$7 million, and I'm pleased to announce today that that number is about \$6.3 million in total and is now being administered by the Alberta Opportunity Company and not by cabinet, which would have Treasury Board minute or order in council.

DR. PERCY: The issue is one of secrecy and of hiding things.

My question is to the Provincial Treasurer. How many more loan guarantees, for the record, have been made by your government since December 5, 1992, by the secret cloak of Treasury Board minute or Provincial Treasurer's directive, none of which are reported publicly? How many and to whom?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the facts are in the documents which I filed in the Assembly yesterday. The facts speak for themselves. I'm proud to say that this government has made its books very open and very clear so that Albertans know the truth.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, just to supplement that, to my knowledge since June 15, 1993, there have been no new export loan guarantees made. I want to make that very clear. This government, the government of Premier Ralph Klein, was elected on June 15, 1993.

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

2:20

Education Funding

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the Minister of Education released a discussion paper entitled A Framework for Funding School Boards in the Province of Alberta. The MLA implementation team, headed by the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti, is presently consulting with Albertans on this paper. Last night the Calgary board of education claimed that the funding proposal up for discussion would cost them \$14 million, moneys which would flow out of the city to boards across the province. My question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, what is the true status of this proposal, and is \$14 million an accurate figure?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the fiscal framework, the discussion paper, is that: it is a discussion paper which puts forward some very important proposals designed to lead to a fair and equitable system of funding education in this province. The correct and accurate status of the discussion paper at this time is that it's being taken throughout the province to a number of regional meetings at which stakeholders are present, and a thorough examination is being made of it. We look forward very, very much to the consideration that is given to it and the recommendations that come forward.

In terms of the second part of the question, Mr. Speaker, dealing with the \$14 million, it's my understanding that given the preliminary figures that were provided along with the discussion paper, this is an estimate that the Calgary board of education has made at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: will special-needs students be targeted by this hit of the funding proposal?

MR. JONSON: No, Mr. Speaker, certainly not. The tens of millions of dollars that are in the budget for serving the special-needs students of this province are still there. The important thing is that we have school boards in the province recognize the requirement to provide education for the special needs of these students, and we're looking in this framework discussion for the best pattern, the best formula, the best way of delivering that

money to the education system so school boards can effectively use the money and apply it for that purpose.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, as it has been suggested, are the Catholic school boards across our province exempt from this funding framework?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, no. No school board is exempt from this funding formula. It is a formula that is designed to be fair and equitable and to apply to all school boards in this province. I cannot imagine why any school board in this province would want to be exempt from an initiative which provides for fair and equitable funding for all students in this province and serves the best interests of those students in their education.

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

Incorporation of Municipal Districts

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I tabled in the House a petition from residents of ID 18 South. That council has made a formal presentation to the Department of Municipal Affairs requesting incorporation as an MD, a municipal district, but that request has been denied. My question today is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Why would you not allow ID 18 South to incorporate as an MD?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, about 10 days ago we met with all of the municipalities in the area of ID 18 South. It's a difficult transition, because in its day ID 18 South was incorporated from Fort MacKay right down to around Elk Point. It's some 450 kilometres, and it involved a very low populated area with a low assessment in those days. In the interim, there has been development in Fort McMurray. We know how Fort McMurray has gone from a city of 8,000 to 35,000 people and how the plants have developed. ID 18 became split into three almost municipalities itself, with three divisions, three councils, three administration buildings. Today, in 1994, when we're looking at incorporating the improvement districts, it doesn't make sense any longer to take that lower portion with the population they have and the assessment base which they don't have, which is tied to the plants almost 350 miles north, and affecting mill rates beside local jurisdictions that aren't fair and equitable - it doesn't make sense any longer not only to incorporate them independently but to keep them tied to that type of a municipal function.

MR. LANGEVIN: My second question to the same minister: why then did you allow the IDs of 14, 15, 16, and now I understand 17 to incorporate when they had a smaller population and less assessment, except for one case I think?

DR. WEST: The assessment, as I said, was tied only to the fact that they take \$4 million to \$5 million assessment from the plants in Fort McMurray, which is 350 miles away. It would be nice to say that if you just drew the circle a little farther south into my area, then my town could be tied to the Fort McMurray plants too and lower the mill rate in my area considerably, but that isn't practical and isn't common sense.

Remember what I just previously said. ID 18 had three separate councils but considered themselves one ID. They had three offices. They administer them separately, almost as if they

were individual governments. IDs 14 and 16 and the rest were one council, and they had assessment that was coexistent with the population they had in the local area. This is not true in the function of ID 18. One other thing: the people in IDs 14 and 16 had a corridor of life and a semblance of living that was coexistent with the ID, but nobody in ID 18 South drives to Fort McMurray to do their shopping.

MR. LANGEVIN: My final question: is the possible disappearance of ID 18 South the start of a mass amalgamation of municipalities like we've seen with health and education?

DR. WEST: The improvement districts were told over a year ago by the minister of transportation and myself that we would be wanting them not only to take over the road authority but to look at incorporating as a municipality if they could, or the division of them would take place in accordance with common sense and good governance. Because you evolve from that, this does not then say that amalgamations or those sorts of things must take place in the rest of the province. The IDs were a special involvement in this province. They represent around 62 percent of the land base in this province, or a hundred million acres, and they had 2 and a half percent of the population. But they have evolved now with development in the north and various areas to become true incorporated municipalities.

Just because we're doing this here doesn't mean that this is something that's rampant throughout the province. Any municipalities, if they get together, can by their choice come forward to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and this government and request that perhaps an amalgamation take place. We did point a policy towards the improvement districts, and we're working only with them. If others across this province deem it feasible and functional to amalgamate, so be it. Come forward in common sense.

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

Welfare Fraud Program

MR. SOHAL: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Mr. Minister, the welfare caseload in Alberta has declined by 44 percent since reforms were announced in April of 1993. How significant has the department's welfare fraud program been in helping bring down the caseload?

MR. CARDINAL: The fraud investigation unit of course has been very successful in helping to bring down the welfare caseload in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. As an example, in the '93-94 fiscal year over 10,000 files were reviewed and visits done, and the fraud recovery branch recovered close to \$6 million in that particular year.

MR. SOHAL: Is this review program continuing in 1994, and have there been any results from recent investigations?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, this program actually was started with criminology students from Alberta colleges employed as summer students, and the program was so successful that last year we put it on a permanent basis. In fact, from April 1 to August last year I believe the taxpayers recovered an additional \$2 million during that period of time.

MR. SOHAL: Pretty dramatic. Will this program continue in the future?

MR. CARDINAL: Yes, of course this program will continue. Approximately 88 percent of the files closed will continue to be closed, Mr. Speaker. Of course, what it does is allow us then to redirect dollars to the high-needs area. Therefore, this program will continue.

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

2:30

Private Babysitting

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's determination to wipe out licensed day cares has never been more evident. First they cut the funding, and now they threaten to yank the standards, the very standards that keep children safe. If that's not frightening enough, they're going to lift the licensing requirements and let just anyone set up a home babysitting service for as many as six vulnerable young children. For heaven's sakes, we have more safeguards for hot dog vendors than we do for kids. My question is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Mr. Minister, without licensing and monitoring, how can you ensure that children will be in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment when there could be as many as six toddlers in a one-room apartment with no licensing?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member says that just anyone can babysit, I think that's discrediting the babysitters out there that are very, very credible. The parents are making choices about where the children should go. As you are aware, I've indicated before in this House that we have over 31,000 day care spaces in Alberta, and the occupancy rate right now is about 21,000. Therefore, there is a vacancy rate of 34 percent. Nothing has changed in the area of regulations for that particular portion, and that will continue. The parents now, in addition to having that option, have one added option: to go to private babysitters of their choice. They will regulate that. Give some of the parents and the babysitters out there credit. They can do the job better than we can.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question. [interjections] Order, hon. members. The hon. member has a supplemental question.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, who asked for the move? Would you tell us how many parents asked you to take away the licensing and safeguards in private babysitting?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, we are not taking away any licences. What is there now will continue to be there. We have a very good day care program in Alberta, in fact one of the best in Canada. We have the second lowest day care rates in Canada, and we have the most day care spaces per capita in Canada. Those will continue. All we've done is add one more option for families that want to use private babysitters.

Maybe you don't know, but in rural Alberta there are areas that do not have day care centres, and people utilize private babysitters of their choice. They select the people. They know the people. I am confident they will continue doing that.

MS HANSON: That still doesn't excuse no standards. In the city we don't know everyone.

Mr. Minister, why is it that when parents ask for help with child care options because of increasing costs, your response is to

place children at risk in this sort of an operation, but when big business asks for help, the government doesn't hesitate to pull out the cheque book?

MR. CARDINAL: There's no question.

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

Ambulance Services

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Constituents and particularly the Lethbridge fire department continue to be concerned about ambulance service from the Lethbridge regional hospital to Calgary. Specifically, there seems to be an inordinate amount of air ambulance charges. I would ask the Minister of Health: what are the main determinants as to whether an ambulance transfer is by air or by ground?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the determinants of how a transfer is effected from a hospital is made by the professional staff, the medical staff, and the administration of the hospital. I should say that this government fully funds their ambulance in this province and also includes the funding for interfacility transfer by ground in the institutional budget. So it is a provincially funded service, and the determinants are made by the medical professional staff and the administration.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question, hon. member.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister of Health then would clarify for me in terms of who pays for ambulance transfers. Who specifically would pay for the charge of an air ambulance, and who specifically would pay for a ground ambulance?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the air ambulance program is a provincial program and is funded provincially. The province, the Department of Health, would pay for those costs. If a transfer is made from one facility to another facility, that charge is again paid through the hospital global budgets, which are fully funded by the Department of Health, by this government, and that would be funded in that way.

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, recognizing that all moneys to hospitals do come from the provincial government and the fact that there will be different ways of accounting for that, one through the Department of Health and the other through a hospital board, would the minister consider placing the responsibility for all ambulance costs, whether they be by air or by ground, with an originating hospital board?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I looked at that issue very carefully, because as you know, it is our desire to place as much of the responsibility with the regional health authorities, which will be responsible for the management of the delivery of all health services in the region. It would have been my preference. However, with the air ambulance program it's very difficult to isolate those dollars and move them in a prospective way into a region's funding. I looked at even combining some regions and putting a global budget in a number of regions. I think at this point we are going to continue this as a provincial program.

I think the member must understand that we have to depend very much on the integrity of the professional people who make

those decisions and the institutions to ensure that patients are transferred in the way that is appropriate to the service and the medical attention they require. I am quite satisfied that occurs. If an issue is raised with me on a facility, I look into it very carefully. Again, we look to the medical profession to help us with those decisions.

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

2:40

Education Funding

(continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the government introduced Bill 19 last year, officials from Alberta Education told the Calgary board of education that since they were already at the provincial average for tax rate and per pupil spending, the tax grab would have no great impact. Now, in a paper entitled Decisions to Make the Calgary board of education stands to lose \$14 million of Calgary property tax revenues to other school jurisdictions. My question is to the Minister of Education. Why did those officials from Alberta Education mislead the Calgary board?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody is misleading anyone here. The fiscal framework discussion paper that has been put before the Alberta public and specifically before Alberta school jurisdictions sets out a framework which contains a number of proposals to provide a fair and equitable system of funding education across this province. The activity that we're currently engaged in is to consult with boards such as the Calgary board of education and get their views as to whether this does have the essential elements of fairness and equity.

Mr. Speaker, every school board in this province will see adjustments in their funding to gain that very, very worthwhile goal. We have never made any pretence about the fact that we want to have a more equitable, across-the-board system of funding of education in this province which is as fair as possible. With respect to the estimated amount that the Calgary board of education has put forward, that's their estimate of what these proposals would result in at this particular time. I urge them, if they have a critique to make of the paper, which I hope they will because they obviously have some concerns, to become part of the process, attend the meetings that are being held, and endeavour to improve the system if it needs improvement.

MR. BRUSEKER: Talking about fairness and equity, the Minister of Education should know that in zone 5, which is the lowest zone in the province, the Calgary board is already below the provincial average anyway. So my supplementary question is: why are the students in Calgary going to be further penalized by an additional tax grab of \$14 million? They're already below average.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. members across the way, including the questioner, that the hon. members on that side of the Assembly have at certain times been very, very adamant in urging the government to get on with a system of equitable funding for education in the province. This is what we are well on our way to doing in a very planned and well-considered way, which involves consultation with the stakeholders involved in education in the province, and now they do not seem to want to be part of that activity. I'm confused.

MR. BRUSEKER: This must be Education's version of EEMA. This is not fairness, and this is not equitable for the students of the Calgary public board. That's the point.

My final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is: why is the government attacking the quality of education programs delivered to students in Calgary that will result when high-needs students must be amalgamated into classrooms of mainstream students?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the contention of the supplementary question, which incidentally is on another topic – but we will proceed, I guess. One of the initiatives that was taken early in my ministry was that of a review of special-needs education policy in this province. I would like to emphasize some parts of that policy for the benefit of the onlooking member. First of all, school boards in the province are responsible for providing for the educational needs of special-needs students. Secondly, the program that is to be designed should be that which is suitable for that particular student's needs. That may involve the integration – in fact, that should be the first option looked at – or inclusion of students in regular classrooms. But it is also clear in the policy that the overriding interest is that of education of the students, and if a special program needs to be developed, a special classroom type of arrangement, that is also acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, if we can get back to the fiscal funding paper, that particular paper, as I said, the bottom line is that it has the money there that was there before for education in this province, and we're making some proposals as to how best apply it. [interjections]

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

Privilege Confidentiality of Telephone Records

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday the Chair suggested that perhaps we could have the response to the matter raised last May 31 by the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan dealt with tomorrow, but the Chair has received an indication that the hon. Deputy Premier will not be here tomorrow. So in order to expedite matters, he has said that he'd be prepared to state his position today. Therefore, the Chair would recognize the hon. Deputy Premier.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to respond to the purported point of privilege raised by the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan. For ease of reference this purported matter of privilege was raised by way of notice to you, sir, on May 31, 1994, and heard in this Assembly on June 1, 1994. At that time, the hon. member cited *Beauchesne* 92, page 25, wherein it states, and I quote:

A valid claim of privilege in respect to interference with a Member must relate to the Member's parliamentary duties and not to the work the Member does in relation to that Member's constituency. The hon. lady goes on cite *Beauchesne* 96, as follows, and I quote again:

The privacy which surrounds Members' office files also extends to computer-based data in the equipment used by Members. The hon. member further cites *Erskine May*, page 134, and I quote:

Administrative action has also been taken to preserve the liberty of the electorate in communicating with Members of Parliament. Finally, Mr. Speaker, my friend opposite calls for censure by citing *Erskine May*, page 69, and I quote:

Each House also claims the right to punish as contempts actions which, while not breaches of any specific privilege, obstruct or impede it in the performance of its functions, or are offences against its authority or dignity, such as disobedience to its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its Members or its officers.

These are very serious charges indeed. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as a long-standing member of this Assembly I view any charge of privilege with immense gravity and will mightily defend the rights accorded this House and its members so that we might discharge our duties on behalf of the people of Alberta. It distresses me, then, when this most serious charge, in fact the most serious charge in Parliament, is leveled against me. It is my contention that this purported breach of privilege is entirely without merit.

Allow me to recount to you the events leading to the allegation by the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the former leader of the Liberal Party, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, attempted to injure my reputation by bringing forth certain allegations concerning staff. These allegations provided by some poor besotted soul, whose name still remains a mystery to me, are baseless. Nevertheless, following this tawdry political display by the gallant member and former leader, several members of the public came forward to offer proof of this Pecksniffian habit of certain members opposite. Whether the stories were true or not we shall never know, because it is not my habit nor inclination to witch-hunt or whisper against members in this House.

However, one specific document came into my possession during this time, and it is this document, or rather my reference to it, which has caused distress and upset the Liberal caucus. The document in question is a copy of the monthly invoice for long-distance telephone service provided to the Liberals and rendered by Edmonton Telephones Corporation. How did I receive it, Mr. Speaker? The answer is: without my knowledge, consent, or inducement it arrived unsolicited in my office in a plain brown envelope. [interjections] Perhaps I should repeat that. [interjections]

2:50

MR. SPEAKER: Would you please give the hon. Deputy Premier the opportunity to state his position.

MR. KOWALSKI: The answer is: without my knowledge, consent, or inducement it arrived unsolicited in my office in a plain brown envelope.

Frankly, sir, I have far less experience with these matters than I believe the members opposite have, and I almost phoned the former leader for advice on how to deal with it. On reflection, however, it was cheaper to pray to Our Lady of Guadeloupe rather than attempt to telephone as members in the Liberal caucus apparently do and with some frequency, I might add.

Mr. Speaker, when the document was brought to my attention . . .

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order will have to be raised after.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, when the document was brought to my attention, I instructed my staff to hold it in strict confidence as I believed its release might possibly be an infringement on the rights or privilege of members of this House in general and members of the Liberal Party in particular. The document remains to this day secure.

Unbelievably, Mr. Speaker, I am being cited for contempt of this Assembly for failing to make this sensitive and potentially embarrassing information public. The Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan charges me as follows, and I quote from *Hansard*, page 2389:

The concern lies in the subsequent actions of the Deputy Premier in that he did not return this information nor did he file it with the Speaker of the House.

File it? I suggest, sir, that that would have been the most inappropriate action of all. The private information which was passed to me would have ended up in the public domain. Return the information? To whom? I do not know who sent it to me. Mr. Speaker, I did what I felt was appropriate in the circumstances. I had the information sealed, and there it remains.

Indeed, I was put upon by members of the legislative press gallery to make this document public. I did not. I stood steadfast in keeping private information that appeared to belong to the Liberal caucus. In a media scrum on May 31 I made the following comments, and I quote: I will argue vociferously against making public any telephone lists that come out of any offices in the government of Alberta because people should have the right to call a government office in confidence. Secondly, just imagine the implications of all of this if I were to release this information. I get calls from all over the world dealing with economic development ideas and proposals. Every minister of the Crown gets these things every day. If we were to make these lists public, nobody would ever phone us and nobody would ever come here. End quote. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Assembly cassette tapes of these interviews with these quotations in them.

Mr. Speaker, I would further advance my argument by citing *Erskine May*, page 134, as the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan did.

Administrative action has also been taken to preserve the liberty of the electorate in communicating with Members of Parliament.

Well, I agree. However, the quote is incomplete without the next sentence of the text. *Erskine May* goes on to say, and I quote:

After a complaint had been made by a Member that a constituent's letter forwarded by him to a government department had been disclosed by the department to a third party who had threatened proceedings for libel, the Prime Minister stated that all departments had been reminded that they must exercise greater discretion as to the circumstances in which disclosure was appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that I have exercised the greater discretion to which *Erskine May* refers. I have refused to divulge or communicate documents relating to the business of the Liberal caucus because it is simply not appropriate to do so. Indeed, to pass on the information might cause the reputations of some members of the House to be held in disrepute and might actually lead to a prima facie case of breach of privilege or contempt rather than the fabricated charge which is before you today.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan alleges that I somehow obstructed her ability to carry out her parliamentary duties. I don't see how. The information that came to my attention does not identify any particular person. It is simply a list of long-distance charges. The member also suggests that there is some breach of privilege associated with accessing computer-based data storage in equipment used by members. Well, the information I have did not come from any computer used by the member or any file generated by the member. It is an invoice prepared by the telephone carrier and sent to me by an unknown individual. I did not ask for the information nor seek it out in some nefarious way. I am an unwilling participant in this 'telephony' issue.

If the member is peeved, then perhaps, Mr. Speaker, this issue should serve as a caution to members about the use of information obtained through unauthorized sources. I can say with confidence that I have been more prudent in my handling of information relating to the Liberal caucus on this occasion than the opposition was when the shoe was on the other foot. This House has witnessed several attempts by the opposition to introduce documents which had been obtained in the most suspicious of circumstances. As the saying goes, Mr. Speaker: it is not always polite to drink from another person's well without permission.

I trust that this ends the matter. It is, after all, petty and tiring. Nevertheless, if the member opposite insists that I file the document with the Assembly and you so order, Mr. Speaker, I will comply. Thank you, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry indicated that he had some difficulty with something that the hon. Deputy Premier was saying. The Chair doesn't really believe there can be a point of order, but certainly the hon. member is eligible to participate in the debate.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I think memories have faded, particularly the memory of the hon. Deputy Premier on this issue. This entire matter is a matter that arose out of an affidavit that was filed by the opposition. [interjection] Twenty-three (h), (i), and (j), Mr. Deputy Premier. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair would like to take this opportunity again to plead with the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert to kindly restrain herself. This Assembly gives all hon. members wide latitude for intervening in debates, but it's supposed to be done while you're standing on your feet, not sitting in your chair.

Privilege Confidentiality of Telephone Records

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Standing Orders 23(h), (i), and (j). This matter arose as a result of an affidavit being filed by me in this Assembly. This is not something that we took lightly when the matter came to my attention by way of a letter to our caucus, to a caucus member. I said: I want proof; before I take any action, I want the person who is alleging that staff were involved in a leadership campaign out of these offices in the Legislature to put it in an affidavit form. That was done, and that's where this whole matter starts from.

Then as the Deputy Premier is walking through the park and a pigeon drops something on his head, a brown envelope full of telephone lists, he starts to make comment about me making telephone calls from Guadeloupe, which is correct. He also made a reference to somewhere in Anacortes. Now, I've never been in Anacortes. I've never phoned Anacortes, but I said to the press right after that allegation, right after that comment that, yes, for three weeks I was on a holiday that I paid for in the Caribbean. Part of my duty as the leader of the Liberal Party is, one, to look after the affairs of the party in Alberta and, two, to look after a caucus, to lead a caucus in this Assembly. It means, sir, that you phone in, that you find out what's happening. On your AGT telephone card there is a phone number for calls within Canada and one for international calls, and if it is within the ambit of public business, public domain – and it is, I suggest, when you

call back and you say: "What's happening. What's the Deputy Premier up to today? Where has he been? What's happening with the hospital in Barrhead?" All of those things and issues like that are public issues. So I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the Deputy Premier stop those references, stop that innuendo, stop putting down other members of this Assembly.

3:00

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member has already participated, and I don't believe that . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: On the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair has already pointed out that it's not really a point of order, but there was an opportunity for people to engage in the debate. Unfortunately, the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan has already participated in this debate and is not eligible to speak again.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I could take it that others can participate. I'd like to make a statement. I think it's germane, if you'll pardon the expression.

MR. SPEAKER: I beg your pardon?

MR. N. TAYLOR: I think it's germane, if you'll pardon the expression.

MR. SPEAKER: Briefly, because we do have other business to go on to, and if there is a point that hasn't been covered that is germane to this subject, the hon. member will have the opportunity to express it briefly.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think one that's been overlooked is that one must remember that phone calls, as you know – and I'm on Members' Services with you, Mr. Speaker – either come directly into the Clerk's office or the only other office that gets them, the department of public works. The hon. Deputy Premier used to be the minister of the department of public works. When a call like this from the WATS line comes in, immediately suspicious when the brown paper is deposited, it puts under question the ministry of public works. I think this is a very grave privilege indeed, because it is not only the question of private phone calls of any member on both sides of the House being available to a former minister of public works, but maybe the minister of public works is going to be suspicioned if these are being leaked around the House. It doesn't matter which side of the House we're on. We don't like the idea that they can be listened in, and a brown bag coming to the former minister of public works has to cast suspicion onto the present ministry of public works that there's a leak there, and something has to be done about that.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. We'll conclude it with this.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, it'd be pretty hard to sit here and let that go by. During the statements that the Deputy Premier was making, the hon. Member for Redwater was sitting over there pointing at the minister of public works and saying: well, we know where it came from. I would say that I don't know what you call that or what part of the rules of the House you would qualify that under, but that comes very close to an accusation, and

if that in fact, hon. member, is the case, I would like to see you do it outside this House. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, if I might. I take my oath in this House very seriously, and I am very upset about somebody making the accusation, the innuendo of the accusation that I have delivered in a brown paper bag to a former minister of public works any kind of information. I don't look at the phone bills, and I certainly do not deliver them to anybody else, and if that is your accusation, I would like you to carry it forward or apologize. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. The Chair believes it has heard enough in order to render a decision in due course. Because part of this happened on May 31 and more has happened today, the Chair wants to review the whole record and will be making a judgment in the near future.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

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

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

MR. DAY: Under 23(h), (i), and (j), allegations and motives, the wrong information that is floating around here. All members who use the long distance system receive copies. All members receive copies and statements. I just want to make that perfectly clear here, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the hon. House leader would want to clear that up, because that simply is not the case as I understand it. The WATS line numbers are not circulated to members of this House and never have been and certainly shouldn't be.

Mr. Speaker, my point is that when the Deputy Premier came into possession of this document – and it matters not to me just how it arrived on your desk, sir – the correct action for him to take was to give it immediately to you because this is a document that is confidential. However it came into his possession, he should have returned it immediately to you, because it is not a document that should in any way have been used, referred to, or had any position or place in this House. It is confidential information and should have been given immediately to you to deal with.

MR. SPEAKER: This is just getting into a to-ing and fro-ing. The Chair is going to conclude the debate on this point now. Everybody who has an interest, the Chair believes, has spoken.

AN HON. MEMBER: Mr. Speaker, you have a point of order. You haven't ruled on the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order?

AN HON. MEMBER: Stockwell rose on 23(i).

MR. SPEAKER: No, the Chair does not believe there is a point of order outstanding before the House.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: The next order of business is some leftovers from yesterday in the area of applications under Standing Order 40. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Law Enforcement Award

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak in support of the motion that I tabled yesterday. With today being the second day of the fall session, this is the earliest opportunity the Legislative Assembly has to recognize a great accomplishment of a police force in Alberta, and that's the Edmonton Police Service. It is important that we deal with this motion in a timely fashion.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is speaking to the question of urgency only and not the motion itself?

MR. ZARIWNY: Yes, I am. I am speaking to the issue of urgency in this matter, that it be dealt with in a timely fashion, and that's why I presented it yesterday, not only to show the Edmonton Police Service but all Albertans how important effective policing and public safety are to this Assembly. I therefore urge that I receive unanimous consent for my motion, please.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has asked for unanimous consent to move a motion pursuant to Standing Order 40. All those in favour of this application, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. The hon. member may now move his motion.

Moved by Mr. Zariwny:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta congratulate the Edmonton Police Service on being awarded the Webber Seavey award for quality in law enforcement from the International Association of Chiefs of Police on October 17, 1994.

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 17, 1994, it was announced by the International Association of Chiefs of Police that the Edmonton Police Service was one of three recipients of the prestigious Webber Seavey award for the quality of law enforcement. The Edmonton Police Service was chosen for this award by a blue-ribbon panel of law enforcement executives from a list of well over 200 international entries. The Police Service received this award for the work they've done in developing a matrix to help incorporate community-based policing techniques into their overall response plan. This new matrix along with other community policing initiatives has helped reduce violent crimes in the city of Edmonton by 16 percent and property-related offences by more than 25 percent over the last two years. These are, I believe, amazing accomplishments. The Edmonton Police Service has long been a supporter of community-based policing. Neighbourhood police stations are a fixture around this city, and it is common to see officers out patrolling the streets, talking to citizens. Their presence is known and welcomed by all law-abiding citizens. So it is no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that the Edmonton Police Service would receive such an honoured award for the initiative they have taken in community-based policing.

3:10

However, it is a terrible irony that at the same time the initiatives of the Edmonton Police Service are getting international recognition and their model is being used by cities right across the world, in Alberta community-based policing is in jeopardy.

Poorly planned and nearsighted cuts that this government has made to funding for community policing are not only risking a highly effective program, but they are also risking the safety of Albertans. It is imperative that we not only congratulate the Edmonton Police Service on receiving this award but that we also support the tremendous work they and other police services across the province are doing and ensure they have the resources to keep doing so.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Chief Doug McNally and the entire Edmonton Police Service should be proud of this accomplishment, and all Albertans should be proud of the fine work they have done in developing Alberta-made solutions.

Thank you.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I congratulate the hon. member for bringing forward this motion and most heartily congratulate Chief Doug McNally and the members of the Edmonton Police Service for their accomplishments. I can recall when I was first Solicitor General, and now retired Supt. Chris Braiden, whom I would call the grandfather of community policing in Alberta and almost across Canada, an Irish transplant, came over and tried to bring back some of the old-fashioned concepts, what were perceived by some people as old-fashioned concepts to policing, getting people out of the cars and onto the streets. I think it's a great, great accomplishment.

But, you know, it's just like earlier today. Why the negativism? Community policing is not at risk in Edmonton, and it's not at risk in Alberta. In fact, the RCMP have just completed in their Lethbridge subdivision a great initiative that in fact is bringing the response and the decision-making to the bottom and pushing it up, instead of the paramilitary fashion of any police force, having it go from the top down. Why the hon. member would like to disparage a great accomplishment of the Edmonton Police Service to put in some political bunk that community policing is at risk – it's not. I congratulate all of them and wish them well.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I have a unique experience to add to this minidebate as to the expense involved in community-based policing as I sat on the Edmonton Police Commission for five years, all the time of the transition from the reactive to the present mode. It's true that the Police Service should be congratulated, and the minister did rightly do so, but it was in spite of a continually dropping grant from the provincial government in aid of policing. It has dropped considerably since the time that retired Supt. Chris Braiden first proposed this initiative to the Edmonton Police Commission. It's congratulatory, but it happened in spite of a lot of drops. Going from one method of deliverance to another, there is a transition period there where you have to operate two systems almost in tandem, which is more money. In order to drag that out of the budget, the city of Edmonton had to do what was a difficult thing in times of a decreasing supply of tax dollars, and that was to provide extra funds in this regard. I'm sure that members of the Police Service and the Police Commission wouldn't be alarmed at all to hear that the congratulatory note from a member from this side added that hint of caution, that there should be some recognition of a continuance of some strong funding for police service in this province.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Let the record show that the motion passes unanimously.

Challenge Cup Soccer Championship

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to read into the record a motion that was moved yesterday during Notices of Motions.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the hon. member should state briefly the reasons why the Assembly should grant unanimous consent for him to move that motion under this order, why the question's of urgency.

MR. WHITE: Yes, sir. I thought it would be wise to read the motion first. Now it is not the case. However, we'll dispense with that. It's in the record.

MR. SPEAKER: Just explain generally what you want to do and why.

MR. WHITE: Yes. I merely wish to congratulate the Ital-Canadian Soccer Club for winning the Canadian championship, sir, and if it's left too long, it hasn't near the effect later on that it would on the second sitting day in session after the recess.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there agreement in the House with the hon. member?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? The hon. member may present his motion.

Moved by Mr. White:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly congratulate the Ital-Canadian Soccer Club of Edmonton for winning Canada's Challenge Cup, the national men's senior amateur soccer championship.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to do something that needs to be said in this House, and I'm sure that if I hadn't been the first to lead this congratulatory note, others on both sides of the House would have done so. The motion simply states that this is the premium, this is the number one, this is the coup de grace, this is the best, the numero uno, if you will, accomplishment in Canadian soccer. On Monday, October 10, the Ital-Canadian soccer team won this event in Canadian soccer. It's called the Challenge Cup, sir. It's presented annually to the best men's amateur soccer team in Canada, and it has been presented since 1926. During that time, Albertans have brought home the cup only once before. The Calgary Springers won the cup back in 1974, and we were very proud at that time, so we should be equally proud for Alberta soccer in general that 20 years later we should regain the cup.

Mr. Speaker, this team serves as local heroes. It serves as the inspiration for some 5,000 children and adults that play the game in an organized fashion in this city under the auspices of the Edmonton Minor Soccer Association and the Edmonton Soccer Association. Both of these organizations are very strong in this city as they operate under the Alberta Soccer Association, and certainly throughout the entire province this is a sport that is

growing by leaps and bounds and in fact today has more participants by double than the other major amateur sport in this province, being hockey. This sport happens to have in total more than any other and all other combined organized sports in this province in the way of participants.

It speaks well for this province that both the provincial government and municipal governments have gone a long way in supporting the active growth of this sport, and in fact I understand that the provincial government and the city of Edmonton have agreed most recently to provide some funds for an indoor facility in Edmonton to further the sport. There's certainly one that was provided in Calgary many years ago, and the sport is growing there by leaps and bounds not only for the male population but also for the female population. One should also note that this sport has a unique application to all women's sports in that it does not require a great deal of upper-body strength, so a woman has the same ability to play the game as a man. In fact, the sport in Alberta is growing much, much faster than any other sport in history, both men's and women's.

3:20

I'm referring, sir, to the history of the Ital-Canadians. The Ital-Canadians were started in the early '50s and were then called Columbus. They had a rebirth and new growth in 1961 when Frank Spinelli, noted in our city and in the Italian community as a very strong supporter for soccer and a very strong supporter of the ethnic community, and Lorenzo Bagnoriol and his friends funded and spirited the new start of Edmonton soccer in this city under a new name, and that's the Ital-Canadians. From that day to this, the Ital-Canadians have been the single most successful soccer club of their calibre in Edmonton and in fact in all of Alberta.

There was only one goal in the particular match on October 10, that came at the 29th minute of the first half, which brought an end to a drought of some seven national championships for this team. The coach and general manager, Mr. Mike Traficante, after spending 20 years playing and coaching the sport for this same team, and the president of the club and owner of a small bar, a bar called Bar Italia in our city and the centre of the local Italian soccer community, Mr. Mimo Longo, affectionately known throughout the community as a proud sponsor of the team through his personal involvement for many years, are both very, very proud and happy men today.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask for the unanimous support of this House for this motion and sincerely congratulate and praise those in association with the soccer club, the management of the club, and most of all the players of the 1994 edition of the Ital-Canadian club.

Thank you, sir.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the government and all members of the government caucus would like to support this motion in extending congratulations to the Ital-Canadian Soccer Club of Edmonton on winning Canada's Challenge cup in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, sports and sports activities are very fundamental to the vibrancy and vitality of the people of Alberta. I looked back in 1994, and I saw something like 60,000 people in Edmonton paying homage to Team Brazil playing Team Canada at a pre-World Cup soccer match in this particular city. I see the activities that are going on, and the government is very, very supportive and very, very pleased and in fact appreciates the comments made in the hon. member's introduction with respect to what's being done to support indoor soccer in the city of Edmonton as well.

In addition to providing congratulations to the Ital-Canadian Soccer Club of Edmonton on this very significant challenge, I also want to throw out a challenge to the soccer community in the city of Edmonton. One of the things that this government has been committed to in the last number of years is to bring, as a part of the legacy arising out of the 1988 world Olympics held in the city of Calgary, the location of Canadian national sports teams to be headquartered and located in the province of Alberta. Part of the legacy that came out of the Olympics of 1988 was that Hockey Canada is now located in Alberta in Calgary. Canada's biathlon team is located in the province of Alberta. Canada's luge team is located in the province of Alberta. Canada's cross-country team is located in the province of Alberta, and just recently we signed an agreement to move Canada's downhill ski team to the province of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, there's absolutely no reason in the world why Canada's national soccer team should not also be located in the province of Alberta, and I cannot think and the government cannot think of a better city to play host to Canada's national soccer team than the city of Edmonton. What this Ital-Canadian Soccer Club of Edmonton has done is enhance the prestige and the opportunity for such a thing to occur. So we're all unanimous in endorsing this wonderful, wonderful accomplishment in 1994.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, as the representative of a constituency in Edmonton that has a great number of Italian Canadians I wish to stand and congratulate my colleague for bringing this motion forward, thank the Deputy Premier for his comments, and just make a couple of comments from my end.

First of all, there are some 60,000 young people playing soccer in the city of Edmonton. Much of that organization comes because of the involvement of the Italian community. Four hundred thousand young men and women in Canada play soccer. I'm told that there are more children playing soccer than any other sport in Canada. I know from my own experience in my own family that my son and daughter carried soccer balls to school rather than the North American football or hockey equipment. They love the game.

The Italian community in Edmonton, in Alberta, in Canada has given us a tremendous enrichment by their love of soccer, and it's filtered all through the communities of Canada. There's one person in particular who stands out – my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Mayfield has already mentioned his name – as a huge supporter of soccer in Edmonton and Alberta. I got to know this gentleman when I was the secretary for the Alberta Soccer Association and the Edmonton Soccer Association. His name is Frank Spinelli. Mr. Spinelli has spent countless hours, hundreds of hours, looking after the teams that he sponsored, and he has spent thousands of dollars out of his own pocket, Mr. Speaker, to look after the development of the Ital-Canadian soccer team and the young soccer players that I spoke of earlier.

So I stand to congratulate the mover of this motion, and I single out this individual from the Italian community who has given more to soccer – many have, and that has to be acknowledged – but a little bit more than most.

Thank you, sir.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to support this motion, which is a motion to recognize achievement by Albertans. I was looking forward quite anxiously yesterday to speaking to this motion, but loan guarantees dominated our

debate. Fortunately, today we have the opportunity to recognize Alberta winners. It is with great pleasure that I stand to speak to this motion to congratulate the Edmonton soccer community and, in particular, the Ital-Canadian Soccer Club for winning the Air Canada Challenge Cup, the national championship trophy epitomizing supremacy in the sport of soccer in Canada.

The Edmonton Ital-Canadians have enjoyed incredible success in our province's soccer community over the years. While dominating the provincial scene, the club has also figured prominently at national competitions and provided numerous players with a platform leading to the national team level and even the professional ranks. The likes of Pasquale DeLuca, Ross Ongaro, Joe Petrone, Darren Poole, Claudio Perusco . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Dan Dalla-Longa.

MR. SEKULIC: . . . Norm Odinga, Wayne Gordey, and John Baretta, to name but a few who have played with the Ital-Canadians prior to attaining professional status. Not Dan Dalla-Longa.

As a long-time soccer player I have had the opportunity to play for and against this team on many occasions. I have always been impressed by the calibre of their players and the commitment to winning that the team has shown under the coach's, Mike Traficante, guidance. It is this commitment coupled with their love and passion for the game of soccer that provided the foundation for their recent crowning achievement. It is my hope that the Ital-Canadians maintain and further enhance their great tradition in soccer by continuing to provide a standard for the rest of Alberta's and in fact even Canada's teams to strive for. Once again, I am honoured to speak in recognition of this great Alberta team, their many supporters, and the Edmonton soccer community.

The Edmonton Ital-Canadians, the 1994 Canadian men's soccer champions, consist of the following: the team captain and long-time player, Andy Takats; players Scott McGeogh, Nandor Takats, Murray David, Joseph Parrottino, Norm Odinga, Frank Saporito, Rob Biro, Wayne Gordey, Rocky Deluca, Simon Massimino, Rob Montalto, Bernie Soto, Livio Montalto, Angelo Sestito, Paul Raimundo, Vince Reda, Fausto Bilotta, Daniel Falcone, who is one of the younger members on the team and also a member of Canada's national youth team, Sergio Maione, who is also one of Canada's most promising players here and a current member of the Canadian Olympic team, and also Eric Munoz. The strategist and head coach of the team, Mr. Speaker, is Mike Traficante, and he has devoted, as mentioned by one of my colleagues, over 20 years of his life to coaching this team. The assistant coach is Mike Bruno-Bossio and the manager is Mimo Longo.

3:30

Mr. Speaker, I would not do justice to this victory if I were to overlook the dedication of several key individuals. Mr. Andy Takats has been a team player and a leader and one of the club's most valuable players for many years under the coaching of Mike Traficante. Both of these highly skilled individuals have been underrated for many years by professional levels, yet they persevered and now have put an exclamation mark on the grading of their abilities by sealing this championship. Other individuals who have played important roles and must be recognized, as were by my colleagues, are Mr. Frank Spinelli, a longtime team sponsor and supporter; Mr. Mimo Longo, a longtime sponsor and supporter and manager.

All of these individuals I have mentioned are leaders, and they lead by example. They have shown how diligence, determination, and commitment can result in success. Mr. Speaker, they have

shown how every team member is valuable and is critical to achieving a successful outcome. The Provincial Treasurer, I see, is particularly interested in every team member. My congratulations go out to them. This victory demonstrates that an Alberta team where each team player is included is the only recipe for success.

I urge all members of the Legislature to support this motion recognizing achievement, recognizing that the only real Alberta advantage is Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Let the record show that the motion carries unanimously.

head: **Orders of the Day**

Speaker's Ruling Written Questions

MR. SPEAKER: Before recognizing the Deputy Government House Leader, the Chair has noted that the procedure respecting written questions has always been troublesome for members. Since the acceptance or rejection or amendment of written questions can be debated, there has been difficulty in knowing what to debate. The device adopted by the Assembly was a deemed motion that the question be accepted or rejected. The Chair is of the view that if a matter is to be debated, amended, and voted upon by the Assembly, there should be a motion on the floor. For a motion to be deemed, it should be specified in Standing Orders. It seems to the Chair that the easiest solution is to rule on this. Therefore, the Chair will rule that when a member's written question is called, the member must actually move: written question number so and so standing on the Order Paper in my name be accepted. Someone from the government should then say whether the government accepts, rejects, or moves an amendment to the written question. Written questions would then be treated like motions for returns; i.e., accepted, rejected, amended, and debated as necessary. This may assist members in the procedure. We should attack this in an orderly manner.

head: **Written Questions**

MRS. BLACK: I would move that the written questions appearing on the Order Paper today stand and retain their places with the exception of 201.

[Motion carried]

Job Creation

Q201. Mr. Bruseker asked the government the following question:

What are the economic assumptions that are underlying the forecast of job creation by industry, 1993-97, as presented on page 23 of *Seizing Opportunity: Alberta's New Economic Development Strategy*?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Written Question 201 is actually a pretty good question. It's one of the ones that sometimes is easy to respond to. The government would be happy to accept.

[Question accepted]

head: **Motions for Returns**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places with the exception of motions for returns 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, and 214.

[Motion carried]

Biprovincial Upgrader

M202. Mr. N. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all operating agreements signed between the Joint Venture Board and Husky Oil Operations Ltd. between January 1, 1992, and May 3, 1994, setting out the terms and conditions of the operation of the Lloydminster biprovincial upgrader.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I've read the question very carefully and have gone back to my officials, and I have to say that I'm not able to accept the question as it reads because there are not agreements, to my knowledge, between the Joint Venture Board and Husky Oil Operations Ltd. that were made in that time frame. However, there is a difference between the Joint Venture Board and the joint venture partners. There are in fact two. The hon. member may wish to talk to me later to clarify what his intentions are.

So I'm not able to provide the information, Mr. Speaker, because it's my understanding that there are no agreements. I must ask that the motion be rejected.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We've pulled the board out of the agreement. I don't know if the minister is aware, but brown paper bags not only get dropped on ministers' heads but occasionally get dropped on the opposition. [interjection] Maybe the same source; I don't know. He might have a whole fleet of them out there moving around.

Anyhow, the question of the Joint Venture Board – you might want to call it a joint venture group – and Husky operations. Surely the minister's not trying to tell the House that a multimillion dollar operation was run without a management agreement between the owners and the people who were running the operation. Mr. Speaker, Husky Oil were the operators of the operation. They were one of the partners. But always in a joint venture in the oil or any other business if you have a number of partners, one partner is the operator, or if it's not the operator, they've hired an outside operator. There's an agreement between the owners and the operator.

She has invited me to come see her afterwards, and I can't think of any red-blooded Liberal that would turn that down. So thank you. I will.

[Motion lost]

Business Plans Performance Reports

M203. Dr. Percy moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of any working documents or

reports prepared by or on behalf of the government between January 1, 1993, and May 3, 1994, pertaining to the performance reports that will be prepared relative to the three-year business plans for all the three-year business plans prepared with respect to the 1994-95 budget.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has brought forward an interesting motion. I would refer him to the document that was filed in the Assembly on February 24, 1994, *A Better Way: A Plan for Securing Alberta's Future*, which spells out the government's business plan and individual department and agency business plans. In that for the first time we have begun to try to spell out performance measures by which the government would ask that Albertans assess our performance and assess the progress in achieving the goals that are spelled out in this document.

I look forward to sharing with the members of the Assembly when we're sitting here in the latter part of November the proposed performance measures from individual government departments and across-the-government measures in a draft format for which we would then provide a final report in June of 1995. I understand the hon. member is looking for the nits and grits, the background to all of these things. Mr. Speaker, we're not at this time prepared to provide that information, because I think we should be judged and we're asking Albertans to judge us on the performance, not on the process but on the results.

As a result, I would recommend to members of the Assembly and seek their support in not accepting – read my lips: not accepting – this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:40

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to conclude the debate.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly would disagree with the Provincial Treasurer. It's clear that there has been considerable analysis and debate by government members of the performance measures, benchmarking, and the like, and the government has always said: get involved in the process; give us input as to how we can improve and make things work better. Now, it's clear that when you look at *A Better Way*, the purported business plans, their idea of benchmarks is how much they're going to cut, not what they're going to deliver. We certainly would like to see the basis on which in fact those business plans had been derived and suggest to them other ways and other methods that could have been adopted so that in fact you could have benchmarks and performance indicators by which you could judge how much you're going to get for the money that is spent rather than how much you're going to cut.

So I would respectfully urge all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of this motion.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

Privatization

M204. Dr. Percy moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of any privatization feasibility studies, requests or calls for proposals, offering memorandums, or prospectuses prepared by or on behalf of the government between January 1, 1993, and May 3, 1994, relative to the sale or windup of Alberta Resources

Railway Corporation, North West Trust, N.A. Properties, Alberta General Insurance Company, Mortgage Properties Inc., the 11.74 percent government stake in Syncrude Canada, and AGT Commission subsidiaries.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, this again asks for some of the process, the backdrop to the government successfully doing exactly what the government said it would do, which is to get out of the business of business, to arrange our affairs so that we not, as the hon. members across the way would advocate, precipitously exit from these arrangements but that in fact in an organized, in a thorough and a careful fashion we get out of being in the business of business.

I think the hon. member actually has cited a number of relevant and interesting examples of areas where we have gotten out of the business of business. I'm sure the hon. minister of transportation would want to acknowledge sometime in the debate that we sold the Alberta Resources Railway Corporation. Last week I had the good fortune to announce the disposal of North West Trust Company, having been amalgamated with Canadian Western Bank. I was delighted to see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud speak so glowingly of the disposition, although he and his colleague from Edmonton-Roper couldn't, you know, get it straight. They are definitely the doom and gloom gang. They thought that we were going to lose lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of money.

Yes, it's tragic that we had to get into North West Trust and Heritage Savings & Trust, but despite the hon. member's allegations a year ago – he got his calculator, and it got revved up, perked up to, I believe, \$233 million. Then all of a sudden just a few months ago he lost part of his calculator, and in fact the number dropped to \$133 million. You know, that's what happens in the departments of political studies and Economics over at the University of Alberta. I'm sure that the member from the Faculty of Education would fully understand the need for better education of the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud with respect to how to calculate the costs of government having gotten into North West Trust, regrettably, in the first place.

Lo and behold, when the government announces and more importantly when Canadian Western Bank, a company that sold on the Toronto Stock Exchange, requiring full, honest, and open disclosure, says that they've made an offer to North West Trust to be amalgamated for the sum of \$93 million, a million to go to minority shareholders, \$92 million to be paid to the province of Alberta for its interest in North West Trust, the hon. member says: no, it can't be done; it's not possible. So he's in denial – and that's not a river in Egypt – that it's a possibility that this government could actually dispose of an asset and get \$92 million cash at the time of closing.

Yes, there are conditions. Yes, we rely on the member's Liberal brethren in Ottawa at the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation, and we are confident that they will see the need to have the province have its indemnity dropped and that all of the other conditions will fall into place.

I thank the hon. member for moving this motion so I could talk about North West Trust, because he will probably ask me a zinger in question period which I will reel from but skulk beneath my desk to look for the answer and may come up with something that might satisfy the member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Going on, Mr. Speaker, to N.A. Properties, having amalgamated N.A. Properties with Holdco and Softco to create N.A. '94. The hon. member I know agreed to having to dispose of all of

those bad assets, those problem assets. He calls them dogs. We have been able to dispose of those and have now amalgamated the remaining assets in N.A. Properties (1994). Same with the Alberta General Insurance Company, the Mortgage Properties Inc. If the Minister of Municipal Affairs were here, the minister would probably speak at length about the disposal of those assets and some 5 percent of our stake in Syncrude Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we have made progress. I'm glad to see the hon. member has acknowledged it. We are here to be judged by our results rather than the process leading up to that. So I would ask all hon. members, as they consider this motion, to not accept – read my lips: not accept – this here motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, because the Treasurer, I think, provided the information. In response to 204 and relative to the sale and the windup of Alberta Resources Railway, I again say to the hon. member that I tabled all that information yesterday in motions for returns 196 and 197.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, you can see what happens: a clear case of withdrawal symptoms, of not enough questions in question period for the hon. Treasurer. He had that pent up, and it had to come out. If he'd only sent us over a letter, we would have asked him. I mean, it's sad to see.

With regards to the motion for a return, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues here that I think are important. We had tried highlighting today in question period the fact that the Provincial Treasurer still likes to do things behind closed doors. Treasury Board directives and those types of mechanisms for financing loans, loan guarantees I think are certainly not consistent with an open and accountable government.

With regards to North West Trust and with regards to some of the other prospectuses and offering memorandums that we requested, the issue here is that we'd like to know what Burns Fry did, what ScotiaMcLeod did to get their money, to get the big bucks, because in many cases the firms that were going to buy these entities were right beside them. Everybody and his mother knew who ultimately was going to get North West Trust. There was a list of about three or four people. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we see that there are these investment firms out there that counsel the government, that tell them the economics of the obvious, that bring two partners together who are virtually married to begin with. So we would like to know what in fact they were getting paid for in terms of prospectus memorandums.

With regards to the specifics of North West Trust, though, just in response to the hon. Provincial Treasurer, the initial number of \$222 million that we had come up with, I might add, in advance was a break-even point, how much they would have to get to break even. The ultimate number, since the Provincial Treasurer has touched upon it and I wasn't able to within question period – we were both thwarted – is that . . . You know, unless you're doing mystical accounting 101, which I'm sure exists – no, I wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole. But look at the numbers, Mr. Speaker. Softco lost \$95.4 million on the transactions. The equity of the provincial government in North West Trust on the public accounts as of March 31, 1993, was \$90 million. You add the extra \$5 million or so that they picked up over the course of the year, and you end up with about \$95 million.

3:50

The bottom line is that when you look at those types of numbers, the \$11 million that they pull out of a hat by mystical

accounting 101, about an \$11 million loss, it is, I think, hard to believe. If you work through who got what from North West Trust, when you look at the partners that were involved in North West Trust, when you look at the Tory bagmen that were involved with North West Trust – Gary Campbell – you have to ask yourself about the losses that this government has come forward with.

So I would urge all hon. members, if they want to know the facts about what the companies involved did in preparing the offering memoranda, the prospectus for the money that they got for, whether it's ScotiaMcLeod, Burns Fry, or any of the other firms that were involved in the sale of these assets, let the government table them. Let's see what the private sector got paid for, because as I said, I don't think you needed a Ouija board to alternately determine who was going to buy North West Trust or who ultimately was going to buy Syncrude.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would urge all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of this very positive, innocuous motion.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

Loans, Loan Guarantees, and Investments

M205. Dr. Percy moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the latest internal manual prepared by or on behalf of the government between January 1, 1993, and May 3, 1994, which formally sets out the standard authorization and monitoring procedures with respect to loans, loan guarantees, and investments.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the Assembly not support this motion. I would refer the hon. member to his own pretty good research. Marianne deserves an A for this. I'm referring to a piece that the member released today regarding background information. You know, we're not choosy. When the research is photocopies of legislation, that's good enough for us.

Under the Financial Administration Act the member refers to:

No guarantee of the payment of a debt shall be given unless it is

- (a) given by an Act,
- (b) authorized by [cabinet], or
- (c) if the guarantee is given or authorized other than as provided in clauses (a) or (b), approved by

et cetera, et cetera. For *Hansard* that's section 74(2).

Mr. Speaker, I would simply refer the hon. member to the list in the public accounts that he has provided today. You go down that list, and they're all provided by legislation.

I know it was just an opportunity to respond to the glowing research from the Liberal caucus, but isn't it interesting, colleagues? Isn't it interesting that today and yesterday as the member across the way and all his gang of friends, his gang of wannabe's and should-have-beens stood up and said in lieu of the hundred million dollars . . .

DR. L. TAYLOR: That's where they spend all their time: in the loo.

MR. DINNING: You know, the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat is absolutely right.

Isn't it interesting that they stood in the Assembly today and yesterday and said how they would have spent another \$800 million.

AN HON. MEMBER: How much?

MR. DINNING: Eight hundred million dollars, Mr. Speaker. I have it. I've kept it right here in my drawer. While in the case of the Bovar agreement with the Special Waste Management Corporation not one single nickel has been claimed on that loan guarantee, the members across the way within 15 minutes over two days spent \$800 million. Typical. These are spending Liberals. At least their brethren in Ottawa, thank the good Lord, have woken up to the seriousness of our deficit situation. But these guys across the way in 15 minutes would have blown our deficit by another \$800 million, and that was just yesterday and today in the course of probably less than 15 minutes. When not one nickel has been claimed on the loan guarantee given by the corporation, the members across the way have spent \$800 million thoughtlessly, without giving it any thought.

You know, they say that they got their Liberal research budget, some \$1.2 million, to come up with these brilliant recommendations. I heard a better idea of how if you had to spend a hundred million dollars, you could probably blow a hundred million dollars by having the Liberal research office stay in business for another thousand years.

Mr. Speaker, what I would say to the members across the way is that we are putting on the record in the public accounts, through orders in council, through programs that are known to this Legislature that we are getting slowly but surely out of the business of business.

In the case of the expert loan guarantee program, we have, as the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism commented today, the reduction from about \$21 million on the books in March 31, '93, to \$7 million at March 31, '94, and today we had an acknowledgment that it's at \$6.3 million. The government has moved that program to the Alberta Opportunity Company, which is a more appropriate vehicle if we're going to have an AOC to deliver export loan guarantees.

Mr. Speaker, I know that they're consumed by process, that they don't really have anything else to do as they wait for their Nova Scotia-supported Liberal leadership vote. Nova Scotia Bell is better than AGT or Telus. You know, maybe I'm surprised, and maybe they've offered Nova Scotia Tel an import loan guarantee in order to deliver this program.

What I liked even more was the Member for Edmonton-Roper, who said: why would somebody want to waste their time getting up on a Saturday morning to vote for the Liberals? That was what Edmonton-Roper actually had to say, and I can hardly wait, as the opportunity arises, as we talk about other guarantees and other matters, to have the Member for Edmonton-Roper in the Assembly so we can hear from him again exactly what he thinks of the Liberal leadership process and the Liberal Party.

I would encourage all members to see their way to not supporting this motion, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to reply in kind to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. It's peculiar to have to listen to a lecture on fiscal responsibility from a cabinet minister that sat around the table and voted for eight successive deficits. Not a single member over here ever voted in favour of a deficit budget. He has voted for eight of them. That individual and some of the others on the front bench there sat around the cabinet table while this province went from being a net creditor to a net debtor. We now have a gross debt – and I underline the word "gross" – of about \$31 billion. He was there for every dollar being spent, and he voted for every dollar that was spent.

Mr. Speaker, at the aggregate level he voted in favour of deficit budgets in the operation of his own office when he was Minister of Education. Every year he overspent. It's on the public record:

overspent. When you look at the public accounts and assess the spending for his own office as Treasurer, he has overspent. So at the aggregate level he is responsible for getting this province in \$30 billion of gross debt. At the individual level, as a minister he has consistently overspent his own budget, and we have to sit here and listen to his strictures on fiscal responsibility. It's tough, but that's what we're paid to do. We have to listen to it, and we do.

4:00

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Provincial Treasurer neglected the fact that he was only able to respond to our question because I had expeditiously provided him with the research five seconds before he stood up, and I have to commend him for knowing good research when he sees it.

Now, let's come to what this motion for a return really asks. This motion for a return asks for the formal mechanisms that set out "the standard authorization and monitoring procedures with respect to loans, loan guarantees, and investments." Today I think we made it very clear that the Provincial Treasurer still likes sitting around the cabinet table behind closed doors and using Treasury minutes and Treasury directives to set out loan guarantees. We do not know to whom. We do not know . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Open government.

DR. PERCY: There is no open government here.

Now, not only, Mr. Speaker, did they not use order in council so that Albertans during an election campaign – and again the context of this has to be brought forward. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Perhaps the Assembly has exercised itself enough for a little while. Maybe the hon. member could conclude his remarks so the Chair can hear them.

Debate Continued

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the point here with regards to the issue of monitoring and procedures, it's clear there was no public scrutiny of this Treasury Board minute that allowed this 4 and a quarter million dollar loan guarantee. Now, the Treasurer will say: but it was repaid. Well, do they only make loan guarantees that aren't repaid? It's clear if you look at NovAtel that that's the case. If you look at MagCan, that's the case. I wonder, is that the assertion the Provincial Treasurer makes?

So the issue is scrutiny, public scrutiny. Orders in council at least can be scrutinized, but Treasury Board minutes, Treasury Board directives are completely insulated from public view. There is absolutely no way of getting at them unless you're lucky, and occasionally we get lucky. The bottom line on this and that we asked in the House today is: to whom was this given?

We also asked the Provincial Treasurer to commit that there were no other loans or loan guarantees that were given out under Treasury Board minute, under Treasury Board directive since – and I'll give him from June 15, 1993, rather than holding him to December 5, 1992. We would like to know, and that is a question we have on the record, which he refused to answer. I would hope that some of the private members there in their next caucus meeting put him to the wall and say: "What else is out there? What other bogeymen are out there?" You forgot about Bovar. You forgot about this export loan guarantee. What else is under the rocks?

Now, what we're asking for in this motion for a return as well, Mr. Speaker, is: what criteria are used to authorize these types of loan guarantees? How do they assess risk? What are the criteria? Now, as I'd mentioned earlier, it appears that the criterion is: the more risky it is, the more likely it is they're going to loan it. You just have to look at MagCan. You just have to look at NovAtel. You can work yourself down the list, and you can come up to a number of about 2 and a half billion dollars lost. So this is a very reasonable request. We're asking: has that side of the House learned anything from history? Have they learnt what types of loan guarantees are bad loans, and have they set out criteria for assessing them? Because it's very clear that they are not out of the business of being in business. You just have to look at the Bovar loan guarantee, which the Auditor General says is a new guarantee. You just have to look at the export guarantee for 4 and a quarter million, which was given out one week before the provincial election was called but after December 5, when the Premier said: we're out of the business of being in business.

So this motion for a return here is very innocuous. It's very positive. It says: tell us what you've learnt, what you know now about bad loans and bad loan guarantees, and set out the criteria that you use. It's very clear to us, Mr. Speaker, that they're still in the business of being in business, particularly big business. So I would urge all members of this House to approve this very positive, innocuous motion. It can only help the order and temper of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:06 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Abdurahman	Hewes	Soetaert
Bracko	Massey	Taylor, N.
Bruseker	Nicol	Vasseur
Collingwood	Percy	White
Dalla-Longa	Sapers	Wickman
Decore	Sekulic	Zariwny
Hanson		

Against the motion:

Ady	Haley	Oberg
Amery	Havelock	Pham
Black	Herard	Renner
Brassard	Hlady	Rostad
Burgener	Jacques	Severtson
Calahasen	Jonson	Smith
Cardinal	Kowalski	Sohal
Clegg	Laing	Stelmach
Coutts	Lund	Tannas

Dinning	Magnus	Taylor, L.
Dunford	Mar	Thurber
Evans	McClellan	Trynchy
Forsyth	McFarland	West
Friedel	Mirosh	Woloshyn

Totals:	For - 19	Against - 42
---------	----------	--------------

[Motion lost]

Northern Lite Canola Inc.

M206. Dr. Nicol moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of any privatization feasibility study, request or call for proposal, offering memorandum, or prospectus prepared by or on behalf of the government between January 1, 1993, and May 3, 1994, pertaining to the sale of Northern Lite Canola Inc.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the hon. minister of agriculture I wish to reject Motion 206. Business plans, requests for proposal, information packages, and other material prepared for potential purchasers of Northern Lite Canola Inc. contain confidential information about current and future financial results of Northern Lite Canola Inc. Release of this information at this time could be harmful to the new owners of Northern Lite Canola. Therefore, this motion is rejected.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Speaker, in terms of this information that we're requesting here, I think it would be very important for the people of Alberta to understand the process that went on in preparing the company, Northern Lite Canola, for sale. We need to understand the process that the government went through in terms of how they made this an attractive asset at a time when it was continually losing money and making it an attractive proposition for another company to pick up. It's dealing with an industry that has a lot of implications in Alberta in terms of the competitive position of other companies, and we'd like to see the background material on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: No. Sorry. When the hon. Member. for Lethbridge-East spoke, he closed debate.

[Motion lost]

4:20 North Saskatchewan River Boat Ltd.

M207. Moved by Mr. Bruseker on behalf of Ms Carlson that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of loan guarantee agreements between the government and North Saskatchewan River Boat Ltd. between January 1, 1992, and May 3, 1994.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the government would like to propose an amendment, and the amendment has been circulated. The amendment would see the addition of some words after what currently is written. The words would be added: "for which all parties to this agreement allow release." We'd be happy to accept the proposed amended motion, and if the procedure is to vote on the amendment first, then I would encourage all members of the Assembly to vote in favour of it.

MR. SPEAKER: On the amendment, hon. member?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes. I didn't know, Mr. Speaker, whether he gets to speak on the amendment, or, if he spoke on the amendment, would that close it off for me? Well, anyhow, I'm up now.

Well, one of the problems I have with this amendment that has added – I notice a number of times – provided "all parties to this agreement allow release" is that it's a convenient out for the government for two reasons. One is: how are we ever going to know, when they come back, if they said that they couldn't get agreement from all parties? It makes it very difficult for the opposition to check out whether indeed one of the parties had turned it down.

Maybe even more important than this is that I think we want to establish the principle in this House – we've tried to for some years – that if you use public moneys, you're in public business; you're under the public eye. If you want to borrow privately and don't want your mother-in-law or the opposition or the government to know what's going on, then you go somewhere else, to the Royal Bank or whatever it is. But if you borrow money from the public, from the taxpayers, it should be a given that the public then knows the deal that was made, not be able to get out the door by saying, "Well, if all the parties don't agree, we don't have to get it."

Mr. Speaker, I'm just saying that the amendment doesn't solve anything. It just gives them a convenient out.

Point of Order Questioning a Member

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

DR. WEST: *Beauchesne* 492. Would the hon. member entertain a question in debate, please?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, certainly, Mr. Speaker. Coming from the hon. member, it's always entertaining.

DR. WEST: Well, carrying the hon. member's argument to the nth degree and expanding it out into the public domain, we have in this country loan guarantees to farmers through ADC in the realm of \$1.1 billion. We have loan guarantees through Canada Mortgage and Housing in this country to the tune of perhaps \$15 billion, and those are as pure a loan guarantee as it is to anybody else. Should those, then, under that light – and I'm asking you this question – be made public? Should every one of those loans and those guarantees on every home in this province and in this country through Canada Mortgage and Housing and on every farm loan that's out there be made public?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, of course, this is sort of peculiar: two nonlawyers arguing a legal agreement. But I've been in business long enough to know that it is public now. If you have a guaranteed mortgage, it's registered. You can get an abstract of title and see what it is. The same with a farm. They are public. The minister has made the very point I'm trying to make. They are public, and they are . . . [interjection]

Point of Order Clarification

DR. WEST: Point of clarification. [interjections] Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Misrepresentation. There isn't clarification on the land titles, I happen to know very well. It may state that there is a mortgage on the land, but it doesn't clarify the terms of

it and the fact that it's guaranteed by the people of Alberta or the people of Canada. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair feels we are really digressing from the amendment. [interjections] Order please. Order. The hon. Member for Redwater was speaking on the amendment.

Point of Order Clarification

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, point of order. The hon. minister must surely realize that he can get the actual mortgage document and look at the terms of the document at land titles. That's part of the law of this province.

DR. WEST: Point of clarification. It's not on the title. So who would you be looking for? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The Chair feels that the best way of proceeding is to recognize the hon. Member for Redwater on the amendment proposed by the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Debate Continued

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, I think we've already shown, particularly with federal government business and a great deal of provincial government business, that if guarantees take place, you can pull the title; you can pull the mortgage agreement. All I'm just trying to say is that that time-honoured thing which was started in the 1930s go through to today. I don't see, if I borrow money from the government, why I should be able to keep the terms secret, because I am borrowing not from the government; I am borrowing from every taxpayer in this province. So I should make it public. It shouldn't be a question of the government checking with the parties that are involved. I think this is nothing more than flimflammy, or whatever the correct word is. As the Premier said so well the other day, it is a fertilization of the truth right up to your knees, Mr. Speaker, to try to put this in here and argue that somehow or another the government isn't responsible for indicating whom they've loaned money to. It's not the government's money. It's not the opposition's money. It's not the Legislature's money. It's the taxpayers' money, and they have to know where it's gone.

MR. BRUSEKER: Speaking to the amendment, Mr. Speaker, you know, this is a curious situation we find ourselves in accepting this amendment. Really, it doesn't say much of anything. It says, "for which all parties to this agreement allow release," but we don't even have a commitment yet, based on the amendment, that the government agrees to the release of this information. So we have the curious situation whereby if this amendment is indeed passed and then the amended motion is indeed passed subsequent to that, then they could turn around tomorrow in the quiet of their caucus room and say: "Well, sorry, hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie. We've decided we're not going to release the information."

I would be happier with an amendment that at least gave some indication that the government side was committed to releasing the information. As the Member for Redwater indicated moments ago, this isn't their own personal money. This is money for which they are operating in trust, supposedly, on behalf of the people of Alberta. This doesn't even give us any indication that

the government is prepared to allow release. Of course, even if the government says, "Well, gee, we're happy to release it" and North Saskatchewan River Boat turns around and says, "Yeah, but we're not," there's still no commitment, and the agreement will not in fact be released. Having had that experience in the past in this Legislature, where precisely this type of amendment has been passed and letters have been sent and the response comes back, "No, we're not going to release it," the end result is that there's no public disclosure of that information, which of course is the point that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was making earlier on: that the whole purpose of the legislative process is to allow for public scrutiny, public disclosure of the finances of the province.

While on one hand this does seem to provide some indication that something might possibly happen if all goes well and the winds blow correctly and the weather's appropriate, it really doesn't provide any improvement at all. So from that standpoint I'm offering a suggestion to the hon. minister and other ministers who may in fact be dealing with similar motions for return that motions for return that are amended in this fashion could in fact be improved if, indeed, we saw that there was a commitment from at least the government side to address this issue.

4:30

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, there are two ways now that the public can come to a government, a federal government or a provincial government, and seek assistance, seek aid, seek money. If you go to CMHC or if you go to AADC or if you went, as you could in the past, to Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and you made your deal with those corporations, you made a financial arrangement, and AADC or CMHC or AHMC would file either a chattel mortgage or a debenture or a land mortgage in the registry offices that would give exact details of the arrangement. Now, I have to admit that I continue to be shocked by the comments made by the hon. minister just moments ago that if you go to land titles, you can only see on the title the notation that there's a mortgage. I guess maybe he's never had a mortgage or he's never dealt with people who had mortgages, because the process is that you go to land titles or you go to central registry and, yes, you see the notation, but you then take the next step and you ask for the document to be delivered to you. Some clerk will go and bring you the document, and you can look at the exact details of the arrangement that you've made on your CMHC loan, your AADC loan, or whatever.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Now, that's full disclosure. That's when you come and borrow moneys from the province or the federal government, and it's required that there be a full disclosure. Mr. Minister, I'm shocked that you continue not to know the process. Where have you been for more than 50 years of your life for God's sake? How can you sit there as a minister of the Crown and not know that? [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order, hon. member. On both sides, if we could direct the debate through the Chair as opposed to shouting at one another, that would be helpful.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry on the amendment.

Debate Continued

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I can remember the heavy, hot days of debating NovAtel in this Assembly when we the opposi-

tion, the NDP and the Liberals, asked day after day for copies of the documents that related to arrangements, loan agreements, whatever, between NovAtel and corporations in the United States or wherever, and we got the same phony-baloney line that there would be some sort of harm done if this was disclosed, harm done to NovAtel or harm done to somebody else. Well, there sure was a lot of harm, almost \$700 million worth of harm. And we're getting the same phony-baloney arguments from that minister over there and other ministers telling us that this would hurt some third party. Let's get with it. If somebody wants to borrow money, like a farmer or somebody that comes to AADC, full disclosure like it has been everywhere else.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, speaking to this amendment, it's an insult to the intelligence of this Assembly. The question that we're addressing this afternoon through these motions clearly shows that there has been no change from the previous administration to the present administration of this Conservative government. They're still doing business the old way. They're still not prepared to share information that should be public, and they use the flimsiest excuses to keep that information private.

I would also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if indeed the Deep Six say that they stand for integrity and open government, I would like to see a little bit of backbone shown and demonstrated, or put their money where their mouth is, because we haven't seen any of that in this Assembly. If indeed members of this government support this amendment, I think what they're saying is: business as usual, and Albertans don't have the right to know how this government is investing their money or lending their money. We keep reminding members of this Assembly that the dollars expended by government are Albertans' money. They're not the Conservative government's money; it's not the Executive Council's money. So why can't we see a change in attitude by the cabinet of this government and an openness through these amendments or through the acceptance of these motions? It would be refreshing if we started to see some integrity in this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you wish to close debate?

MR. KOWALSKI: Only with your permission. I can't do that on my own.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have one member standing. You've not yet spoken.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: I'm speaking to the amendment. The issue here is one of fairness, that there is one set of rules for individuals in this province. The problem with this amendment proposed by the hon. minister is that it still allows firms to hide the rules and the conditions under which they have had access to taxpayers' dollars. It's information that ought to be public and available for scrutiny, just as in most instances the mortgages and other types of obligations that individuals have to the state or to the private sector are on record somewhere.

Again to harken back to question period, a 4 and a quarter million dollar loan was made, and we don't even know to whom it was made. All we know is when it was made. It was paid back, but we know nothing about the group or the individual or the firm. Here we don't know the conditions under which the guarantees were made, to whom the guarantees were made, and

any of the other types of supplementary conditions or contingent obligations.

So what we're asking, Mr. Speaker, is that if you want access to taxpayers' dollars, you better be prepared to accept full scrutiny. In fact, the rules of the game shouldn't be tilted in favour of businesses who have access to taxpayers' dollars; just the reverse should hold. If a company can't get money from a bank, if a company can't get money from private investors, there's got to be some price to be paid for getting access to dollars from the public sector, and that price has to be scrutiny and public accountability.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Deputy Premier, it's the Chair's understanding that you've already spoken to the main motion and to the amendment.

MR. KOWALSKI: I just moved the amendment; I didn't speak to it. I thought I had the right to close the debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is the Chair's understanding that without unanimous consent of the House . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: It's okay. It's okay.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: So now we'll call for the vote on the proposed amendment to Motion 207.

All those in favour of the amendment, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed to the amendment, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The amendment is carried. Call in the members.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:40 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Abdurahman	Henry	Soetaert
Beniuk	Hewes	Taylor, N.
Bracko	Leibovici	Van Binsbergen

Bruseker	Massey	Vasseur
Collingwood	Percy	White
Dalla-Longa	Sapers	Wickman
Decore	Sekulic	Zariwny

Totals: For – 42 Against – 21

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the main motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You've heard the motion by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West on behalf of his colleague the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie. All those in favour of the motion as amended, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

Magnesium Company of Canada Ltd.

M208. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the loan guarantee agreements between the government and Magnesium Company of Canada Ltd. between January 1, 1986, and May 3, 1994.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, am I closing the debate? I'm not closing the debate now? I need a ruling on this, because I was of the assumption last time that I was going to have a chance to participate in the debate, and I did not have a chance. If I speak now, does this mean closing the debate?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Deputy Premier, no, it will not mean that you're closing debate. The ruling on the previous opportunity that you took to speak: the mover of the main motion may speak again to close debate but the mover of the amendment may not, as determined by Standing Order 23(a). So, no, you're not.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much then, Mr. Speaker. I'll be very, very clear on this. The intent in dealing with Motion 207 – and I know we're on Motion 208 – is that the government actually was attempting to assist the opposition in the obtaining of information. The government view was that adding an amendment to it, "all parties to this agreement allow release," would in fact facilitate the obtaining of such information.

Much of the debate in the last motion resolved itself around the question of government money. There was no lender, so it was not the government lending any money to anybody, Mr. Speaker. It was the government putting in place a guarantee.

Well, that spirit and the manner in which that last motion was – it really, really bothered me, Mr. Speaker. So I now want to withdraw the amendment that I have for Motion 208, and I'm asking for a complete rejection of the motion.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, these things always get polarized so fast. One side of the House goes one way and the other goes the other. Quite often a lot of us are asking which way do we go this time and which way do we go that time without thinking it through. On this particular issue I wanted to make an appeal to both sides of the House because this is not a case of the government versus the opposition. This is a case of the cabinet versus those that are not in cabinet, regardless of whether they're in opposition or not.

Obviously, if the cabinet can make agreements without filing the information or without giving out loan agreements, they're going to be denied some of the wisdom of the people either in the opposition or behind the front row here. As a matter of fact, I've often heard people over there make some very good contributions to policy and maybe to business ideas, but you in the last two rows there are being denied a chance when the cabinet is allowed to keep secret the deals it made. Who knows what somebody in the backbenches of the Conservative Party or the Liberal Party or even the NDP – God bless their pointed little heads; they were in the House in those days – might have been able to flash and flag and been able to point out if agreements had been filed in House when these loans were made? But, no, they weren't, so it was kept a secret from all of us, whether you were a Liberal, a Conservative, or an NDPer.

So what you have here is the cabinet – this is one thing to remember – asking the right to keep secret from you, whether you're on this side of the House or that side of the House, the kind of deal they made. And not only keeping it secret from you; they are denying you your input and protection. You represent and were elected by taxpayers, and you're elected by taxpayers to look after their money. They're denying you the chance to have input, to say, "Hey, old chum, I used to be in this business, and you've signed a lousy deal" or "This looks like a lousy deal; better start getting out of it." Instead, what you do is after 10 or 12 years, when whatever it is has hit the fan and the money has been lost, you're asking: "Come along and support us, because after all, we took this thing five, 10 years ago. You're not a real Conservative unless you support us, and you're an awful mean opposition to be asking what's going on."

There is a current benefit to be realized by getting across to all members in this House that are not in the front bench that the front bench can't go off and make secret agreements, can't make agreements and keep us out. Because if they're using your taxpayers' money, your voters' money to make a deal, whether you're Conservative or Liberal, you have every right to know what's going on.

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

DR. PERCY: Yes. I, too, want to speak on this motion. I think it's illustrative. Had the structure of the loan guarantee been made public at the time it was signed, it would have been clear, for example, that we didn't own the technology. It would have been clear, in fact, that this was an agreement that locked us into a large potential loss with I guess it was Alberta Natural Gas. Norm Wagner, who's been out and about the province talking about fiscal responsibility, I believe at the time was the chairman of the board when in fact this initial agreement was signed, and then he had the wisdom to punt out, to leave the province holding the bag.

When one looks at the history of this, Mr. Speaker, you see that initially it was about \$102 million. They've written down

about \$53 million of it. There is still \$49 million outstanding, on which we pay \$500,000 a month interest. We have the assurances of the Deputy Premier – he does not procrastinate on these things – that by the end of this fiscal year MagCan will be gone, but it will be gone at the cost of \$150 million to Alberta taxpayers. Would this have happened had this material been available for public scrutiny? Would we have entered into this had it been debated in the House? Would the people who initially got us into this been laughing all the way to the bank had they known they were going to be held up to scrutiny and then ultimately to ridicule once it was fact that it was a technology that didn't work and there was a product being produced for which there was no demand? Had this material, had the structure of the guarantee been available for public scrutiny, I doubt very much we'd be looking a \$150 million loss in the eye.

Also, Mr. Speaker, with regards to the issue of scrutiny – and this is the principle that's embodied in this motion for a return – had that scrutiny been available, so many of those backbenchers or private members would not have been caught off guard by the \$100 million loan guarantee to Bovar. They wouldn't have read about it in the newspaper when we released the material. They would have known about it before the fact, and they would have had their input before the fact.

So I would urge all hon. members to vote in favour of this motion for a return.

5:00

MR. DECORE: This is a really sad story of the myriad of sad stories that the government got itself involved in. Fortunately it's in your constituency, Mr. Speaker. The sad part is that when you drive past this huge building, you see a building that millions of dollars have been squandered in putting up. You see a little steam coming out, and you say to yourself, "My God, how could anybody agree to pay I think it's a million dollars a month or more in maintenance costs and costs of just upkeep of that building?" A million dollars a month.

In addition to that, there are costs that have to be paid on the loan guarantee: interest costs and so on. This House has been told by a previous finance minister that it was just a matter of a short time before this state-of-the-art factory, edifice, technology would be sold and Albertans would recoup all of the money that they put into it. It hasn't happened, and it won't happen, and I'm told – maybe you know even better, Mr. Speaker – that the equipment is now so rusted and so broken down that nobody could retrieve anything from that plant.

What is there to hide, Mr. Deputy Premier? What is there to hide from the people of Alberta by not telling them all of the details of this loan agreement? I guess all you can be telling Albertans is that you're ashamed of what you got into and that there's more shame that would come by disclosing the document and showing how negligent the government really was on this deal.

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

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I look at this whole MagCan fiasco and the whole issue of loan guarantees. Why are loan guarantees made in the first place? Is it because the companies are such a good business risk? The people that lend money to a business for a living aren't willing to lend money to these businesses, so they come to the government. Why does the government make these loan guarantees? They make these loan guarantees because possibly a particular region will be revitalized economically. Maybe because it'll create employment, and the government will be able to recoup its

exposure, the risk that it took, through taxes. Or maybe it's even made to friends of the government. Heavens knows that that doesn't happen here.

I remember the Treasurer saying, you know, after he said that that was then and this is now: this government here is going to make it its policy that if you deal with the government, everything that you do with the government's going to be in the open. Those are almost his identical words. Yet we can't get information on a loan guarantee. We're given the reason that in the case of some of the other loan guarantees, well, it would jeopardize negotiations that are going on. Well, there are no negotiations going on with this MagCan plant. We're told that possibly it's going to be sold. But how would the details of the loan guarantee possibly affect any sale? Everybody knows that it's a shemozz, everybody knows that the government doesn't own the technology, and everybody knows that the plant has rusted, that you can't get it up and running anymore. In the case of the MagCan plant we can't even get the financial statements, and we can't get the financial statements on this shemozz because of the argument that it's not a subsidiary, that it's not owned by the government.

I took this up with the Auditor General, and he said: well, the government doesn't own the shares. But the government controls that company. The government has an obligation to let the people of this province know what happened to their money, and the fact that this government continues to hide behind some of these reasons – oh, it might affect negotiations; oh, we don't own the shares in the company – only begs the question, only makes you suspicious: what else is there that we don't know about? What else is there about this open government? We see all these mountains of paper, documents submitted, but when we ask for the stuff that we would like to see, oh, there are all sorts of reasons why we can't get that information.

Mr. Speaker, loan guarantees are continuing to go on in this government. The people of Alberta need to know what's happening to their money, and if negotiations are involved, maybe some sort of condensed information can be given out. I understand that confidentiality needs to be maintained. I don't understand it in this MagCan plant quite honestly. This MagCan plant is done. It's never going to be sold. It's going to be sold for scrap value, and the longer we prolong it, the more we're going to bleed. All we're really doing is protecting past mistakes. Let's own up to these past mistakes and get on with it. Let's get out of this deal and let the people of Alberta know that this government is truly not in the business of being in business. I don't know how the Deep Six back there can continually condone by their sort of silence – I mean, they're purporting to be the entrepreneurs, yet this continues to go on, a million dollars a month or whatever the figure is that this government continues to incur.

So, Mr. Speaker, I speak in favour of this motion, and I urge all members of this House to vote for this motion and to get the books on the table, to get the truth on the table, and to get on with it.

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

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to speak in favour of this motion. There's a sorry history with regards to this MagCan plant. I can remember well back in 1985 when the discussions were taking place for the development of such a facility, and anyone within the petrochemical industry cautioned anyone risking an investment on such a plant. That was

shared with the government at that time and with the Premier. I can well remember private investors optioning land in the petrochemical belt knowing that the main petrochemical investors in the province of Alberta were saying that you'd never make a dime on it. It reminds me of the debate around the Swan Hills plant as well.

The cabinet and the government of that day felt they were better businessmen than the entrepreneurs that were out there in the marketplace. From those political decisions we see a legacy of debt, yet we have to sit in this House and listen to the people that brought that legacy of debt trying to infer that this Official Opposition, when they try to show you how money that you lost for Albertans could have been well used, are not thrifty people, we're not good stewards for the Alberta dollar. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the cabinet of that day – and many still sit on this front bench – had listened to the private sector, had taken heed, and not risked through these obscene loans, we wouldn't be here today dealing with this motion.

I can remember as well – and, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you remember this – that when the decision was made during a political campaign where that plant was going to be sited, it was suggested at that time that if that plant was going to be sited and had any hope of an economic reality, it would be placed in a petrochemical belt, not in an area where it did not have the ability to indeed feed from the petrochemical industry.

I would once again challenge the government members. If you're trying to tell Albertans that you've changed and that you're a different administration, why are you sitting there silently and allowing the front bench to tell you how to vote, telling Albertans that they have no right to know what happened to their money? It's their money, not someone's in the front bench or the back bench. Yet we hear people going out from the private members, talking to the media, protesting to the media, but when it comes to their putting money where their mouth is and standing up and showing their true colours, they sit like quiet little boys.

5:10

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that nothing has changed, and I'll keep repeating this. Nothing has changed over there. We're on the same road, and I for one have no confidence in the financial capabilities of this government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues have offered several compelling reasons why the Assembly should vote unanimously in favour of this motion as proposed by my colleague for Edmonton-North West. [interjections] Calgary-North West. I'd like to offer one more reason. I'd like to remind all members of this Assembly of one more reason why they should support this motion. I'd like members to recall that every private member on the government side and every cabinet member voted in favour of freedom of information legislation, legislation that, if this government was not dragging its feet in putting into place the regulations and proclaiming the legislation as law, would already offer opportunities for Albertans to get this kind of information. I would suggest that this government begin to practise what it preaches and what the Premier promised Albertans when he brought forward his Bill on freedom of information and what Albertans told the all-party committee that studied that Bill and brought recommendations to this Assembly to make that legisla-

tion even better, that this government begin to practise behaving as though it were operating within a framework of freedom of information.

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely nothing more revolting in a democracy than a government hiding information from its citizens. I would suggest that this government can start behaving in a way to give Albertans confidence that it means what it says, that it wants to be open and accountable and act as though this law were already in place. It would be good practice for them, and I urge all members to support this motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West to close debate.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleagues that spoke in the debate this afternoon. I'm really pleased to see the way this has gone this afternoon, because this shows that this government really hasn't changed at all. It shows that the government that was so proud to be secretive prior to the last election is proud to be secretive after the last election.

Mr. Speaker, we went through a procedure of passing a Bill that had been spearheaded by my colleague from Edmonton-Glengarry for years entitled freedom of information. I know that my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo, amongst others, along with the member from Edmonton or is it Calgary-Glenora - North of Beiseker, he tells me - has been involved with that as well.

We on this side of the House have been looking for information on a variety of issues. This particular motion for a return that I've got on the Order Paper today, Motion 208, asks for information with respect to MagCan. Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected to this Legislature in 1989, MagCan was going on stream, and eventually it did operate for a short period of time. At that time I was the critic for a government department which no longer exists called technology, research, and telecommunications. I asked if I could go in and see this plant. Could I go see the facility? I was denied access at that time. I was told that because it was secret and it was new technology and so on and so forth, it really wouldn't be appropriate for a member of the opposition to go in and see that plant. Of course, now I understand there's not much to see at all. I don't know whether you as the MLA for that particular constituency have had a chance to see it. I know that I haven't, and I would hazard a guess that none of my colleagues from this side of the House have had a chance to see inside the facility ever, since it opened or since it closed for that matter.

My understanding is that the government has received a rather small offer, I understand in the neighbourhood of \$400,000, for the plant. Given the \$102 million loan guarantee, that seems to be rather small.

Mr. Speaker, the curious event that transpired today of course is that we have a motion for a return and some time earlier on today there was a proposed amendment to that distributed to members of this Legislative Assembly which was similar to an amendment that we dealt with. In fact the wording is identical: "for which all parties to this agreement allow release." The Premier - sorry; just a small Freudian slip there. The Deputy Premier decided on a moment's notice between the vote for Motion for a Return 207 and Motion for a Return 208 to change his mind.

I think it's important for members on the back bench, opposite side, or the non cabinet ministers on the back side to recognize what has happened today. In the bat of an eye, someone who's in charge of a particular government department, in this case economic development, says: "Because they don't play the rules

that we set out, we're going to change the rules. We're going to say, 'No, sorry; I was going to give you the information but nah, nah; now that you guys were mean to me on 207, we're not going to do that.'"

Part of the problem there is that when you look at his comments in rejecting it, the minister referred to the amendment that he had considered but has withdrawn or not introduced, which says, "for which all parties to this agreement allow release." His argument was: gee, in that previous Motion 207 that would have facilitated the distribution of information. Well, in fact, Mr. Speaker, having had the experience where that kind of amendment has been introduced in the past, it does nothing to facilitate at all the release of information. In fact the only thing that it facilitates is that the government can stand up and say: "Well, we accepted this motion for a return. We didn't reject it. We accepted this motion for a return. Gee, it wasn't our fault. It wasn't the government's fault that we didn't get the information in the opposition, but it was some other big bad guys out there somewhere."

Well, who's going to provide it? What is MagCan nowadays? Who is MagCan? Where are they? What we have, as far as I'm aware, is a closed, defunct building with some equipment inside, which, as I said, I've never seen. We don't know what information in terms of the dollars and cents is out there, in terms of the terms and all kinds of things. As my colleague from Calgary-West says, it makes no sense whatsoever. So, in fact, the amendment does little to facilitate the distribution of information.

Now, I can understand why it is that the government is reluctant to release the information on this. I can, because it would simply be pointed out how foolish it is to buy a car and not have a licence to drive the thing, which is essentially what happened here. We bought a car for \$102 million called the Magnesium Company of Canada, which they were told not to buy in the first place, and as it turns out, we don't have a licence to operate the thing. We can't plug it in and turn it on even if the technology worked. All of that would come out. It would simply show that once again this government got outfoxed by some people who bamboozled the government and unfortunately the taxpayer in the province of Alberta for \$102 million.

Now, it would be interesting to know where the \$102 million went. The government has written down, as my hon. colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud points out, the loan guarantee, which simply says, "Well, we admit that we blew it for at least half the amount of money, and we think we can still get half the amount of money out of it again." Well, that's at best dreaming in the clouds. Now, maybe - maybe - something will be recouped out of this, and maybe somewhere along the line Albertans will get some money back out of it, but the fact of the matter is that we're going to lose a lot of money. By the time we get to the point where we are ready to close the doors on MagCan and show another substantial financial loss, any documents that are around will probably be long gone. [interjections] Maybe a Mexican trade office. Well, I think it's a little too far north for that, but it might make a good highway halfway house to get down part way.

So, Mr. Speaker, this rather whimsical change of mind on behalf of the minister of economic development to not introduce the amendment and then not subsequently pass the amended motion I think is something that all Albertans should be particularly concerned about, the way this government operates, and particularly disappointed in in that this is probably the last big deal, at least that we're aware of, that is still hanging over our heads.

I encourage all members to support the motion for a return.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, would the members in favour of the motion please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is defeated. Call in the members.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:20 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Abdurahman	Decore	Sekulic
Beniuk	Henry	Soetaert
Bracko	Hewes	Taylor, N.
Bruseker	Leibovici	Van Binsbergen
Collingwood	Percy	Vasseur
Dalla-Longa	Sapers	White

Against the motion:

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

Totals: For - 18 Against - 42

[Motion lost]

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:34 p.m.]

