

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, November 2, 1994**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 94/11/02

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I beg your leave to introduce a petition. This petition is signed by a number of Albertans asking the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to ensure that 400 hours of kindergarten are provided to every child in Alberta without a user fee.

Thank you.

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition signed by approximately 430 people representing Lethbridge and Alberta showing a strong opposition to the proposed Bill 53, the Social Care Facilities Licensing Amendment Act.

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

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition from eight of my constituents dealing with the inclusion of sexual preference in the Individual's Rights Protection Act.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would like to present a petition from the LAC of Galbraith school in the constituency of Lethbridge-West signed by 51 constituents who are concerned about the level of funding for kindergarten and in fact are urging the Alberta government to amend the Alberta School Act to guarantee funding for kindergarten.

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg your leave to introduce a petition signed by 2,895 residents of Edmonton, Sherwood Park, and surrounding areas urging the government

to provide quality kindergarten education for our children by maintaining a minimum of 400 hours of instruction per child per school year . . . [to be entrenched and] guaranteed by legislation.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that my petition of May 30 regarding the Sturgeon general hospital be read and received at this time.

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 Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask that the petition I filed last May 30 requesting that the Sturgeon general hospital be moved under the proper jurisdiction to the north rather than left in the Edmonton area now be read.

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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition which I presented on June 1 regarding the Alberta Children's hospital now be read and received.

Thank you.

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: **Introduction of Bills**

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

Bill 221 Universities Amendment Act, 1994

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being Universities Amendment Act, 1994.

This Bill will increase the teaching load of university academic staff to 12 hours per week and by doing so will eliminate the access problem that students have today.

[Leave granted; Bill 221 read a first time]

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

Bill 222 Amusements Amendment Act, 1994

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 222, the Amusements Amendment Act, 1994.

This Bill would make it an offence to rent, to sell, or to exhibit to minors films or videos of a pornographic nature.

[Leave granted; Bill 222 read a first time]

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

Bill 223
Health Care Instructions Act

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 223, titled Health Care Instructions Act.

This Bill would allow an individual the ability to give directions for health care decisions which will be made when the individual is no longer able to make them. These directions are also known as advance directives or living wills.

[Leave granted; Bill 223 read a first time]

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

Bill 224
Tobacco Control Act

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 224, the Tobacco Control Act, which aims to reduce smoking by teenagers in Alberta by prohibiting the sale of cigarettes through self-service displays and vending machines, raising the age for legal purchase of cigarettes, and requiring stores to post signs indicating this restriction.

[Leave granted; Bill 224 read a first time]

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

Bill 225
Family Day Amendment Act, 1994

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Family Day Amendment Act, 1994.

This Bill will move Family Day to a Sunday to be celebrated as we do Mother's Day and Father's Day.

[Leave granted; Bill 225 read a first time]

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

Bill 226
Brand Amendment Act, 1994 (No. 2)

DR. L. TAYLOR: Yes. I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Brand Amendment Act, 1994 (No. 2).

What this does is allow, in the case of a divorce, for a brand to be transferred to the individual staying in agriculture.

[Leave granted; Bill 226 read a first time]

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

1:40

Bill 227
School (Early Childhood Services) Amendment Act, 1994

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would beg leave to introduce Bill 227, which is the School (Early Childhood Services) Amendment Act, 1994.

Earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, the government cut the kindergarten program from 400 to 200 hours. The Premier said at the

time that he had empirical evidence to support his contention that the 400 hours could be accomplished in 200 hours.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. The hon. member well knows how to introduce a Bill for first reading.

MR. HENRY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker, under 13(2). There are several instances where you've allowed ministers of the Crown to make a very brief statement, and I can assure you mine is briefer than some of the ministers have made in the past.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member will introduce his Bill. A point of order will be raised later.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I would ask your direction in terms of when the point of order would be considered.

MR. SPEAKER: After question period is over, as it normally is.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would then beg leave to introduce Bill 227, which is the School (Early Childhood Services) Amendment Act, 1994.

This Bill would mandate a minimum of a 400-hour program for every child who's kindergarten age in Alberta and would allow school boards to allocate Alberta school foundation program funds so that we have a fully funded, fully accessible program of kindergarten for all children in Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 227 read a first time]

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

Bill 228
Universities Amendment Act, 1994 (No. 2)

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 228, the Universities Amendment Act, 1994 (No. 2).

This Bill will set out the process for appointing and operation of governing boards of postsecondary institutions.

[Leave granted; Bill 228 read a first time]

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

Bill 229
Children's Advocate Act

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 229, the Children's Advocate Act.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, will expand the authority of the advocate to include any child under government care. It will also require more direct communication to the Assembly rather than to the ministry.

[Leave granted; Bill 229 read a first time]

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

Bill 230
Liquor Control Amendment Act, 1994

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 230, the Liquor Control Amendment Act, 1994.

This Bill will change the age of majority for the consumption of alcohol from 18 to 19 years. The change reflected in this Bill has been supported in the past by the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta school trustees, many Albertans, and particularly parents.

[Leave granted; Bill 230 read a first time]

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

Bill 231
Limitation of Actions Amendment Act, 1994

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Limitation of Actions Amendment Act, 1994.

This Bill levels the playing field with respect to limitation of actions for all professions.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 231 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West on behalf of the hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

Bill 232
Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 1994

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Fort McMurray I request leave to introduce Bill 232, the Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 1994.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will provide a tax credit equivalent to the amount of provincial income tax payable by Alberta utility companies. Thus utility companies will not be charged provincial income tax on their income derived from selling electricity to Alberta customers. This credit will be mandated to be passed along to customers in the form of a rebate on their electricity bill. The Bill also reduces the corporate tax rate for small businesses from 6 percent to 4 percent.

[Leave granted; Bill 232 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

Bill 234
Vulnerable Persons' Protection Act

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Vulnerable Persons' Protection Act.

This Bill will endeavour to offer protection for vulnerable persons in care and will provide some protection for persons who identify abusers.

[Leave granted; Bill 234 read a first time]

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

Bill 235
Emblems of Alberta Amendment Act, 1994

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 235, the Emblems of Alberta Amendment Act, 1994.

This Bill will make the bull trout an official emblem of Alberta, an initiative that is supported by conservation groups such as Trout Unlimited Canada, the Alberta Fish and Game Association,

and the Bull Trout Task Force. It is hoped that official recognition of this native fish will increase awareness of the bull trout and help conservation efforts.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 235 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

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

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to table four copies of the annual report of the environmental protection security fund for the period April 1, 1993, to March 31, 1994. If members wish to get a personal copy, there are more available in my office.

I'm also filing today the annual report of the Northern River Basins Study for the period of the 1993-94 fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to table with the Assembly six reports, four copies of each: the Alberta Foundation for the Arts annual report 1993-94; the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation annual report for the year ended March 31, 1994; the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues annual report, April 1, '93 to March 31, 1994; the Alberta Human Rights Commission annual report for the year ended March 31, 1994; the Alberta Community Development annual report for the year ended March 31, 1994; and finally, the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission annual report for the year 1993-94. Additional copies of those are available in my office.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

1:50

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to table with the Assembly four copies of the 1993-94 Public Works, Supply and Services annual report. Additional copies are also available at my office.

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

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table today on behalf of the Holy Redeemer Local Advisory Council the following resolution:

We, the Holy Redeemer LAC, urge the Legislature of the Province of Alberta to amend the Alberta School Act to mandate the right of access to fully funded kindergarten programming to a minimum of 400 hours per child per school year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of a study done by the OECD that states that universal preschool for children is emerging as the number one goal for industrialized countries.

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of a report entitled Predicting Early Onset of Male Antisocial Behaviour From Preschool Behaviour, another substantiation for the ECS program.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Parents Association of Westbrook School I would like to table the following document:

We, the Parents Association of Westbrook School urge the Legislature of the Province of Alberta to amend the Alberta School Act to mandate the right of access to fully funded kindergarten programming to a minimum of 400 hours per child per school [year].

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a letter from the parent council of West Dalhousie elementary school that says essentially the same thing as the previous filing, requesting that the Alberta School Act be amended to mandate the right of access to fully funded early childhood services to a minimum of 400 hours per child per year.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hanna LAC I would like to table four copies of a resolution urging the Legislature of the province of Alberta

to amend the Alberta School Act to mandate the right of access to fully funded Kindergarten programming to a minimum of 400 hours per child per school year.

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings this afternoon. The first is on behalf of the Jean Vanier Catholic School Parent Advisory Council with the following resolution:

We, the Jean Vanier Catholic School Parent Advisory Council, urge the Legislature of the Province of Alberta to amend the Alberta School Act to mandate the right of access to fully funded Kindergarten programming to a minimum of 400 hours per child per school year.

My second tabling today is four copies of a document prepared by the Alberta Liberal caucus entitled This Could Happen. What it is, Mr. Speaker, is a list of some examples of the kind of privatization that can take place under Bills 41 and 57 if passed into law.

Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege today to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly 23 visitors from Greenfield school, 19 of them very bright students. They know everything they should know about provincial government. They're accompanied by teacher Jim Horen and parent Mrs. Jan Ogilvie. Four of them are seated in the public gallery. The other 19 are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them all to stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly I would like to introduce 53 students from Brander Gardens elementary school, a great school and a great class, and two teachers accompanying them: Mrs. Natalie Esteves and Mr. Jim Kaiser. They're seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-McClung I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you 23 students from Centennial school in Edmonton. They're accompanied by their teacher Esther Oaks and by parent helpers Cheryl Burton and Barb Kendall. I understand they're sitting in the public gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly some constituents from St. Albert who are here today because they are concerned about cuts to ECS: Sheena Fulton, Barb Hubbard, Colleen Sparrow, Carol Randall, Joanne Osborne-Paulson, Sue Languedoc, Terry Starko, and Barb Peters. I would ask them to rise, please, and receive the warm welcome.

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

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly three of my constituents that are with us today. I would like to acknowledge Pat McLauchlan, who is a school trustee, very active within our community; Julie Davies from Ardrossan, very active in the community, particularly in early childhood services; and Liz McRobbie from Fort Saskatchewan, also a very community-minded individual and also concerned about kindergarten. I'd ask you to please stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to present to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly seven of St. Albert's finest constituents. They are here because they're concerned about the cuts to kindergarten. They are Kelly Curtis, Kim Hines, Sharon Smiley, Mary Fuchs, Cathy Staring-Parrish, Marta Wenschlag, Mark Brostrom. They are in the public gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly three individuals who are seated in the public gallery. Daria Gushaty is a tireless community volunteer who has been working on behalf of her child in kindergarten. I'd also like to introduce a social work student who is fulfilling a placement requirement in

my office, Ms Janice Stuart, and as well Ms Carol Vogay. Ms Vogay is the chairperson of the Edmonton Kindergarten Coalition. They're in the public gallery. If they could rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry I'd like to introduce 24 students from St. Anne school who I believe are sitting in the members' gallery led by their teacher Shawn T. Carson and helpers Mrs. Eva Johnson, Mrs. Edem Mahary, and Mr. Adam Debre. If they could rise and receive the traditional welcome of the House, I think they'd appreciate it.

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 through you to members of the Assembly some residents of Sherwood Park who are joining us in the Legislature today because of their concern over cuts to early childhood services. From Sherwood Park: Flo Brokop, Lynann Kroetsch, Mervyn Lynch, Pat Lemire, and school trustee Karen Bernard. I would ask them to rise in the public gallery and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly two constituents of Edmonton-Glenora who are here in the Chamber today because of their concern about government cutbacks to funding of kindergarten. I would ask that Anne Hill and Bruce McCurdy please rise and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to the Assembly today a distinguished Albertan, Connie MacRae, a 19-year resident of Fort McMurray. She currently chairs the Northern Lights regional health authority and is also chairing the recently announced human health monitoring program. I'd like all members to acknowledge Connie MacRae standing in the members' gallery.

head:

Oral Question Period

2:00

Government Reorganization

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, this government operates under the misguided notion that fundamental restructuring of how government works is nothing more than mere housekeeping. Albertans have seen major changes made in the way government operates without any of the details. This is a government bent on governing by closure and cabinet decree rather than public consultation and debate. I'm tabling today a draft copy of legislation which reveals some of the details behind a blatant attempt to eliminate government accountability. My questions are to the Minister of Labour. Why is this government muzzling genuine debate and consultation among Albertans by presenting bare-bones legislation, leaving the details behind for regulations?

MR. DAY: Absolutely no muzzling of debate whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. HEWES: Closure, Mr. Speaker, closure.

Mr. Speaker, then, my supplementary to the minister is: how does the minister justify legislation that he calls housekeeping that will replace government with Health Care Incorporated, Education Incorporated, Environmental Protection Limited, Social Services Enterprises Incorporated? How do you justify that?

MR. DAY: I'm delighted to respond to this, Mr. Speaker. However, it is hypothetical, and it's also talking about legislation that's tabled here in the Assembly. Having said that, the legislation that is tabled right now is liberating legislation. It's legislation that's going to cause services to be delivered to Albertans in an efficient manner, in a responsive manner, and in a way which reduces the tax load on Albertans. This is legislation that's been asked for by the people of Alberta. We've consulted with the people of Alberta. Members opposite who have risen in the House and said that they haven't even read the Bill are trying to debate it without even referring directly to it. We're delighted that we've been able to present this for the people of Alberta.

MRS. HEWES: Well, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I have read the Bill. This is government by corporation. It's taxation without representation.

Mr. Speaker, given that this government has no mandate from Albertans to introduce government by corporation, will the minister now agree to withdraw Bill 57?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, again, I'm delighted to be able to discuss this right here in question period, where we do have a bit of an audience, not like late at night when there are only three or four Liberals sitting here trying to stay awake.

It is not, Mr. Speaker, taxation without representation. I can say very clearly that even on items like fees and charges for delivery of services, all of those have to receive full approval by the minister responsible. Anything that would move out to one of these organizations has to be annually reviewed, not reviewed every two years like members opposite are asking for, is subject to the Auditor General and subject to being audited. So we're delighted with this. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Order. The Chair would remind hon. members in the opposition caucus that they are not the arbiters of what is to be heard in the Assembly.

The hon. minister.

Government Reorganization (continued)

MR. DAY: I'm delighted to continue to discuss this Bill.

This is not compelling legislation. This is permissive legislation. All departments right now are doing various things which – if they determine between themselves and the public of Alberta and the consumers served that a service is better delivered by an organization outside of government, it will certainly be delivered in that manner.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Delegated Regulatory Organizations

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government, under the guise of efficiency, under the guise of deficit reduction, under the guise of good housekeeping, is eliminating government accountability and the role of the Legislature. It is instead opting

for government by corporation, Patronage Incorporated with satellite branches throughout the province. This government aims to institutionalize patronage on a grand scale. My questions are to the Acting Premier. I know they're low down in the batting order, so I'm interested to see who is up to bat. How do you expect Albertans to trust this government to privatize, to delegate fairly when, for example, they attempted blatant political patronage in the appointment of the former Deputy Premier to the AEUB? They only stopped because they were caught.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, hon. members will note that we don't have a position of Deputy Premier. It no longer exists. Because of that, all ministers are responsible to answer to the Legislature. If the hon. member has a question to the Premier, I'll make sure the Premier hears about it, and we'll answer at the earliest opportunity.

DR. PERCY: Ah, Mr. Speaker, talk about an absence of accountability. You've just seen it; you've just seen it.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Labour. How do you expect Albertans to trust your government when we see high-flying Tories with good contacts getting big contracts for sweetheart deals? Take Bovar, for example. I don't think the man off the street would get that.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, in regards to this legislation and the supposed ability of the government to be able to do things and maybe not be trusted, I have in my possession a document that has just been leaked to me. It's called Liberal Media Information, a leaked document regarding delegated regulatory organizations. We've been talking about this for two years. This is one of dozens of drafts that have come out. How can the public trust an opposition that will not deal with the issues but only deals in mindless scare tactics? How can they be trusted?

DR. PERCY: Well, he's just confirmed that his Bill is scary, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Labour. In light of the recommendations of the Auditor General for increased government accountability, page 10 of the annual report for your reading, why do you introduce so-called housekeeping legislation that flies in the face of virtually every recommendation made by the Auditor General for increased accountability and enhanced performance? Why would you do that?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, again, it's absolute living proof that, if they say they've read the Bill, they don't know how to read. That is exactly addressed. For any organization that is going to be delegated any authority, the lines are very clearly, explicitly drawn in the Bill. It's mandated that these lines are very clearly drawn in terms of what they do.

Also, Mr. Speaker, any delegation of authority can't just be done on a haphazard basis. There has to be a public meeting. It has to be advertised in newspapers. It has to be advertised in the *Gazette*. All the consumers involved will be consulted, the stakeholders and the deliverer of services.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing is a most shameful presentation of mindless fear tactics: no intelligent debate, just mindless fear tactics.

Ethics in Government

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, in the House yesterday the minister of transportation said, and I quote, "I don't recall any

tender being let to pave a driveway to anybody's road." Yet when he got away from the bright lights of the Legislature, he suddenly did recall that indeed there were two tenders let for paving his personal driveway. So this morning I did a little phoning and got a couple of quotes. They were \$2,500 to \$3,000 higher than it cost the minister for his driveway. So my question to the minister is: what deal did the minister . . .

Speaker's Ruling Questions outside Ministerial Responsibility

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. So far the hon. member's preamble doesn't seem to be asking about any activity of the government. He's asking about personal dealings of a member of the Assembly. The purpose of question period is to ask questions about the activities of the government.

MR. BRUSEKER: I was just getting to the question. I hadn't asked the question yet.

2:10 Ethics in Government (continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: My question to the minister: what deal did the minister make on behalf of the government of Alberta regarding future paving contracts so that he could get a bargain rate on his own personal paving contract?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I've never heard of such underhanded, sneaky, sleazy questions in the House.

Let me go on. I don't know of any legislation in the department of transportation that would prevent that member from talking to the private sector, making his own arrangements to pave his driveway and pay for it.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, my supplementary question. I'd like to remind the Acting Premier, the minister of transportation, of something else that he said: it doesn't matter "whether they were cousins or brothers or sisters or neighbours, they all received work." So my supplementary question is: how many other times has the minister used his position to obtain preferential treatment? [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Allegations against a Member

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That question is out of order, absolutely out of order. Is there a possible supplemental that might be in order, based on that preamble and everything else?

Ethics in Government (continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question, then, is dealing with the concern of conflict of interest. What changes will the minister make in his department and in his department's dealings to ensure that future incidents like this can be prevented?

Speaker's Ruling Allegations against a Member

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That question is also out of order considering the last few words of the question.

The hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler.

Highway Construction

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. Over the last week we've heard repeatedly about some fast-tracked road projects. I'm not sure how you hide a road, but I do wish to inform this House that the four projects undertaken in my constituency were necessary and were priorities of the respective councils. Can the minister outline for the benefit of my councils – namely, the county of Lacombe and the county of Stettler – the process by which highway-related construction work is undertaken? Specifically, what criteria is involved in the approval process?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, we have a very detailed process in the awarding of contracts, and there's a number of steps that have to be taken before the tenders are let. Let me just go through the system as we see it in transportation. The project first has to be surveyed and designed. The right-of-way has to be purchased. Utility lines have to be relocated. Environmental issues are addressed. Quantities of material are drawn up for the contractors. Tenders are let by advertising in numerous papers. Contractors are given anywhere from two to three weeks to prepare their bids. And this is important: tenders are then opened in public. Tenders are opened in public with the contractors or their alternatives at the table, and only the total price of the contract is read aloud.

The bid is then reviewed by the department to make sure that the bonding's in place and everything else it takes to make that tender legit, and it's awarded by the assistant deputy minister. At no time – and I want to repeat – at no time is the minister involved nor does he become involved with the review or awarding of that contract.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister aware that unfortunately last night there was a tragic accident that took two lives on Highway 43. Public safety must be top priority, and as such will the minister please provide some details of the construction work that has taken place and what improvements are planned for this well-utilized stretch of road?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it's a sad day when you have two people die on Highway 43. I just got word of it last night at 11 o'clock. We had a motor vehicle accident near Whitecourt where two people were killed. It's sad, as I say, that people have to die or be injured on a highway.

Highway 43 has a traffic volume that ranges anywhere from 3,000 to 7,500 vehicles per day. Of this, 18 percent is truck traffic, and that's the highest truck traffic on that type of road in the province of Alberta by about 5 to 6 percent. It's important that we work with the communities in improving that road.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly a document that was presented to me by the towns of Whitecourt, Fox Creek, Valleyview in respect to that highway. [interjection] The question was: what are we doing, and what have we done?

Within the constituency of Grande Prairie-Smoky on July 17 a contract was tendered for replacement of a failed culvert on Highway 43 at Tom Creek just south of Valleyview. There was also construction of a climbing lane for southbound traffic at Sandbox Hill, and this project was awarded to Ledcor Construction for a total of \$1.56 million.

On July 15 we had another tender . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Perhaps the hon. minister could undertake to table that information. It seems to be getting rather lengthy for question period.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the request of the towns of Whitecourt, Valleyview, and Fox Creek in regards to Highway 43. I will table this.

I just want to close by saying that over the last two years nearly \$13 million has been invested in Highway 43 for improvements so that just the kind of thing that happened last night shouldn't happen again.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for that information.

What is the government policy regarding the paving of private driveways?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the department of transportation does not have a policy for paving private driveways, never has and never will, but that doesn't stop any Member of this Legislative Assembly, as I mentioned before, working out a deal with the private sector and paying for that paving the same as anybody else can.

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

Kindergarten Programs

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year the Premier of our province promised equity in education and then just cut kindergarten in half. We were afraid of a two-tiered system, but what we have here is a multitiered system around our province. We have programs ranging from 200 hours to 450 hours and fees ranging from zero dollars to \$650. My question is for the Premier or the minister. I'd like him to explain where the equity in education is when in Camrose a 400-hour program has no fee and in Medicine Hat the parents have to pay \$650 for the same program.

MR. JONSON: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make something very clear, and that is that often research has been referred to in the debate over early childhood services. I note that the hon. member across the way and a press release which I happen to have here indicate that we reduced spending on ECS funding by 55 percent, which of course is inaccurate. The amount of money spent on early childhood services in 1993-94 was some \$85 million. For 1994-95 some \$60 million is being spent, or a reduction – a significant one, I agree – of about 28 percent. I just would like to clear that matter up, because these contentions are often let go, and I would not want to overlook that.

2:20

With respect to kindergarten, Mr. Speaker, in the funding for this year there is a great deal of equity in that we are providing funding for the offering of 200 hours of kindergarten, which we deem to be adequate preparation for grade 1. That is the position of the government.

With respect to the concern expressed by the hon. member with respect to a multitiered approach, this seems to be being portrayed, Mr. Speaker, as something new in the province. For many years, in fact from the time that early childhood services

was introduced in this province in a broad way, there has been the flexibility to meet local needs according to local priorities. We have private operators. We have school systems operating kindergarten. There have been variations in the number of hours and in the nature of the program for some years, and I think that should be kept in mind. It has been designed and based on the basis of local areas having some flexibility to meet local needs.

MR. HENRY: The minister can play all the shell games of school years and calendar years and fiscal years, but the reality is kindergarten . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question. [interjection] Question.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, since the Liberal survey of ECS shows that where there is a significant fee, there's been a 10 to 15 percent drop from projected enrollment, I'd like to know what the minister has done to find out who those children are and if their parents cannot afford the exorbitant fees that are being charged for kindergarten in this province.

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the contention that ECS enrollment has dropped by 10 to 15 percent, not at all. If this statistic is the same as the statistic that was used in the first question, where he's out by about 25 percent in terms of the drop in early childhood services funding in the province, I don't see any reason to take this one seriously.

MR. HENRY: We can flip-flop and contradict every second day, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the Government House Leader: when Bill 227 comes to a vote, is he going to put the whips on his caucus, or will he allow a true free vote, and will Albertans get back their 400 hours of kindergarten?

MR. DAY: The Government House Leader does not apply whips to the caucus. This caucus makes decisions on its own. The question I believe would be in contradiction of Standing Order 23(e), which is very clear that it's anticipating debate on items that are already there. However, I do appreciate the member opposite soliciting my support for his initiative, and unlike how they review things, I will review the matter.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

Immigration Policy

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has brought in some long-awaited and long-needed reforms to this country's immigration system. The new plan deals with important issues of family class provisions, sponsorship, and overall immigration levels for the future. An updated immigration policy that serves to the benefit of this province and this country is an important issue to my constituents. I would like to ask the minister responsible for immigration: what is his initial response to the federal position announced yesterday?

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is quite correct. We have been waiting some time for this announcement. After having briefly perused it, because it's only been out a short

time, we have to say that there are no real surprises in this announcement. We've long argued for a better balance between the economic and humanitarian objectives of the immigration program in this country, and we see that more immigrants will now be selected on the basis of their potential economic contribution and fewer will be admitted under the family class.

We're still reviewing the proposals that have been brought forward, and we will be developing a more formal position as time permits. In general, we support the direction that the federal government has taken. It's the direction Alberta has long been pushing for, and we're pleased to see them move along these lines.

MR. HIERATH: Many Canadians question the overall benefit of the sponsorship program. To the same minister: should sponsors – that is, immigrants and their families – be responsible for a higher portion of the costs?

MR. ADY: What the hon. Member for Taber-Warner is really referring to is the provision in our current immigration policy where an immigrant can possibly enter the country and for a variety of reasons find themselves on our welfare roles or within our health care system. The federal government has put on the table the idea of setting more realistic sponsorship criteria. They're considering the idea of having sponsors post a bond to cover any immediate calls on our social and health services. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we strongly support this initiative, and we'll continue to work to see it implemented.

MR. HIERATH: My final question relates to the next step in this process. Where do we go from here to ensure that Alberta's interests in developing a new immigration policy meet the needs and the aspirations of the people of this province, not just those from the federal policy-makers in Ottawa?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent question because that's often a misunderstood issue. Let me clarify that immigration is a shared federal/provincial responsibility. However, federal legislation is paramount and ultimately determines the character and direction of immigration programs in this country.

The most powerful agreement from a provincial perspective is the deal between Ottawa and Quebec. This accord gives significant authority to Quebec in the selection and integration of immigrants, an authority that no other province in this country shares, and I suppose we all have to ask ourselves: is this fair?

From our perspective, we will continue to seek a more balanced partnership with the federal government in the development of immigration policy. We have a lot to say in this area, and we hope that they are prepared to listen.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So that he can be forearmed or forewarned, my question today is to the Member for Little Bow, the chairman of the agricultural committee for the government over there. Last year the Klein government asked government employees to take a 5 percent wage cut to help the government balance their books. The Premier preached how all the government workers would be asked to comply with this noble gesture, but now we see that although the little guys, your foot soldiers, followed their orders and their wages were rolled back, the upper level bureaucrats and insiders were rewarded with pay

increases. My question is: why did the five high-ranking officials of the newly created Agriculture Financial Services Corporation receive a combined \$35,000 a year increase in pay?

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, since the question and the particulars come under the jurisdiction of the minister of agriculture and since I'm unaware of any pay increases, I'll do my best to obtain the information for the hon. Member for Redwater and have the minister respond to him directly.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I wondered why we were paying him \$24,000 a year of taxpayers' money to look after this, but now I guess we found out.

Would the hon. member, then, in a philosophical line assure the Assembly that this is just not another way of getting Ralph's unelected team on the gravy train, whereas everybody else gets a 5 percent cut?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. This question should be responded to by a member of Executive Council.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, as acting minister of agriculture, I'll take that question as notice and provide it to the minister.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I thought he was in charge of paving and somebody else was in charge of pensions.

The next question, Mr. Speaker, then. Back to the Member for Little Bow because I'm sure that this is a policy issue and quite within his ambit. Could he say why the government is moving in and increasing the pay and the administration in farm lending when in every other area they're getting out of business – out of guaranteeing student loans, out of guaranteeing export loans – yet we're getting more heavily involved in lending money and with their bigger staff?

2:30

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I believe that question should be directed to the minister of agriculture, and I'll make sure that the minister's aware of it and responds at the earliest opportunity.

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

International Year of the Family

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are all to the chairman of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. In this International Year of the Family a recent study of Canadian families has been completed. This study investigated over 2,000 adults across Canada. As well, there's been recognition of the International Year of the Family right across the country and across the province. My first question, Mr. Speaker, is: does the report indicate what the most common family type is and what Canadians prefer?

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

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat is quite right. The Canada committee for the International Year of the Family commissioned a study by the Angus Reid polling group entitled the State of the Family in Canada. The purpose behind this was to dispel some of the myths that are occurring concurrently with the development of the family

in Canada. [interjection] I understand that it might be boring to the opposition; however, to the family it is incredibly important.

The results stated that the traditional family with two married adults represents 54 percent of the family population in Canada. Interestingly as well, 68 percent of all Canadian families felt that the traditional family unit of two parents was the best way in which to raise a family.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. Do Canadians feel that child care should be the responsibility of the individual or society?

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

DR. OBERG: Mr. Speaker, in the poll that was conducted by Angus Reid, there were two very important questions asked the 2,000 respondents: one was about elder care and the other was about child care. They asked them whom they felt the responsibility was to. Interestingly, 74 percent of the respondents claimed that child care was the responsibility of the individual or the family and not the state. Also, 55 percent of the respondents stated that elder care was the responsibility of the individual or the family and not the state.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Could the chairman indicate what the province of Alberta and cities in Alberta have done to recognize the family in this year?

DR. OBERG: Eugene Rolfe of the United Nations probably stated it best when he stated that the province of Alberta was the best representation of public participation in the International Year of the Family in the world, Mr. Speaker. I think that all Albertans should be proud. Municipalities across the province, with the exception of the city of Edmonton, declared 1994 the International Year of the Family, and we have had 4.2 million participants in over 1,000 registered events across the province.

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

Ambulance Services

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask a question about an Alberta family and what this government has done for them lately. On October 28 a young man had the misfortune to be injured in a car accident on Highway 2 between Wetaskiwin and Ponoka. His further misfortune was to be injured on the wrong side of the line between the closest ambulance authority and the one that eventually provided transport to the Ponoka hospital. Because of this arbitrary line the first ambulance to arrive couldn't do anything but wait for a second ambulance from farther away to reach the scene of the accident. My question is to the Acting Minister of Health. Why has the government so mismanaged ambulance contracting that trained professionals are forced to stand idly by and not provide emergency services even though they're first on the scene?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, certainly driving that stretch of highway many times a week myself I appreciate the fact that there needs to be good safety available to anybody on that highway. I'd also like to say that here we have another example, albeit it a tragic one – and I'm not questioning the circumstance itself – but it seems we regularly hear of isolated incidents which then the

members opposite try and apply right across the province. I know the Minister of Health will be pleased to see what gave rise to this. I know the regional health authorities are grappling with these very types of challenges, and hopefully as they do that, we'll see more and more of these isolated incidents resolved.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, ambulances don't come under the regional health authorities.

What kind of explanation could possibly be given by the government to this young man and his family who had to wait in the cold for the right ambulance to arrive?

MR. DAY: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker; regional health authorities are dealing with many questions, including emergency services which are provided in many cases by and through ambulances. So the member will stand corrected on that one. Again, this is the type of incident that could lead to an evaluation of how to improve the process.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. SAPERS: Yes. Could the minister then explain how in his government's move towards efficiency and cost saving it's somehow more efficient and saves money to dispatch not one but two ambulances?

MR. DAY: I've addressed the question, Mr. Speaker. Again, isolated incidents like these upon review may show that indeed they're isolated incidents or they may show that an improvement needs to be made to the system, and that's exactly what everybody involved in this situation wants to evaluate.

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

Highway 58

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the opposition members were suggesting and making innuendos that road building in northern Alberta or rural Alberta is not important. In my riding there are miles and miles of unpaved and underdeveloped roads, roads which, I might add, are needed desperately. One of these roads is the extension of Highway 58. This road needs to be built because it is unsafe to travel. My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. For the benefit of the many councils and municipal governments who are working towards developing Highway 58, could the minister outline how this highway will get on the priority list?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the member has just done a very good job of being heard, and, I'm sure, along with her group we'll consider it.

MS CALAHASEN: Mr. Speaker, safety is an issue here. Will the minister ensure that this crucial road is put on the priority list this year?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, we have some 400 requests each year. I will submit this to the department and make sure that we review it and the dollars available. I also note that it's the MLA's number one priority, and we'll see what we can do.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you. Would the minister then be willing to attend a meeting with this group who has been holding

meetings and have his department lead the discussions towards resolution of completing this road?

MR. TRYNCHY: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to travel to that area and see firsthand the conditions of the roads, and I make a commitment that when we have the time, we'll visit the area, tour the area with her people.

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

Adoption Search Agencies

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last spring we warned the Assembly that the Department of Family and Social Services set a dangerous precedent when it privatized the in-home support services to an employee in Lac La Biche. Given this disturbing history, we have real concerns over how the minister intends to give out licences for the new adoption search agencies. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Mr. Minister, will you assure the Assembly that these potentially lucrative search agencies that you've created will not be handed down to current ex-staff members before going through an open public tender?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, this particular issue that's in the House I believe is in committee for discussion tonight, and I would hope the member would participate in that process during the discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, will you commit to establishing a clear set of standards and qualifications for these search agencies?

2:40

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, like I indicated in my first answer, this issue is being discussed in committee either tonight or tomorrow, and I believe the member has every opportunity to make the recommendation. [interjection] It is on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS HANSON: Okay. I'll try again. Will the minister confirm that his current registrar of adoption records may be planning to set up his own agency?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of it at this time.

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

Biomedical Waste Disposal

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Over the last four years the government has shut down almost all of the hospital-based incinerators, thus the incremental costs of . . . [interjections] I don't have to take anything from you over there, and I'm not going to either.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Maybe this will be the last question that's asked today unless the House comes to order.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. DUNFORD: I'll start again, Mr. Speaker. Over the last four years the government has shut down almost all of the hospital-based incinerators, thus the incremental costs of segregating and shipping waste that have been created are being funded through increased government grants. A number of operating hospital-based incinerators could or do meet the recommended national standards as described by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment – that's CCME – that are set for incinerators burning less than 200 kilograms per hour. My question to the minister: prior to the shutdown of the remaining hospital-based incinerators, could the minister review the current Alberta standards in light of the CCME guidelines for small incinerators?

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

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in 1992 the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment did in fact set standards for the emissions as they relate to incinerators destroying biomedical waste. These standards were then adopted in Alberta in 1993.

I think it's important that we recognize that there are really two streams of waste from hospitals: one, the general waste, and the other, the biomedical waste. The biomedical waste really amounts to only about 10 percent of the total waste. In 1993 there was a lot of discussion with major hospitals in the province along with Public Works, Supply and Services, Alberta Health, and Alberta environment to look at those emission standards, and in fact it was determined that most of the larger hospitals' incinerators would meet the new standards as long as they were not trying to incinerate biomedical wastes.

I will undertake to look at the standards and see if there's anything we can do, but currently if a hospital is only incinerating 10 tonnes a month or less, they don't even need a permit as long as it's not biomedical.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: why has the Alberta government decided to use the recommended guidelines for larger incinerators regardless of their size, as these standards make it uneconomical for a small incinerator to be upgraded?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, as I outlined in my earlier answer, the incinerators that are burning 10 tonnes a month or less do not need a licence even, and those larger ones, it's my understanding, will meet the emission standards as long as they're not attempting to incinerate biomedical waste.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister make efforts to ensure that the government grants for the additional costs of waste disposal are not removed as part of Alberta Health's cost reduction program?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. LUND: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member recognizes, the budget for this comes out of the Health budget. Being that the Minister of Health is a very open and caring

individual, I would invite the hon. member to join with me and we will discuss the matter with the Minister of Health.

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

Special Waste Treatment Centre

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Article 1308 of the obscene sweetheart deal between this government and Bovar says that the taxpayers, not Bovar, will pay all of the costs of restoring the Swan Hills hazardous waste plant site. In the annual report of the Auditor General for 1993-94, on page 62, the Auditor General recommends that the government estimate the cost of site restoration and record it as a liability for the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation. In the words of the Auditor General:

Including these costs will enable the Corporation's financial statements to reflect the complete cost to the Province of operating the Swan Hills plant.

My first question to the Minister of Environmental Protection: why would you allow the Alberta taxpayers to be taken to the cleaners on the cleanup of Swan Hills?

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

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is true that the Auditor General did identify the cleanup of the site as a liability. In the management letter the Special Waste Management board has agreed that they will establish a fund so that in fact there will be dollars there at the time that the plant would be decommissioned.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplemental.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that the Auditor General says that "the cost that will eventually be paid is likely to be significant," can the minister tell Albertans how much they will now have to add to the cost of running the Swan Hills facility?

MR. LUND: The fact is that that number is not known. One of the other comments in the letter was that there is going to be a group of engineers starting to look at the whole decommissioning of the plant and trying to determine that number.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: did the minister or his department inform the Natural Resources Conservation Board that the numbers with respect to the operation of the plant did not include the significant cost of cleanup?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely not. We will not talk to nor will we interfere with the NRCB process.

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

Freedom of Information Legislation

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One hundred million dollar loan guarantees, paved driveways, patronage appointments, secret deals . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. member could surely frame a less inflammatory type of preamble to his question.

MR. ZARIWNY: Albertans are wondering what else this government is hiding. Meanwhile, five months after passing the freedom of information Act, it still sits on the shelves collecting dust, waiting to be proclaimed. To the Minister of Justice: can the minister explain why in the middle of all these secrets and promises the Act hasn't been proclaimed? What are we hiding?

MR. EVANS: You know, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I made a comment about the expertise of the research of the Liberal opposition. I'll just repeat that again today, because the Liberal opposition doesn't seem to understand that back in September carriage of the very important piece of legislation, the freedom of information Act, was transferred to the minister of public works.

MR. ZARIWNY: My question, then, is to the minister of public works. I will repeat the question for his benefit. Can the minister explain why in the middle of all these secrets and broken promises the Act hasn't been proclaimed?

2:50

MR. THURBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the hon. member would know that there's a certain process that has to be put in place before the actual freedom of information Act can be accessed by the public. There needs to be a commissioner put in place. Before that, there's a very long process that has to be undertaken by my department to in fact achieve access to the multitude of records that are there.

MR. ZARIWNY: Is the process, Mr. Minister, to purge all of this Assembly's powers before the Act is proclaimed?

MR. THURBER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. ZARIWNY: Four hits. I'm pretty lucky today. Will the minister explain why the commissioner has not been appointed, as the Premier put it, to get the administrative framework in place?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, the commissioner will be appointed in due time through a process that is in place now. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired, but the hon. Minister of Education has indicated he wishes to supplement a previous answer.

Kindergarten Programs

(continued)

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I felt it might be useful for all members of the Assembly, given the previous question from the Member for Edmonton-Centre, to provide this information. I'd like to preface the information by indicating that in terms of overall school enrollments we do not have final and accurate information on this until shortly after the end of November according to the current process.

I would like to indicate by way of supplementary information, Mr. Speaker, that for the 1993-94 school year the province had registered some 40,930 early childhood services students. For the

1994-95 school year, with one-third of all ECS operators reporting, the percentage of students in early childhood services remains about level. A reduction of one-half of 1 percent is indicated thus far. In terms of the overall enrollment in the schools of the province, it is somewhere in the neighbourhood of a 1 percent increase.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would then ask the Minister of Education: why has he not looked at the municipal census figures that are used to project ECS enrollment and compared those with actual enrollment so we can see what the actual drop from projected enrollment from actual students this year would be?

MR. JONSON: I believe I have, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to respond to the question. The question that was posed previously, as I recall, was prefaced with a contention that early childhood services enrollment in this province was down some 10 to 15 percent. I felt that it would be useful to the Assembly to have the information that I provided.

In terms of municipal statistics, I will check the reference that the hon. member has made. However, I do come back, Mr. Speaker, and say that the contention was that early childhood services enrollment was down, and I just wanted to help him.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair has received indications that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, the hon. Government House Leader, the hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member for Sherwood Park, and the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan all have points of order they wish to raise. We'll start with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Point of Order

Explanation of Speaker's Ruling

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would rise under Standing Order 13(2) which reads: "The Speaker shall explain the reasons for any decision upon the request of a member." I certainly would abide by your decision, sir. The explanation I would request is twofold. Number one, when I was introducing the Bill, I rose on a point of order and you did not allow the point of order to go forward at that point but rather delayed it until this point. When looking through Standing Orders and *Beauchesne*, the only reference I can find is to question period with regard to dealing with points of order, and that would be *Beauchesne* 415: "A question of privilege or point of order raised during the Question Period ought to be taken up after the Question Period," et cetera. My point of order was not during question period, and I would ask why it was not dealt with at the time.

The second is: I attempted to provide a brief explanation of Bill 227, that I have introduced today. In preparing my comments, I very deliberately did not attempt to pass judgment or say things like describing any cruel cuts or inconsiderate government or any of those kinds of words but was trying to simply state the facts. I thought that was important to put the Bill in context so that the Legislative Assembly would very clearly understand why this Bill was coming forward. In doing so, recognizing that quite often members rise and give one or two or three or four sentences about the Bill, I did peruse *Hansard* in the past, and I bring your attention to *Hansard*, page 1687, where the Minister of Environ-

mental Protection introduced Bill 30 and went on at some length describing Bill 30. As well I would bring your attention to *Hansard*, again of 1994, page 2497, where the Member for Olds-Didsbury introduced Bill 45 and was permitted to go on at some length again, not extraordinarily long. One more: Bill 18, when it was introduced by the Premier on page 1023 of this year's *Hansard*, was also permitted to go on. Mr. Speaker, my comments were considerably shorter than any of those. I would also put to you – and I say this not having access to the Blues yet – that even today the Member for Little Bow, in presenting his Bill, was given some latitude with regard to comments about his Bill and support for his Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, again under 13(2) I would submit to you that I should have been allowed the opportunity to make the very short statement that I had prepared on Bill 227. If allowed by you, I would make that statement at any other time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to this point of order, the Chair would say that it takes the position – maybe it's a wrong position – that we have routine proceedings every day that are covered by television. That facility requires a certain amount of expense, and the whole idea is to get through routine proceedings as quickly as possible and not be cluttered up with points of order, which can be adequately dealt with at this time of the day. So unless we hear otherwise, we'll continue on that basis, that this is a period that is pretty formal and generally pretty routine.

The main point that the hon. member is raising deals with the comments he prepared for the introduction of the Bill. The Chair felt – and the Chair hasn't had an opportunity to peruse the Blues either – that there was more of a second reading type of information being presented than the basic facts concerning that Bill. The comments could easily have been taken as provoking some type of debate. Of course, at this particular stage there is no opportunity for anybody to reply in any way, and I think it's generally considered that the hon. members shouldn't use the opportunity of explaining their Bill to make points that can very adequately be made at the next stage of the Bill.

3:00

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly accept, of course, your ruling and the rationale in terms of the television time, but I would just ask you to review page 1023 of *Hansard*. When the Premier introduced his Bill, he went on about "this . . . honours my personal commitment and the commitment of this government." I will leave that to you to peruse at some other time, but very clearly that was much more inflammatory and much more debatable and provoked much more response than mine.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will do that.

I sort of lost the list. The hon. Government House Leader, I believe.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for not losing me on the list. I just wanted, as I've done now three days in a row, to appeal to your good judgment and refer specifically to Standing Orders 23(h), (i), and (j), dealing with allegations, false or unavowed motives, and using abusive or insulting language. We know that in the heat of question period, especially when the cameras are on, this forum takes on much of a live theatre type

of approach. Then the cameras are off, as they are now, and everybody kind of calms down. Not only because there's widespread broadcasting going on but also on the issue itself, I have to say that the Member for Calgary-North West stooped to new lows today in terms of the preface to his questions in the House and the type of language was of such an insulting nature and so inflammatory that . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The gentleman isn't here.

MR. DAY: This is not a point of privilege, though it borders on that. I'm using that as the example, Mr. Speaker, because each day that I've raised it, the next day they have hit new lows. I'm concerned that unless in your good judgment you were to put the brakes on this, tomorrow we would go from the cesspool way down into the sewer somewhere, and I don't want to see that happen.

MR. SPEAKER: Of course, the Chair can't disagree with what the hon. Government House Leader said because the Chair did rule two of the questions out of order for that very reason, that it was an absolutely unacceptable approach to question period. Perhaps the Chair should have caught it in the main question. In any event, the hon. Member for Calgary-North West was definitely out of order with regard to his questions and the way he was asking them.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'm just wondering whether or not you would permit a brief response to the minister's point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: No, I would not. The Chair would not do that. The hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition is next on the list.

Point of Order

Unrelated Supplementary Question

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the question asked by the hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler – and I cite *Beauchesne* 410(8) – I wonder if you'd give consideration to that section, when you have had a chance to look at the Blues, relating to the consistency or the relationship of the preamble to the supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, the Chair would rule on that. The Chair apologizes for missing that. The hon. member's last supplemental was not in order, being not related to the main question. It wasn't supplemental to the main question. The Chair regrets – the Chair was engaged with a note that had come at the time.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Point of Order

Seeking Opinions

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order under *Beauchesne* 409(3) in relation to a question asked by the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat. I have not had the opportunity to peruse the Blues, but as I was listening intently to the question, it struck me that it was specifically asking the hon. member for his opinion. In reviewing *Beauchesne* 409(3), it would indeed be out of order to seek an opinion from the hon. member that is asked the question as, you've indicated a number of times, question period time is short. We have specific requirements for question period in terms of what question period should be for. I would ask that you rule on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, I don't really think that the Chair has to hear from the hon. member. The hon. members will understand that the Chair had the same thinking, that perhaps this could be, but on the other hand, it could have been an imperfect expression of an inquiry as to what the committee's role was. Certainly when the Chair heard the answer to the question, it was not a matter of opinion. The hon. Member for Bow Valley listed more results and elucidated on the Angus Reid poll. So if it sounded like it was asking for opinion, it didn't appear that the answer was responding to a question of opinion. It was a factual answer. But hon. members are reminded that they should not ask questions of opinion and their questions should be crafted in a way that is seeking information.

The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cite 23(h) and (i). I take very seriously I believe the direct allegations by the Member for Lesser Slave Lake in the inference that yesterday the Official Opposition made light of safety and road construction in northern Alberta. I've tried to peruse *Hansard* dealing with issues of safety and transportation corridors specifically in northern Alberta, and I would suggest that the exact opposite is the case. I firmly believe after perusing *Hansard* that indeed I would ask the Member for Lesser Slave Lake to withdraw that allegation based on 23(h) and (i).

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, if the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake had made an allegation against the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, that point would be in order, but the chair heard no specific allegations against any specific hon. members in this House. The Chair heard perhaps some allegations against the Liberal caucus, but that is not going to be ruled out of order.

Point of Order

Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: Now, there's one point of order that is remaining from yesterday that the Chair is prepared to rule on. It happened when yesterday, November 1, the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti raised a point of order concerning comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Manning during question period. The Member for Edmonton-Manning stated in his second supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer: "Why does the Treasurer, then, continue to mislead Albertans about the value of the assets in the fund?"

The point of order raised related to the use of the term "mislead" as it was argued that this an unparliamentary expression. In ruling on this point of order, the Chair wants to make clear that while *Beauchesne* contains lists of words and expressions that have been ruled parliamentary or unparliamentary, it is not the use of the word itself that makes it unparliamentary but the manner, tone, intention, and context in which it is used. In this regard, members are referred to *Beauchesne*, paragraph 486. There are some general rules concerning unparliamentary expressions which are concisely stated by Griffith and Ryle in their work *Parliament: functions, practice, and procedures* when the authors state on page 211:

Any abusive words which are likely to create disorder may be ruled out, but the main guiding principle is that charges should not be made against Members . . . which question their honesty or integrity, for example by imputations of false motives, charges of lying,

deliberately misleading the House and other falsehoods. A Member cannot be both honourable and dishonest.

It is clear to the Chair that in order to be out of order, the offending member must assert or imply that another member deliberately or intentionally misled the House. The absence of the word "deliberately" or "intentionally" will not, however, necessarily mean that "an allegation is misleading" is in order. As stated at the outset, it is the context in which the expression is used that must be considered.

After carefully reviewing the exchange in the House yesterday, the Chair is of the view that the use of the term "continue to mislead Albertans" imputes that the Treasurer was engaged in conduct that was intentional or deliberate. There are many other terms and expressions that can be used to convey the same idea.

In these circumstances the Chair would ask that the Member for Edmonton-Manning withdraw the expression he used with respect to the Provincial Treasurer yesterday.

3:10

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I did, I guess, phrase my question in the way I did, I did not intend to imply that the Treasurer knowingly misled Albertans about the value of the heritage savings trust fund. However, the number that the Treasurer had put forward as being the true market value of \$12.482 billion, some \$4 billion higher than the \$8.5 billion valuation which was completed by a reputable, independent source - I guess it was an inappropriate way of phrasing the question. I didn't mean to imply that he had knowingly misled the House, but certainly the data that was presented by the Treasurer could mislead the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that Written Questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places, except for written questions 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, and 220.

[Motion carried]

Education Restructuring

Q215. Mr. Henry moved that the following question be accepted: How many of the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables, January 1994, recommended shortening the early childhood services program to one-half year per child, raising the entry age to limit ECS to one year, and reducing or eliminating ECS transportation funding?

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members can read the question. Very briefly, we've had a dramatic change in the funding and structuring of ECS programming in our province. The government purports that they have not only evidence but they have public support to do so, and I would suggest that the government in its consultations has a responsibility to tell Albertans exactly how many submissions they received to that

effect. It's my submission that there would be very few, if any, submissions to that effect.

MR. JONSON: I would start out by indicating that we do not accept this particular Written Question 215. Mr. Speaker, I think we should indicate that we try and provide information that has been compiled and table all possible and reasonable amounts of information in this Assembly. This particular question would require the hiring of additional staff and a breakdown far beyond what is really necessary.

I'd like to indicate that on February 15 I tabled the document Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables. This document, Mr. Speaker, succinctly outlines Albertan's written responses to the original consultation paper released for the education roundtables. Some 17,000 responses were received representing approximately 30,000 people. Albertans were good enough to let us know how they felt about such items as defining basic education, funding education, measurement of education, and changing the delivery of education.

Mr. Speaker, on June 1, 1994, I tabled the document entitled Meeting the Challenge, The Public Response. This 37-page document fleshed out the previously mentioned publication. I would draw the hon. member opposite's attention to pages 2 through 5, which provide statistics relative to the topic being raised. Additionally, throughout the document specific numbers are given on a variety of topics. Unfortunately, Meeting the Challenge, The Public Response, does not provide statistics based upon the items asked for in Question 215. It does note in different areas of the document what people felt about early childhood services, including the fact that some Albertans felt that ECS was a nonessential program. However, we also acknowledge that there was support for an ECS program. I think it is important. We are dedicating some tens of millions of dollars to early childhood services. We do not agree that a preparation program for entry into school is not necessary, but we do maintain that that necessary preparation for grade 1 can be done within the 200 hours.

Mr. Speaker, the particular items that the hon. member is asking for were not provided in our summary statement. They were not provided for in our initial presentations. We have provided information, I think, in an open way on this particular consultation process, and we just cannot accept that we should go into a process of hiring additional staff and go through all the submissions for this information.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In closing debate on the motion, I find it incomprehensible that the government would make a major decision to cut a program in half for 40,000 children without having done the analysis of its public consultation. The record is very clear that the government has not analyzed the consultation and produced any figures for itself or for anybody else showing what the consultation said with regard to support for cutting the ECS program in half.

The minister can talk all he wants about how the government feels, but in terms of being able to accomplish ECS goals within 200 hours, very clearly the empirical evidence isn't with him and very clearly the public is not with him and the consultation is not with him. This underscores, Mr. Speaker, what most Albertans recognize now: the education roundtables were a sham and the government chose to analyze those things that they knew they

would get a response that was favourable to the decisions they had already made and chose not to analyze those things that would not support their position, which is, in this case, to cut ECS funding.

I'm terribly disappointed, and I think the people of Alberta need to know. I will do my best to make sure they know that the government did not do an analysis of the 17,000 submissions again representing 30,000 individuals to show any support or nonsupport for its decision to cut ECS. This is a bad decision. The people of Alberta know it, and this government knows it. Otherwise, they would have released this information, and they would have it done before they made the decision. Thank you.

Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The question having been called with respect to Question 215, those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: 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 3:20 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Abdurahman	Hewes	Sekulic
Carlson	Kirkland	Taylor, N.
Collingwood	Massey	Vasseur
Dalla-Longa	Percy	White
Hanson	Sapers	Zwozdesky
Henry		

Against the motion:

Ady	Friedel	McFarland
Amery	Fritz	Mirosh
Black	Gordon	Oberg
Brassard	Haley	Pham
Calahasen	Havelock	Renner
Cardinal	Herard	Severtson
Clegg	Hierath	Smith
Coutts	Jacques	Stelmach
Day	Jonson	Tannas
Doerksen	Kowalski	Taylor, L.
Dunford	Laing	Thurber
Evans	Langevin	Trynchy
Fischer	Lund	Woloshyn
Forsyth	Mar	

Totals:	For - 16	Against - 41
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[Motion lost]

Education Restructuring

Q216. Mr. Henry moved that the following question be accepted: How many of the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables, January 1994,

stated that the following were essential subjects or services: physical education, fine arts, French, other second languages, adult extension, and kindergarten?

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, members can read it, but it asks again for the analysis of the roundtable submissions on education for those that stated that physical education, fine arts, French, other second languages, adult extension, and kindergarten were essential subjects or services. I understand the government's prepared to accept this one, so I'll take my place.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I would accept Question 216.

[Motion carried]

Education Restructuring

Q217. Mr. Henry moved that the following question be accepted: How many of the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables, January 1994, stated that there should be a 5 percent salary reduction in the education system?

MR. HENRY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 217 deals again with the roundtable discussions and the submissions and then the 5 percent salary reduction. Again, I understand the government is prepared to accept it.

Thank you.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to indicate on behalf of the government side of the House, both sides of the House that we are on, that we accept this question.

[Motion carried]

Education Restructuring

Q218. Mr. Henry moved that the following question be accepted: How many of the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables, January 1994, supported user fees for transportation, and how many of those submissions supporting such fees were from rural areas?

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Again the question deals with the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge and asks for a breakdown of those who supported user fees for transportation and how many of those submissions supporting user fees were from rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, I've received in my travels in the province a great deal of concern, especially from rural areas but not exclusive to rural areas, about the increased cost of transporting students and the decreased government support for that. The people of Alberta have a right to know where the government got its advice in terms of those issues.

Thank you.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to Written Question 218, we must reject this particular question. I would, however, on a positive note, a constructive note, refer the hon. member to information that was tabled with the House in June. I referred to it in my remarks with respect to Question 215. There is considerable information in there with respect to the interest that people had in user fees. We did not pose the question as to whether there should be rural transportation fees or urban transportation fees.

I'd also indicate that by the very nature of the very extensive response that was provided to the workbook Meeting the Challenge, it is impossible to break that out and to identify all the people that signed petitions or provided written submissions or made comments on a rural/urban basis. It's just not possible to provide that information. Once again I would have to indicate that to try would be a considerable additional cost and involve considerable additional work hours.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to emphasize that although there is information already provided to the hon. members across the way on the views that were expressed on user fees in the general sense, it is not possible to provide the information. Therefore, I move to reject 218.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You touched on something that's very near and dear to me and has been for all the years I've been in politics, which is a very long time. Being one of the children, you might say, way back in the late '30s that first started on school bus systems, I was always intrigued by how such a system had evolved. In later years, about 10, 12 years ago I saw studies in the U.S. which showed the number of children that would go on to postsecondary institutions that were victims, if you want to call it, or people that had used school bus rides. They had split it up to half an hour, three-quarters of an hour, an hour, and over an hour. It was absolutely astounding. Those that had been on the school bus in grades 1 to 6, any of those grades, for over an hour hardly went to postsecondary school at all, whereas those that were on half an hour or less attended at a much higher rate a postsecondary school.

I guess what I'm trying to get at, Mr. Speaker, is that one of the things that controls not only the access to equality of education as rural versus urban people but also whether the mind-set of the child or the student will go on to further training, which is particularly necessary in this world. Quite often it is governed by bus rides and how long they take a bus ride.

Those that never experienced it themselves – and I don't know how many city slickers here were born within spitting distance or at least sprinting distance of a school, but if you were born where you had to ride buses for anywhere from three-quarters of an hour to an hour and a half, you will realize that a child that is not even 11 or 12 years of age is expected to be gone, when they leave their portal in the morning to go to education and come back to the portal or door at night, longer hours than any labour union would allow any full-grown employee to take time off without having a strike on their hands or overtime. Yet we time and again sentence our seven, eight, 10, 11, and 12 year olds to time on a school bus. I don't how many of you have ridden a school bus. Even the most modern ones have seats that feel like the top of this desk and are anything but very desirable to ride in.

3:40

So the whole idea of school busing and transportation should be something that's taken apart in every detail. To have a Minister

of Education, particularly one that comes from a rural area, say that surely they looked at user fees – we're talking about transportation. Part of the trouble with the whole system of transportation and transportation grants in the department that he presides over is that they have always made an incentive to make school buses – you see these things that look as long as a CNR train out there, moving back and forth, weaving all over the countryside in order to fill their seats, sometimes picking up children that are only a 10-minute drive away or a 15-minute drive away from school. But because they would have to fill the bus and go back and forth all over the place, they've been out there for over an hour. So for the minister to say that he has not bothered – and this is what he's really saying – wasn't interested enough to check out what rural people thought about transportation to the school system is just very, very hard to understand.

Indeed, I know the minister has often been called upon to try to sell the Alberta advantage, but how can he redesign the school structure – and we're talking about in large districts, which will encourage it even more – to space the schools out farther apart? He hasn't even checked with the parents to see what they think of this school system. In fact, the last time I looked, this Department of Education had not ever done a study to show what happened to children that had been on long bus rides or short bus rides and how they were advantaged or were disadvantaged down the road, a very interesting study indeed that's done in some of the American states.

For years and years this government has gotten by with the idea of busing them in, you know, as if they're going to the Cargill packing plant. The farther they got, the bigger the load. Bring them in. But it doesn't work. As far as I'm concerned, this government, although it pretends to be a friend of rural education and rural people, is neglecting its duty here, without studying any report. One of the ways we could study this a lot more is to get a report on exactly what rural parents and people think of that rural transportation scheme.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

Education Restructuring

Q219. Mr. Henry moved that the following question be accepted: How many of the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables, January 1994, supported user fees for education beyond 12 years of schooling?

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Briefly, it basically asks again for an analysis of the roundtable discussions showing how many individuals supported user fees for education beyond 12 years of schooling. I understand the government's prepared to accept this, so I'll take my place.

Thank you.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously, there was considerable comment on user fees provided our roundtables,

which was very worthwhile. It indicated an overall view, which I think was very significant, with respect to user fees.

With respect to the specifics of this question – that is, the summary with respect to user fees for education beyond 12 years of schooling – we are quite prepared to provide that information, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, on behalf of the government I accept Question 219.

[Motion carried]

Education Restructuring

Q220. Mr. Henry moved that the following question be accepted: How many of the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables, January 1994, supported putting in place charter schools, giving the minister the power to fire superintendents, involving business and industry more in the assessment of outcomes in the educational system, increasing the role of school councils, introducing a four-day school week, and introducing year-round schooling?

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, this refers to the public quasi-consultation that the government had last year before the major changes, including charter schools, role of school councils, four-day workweeks. The public of Alberta has a right to know when the minister or any minister of the Crown consults Albertans. The public has a right to know what groups and individuals said in a quantitative way to the government. The government has gone ahead with major restructuring and major changes to the education system that did not grow out of its consultation. The onus is on the government to show where in its consultation the support or the motivation or the idea for the specific changes were made, and if the government cannot show that, then the government very clearly is saying that the consultation was not related to the changes the government made and in fact was only a PR exercise.

With that, I'll take my place and let other members speak.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, we must reject Question 220. I regret, but I must take some umbrage with this particular question, because it is kind of a shopping list and it ranges all over the place in terms of what information it is requiring. Therefore, it seems to even get into things such as assessment of outcomes by business and industry. I'm not sure of the meaning that the members across the way put on that particular issue, but as I recall, that wasn't even an issue to be raised. Certainly business and industry involvement in partnerships in the schools was spoken about, and it has been a topic of broad discussion.

The other thing I'd like to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that in the consultation process and the other meetings, the other input that has come to us, I would suggest to hon. members across the way that, first of all, as an example, there has been a considerable degree of support for more choice within the education system. A way of implementing or responding to that view, to that goal, to that desire out there is to put forward a charter school model and to look at it in a limited sort of way, evaluate it. That is part of responding to the broad theme of choice.

Another theme that has come through in the consultation process that the hon. member is dealing with specifically but also

in many other venues of our extensive discussions that we've had is that there should be more flexibility within the school system. Mr. Speaker, four-day school weeks and year-round schooling is not a topic that we've popped on anybody. It's been around for some time. It is something, given that there is that strong general direction for flexibility so that people can get the job done but, yes, be held accountable at the other end, that we have entertained, proposals for four-day weeks and introducing year-round schooling, with always the proviso that we would want the pilot projects. I'm pleased to say that there are a limited number under way in the province. I guess there are about at this point in time perhaps two or three in this area.

Given that we are interested in seeing this flexibility – and we are going to ask the school boards to do a follow-up evaluation of these particular initiatives. Going back, as I said, to the general direction of flexibility, I think we are following through quite logically on what we have heard. The specifics that they are referring to here are outcomes of what I think were firmly established directions or themes in our consultation.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but I would just like to conclude by saying that one thing I think should be acknowledged is that the consultation process is very, very important, but there are other consultations beyond the initial one that we are listening to. We have our implementation teams now working with respect to the fiscal framework, the roles and responsibilities issue. We also have comparisons. We have statistics. We have other submissions which I think we have to listen to as well.

3:50

I noted, for instance, with respect to an earlier question – I believe it was Question 215 – one of the pieces of information that was asked for was information on where we would contend or where we would fit in with respect to one year for kindergarten. Just as one example of many pieces of information I could refer to, Mr. Speaker, if you were to look across Canada, you would find that that is the case in many of the provinces. We're not out of step there.

They are interesting topics that are raised here. I've clarified, I think, our position, and that is that we are following through on themes that were raised at the roundtables. I regard, for instance, allowing a four-day week pilot project to go forward as a way of following through and seeing if we can act upon that particular expression of opinion. But, Mr. Speaker, given that some of these issues were not key issues raised at the roundtables and coming back to the concern about redoing what I think was a thorough job of analyzing the submissions in the first place, we reject Question 220.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To close debate, I don't know if the minister and I are in the same world right now. His comments on 215 . . . [interjections] I hope not too. I prefer to be in reality.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, we want reality, not socialist arrogance.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat wanted to expound his socialist views, he should have entered into debate when there was time.

The comments from the minister on 215 had absolutely nothing to do with the question that was posed on 220. The minister

questions the phrase, "involving business and industry more in the assessment of outcomes in the educational system." Mr. Speaker, I attended two roundtables, and that was very much one of the issues that was discussed. It was also one of the issues involving business and industry and the advisory committee that developed the framework for the roundtables. There was discussion there in terms of outcome as well. I'm not sure if the minister's aware that that happened in his department.

For the government to reject this tells me that the cursory review that they released previously this year of the 17,000 submissions is a total and sum of what they've done in terms of analyzing the roundtable submissions. It's been a sham, and Albertans know it's been a sham. Mr. Speaker, I'm informed that the way these submissions were analyzed was: one in favour, one against; one in favour, one against; two against, one in favour. In fact, it was simply a counting of who supported the government and who didn't, not an accounting of what people really wanted to tell the government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm terribly disappointed that the government has chosen not to provide a more detailed analysis. If the points that the minister raised about charter schools being a response to individuals wanting more choice, then the government could have responded in that way with this question by providing the number of individuals who suggested that they wanted more choice and how many of those actually suggested charter schools. The government's very prescriptive. The government is ignoring the people of Alberta in its consultation, and the people of Alberta have a right to know that the government did not in fact complete an analysis of the consultations but went ahead with their ideologically driven agenda.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

head:

Motions for Returns

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns appearing on the Order Paper stand and retain their positions with the exception of motions for returns 212, 213, 221, and 224.

[Motion carried]

Career Development Centre Grants

M212. Dr. Massey moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a list of companies that received grants through the provincial career development centres by grant amount, training provided, and region for the calendar years 1991-92, 1992-93, and 1993-94.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are concerns about programs. Although there are a number of excellent programs being offered by private companies across the province, sir, there is some concern about some of the offerings. I would hope that the government would accept this.

Thank you.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, in the continuing commitment to the open and responsible government that we certainly practise on this side of the House, I'm pleased to accept Motion for a Return 212.

The information contains some 226 pages outlining all the companies that received conditional grant funding through one or more of the department's 21 career development centres. The information is broken down by service delivery area, company name, program name and identifier, and finally by the total amount of the grant awarded and total amount actually paid to the company.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I changed my mind: Ady for Premier.

MR. ADY: Just a minute, I'm not finished.

All additional grants are provided based upon specified program periods and require the company to meet certain program criteria and conditions. This explains why you will note that there are differences between the total amount of the grant awarded and the actual amount finally paid.

During the fiscal years of 1991-92, 1992-93, 1993-94 the career development centres provided a conditional grant to companies through the Skills Alberta program and the employment alternatives program. The Skills Alberta program provided individual companies with funds in order to conduct specified training activities with new and existing employees in areas such as management training, literacy and numeracy, train-the-trainer types of initiatives in technology advancement areas. Funding was provided to compensate companies for a small portion of their direct out-of-pocket expenses related to training activities such as instructor's direct training time, tuition fees, training materials, travel costs, training development costs.

The employment alternatives program provided individual companies with wage subsidy support in order to hire individuals who were either social allowance recipients or had exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits. The program continues to this day. However, it now offers no wage subsidy support to companies and is more focused on pre-employment training activities for supports for independence clients in areas such as life skills training, specific occupational skills training, career counseling, and job search techniques.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DR. MASSEY: I want to thank the minister, Mr. Speaker. There have been a number of concerns raised, and I want to assure him that we'll use the information to try to address those concerns.

There have been concerns about students being trained for nonexistent jobs. There have been questions about the adequacy of the courses being offered by some companies, and there are questions about the content and the skills and that some of the programs are inadequate and are dated. There was also the question raised about instruction being given by individuals who have little understanding about adult learners, their motivation, and student learning styles. There have also been questions raised about the fees that the government's been charged by some of the companies. Lastly, a recent report by Chambers at the university has called into question the value of some of this training, and I have a quote from him where he concludes that further investment in nonuniversity education is unlikely to be socially beneficial.

So I think it's timely that the information is made public and open to scrutiny, and we certainly do thank the minister for his co-operation.

[Motion carried]

4:00

Student Loans

M213. Dr. Massey moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a breakdown of the rate of defaults on student loans for the calendar years 1991-92, 1992-93, and 1993-94 based upon the educational institution, private or public, which the student receiving the loan attended.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to Motion for a Return 213, which asks for

a breakdown of the rate of defaults on student loans for the calendar years 1991-92, 1992-93, and 1993-94 based upon the educational institution, private or public, which the student receiving the loan attended.

I propose that this motion be amended for two reasons. First, I would not wish to compromise the privacy of institutions by providing their individual default rates. Second, the default rates on student loans for 1992-93 and 1993-94 are not yet available, because it takes about two years for a default rate to emerge.

Therefore, I propose that Motion for a Return 213 be amended to read as follows:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a breakdown of the rate of defaults on student loans for the years 1990-91 and 1991-92 based upon educational sector.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. I think if the amendment means what I interpret it to mean, it's acceptable to us. The concern, then, is that some students and parents across the province are concerned that the finger is being pointed at them as being loan defaulters. Of the college and university students I've talked to, at least three of the associations are particularly incensed with being labeled as student defaulters. So by breaking it into educational sectors, as the minister indicates he will do, if that will break out the default rate of private institutions, then the amendment is certainly most acceptable.

Thank you.

[Motion as amended carried]

Education Restructuring

M221. Moved by Dr. Massey on behalf of Mr. Henry that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a breakdown of the 17,000 submissions analyzed in Meeting the Challenge: A Summary of the Public Response to Education Consultation and Roundtables by municipality.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to Motion for a Return 224, which asks for

copies of any legal opinion provided to the Minister or Department of Advanced Education and Career Development concerning . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We're actually on Motion 221, hon. minister.

MR. ADY: It's not mine.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion 221, the Minister of Education. The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. EVANS: Well, as Deputy Government House Leader and on behalf of the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the government will have to reject Motion 221.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

Student Loan Default Rate

M224. Moved by Dr. Massey on behalf of Mr. Henry that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of any legal opinion provided to the Minister or Department of Advanced Education and Career Development advising that it would be inappropriate to release default information on the rate of default on student loans according to individual lending institutions.

MR. ADY: I apologize to the Chair for not listening more closely to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

I again would like to say that this calls for copies of any legal opinion provided to the Minister or the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development concerning the release of student loan default information relating to lending institutions.

As default rates are calculated on an educational institution basis and are not calculated for lending institutions, no such legal opinion was ever requested or received. Consequently, as the information requested is not available, I would propose that Motion 224 be defeated.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than**
head: **Government Bills and Orders**
head: **Committee of the Whole**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'd call the committee to order.

Bill 217

Motor Vehicles Statutes Amendment Act, 1994

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Stony Plain, would you like to make some comments or amendments?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to start off by thanking all members of the House on both sides for supporting this Bill in second reading. You have what appears on the surface to be a lengthy list of amendments. It is not a lengthy list of amendments by a long shot. What we've done is gone through the Bill and made sure that the Bill fits the existing legislation better, reflects the language and doesn't duplicate, and in a couple of cases has in fact gone a long way to enhancing the Bill.

The concerns that were raised by the members opposite I will try to address before I go into the amendments. The first one is that Edmonton-Strathcona was concerned about inspections, whether they should be standardized and whether they would be at a reasonable cost. They currently run around \$200. The answer to that is through regulations, yes, they will be standardized. Yes, we will look at keeping costs very reasonable. I must add that Edmonton-Manning also had concerns with respect to cost. I do like to reiterate that we are looking at making sure the costs are down, because the issue of this Bill, the principles of it, are to do with safety. If we stick with that, I think there is a good way of doing it.

Edmonton-Strathcona also mentioned expiry dates on inspection certificates. I want to make it abundantly clear at this time that the inspection certificate is for one purpose only, and that is to register the vehicles for certification, for registration only. As a result, the regulations will specify the time, and I would say that the maximum that we'd even consider would be 30 days but more than likely closer to seven days or thereabouts.

I'd also like to be on the record as stating quite specifically that this Bill in no way intends to be a move towards mandatory overall vehicle inspections. That's not the intent of it. If that particular direction should come, it would have to come at another time and another place.

From the industry there was a concern with the use in the Bill of the term "rebuilt," and the amendments will change that to "being repaired." There was a concern in the industry which quite frankly I didn't quite follow, but they felt that the "rebuilt" term would somehow or other infringe on their good character. The idea behind that designation after a vehicle has been written off is so that all the people handling it are fully aware that that car has been through a heavy-duty process. Whether you called it repaired or rebuilt I thought was quite immaterial. So as we get to the amendments, we'll address that.

4:10

There was a concern also for not needing a full inspection of a written-off vehicle if it was done for cosmetic or minor damages. That will be addressed so that we don't have a full-fledged inspection unnecessarily. For example, if it's written off for cosmetic purposes, they'd apply to motor transport, who would send out a qualified mechanic or bodyman or whatever to do an initial assessment and decide if the vehicle would be subject to a full inspection. So that takes care of what we felt was a very valid point.

The other concern that was raised was: is the Bill retroactive? We went through that very carefully, and I don't see anything in the legislation that would make it retroactive, and indeed it should not be retroactive.

The other part I think I should mention here too is that the Bill would become law upon proclamation, and there's a good reason for that. If the Bill became law immediately, before regulations were out and proper consultations with all the stakeholders in the process, we would have chaos throughout the whole industry. That certainly is not the intent of it. I've been assured by the ministers involved that this process will be fast-tracked to a large degree, so the lack of proclamation won't be a desire to slow down the Bill or anything of that nature.

Hon. members will also be aware, when you looked through the amendments and the Bill when you had it, that this Bill is an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act, and as such it fits right in very well. Once it's proclaimed and all the regulations are in

place, it will in fact be an enhancement for the people trying to enforce it.

I do repeat that the principles of the Bill remain intact or else they are enhanced twofold: one is the keeping of unsafe vehicles off the roadways, and the other of ensuring that unsafe vehicles from out of province aren't brought in. Both of those are addressed as they were in the Bill, also readdressed in the amendments to make them clearer.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move, then, the following amendments, if I can, as a package, which all members should have. I'll go through them as quickly as I can so that you can see the highlights. Then at the end I would be very pleased to do any clarifying that the members would like. I do stress that the amendments in there are all either housekeeping or wording changes or something of that nature and don't get away from the Bill. I do apologize for the length of it, but I think you're further ahead taking a little bit more time now and having it done right than trying to keep rebuilding it.

The first one to section A . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, just for the instruction of the Table as well as hon. members, do you wish these taken by section or the whole thing in one shot?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: I would prefer they go in the one shot, as you say, because they don't detract from the original Bill, which we all agreed on. However, I don't have any difficulty whichever way your direction is, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Any comment from the Opposition House Leader?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Well, I guess I would have preferred them all in one shot, but if the hon. member feels that he can make his point better that way, fine. We don't intend taking a standing vote on most of them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for both those pieces of information.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain will proceed then, and we are going to take this as one collection of amendments.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Good. Thank you. I think in view of the spirit of what's going on here, I would answer any questions by being interrupted as each section goes. I don't want to in any way take away from it.

The first one under section A you'll . . . [interjection] Well, we'll go through it. I could sit down and pass them all.

Section A you will see is a definition of the salvage vehicle, and it determines that a vehicle becomes salvage once it has been sold for that purpose. The other part that's in there now too – and it has been in the legislation before. Written-off vehicle is the one, then, that becomes a repairable vehicle. That becomes very, very clear, and that particular amendment under section A does that.

If we go on to section B, it changes the wording somewhat to clarify it. The inspection certificate comes under section 12 of the Act and is defined in the regulations. Now also the wording, if you go through it, prevents a registration certificate from being used without having the proper inspection certificate along with it. It tightens up the whole process to ensure that once the vehicle has been in that accident process, then it's simply been taken care of.

Section C basically deletes section 42.1 of my Bill 217, and that shows up later under section 58.1. That has all to do with the canceling of registrations. Upon consulting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and people from registry, two things came out very clearly. The process that we had wasn't as good as it could be. The second one I'll point out now so I don't overlook it further. As you know, my original Bill had references to destroying VIN numbers and things of that nature. By this new amendment, what it does is it tracks the serial number. You don't have to worry about that serial plate. It can follow the vehicle through salvage or whatever, but once the vehicle has been determined as salvage, that serial number can never be used again. It'll always be on the computer as an inactive or improper number. Another spin-off benefit by this change is it prevents people from using that number and applying it to, say, a stolen imported car or something of that nature.

The same under section D, if you'll notice. There are some more deletions that will reappear later in a dressing up of the Bill. It's to do with the salvage vehicles. They're better addressed further on in 58.3 and, as I indicated earlier, also defined under section 12.

The major changes to the reporting of written-off vehicles are in the amendments to section 58 of the Highway Traffic Act. We're allowing for a lot more flexibility there as to who can report it. It's an improvement. The Bill now reads, "the insurer or [any] other person designated in . . . the Highway Traffic Act." That's also where we changed "rebuilt" to "repaired." What that will do, Mr. Chairman – currently in my Bill I restricted it to insured people – is allow regulations to bring more and more people accountable as we go on.

Section F is strictly editorial and makes the Bill more consistent with the Highway Traffic Act language.

Section G amends the penalty provisions and takes out a section that is deleted, and that comes later in the penalties, as you'll see towards the end of the amendments, which still stay at the highest under the Highway Traffic Act, \$500 to \$25,000 I believe, with six months' imprisonment. It's the stiffest penalty you'll find anywhere in the Act.

Section H is the new amendments, and they change section 12 of the Highway Traffic Act. These changes are needed to allow new regulations under section 12 to deal with the designation of the written-off vehicles on the motor vehicle system. That's the tracking of the serial numbers and so on.

Section I is important. There was an error made in the drafting of Bill 217 originally. We had taken out the clause allowing the sale of vehicles that had not been inspected, providing a signed statement outlined the condition of the vehicle. That section we felt should be put back in to allow the transfer of vehicles in such a way that you can still track them. Vehicles will not be registered until they have passed inspection. Rebuilders will be able to transfer the bodies between themselves, and the ownership of the car bodies can be tracked and repaired and so on. So what it does is clean it up, and it doesn't take away from the Bill. As a matter of fact, it helps it out.

4:20

Section 141 is also amended so dealers are responsible – this is quite important – for the actions of their employees if they contravene the Act, unless a dealer can prove that he or she took all reasonable steps to ensure that the person did not contravene the section. This makes the dealerships accountable. They have to know what their employees are up to and eliminates a loophole

of, gee whiz, I didn't know what my salesman was doing. I think that's a big improvement too.

Finally, we have included the proclamation clause, as I indicated earlier. It's important the industry works with the departments of Transportation and Utilities and Municipal Affairs to ensure that a comprehensive regulation is developed that fits for everybody and makes this Bill, these changes workable. It'll take a bit of time to develop it. Quite frankly, I for one don't want a whole lot of people scrambling, a paranoia if this Bill will be proclaimed rather quickly or becomes law overnight. It sends a message out, and I'm looking forward to seeing the industry people getting together with the department to make sure that we have done what we set out to achieve, and that's to maintain the safety of our highways.

On that, Mr. Chairman, I'd entertain any questions or move that we accept the amendments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or further amendments?

The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Just a positive comment, Mr. Chairman, if I might. Certainly I commend the member for bringing it forth, and I accept his humility in indicating that there is some fine-tuning to be done at this particular point. I certainly will be voting in favour of this particular Bill. I think it's a step in the right direction. If we haven't gone the entire mile that's required, that's fine. We'll do that in an evolutionary process. So I would be speaking to the amendments as it enhances the Bill, of course, because I think it's a fairly quality Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As somebody that kind of likes to monkey around with old pieces of junk - I love antiques, and that's one of the reasons, probably, why I like the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

I have a couple of questions, even just in refining it. Your section 2.1 that's on the second page of the amendments:

Before issuing a certificate of registration . . . last registered outside of Alberta, the Registrar or licence issuer shall require production of an inspection certificate.

I bequeathed to one of my daughters a couple of years ago a fairly old car that was in very good working order. She lived in Ottawa. Then it turned out that many of the provinces had this same regulation, and it looked as if she was going to have to have about four certificates of registration. Ultimately, after talking to the local gendarmes and everything else, the idea was just to go ahead and hope like heck that she would not be apprehended.

I think there should maybe be some alteration so that if you're transporting a vehicle from one part of the country to another, provided it's got a certificate of where it comes from, it should be able to cross these provincial borders. It was something that we ran into accidentally, and it caused some concern. I hated to advise breaking the law, but that was about the only way to get it down there, if it was going to be driven down. So it's just a thought, that maybe that could be altered in such a way that if the vehicle is in operating order, at least they allow 24 hours, because I notice further on that we do allow vehicles to operate that are written off for a day. So I think we have a peculiar circumstance in that the driver of a good, well-constructed car could get picked

up because they didn't have a certificate, but one that is a written-off one or a wreck would be allowed in the province for 24 hours, which is all you need to cross most provinces.

In my opinion, I'm not sure that 24 hours should even be allowed. I think if a car is written off, it shouldn't be allowed on the road for five minutes, let alone 24 hours. Twice you mentioned that a written-off vehicle is valid for 24 hours to be on the road. That's on the bottom of page 3 and then high up on 4. All in all, I think it's a step in the right direction.

Maybe the last one is another question, the very last one, 141(1). This is more ignorance on my part because I haven't read it. Maybe the hon. member could refresh me, my memory anyhow. It says, "No person shall sell a used motor vehicle if the person is of a class described in the regulations." I'm just wondering what kind of class he would have to be in not to be allowed to sell a car.

That's it.

MR. WOLOSCHYN: I'd be very pleased to answer the questions from the Member for Redwater. First of all, I think you perhaps have misinterpreted the first one. The first section states specifically that a used car may not be registered in Alberta for the first time. That's for registration, and that's to get at the people who circumvent the system by importing clunkers. So the case that you described of a person going through the province wouldn't apply here, and it wouldn't restrict him in any way, shape, or form. That's just for used cars brought in here, one of the reasons that I was quite willing to leave some of this in regulations. There's another area that this doesn't cover. What happens when a person comes into the province to live here? Do we start hammering them with these heavy inspections if they're going to drive it? So we're going to have to look at fine-tuning some of these things through. So the first one, that wouldn't apply to what you're saying there, hon. Member for Redwater.

The other one, the in-transit permits for written-off vehicles, that is not for the time of the accident. When that vehicle has been repaired, you have to get it to the inspection station to be inspected. So a qualified mechanic or someone would take it there to get it inspected. That's what that's for. The 24 hours would mean that on the day you assign that, that vehicle has to get there and be inspected. If it doesn't meet your requirements, you don't drive it home; it gets towed away. So that's to facilitate the easiest possible way of a repaired vehicle getting to the inspection station. That's all that's for. It doesn't permit you to drive it anywhere. It would be a from point A to B kind of permit and with, as I say, qualified people. It wouldn't be issued to just anybody; it would be somebody who is involved and qualified in the repair.

The third question, hon. member, you were referring to. If you look further on in the regulations, and if you have the whole legislation through there, that pertains to the selling of the salvage car and making sure it is sold through the stream, that it doesn't go back to the unsuspecting consumer, what this legislation is designed to protect. So your question is a very valid one, and the answer is that if you follow that through, you can't sell that car to a consumer as a fixed-up car unless it's been inspected and properly gone through; then you get your thing going there. So the question is valid, and I think perhaps because of the way it's stuck in here, it may have misled you a little bit.

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just some comments as well to the hon. member who has sponsored the Bill

and provided us with a series of amendments with respect to the Bill to help improve it and make it clearer for all of the individuals who are going to have to live under the rules.

Mr. Chairman, I don't have the benefit of the regulations to section 12 of the Highway Traffic Act in front of me, so some of my questions may be easily answered. Because I don't have the benefit of those, as I read through the amendments and the Bill in terms of the definition of written-off motor vehicle, what I don't know – and perhaps the hon. member can help me – is whether there could in fact be a situation where a written-off motor vehicle is still a drivable motor vehicle. I'm thinking of situations where a vehicle that is a much newer model vehicle would have to sustain extensive damage to be written off, whereas an older model vehicle would only have to have a fender bender to, for insurance purposes, be written off and not be salvagable from an insurance perspective. I think that matters as to whether or not a vehicle can in fact be driven on Alberta highways, depending on whether or not it constitutes a written-off motor vehicle or not. So I would just like the hon. member to help me with that in terms of where we go with that.

4:30

When I move to his amendment, section E into 58.1, there's a time line there: "the insurer or other person designated in the regulations." Again, I don't know who the "other person" or other persons "designated in regulations under section 12" would be, but their obligation under this legislation is to "notify the Director of the Transportation Safety Branch . . . within 6 days of the motor vehicle's becoming a written-off motor vehicle."

Now, I assume, Mr. Chairman, that it's going to be an adjuster or an assessor who's going to make the decision as to whether a vehicle is written off or not written off. Again, I'm making some assumptions that it will be an adjuster who will say that the vehicle is written off, and then from that point in time the obligation will fall to the persons responsible to give notification of that.

Subsection (3) gives the obligation to

the person in possession of the motor vehicle's certificate of registration [to] return the certificate to the Registrar within 6 days of the motor vehicle's becoming a written-off motor vehicle.

So in 58.1(1) there are obligations of "the insurer or other person designated," and in sub (3) it is the obligation of "the person in possession of the motor vehicle's certificate of registration."

I would just like to get some clarification from the hon. member if there is a decision made by a qualified individual, an adjuster for example, as to whether or not a vehicle constitutes a written-off vehicle by definition under the Act which will then kick in the obligation for each of those individuals. Now, I know that the intention of the Bill is to prevent damaged vehicles that are unsafe getting back on the road. I can envisage situations where those requirements may be very difficult to meet. For example, in a very serious motor vehicle accident we may not have an individual capable of complying with these requirements under the Act, and then the obligation would fall to somebody else. I don't know what consequences there would be for failing to do so, and again I recognize that we're talking about much further down the road than this. Nonetheless, the legislation does impose upon Albertans certain obligations, and perhaps the hon. member can help me with how he sees that process working under 58.1(1) and (3).

I want to move to the provisions under 141(1), which is the amendment section I. Again, I'm not sure that I'm clear yet – the hon. Member for Redwater asked the question – because we're talking about the regulations and don't have the benefit of those in front of us. The provision as amended says, "No person shall

sell a used motor vehicle if the person is of a class described in the regulations." I'll make an assumption that the person of a class is, for example, a registered dealer in automobiles. I think it's either that or it is intended to read: if the vehicle is of a class described in the regulations. I'm not sure if I've got that right, whether we're talking about persons of a class selling used motor vehicles or vehicles of a class defined in the regulations. So perhaps the hon. member can help me with that.

The other thing that I noticed in reading through 141(1). The reference there is a prohibition for the sale of "a used motor vehicle . . . unless . . ." and then the two provisions after that set out the exceptions from the prohibition.

Mr. Chairman, while I've only had just a very quick opportunity to review the amendments brought forward this afternoon, it appears to me this is the first time that the phrase "used motor vehicle" is used as opposed to "written off motor vehicle." I'm wondering if the member can help me as to whether or not the prohibition set out in section 141(1) is intended to be a prohibition on the sale of written-off motor vehicles until there is a certificate of inspection available for that or whether it is the sale of any used motor vehicle. The hon. member just mentioned the scenario where someone moves to the province of Alberta, brings a used vehicle from outside the province, and then, in whatever circumstances, decides they want to sell their used motor vehicle. To my way of thinking, "used motor vehicle" in that context is broader than I think the member wants. I think we are only concerned with making sure that it's written-off motor vehicles that don't find a way back to the highways of Alberta. If I'm misinterpreting that, perhaps the hon. member can help me out as to exactly how section 141 will apply to Albertans who have to comply with that specific provision.

Mr. Chairman, I think those are my comments, having just had a cursory review, and I look forward to the hon. member's comments to help us in looking at approving the amendments to the Bill.

Thank you.

MR. WOLOSHYN: The first part you are referring to, section 58.1 and its relationship to 58.3, that on the surface would appear to be slightly misleading, but after an accident an insurance company becomes the owner of the vehicle. They are not the registered owner of the vehicle necessarily, so they are then bound to pass it on. It's written the way it is – it says "other person designated in regulations." There's a reason for that, because there are fleets that are self-insured if you don't have insurance on your vehicle, and this lets down the road, as these other people are brought into it, for the regulations to define that eventually anybody who's in this position will be bound by it. When you go down to subsection (3), the person, then, who is in fact in possession of the registration has to turn it in. That may not be the insurance company; they may not have the registration. So it appears to be contradictory on the surface, but it really isn't.

Then the other one that he went on with was that in section 141 – and I guess we should have the regulations here – it permits the ability of people to sell clunkers between themselves, if you will. It's not intended in any way, shape, or form to inhibit the movement of vehicles provided, if you read the rest of it, that the condition of the vehicle has also gone along with it. It's a tracking system there.

With respect to your concerns about the six-day time limit, that was also a concern of mine. Now, with the movement of registries throughout the province, where you don't have to go to

any one, and the age of computers six days is actually a business week plus, if you will. So given that, we felt that was sufficient time for people to do the informing.

Now, one of the reasons why this Bill won't come into effect until proclamation is for some of the very points that you are raising here. If in fact these are presented as problems, we want to know about them in advance and set up the regulations and, if need be, change things.

MR. N. TAYLOR: This is a very short question, and there again it's my ignorance that causes me to ask this, because it's probably filed away somewhere.

It says at the top of page 2, "An inspection certificate specified by regulations under section 12 of the Highway Traffic Act." I just wonder: are there only certain places that are licensed to do this? Or can any – just how does the process work? I know that in Ontario they have a big seal on the window of the garage, and only those garages can give the certificates out. I haven't seen anything in Alberta that way, and I was wondering if he could enlighten me as to just how it would work.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Again, that's another one. That's another one of the problems that we're trying to address and not convolute the legislation with a bunch of those things. You're absolutely correct. There are designated inspection sites for written-off vehicles under section 12. The intention, hopefully, is that as time goes on, bona fide garages or whoever will be able to do these inspections, much along the line that we have with school buses currently. That again is another reason why I am reluctant to want to push this legislation in overnight, because then you'd have people having to haul, as they currently do, vehicles to an inspection station over literally a hundred miles. So that's where that one is coming from, and it's a very good question. The intention is to expand it and that bona fide garages – whatever that might mean – or body shops do the inspecting.

4:40

[Motion on amendments carried]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 217 as amended agreed to]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you very much, colleagues and Mr. Chairman. I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee now do rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports Bill 217 with some amendments. I wish to

table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. So ordered.

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

Bill 218

Water Resources Amendment Act, 1994

[Debate adjourned November 1: Mr. Clegg speaking]

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

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to take much more time because I know there are many of the members that want to speak, but there were just a couple of points that I was going to mention yesterday when I left off. I did say to the hon. Member for Bonnyville that there were many points that he brought up that I was certainly in favour of. What's lacking in the Bill is a broader scope of what we have to really look at. For example, he didn't mention anything about the irrigation in southern Alberta. I know that some of the hon. members will be speaking of that later.

I just want to take a few minutes to explain the process. May I add first that we will be coming to Bonnyville, and I will personally invite the hon. member to the meeting in Bonnyville with a written letter, because we want every Albertan to have input in this very important legislation.

Just to draw your attention to exactly what's happened. When the first review took place, there were 70 interest groups throughout Alberta that were interested. Obviously, you can't have a committee with 70 interest groups, so what happened at that time was that the interest groups were lumped together to form 14 members of the committee. Those are the same 14 members of the committee that we are using today on the final review of this legislation.

I just want to mention how it works. For example, we have Dave Andrews representing I think it's – well, I'll just read them quickly out: the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, Alberta Cattle Commission, Alberta Cattle Breeders' Association, Alberta Feeders Association, Western Stock Growers, the Alberta pork producers, Pembina Agriculture Protection Association, United Farmers of Alberta, Alberta Wheat Pool, United Grain Growers, Alberta Surface Rights Federation, Unifarm, and the Prairie Association for Water Management. We have one individual, and that individual has a meeting with representatives of all of those different organizations. They bring their decisions, after they've had a meeting, to our committee so that every possible organization in Alberta – I've got five or six pages here that I could read, but I'm not going to. That's how the committee was formed, and that's to get as many Albertans and associations to give input into this final review of the committee.

In closing, I'd just invite everybody in this room and all Albertans to take part. We've had two hearings now. The first was a week ago Friday in Red Deer, and I think we had about 60

people out. We had one in Slave Lake last Friday. Yes, the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake was there, and we appreciate the MLAs showing up, along with all individuals. If any of you want a date when it's going to be in your community, certainly contact me and I will see that every member of this House gets it.

I look forward to further debate on this Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to participate in the debate on Bill 218, the Water Resources Amendment Act, 1994.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the hon. Member for Dunvegan in reminding hon. members that the water resources legislation is being reviewed by the government and that he, as the chair of the Water Resources Commission, is very much involved in a process that is looking at new and better ways to manage our water resources in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said and certainly admitted for a number of years that our water resources legislation and our management approach has a long and successful history. But times do change, and it is now time to move forward and have a significant review of the way we manage water in the province of Alberta.

I doubt if many members of the Assembly or many Albertans would take issue with the statement that water is one of our most precious resources. It is constantly under pressure from the demands of many industries, many organizations, residents, and businesses that rely on water for their own consumption and for the development and prosperity of their businesses. Because we have so many competing interests, it's important that we take the time to look at all of the issues that come before us with respect to water management. I do appreciate that the government is undertaking its review and is currently talking to Albertans about changes that Albertans would like to see and that the Alberta government can implement in terms of water resources legislation.

4:50

With respect to Bill 218, Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill in fact addresses an issue that is not specifically addressed in the draft legislation for a new Water Resources Act or in the discussion about water resources management. One of the specific intentions of this Bill is the protection of aquifers, especially from heavy demands by the oil industry. That was really one of the reasons behind this Bill. The draft Water Resources Act that is in discussion at this point in time treats groundwater the same way that it treats surface water. It does not make the distinction and does not distinguish between either potable or fresh water and saline groundwater. There is no specific policy that exists presently, or will under the proposed draft legislation, restricting the use of potable groundwater for oil field activities. What does occur right now is that there are guidelines for the use of potable water, but there is no restriction on the use of potable groundwater for oil field or for any other industrial activity.

The current guidelines that the government now uses do make specific reference to an encouragement to industry to find other sources of water to use rather than using groundwater or fresh water. But, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that does not go far enough and that we need to include in our legislation a process whereby the use of fresh water can be phased out over time so that heavy industry and the oil industries will have to rely on

other sources of water for oil extraction. Some members of the Assembly may recall that in our estimates debates the hon. Member for Redwater made reference to the use in Alberta of fresh water for chasing out oil and that it was certainly something unique to our province or our part of the world and that oil extraction in other parts of the world would not consider using fresh water for the purpose of extracting oil.

I also recall, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member from Grande Prairie asked a question in the Assembly about his concern relating to the use of water in the Valhalla aquifer for drilling activities. My understanding is that that has not proceeded at this point in time, but certainly the residents of that part of Alberta are also very concerned with using fresh water and penetrating and using the Valhalla aquifer for purposes of oil recovery.

The other thing that's important to note, Mr. Speaker, is that while the government is now in the midst of its discussion on the new Water Resources Act, it is from its expected timetable rather far behind. In the June 1992 Water Management in Alberta newsletter it had been proposed at that point in time that the minister of the environment would introduce legislation in 1993 and would then move forward with legislation in 1993. We're now at the end of 1994. The public consultation process is just taking place, and to provide to this Legislative Assembly a well-crafted and well-drafted Water Resources Act, we would not expect that a new piece of legislation would come forward until the fall session of 1995. So we may very well be three years behind in the entire process of bringing forward and adopting for the province of Alberta new water legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, to respond to the hon. Member for Dunvegan, Bill 218 deals with an area of water resource management that is not included in the current review. It deals with an area that is the most urgent area to deal with, an area that cannot and should not wait for the consulting process to finish and for the new draft Water Resources Act to come forward, because at this point in time it doesn't look like that draft legislation will include the specific protection of freshwater aquifers from the heavy demands of the oil industry and other heavy industry.

Mr. Speaker, I'll just take a moment to go through the objects of the Bill and specifically what the Bill is intended to do. As a general objective of the Bill, it is to assist the conservation of Alberta water resources by ensuring that competing demands for all municipal, agricultural, and industrial uses do not have a negative impact on the environment or on the long-term supply of water for domestic needs, approved projects, in-stream flow needs, and nonconsumptive uses, including protection of biodiversity, outdoor recreation, and aesthetics.

Members will know that under the current water resources legislation there is not at this point in time a statement in the Bill of the principles or goals, although the draft Bill does do this. What Bill 218 does, Mr. Speaker, is set out that there is a purpose for the Act. The purpose is for the "long-term conservation of both non-saline ground water and surface water in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Alberta." The intent of that is to entrench in legislation long-term conservation of water as a guiding philosophy of the water resources legislation. What that does is establish conservation, biodiversity, aesthetics, and recreational use as factors that must be considered by the minister and an individual that we have defined as the controller of water resources in all of the reviews for applications for water licences.

The specific situation that gave rise to this Bill was the difficulty that was experienced in Cold Lake with respect to a drought that had occurred in the area, wherein the oil field

activities and the oil field extraction in the Cold Lake area resulted in the removal of the licence for taking water from Cold Lake and then allowed Imperial Oil in its activities in that area to access the aquifers. The intent here, then, is to protect the long-term supply of potable groundwater by in the legislation phasing out the use of groundwater aquifers for oil field injection and also limiting the use for other industrial purposes. That's really what the intent of the legislation is: to build in a four-year phaseout period to allow industries to access and develop other sources of water for oil field injection.

Mr. Speaker, in my conversation with the hon. Member for Bonnyville, he tells me that the lake levels in Cold Lake are once again much higher than they were during the drought years a few years back. The licence was revoked for the use of Cold Lake because it had receded below the benchmark. The water is now up, so it would be possible for industry to continue to or once again use the lake water. I think that would be appropriate because we don't know what happens in the freshwater aquifers, whether or not they are in fact able to recharge as fast as they are used and consumed for oil field activity. While it may now be that the environment, the conditions are better to go back to using lake water, surface water rather than the aquifer, we don't know whether or not those conditions will continue to exist, and what we're looking for are ways to move industry into using other water sources, including surface water from rivers, including surface water from lakes, and including brackish water from much deeper aquifers that contain saline groundwater rather than nonsaline, potable water. So the intent of the Bill is to move in that direction.

5:00

Mr. Speaker, the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act right now does not contain any provisions for an environmental assessment where there is a withdrawal of water in a major way. What Bill 218 does is it amends the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act to make environmental assessments mandatory for all large-scale diversions of water, and it also amends the Water Resources Act so that relevant reviews of the environmental impact of any proposed diversions would have to be considered when reviewing applications for water rights.

Again, Mr. Speaker, some of the specific provisions of Bill 218 are not dealt with in the review of the Water Resources Act that's ongoing, so I think it is appropriate for members of the Assembly to consider this legislation at this point in time to bring protection to the freshwater aquifers not only in that area but in the area of Grande Prairie and others where there are heavy demands. I don't think it would be fair to the sponsor of this Bill or to colleagues in the Legislature to say, "Well, there's a Water Resources Act review going on," because that's too simple a statement to make. There are specifics contained in that review. There are specifics contained in this Bill. I think they are not necessarily conjunctive. This Bill does some different things than that review does.

Mr. Speaker, one of the positions that is created by virtue of this Bill is an independent controller of water resources, and what it does is it attempts to depoliticize the process where the minister has many discretionary and residual powers under the Water Resources Act. What we hope to do with the controller of water resources is transfer the minister's power to that independent controller, depoliticize the process, and take out any potential for political bargaining in the management of water resources in the province of Alberta.

Another thing that Bill 218 does is it establishes the water conservation technical advisory committee, and that committee is

structured to make public recommendations which the Water Resources Commission, that the Member for Dunvegan spoke of, would be required to accept. The benefit of that, Mr. Speaker, is that there will be full public knowledge of the technical advisory committee's recommendation. We again move in a direction that depoliticizes and brings information to light for the people of Alberta.

One of the other components of Bill 218, Mr. Speaker, is that it establishes much stiffer fines for violations of the Water Resources Act, and it implements a more effective deterrent to potential violators. I recall hearing the hon. Member for Dunvegan speak well and speak highly of the inclusion of establishing stiffer fines for violations in the use of water.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to just make some reference quickly to some of the existing policy that is in place at this point in time and to look at some of the statistics in this area to recognize the importance of protecting potable groundwater, to move in a direction that prevents the use of potable groundwater for oil field injection purposes, and to try and move in a direction that requires those industries and other heavy industries to find other appropriate sources of water for oil extraction.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, the groundwater allocation policy for oil field injection purposes, which was announced in 1990, limits the use of potable groundwater for oil field injection to 50 percent of the long-term yield of a given aquifer in the immediate vicinity. What's interesting to note is that the policy applies to only the white zones of Alberta, and it does not apply to the green zones or the forested areas of the province of Alberta. Also, the policy is restricted to oil companies and does not apply to other industrial users of groundwater. As I mentioned, the policy does encourage companies to investigate the possibility of the use of other sources, but the encouragement is only encouragement and does little to protect the groundwater resources.

Groundwater use in Alberta was estimated by the ERCB to be approximately 158 million cubic metres in 1986, and since that period of time, demands for its use have continued to grow. The 1986 figure represents 5 percent of Alberta's total aquifer supply, and 90 million cubic metres of it, over 50 percent of all groundwater use, was used for oil field injection. Of that amount, about one half of the water used for oil field injection is potable, fresh groundwater.

In 1991-92 licences were issued for the withdrawal of nearly 2,000 acre-feet of nonsaline groundwater by industrial users. I'll be using "nonsaline" and "potable" as equivalent terms. Permits for the use of potable water for oil field injection accounted for over 70 percent of that volume, which was 2,000 acre-feet. In 1992-93 licences were granted allowing the withdrawal of nearly 5,000 acre-feet of nonsaline groundwater by industrial users, and of that amount, 87 percent was used for oil field injection. It says, Mr. Speaker, that with those figures the use of potable groundwater for oil field injection more than tripled in a single year, and the trend continues. We know that activity in the Cold Lake area will continue to increase, and we expect, therefore, that the trend will in fact continue over a period of time.

There was a suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that the Cold Lake Regional Water Management Task Force had in fact found, and I did mention this, that the drought conditions in the Cold Lake region caused record low water levels in the regional water basin. It was a serious concern that the activity of Imperial Oil in the area did in fact have a direct effect on the lake levels of both Cold Lake and Ethel Lake, and because of that it was suspended.

Mr. Speaker, for the reasons that I've indicated, I would ask all members to not simply set this Bill aside because of the existing review of water resources legislation and to support Bill 218.

Thank you very much.

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

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to rise and speak to this Bill. I'd like to take essentially two different tacks on approaching Bill 218. Both of them have to do with my residence. The first one, as you know, is in southern Alberta, so the whole concept of irrigation, water conservation, water management are issues that are critical to the part of the world that I live in and yourself, Mr. Speaker.

The second tack that I want to take is as a former resident of Cold Lake. I lived in Cold Lake approximately eight or nine years ago, and at that time the issue of the Esso Resources plant up there drawing down Cold Lake was a very contentious issue, and indeed there were several arguments and several sides to that issue. I found the last speaker's comments – and I even managed to copy one of them down – very interesting. The direct comment was: the use of fresh water "phased out over time."

5:10

As someone now living in southern Alberta, I certainly recognize the importance of fresh water and the importance of adequate management of fresh water, but the issues are not just simply so black and white, Mr. Speaker. The usage of groundwater in the Cold Lake area and the drawing down of Cold Lake is essential for the oil technology that is going on in the Cold Lake area. I don't think that anyone in this Assembly would disagree that if there were alternative methods that could economically and technically be applied to the steam infusion process in the Cold Lake area, it would benefit everyone.

I think that my question, if this Bill goes on to committee, is for the member who introduced it, and essentially that is the one of public consultation. Have you spoken to the people in Cold Lake? Have you spoken to the people and said, "We want to phase out completely the ground water injection over time"? Have you spoken to them and found out what their feelings are about this critical component of the industry in Cold Lake, the issue of the economy in Cold Lake, and what to do with it?

Simply saying, you know, "It's my opinion or my Liberal caucus opinion or it's my Liberal leader's opinion that we should phase out the use of fresh water in oil injection over time" is not good enough, Mr. Speaker. You have to go and talk to the people that are employed in the industry. You have to talk to the engineers from Esso. You have to talk to the mayor of Cold Lake, the mayor of Grand Centre and find out what their opinions are on this. As I'm sure the member knows, the water level of Cold Lake is up over three feet now, and it is not at a critical low as it was before. This is something that I think should be taken into consideration.

As I stated, when I lived in Cold Lake eight or nine years ago, Mr. Speaker, there was tremendous debate as the level of Cold Lake had dropped. Everyone was pointing fingers at the Esso plant saying that they were drawing way too much water, and I think certainly an argument could be made at that time that they probably were. However, it was essential to the economic being of Cold Lake, Grand Centre, and Bonnyville, which is where the hon. member who proposed this Bill is from. I think that the onus is on him, prior to bringing in a Bill like this, to go and talk to the people directly involved and bring their opinions and table

their opinions in the Assembly as to whether or not they're willing to sacrifice a large amount of the industry in Cold Lake for this Bill. If there are other alternatives out there – and I must confess that I am in no way an expert on the oil and gas industry – then I'm sure that everyone in this Assembly would welcome a different approach, because we all value the incredible resource we call water. I think it's something that's critical.

I'd like to now just address my statements to my other life, which is now in Brooks. I would like to comment on irrigation. When you put forward a blanket Bill called Water Resource Management, it is not just as simple as saying: well, you should not inject groundwater into oil wells. There's a tremendous industry in southern Alberta called irrigation. Mr. Speaker, as you know, in your constituency there were recently, within the last week, 550 jobs announced at the Cargill slaughter plant. You know as well as I do that those jobs would not be there if it wasn't for irrigation.

In the town of Brooks a thousand jobs were just announced at the . . .

MR. SMITH: How many?

DR. OBERG: A thousand were just announced at the former Lakeside and now IBP packing plant and farm industry in Brooks. Mr. Speaker, again, these jobs would not be there if it were not for irrigation.

Any time we look at a Water Resource Management Act for the province of Alberta that is all encompassing in the province of Alberta, that does not address irrigation, does not address water quality in the irrigation system, I think it's a travesty. I think that we have to look at it.

I'm not sure how familiar the Assembly is with irrigation or how familiar the member is with irrigation, but I would just pose some questions to him for committee, if this passes into committee. How many irrigation districts are there? They're a critical component to our area. Before the hon. member puts this Bill in, he has to contact them. He has to sit down with the irrigation districts and find out what their concerns are about water resource management.

Mr. Speaker, there are huge issues regarding the usage of water. As you know, presently under the irrigation system the water consumption is not necessarily categorized by human consumption, then animal consumption. It's categorized on existing licences. So if you have an existing licence for, say, 700,000 acre-feet – again I'm sure the hon. member from up north would know what an acre-foot of water is – that can be drawn down without starving the communities down the way.

These are issues that are incredibly important, Mr. Speaker. I really feel that they're issues that have to be developed more. Because of the time constraints today I just can't go into them, but I would be more than happy to adjourn debate and get into it the next day.

I therefore move that debate be adjourned.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We vote on the issue, hon. member. We may go on to some . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: With all due deference, Mr. Speaker, I don't think you can take a motion to adjourn debate if there's somebody willing to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hear what you're saying, but in fact you may do so. The Assembly has control over whether the motion is acceptable to the Assembly.

The hon. Member for Bow Valley has moved that we adjourn debate on Bill 218 at this time. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would now move that we call it 5:30 and that when we reconvene at 8 o'clock, we do so as Committee of the Whole.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader has moved that we now adjourn the Assembly and that when we meet at 8 p.m., we do so in Committee of the Whole. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:18 p.m.]