

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, February 21, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/02/21

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave this afternoon to introduce a petition signed by 947 residents of the province of Alberta from 70 different communities urging the Legislature to call on the government of Alberta

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

Thank you.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition signed by 47 people urging the government

to retain the Person's Case Scholarship because it ensures this critical piece of Alberta history is always remembered and respected.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to have the petition that I presented on February 14 on restoration of early childhood services funding read and received today.

Thank you.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I request that the petition I presented on February 15 calling for the reinstatement of early childhood services funding be read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition which I presented to the Assembly on February 15 regarding funding for early childhood education now be read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I request that the petition I presented on February 16 requesting more funds for early childhood services be now read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to request that the petition I presented on February 16 regarding funding for ECS be read and received. Maybe by repeating it a few times, they might hear the message.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would request that the petition I presented on February 16 with regard to 400 hours of funding for ECS, which, Mr. Premier, is very important to people in this province, now be read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned Residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services instruction per year.

We also request the Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to allow Alberta School Boards to use money from the Alberta School Foundation Fund to fund 400 hours or more of Early Childhood Services, as determined by the local community, so that there are no ECS user fees for 400 hour programs and so that all Alberta children have an equal opportunity or "level playing field" to succeed and compete in life by having equal access to basic educational resources.

head:

Notices of Motions

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(2)(a) I'm giving notice that tomorrow I'll move that written questions and motions for returns stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 40 I will rise after question period today and seek unanimous consent to consider the following motion:

Be it resolved that this Assembly congratulate the Kinsmen and Kinettes in recognition of their 75th anniversary on February 20, 1995.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Provincial Treasurer I wish to give oral notice that he intends to introduce the Balanced Budget and Debt Retirement Act.

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

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to give notice that after question period pursuant to Standing Order 40 I intend to rise in the Legislature and request unanimous approval of this Assembly for the following motion:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize and support the city of Calgary's bid to host the 2005 world's fair.

head:

Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I table copies of letters today, among them from the Alberta Chamber of Commerce and from TransAlta, indicating their concern that if the federal government removes its utility tax rebate, it will be for one reason and one reason alone, and that is that the provincial government removed its utility tax rebate in 1990.

1:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to table a submission by the Kindergarten Restoration Committee in my riding to the trustees of the Grande Yellowhead school division. This submission consists of a petition signed by 1,028 residents and 196 letters from other residents of the area. All are urging the Grande Yellowhead school board to restore the 400-hour kindergarten program. I've been asked to do this so that all members in this House will see the light and vote in favour of Bill 202.

MRS. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file with the Assembly four copies of the 1993-94 annual report of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. Members will shortly be provided with a copy.

Thank you.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table copies of 15 letters from residents of Innisfail who are very concerned about the proposed cuts in the number of active care beds and the cutback in surgery at the Innisfail hospital. The residents of Innisfail have asked me to bring this to the attention of the minister, and this is of course my first opportunity to do so. I'm happy that their correspondence is having some impact.

MRS. GORDON: On Thursday last the Member for Calgary-Buffalo filed with this House a letter written to me on January 16, 1995, allegedly reporting that no reply had been received. Mr. Speaker, I wish to file a copy of my written response to correct this fallacy, dated January 31, 1995, wherein the member was indeed informed of the additional meeting dates scheduled by the Lottery Review Committee in Calgary, Edmonton, and Fort McMurray. Furthermore, a cordial invitation to participate was extended. Although invited and encouraged to attend, he was a definite no-show.

head:

Introduction of Guests

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and my honour to introduce to you and through you a constituent from the Grande Prairie-Smoky constituency. He's probably rapidly becoming the largest bison producer in the Peace River country, a man with a very colourful experience in fescue production, a strong agricultural component, a past agriculture minister of this province: Marv Moore. Would you please rise and receive the accolades of this House.

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

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to introduce to you 16 visitors, students as it were from W.P.

Wagner school in the lovely constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore who are here visiting today with their very dynamic and enthusiastic teacher Mrs. Arlene Cairns. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the thunderous applause of the Assembly.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to introduce 52 visitors from Lago Lindo school. That's a school in my constituency. Half are in the members' gallery, and half are in the public gallery. I would ask that they stand and that the members acknowledge their presence.

Thank you, sir.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege for me to present to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly a very hardworking constituent. She is part of the St. Albert Kindergarten Coalition who is working hard to restore 400 hours. I would ask that Terry Starko, who's seated in the members' gallery, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. N. TAYLOR: M. le Président, ça me fait plaisir de vous introduire 32 visiteurs de l'école Citadelle. It's my pleasure to introduce 32 students from our Francophone school in the town of Legal accompanied by three teachers: Mme Denise Cyr, Mme Monique Gravel, and M. Raymond Tremblay. I'd ask them to stand and receive the congratulations and welcome of the Assembly.

head:

Oral Question Period

Utility Tax Rebate

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, both the Alberta Chamber of Commerce and TransAlta Utilities have recently pointed out that if the federal government eliminates its \$173 million utility tax rebate to Alberta utility companies, it will be solely because that's what the provincial government did with its rebate in 1990. Believe it or not, nine members of this government's front bench today voted for that 1990 tax grab, including none other than the Premier and the Treasurer themselves. There they were with their hands in the air saying: "Yes, yes, yes. Tax those Alberta utility companies." How can this Premier say that the federal government is reprehensible for eliminating its utility tax rebate when that's exactly what this Premier voted to do in 1990? That's the reprehensible pot calling the reprehensible kettle black.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge it hasn't been done yet. There's some talk of it being done. There's a rumour out there that it might be done. There's some speculation that it might be done. Yes, it will cause some harm to the Alberta consumers. There was good reason back in 1990: it's because of the very special arrangement we had relative to the equalization of utility costs in this province. I'll have the hon. Minister of Energy supplement.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, a decision that was made back in 1990 to eliminate the provincial side of it had some good reason for it. On the electrical side, which is the vast majority of the rebate, the tax burden that was borne by the private-sector utility companies, as opposed to Edmonton Power, the Crown-owned

one of the city of Edmonton, was being averaged through the EEMA process and spread across Albertans on an equal basis. So the discriminatory practice in fact was leveled out in the province of Alberta.

The issue we're faced with today, Mr. Speaker, is a speculative one that the federal government may or may not remove a tax rebate from the federal tax side that would clearly discriminate against the province of Alberta as it lines itself up with the provinces adjacent to it that are Crown corporations.

MR. MITCHELL: I can hardly believe, Mr. Speaker, that the two of them can stand there and say that with a straight face. Last week they were adjusting taxes . . .

THE SPEAKER: Question.

MR. MITCHELL: How can the Premier claim that he is promoting the Alberta advantage when his government's 1990 utility tax grab has increased the power costs for the energy industry, the petrochemical industry, the forestry industry, the steel industry, and the pipeline industry and has eroded their competitiveness?

MR. KLEIN: The only one I hear complaining about it, Mr. Speaker, is the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition. Basically, what we have tried to do in this province is to equalize power rates so that indeed people who pioneered the forestry industry, for instance, in northern Alberta would have access to comparatively cheap electricity. We're going through that review right now. I think the hon. minister gave a reasonable explanation as to why that decision was made in 1990, and again I'll have her elaborate.

1:50

MRS. BLACK: Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly the only people that are going to have a negative impact on the province of Alberta and the Alberta advantage are their kissing cousins in Ottawa, who are going to speculatively use the tax system to discriminate against the province of Alberta in this country. If you want to help out Albertans, you will go down to your friends and tell them: don't use that tax system for discrimination. Clearly, in the province of Alberta it's a fact that we have some of the lowest electrical rates in this entire country. No one else can match it, and clearly our process has been very fair, very open. This is clearly the speculation of a tax grab by Ottawa, which is absolutely wrong.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities has something to augment on this.

DR. WEST: Just a little supplemental information, because I wouldn't want an innuendo left on the floor that would cloud the issue. Out of the \$238 million that's involved from the federal government transfer to the provinces, as was said here by the Minister of Energy, \$173 million is given to the province of Alberta, because we still believe in private-sector involvement, and the majority of our utilities are private sector. That's two-thirds of the transfer of this \$238 million to the province of Alberta. Ontario only gets \$1.6 million, Quebec \$10.8 million, and they don't transfer the money they get back to the consumer. We give all of the \$173 million back to the consumer. Here is a federal government that's going to take two-thirds of this money out on Alberta because we believe in the private-sector business in this province. And they profess as Liberals to be private-sector oriented?

MR. MITCHELL: The Minister of Transportation and Utilities is exactly right. The people they are hurting, Mr. Speaker, are the consumers of this province.

Why doesn't the Premier call the federal government's bluff and reinstate the provincial utility tax rebate prior to the federal budget? Wouldn't this afternoon be a perfect time to do it?

MR. KLEIN: If I did that, Mr. Speaker, I would be disappointing greatly the hon. Member for Redwater, because I read in the newspaper just yesterday his letter to the editor defending with great vigour Mr. Martin and his proposal to tax private utility companies. I was absolutely astounded that this member would write a letter to the *Edmonton Journal* and to the *Calgary Herald*, published in both newspapers, advocating that Alberta consumers be punished. Absolutely awful.

MR. MITCHELL: Maybe he should turn it the right way up when he's reading it, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. We will now move on to the second main question.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Rural Health Services

MR. MITCHELL: With pleasure, Mr. Speaker. As regional health authorities are being forced by the Premier's imposed agenda to shut down rural hospitals throughout Alberta, communities are losing more than simply bed space. They are losing their physicians, and when their doctors go, community stability and, most importantly, a sense of security about the community's health care goes too. To the Premier: what assurances do rural Albertans have that doctors won't leave town once the Premier's policies have caused the local hospital to be shut down?

MR. KLEIN: Absolutely amazing coming from the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition, who just a few short days ago said: there are too many hospitals. We probably don't need as much acute care hospital facilities as we have in the province, said Mr. Mitchell, quote, unquote. This coming from the Leader of the Official Opposition, who only days ago was advocating shutting down hospitals.

MR. MITCHELL: This, Mr. Speaker, from the Premier who told Albertans: don't vote for Nancy Betkowski, because she's going to close your hospitals; vote for me. I wonder how many Albertans he misled personally.

What action is the Premier taking to prevent cases like Fort McMurray's, where one-third of the family practitioners are leaving the community?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like that fully substantiated. I really would. I would like to see the proof. I would like to see this hon. member stand up and document that one-third of the doctors in Fort McMurray are leaving or have left. I'd like him to stand up and document that, because I believe that to be absolutely untrue.

Mr. Speaker, we are going through a very significant reorganization in health to move from more institutionalized care to more community-based care. This involves a fundamental reorganization and a rethink of how we deliver health services. I have said time and time again: these are difficult times, very difficult times indeed. The members of the regional health authorities, all

volunteers, are struggling with their MLAs and with their community people, with the various medical disciplines to sort this out and to come to some conclusion that will fully rationalize health care in this province.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be useful to have some facts about the physician complement in this province. In 1994 there were a total of 39 physicians that informed the College of Physicians and Surgeons that they were leaving Alberta to practise in the U.S. We have about 4,500 physicians in this province. Also, there was a total of 222 new physicians who received billing numbers in this province in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, there has always been some outflow of physicians. We're very concerned that we keep our physicians in this province. However, we must recognize that the U.S. is here recruiting, offering very lucrative salaries, very attractive placements. I think it speaks well of the graduates that we do have in this province that they're that highly regarded. We will continue to work with our physicians to ensure that our physician complement is kept to meet our medical requirements.

MR. MITCHELL: It's not the promise of more money that's driving Alberta doctors out of this province, Mr. Speaker. It's the instability and the insecurity that they feel in this health care system.

Why is the Premier allowing health care regions to erect barriers which will discourage physicians from practising in rural Alberta? [interjection] Yes, they are.

MR. KLEIN: Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, they are not.

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

Radiology Services

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. You know, first it's the physicians and now it's the health care dollars that are going to be fleeing the province. The sellout of our health care system to U.S. interests is about to begin. Telemedicine Services Group of Boston is currently negotiating to provide X-ray and pathology services for all of Alberta. Why would the Minister of Health even consider this American proposal for radiology when a made-in-Alberta proposal has not been taken seriously and still awaits her okay?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring the hon. member up to date, because just last night I had a fairly long discussion with the chairman of the Calgary regional health authority. He gave me every assurance – every assurance – that this simply will not happen.

2:00

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, is this more thinking out loud, more musing? The fact is that the Minister of Health has ultimate control over the health care system. Why would she even think about this, thinking out loud? Why would there even be this musing about exporting control of diagnostic services to American insurance companies?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the regional health authorities certainly have the opportunity for negotiating with Alberta and other areas for their services. However, radiology services are under our fee-for-service program in this province, and I think the

Premier has outlined very clearly the opinion of a very major regional health authority in this province.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, not the regional health authorities; we want the assurance from this Minister of Health that there will not be a monopoly provided to an American service group for diagnostic services, services which can be provided by professionals right here in Alberta.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence in the radiologists in this province to compete on a one-to-one basis with any service. As I indicated earlier, radiology services are under a fee-for-service program. Obviously there is no intention.

However, I do want to raise this one issue. Conversely, I would suppose that they would also say that an Alberta company should not offer their services and be competitive anywhere else.

MR. SAPERS: That's not the issue, Shirley, and you know it.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Of course it is.

THE SPEAKER: Your time has expired on this subject.
The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Logging on Private Land

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister of Environmental Protection. In a rather brief career in competitive hockey I made up for a lack of skill by being perhaps overly aggressive to the point where I was actually called a hacker and a slasher, but even in my wildest days on the ice I never reached the degree of hacking and slashing that it's reported some loggers are doing in Alberta on private land. I want to ask the Minister of Environmental Protection: has the minister been notified of the exact areas in the southern part of this province where these hackers and slashers are operating?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the whole issue of logging on private land is one that we have been spending a lot of time on lately. It does cause a lot of concern if in fact there are any environmental damages occurring. We are urging people and we have our people out there observing to make sure that there aren't environmental damages. We've got a hot line, and I'll give the number so that if people find that there are areas that are being damaged, they can phone. The number is 1-800-619-5732, and we're advertising that all over the province so that if, in fact, there is environmental damage, it can be addressed. [interjections]

MS LEIBOVICI: Point of order.

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, around our area in my home constituency there is a lot of logging going on on private land. It's interesting though. Aesthetically it's not appealing; however, I notice that there's even a lot of selective logging going on. The practices are not the kind that would be detrimental to the environment. I would urge the hon. member that if he knows of any areas that are in fact being damaged environmentally, he would let us know.

MR. DUNFORD: I missed that phone number. There was some disturbance in the House. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. DUNFORD: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, given that there is a concern over the availability of water in the whole South Saskatchewan River basin, what is this hacking and slashing doing to the availability of our water for the future?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the hon. member missed that phone number, we'll give it again. It's 1-800-619-5732.

Now to answer the specific question, there's been a number of studies done on the effects of logging in water basins and what effect that has on the watershed. As a matter of fact, two of the most recent are one done in the Hinton area in the tricreek basin, another done around Valleyview in the Spring Creek basin. The interesting thing that was observed is that if you do log the area to up to 30 percent of the timber in a water basin, in other words in the watershed, it actually increases the over year flow by about 15 percent. Now, any one of us that has been out in the forest, particularly a coniferous forest, can easily identify with that. If you walk today in the forest where there's a lot of spruce, the snow is hung up in the branches. That water never does reach the ground. Once it melts, it evaporates and is gone. So in fact there is more water available in an area that has been cut.

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to concede that there are loggers in Alberta that are practising good logging practices, but what can the minister do to ensure that the career of those hackers and slashers lasts just as briefly as my hockey career?

MR. LUND: Well, there are . . . [interjections] It's really interesting that across the way they aren't a bit interested in hearing the answers to these very important questions. Mr. Speaker, it would be very much to their advantage if in fact they would listen; then they wouldn't have to come back with the stupid questions they've asked in the past.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of Acts that can be used if in fact there are any environmental damages. Maybe I should just run through a few of them: Forest and Prairie Protection Act, the Soil Conservation Act, the Water Resources Act, the Public Lands Act, and the Fisheries Act, which is a federal Act, but of course we administer it. So if there is environmental damage, if there's anything going on that is against these Acts, we can take action and we will take action. We will come down with a very heavy hand. But if it's just aesthetics, then it's another issue; it's very difficult. You can't rule against what an individual does on his own property if it doesn't affect somebody else.

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

McDougall Centre

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1981 the government bought McDougall school in Calgary for \$20 million. Now, the rationalization at that time, given by the then Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services in *Hansard*, March 19, 1984, was that it was

appropriate to develop space in a central location for . . . southern Alberta MLAs . . . to meet with the public - the people of Calgary and southern Alberta.

However, when this southern Alberta MLA requested the use of the building to meet with Calgarians and members of the public, I was informed that the building was for the exclusive use of the Conservatives. So my question is to the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: The government. The government.

MR. BRUSEKER: No. I was informed that it was for the exclusive use of the Conservatives. Why does the government, why does the Premier insist on excluding certain MLAs from a building owned by all Albertans?

MR. KLEIN: Well, the last time I looked, the Conservatives and the government were synonymous.

Mr. Speaker, I think a substantial amount was set aside for the Liberal caucus to rent space in an office building in Calgary to conduct their caucus meetings, to conduct their meetings with the public. We have never asked nor do we ever purport to want to ramble around in the Liberal caucus offices over here in the Annex. I would like to point out that McDougall Centre is the southern government office – the southern government office – just as Government House is Government House. Those people over there are not the government. They think they are sometimes, but they are not the government. We are, and the people said that we were the government last June 15.

2:10

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, since that is the policy, then, of the government and of the Conservatives, when will the Conservative Party reimburse the people of Alberta for their exclusive use of a publicly owned building?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, McDougall Centre in Calgary and Government House are both used for a number of government-related functions, and indeed just the other week we had the new Alberta Economic Development Authority meet in the caucus chambers at Government House conducting government business. We have had numerous groups meet with MLAs and ministers in McDougall Centre in Calgary to discuss government business. That's what the government houses are all about.

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

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Based on that last line of questioning, it's clear the only difference between this session and the last session is that the Liberals have cut six feet off the height of their leader.

THE SPEAKER: Does the hon. member have a question?

MR. HAVELOCK: I do have a question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. In today's newspaper there is a story regarding the environment and energy ministers' failing to agree on how to cap Canada's emissions of greenhouse gases. Mo Sihota, the environment minister from Lotusland, incidentally not to be confused with Moe from the Three Stooges, has suggested that Alberta has snubbed the green plan and buried its head in the tar sands. Mr. Minister, why is Alberta out of step with the rest of the country on this important issue of global warming?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe for one minute that Alberta is out of step. In fact, Alberta is the only province that has been really proactive. We set up a process called the clean air strategy. We brought together industry, government, and people from the environmental community. They have worked hard and came forward with a plan that, in fact, is working. We've gone forward with the voluntary challenge program and a registry. Voluntary is working. I can read you off some examples. For example, Alberta Power co-ordinated a communitywide effort which reduced electric demand in Jasper by more than 2,000 kilowatts, which meant a reduction of 6,020 tonnes of CO₂ and 6.6 tonnes of nitric oxide. Renaissance . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order. The Chair would remind the hon. minister that question period shouldn't be a way of delivering a bunch of statistics.

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, I thought it was an excellent answer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: where, then, do Canada and Alberta fit into the global scene?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, there were 36 countries that signed on in Rio a number of years ago and made a commitment that they would in fact reduce greenhouse gases back to the 1990 level by the year 2000. The report that we were given yesterday in Toronto indicated that there had been 15 countries that had reported at this time. Only five have indicated that they will even meet the target. Nine of those countries are indicating that they're going to be above the target. One has indicated that they may have something done by the year 2000. So, in fact, the statistics for Canada indicate that we're about in the middle, that if nothing were done, we would be about 13 percent over our target. With the voluntary challenge program and the registry, we're convinced that we will see a decrease, and we're not going to get into the regulatory, and a no regrets program is the one we're going to follow.

Thank you.

MR. HAVELOCK: Another excellent response.

Mr. Speaker, if Ms Copps and Mr. Sihota were to get their wish and could regulate against carbon dioxide emissions, what would that mean to the energy sector in this province?

MR. LUND: Well, depending on the extent. I was really disturbed when I discovered that, in fact, the federal government had commissioned what they call a blue-ribbon report, and it certainly talks at length about carbon taxes. I wouldn't be surprised if we see some kind of a green tax dealing with the emissions, but I think as it relates to the energy industry, it would be better that the Minister of Energy should reply.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I don't like to impress upon the opposition, but since the energy industry is one of the motor industries of this province, I think they should pay attention to concerns that come forward to it. Clearly an intrusion by the federal government would not be appropriate. One of the things that occurred in the document of consensus that was brought forward was the voluntary challenge program and registry. As it pertains to British Columbia, they have under their jurisdiction in the Constitution the ability to impose regulation within their

province, as does the province of Alberta. We have, we believe, a very strong regulatory process.

Insofar as the federal government, Mr. Speaker, we've sent our message down that it would not be acceptable here in Alberta to impose a tax at the wellhead on our product. Clearly the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud participated and shared with us a report on the impact of an imposed tax on the oil and gas industry which clearly indicated that there would be a minimum of about a \$5 billion hit to this industry. So we would like the opposition Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to send that information down to the federal Environment minister and to stand with us to oppose any kind of implementation of a tax.

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

Social Assistance

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First they tried to cut the handicap benefits from a disabled man because he did not attend a career planning class. This man suffers with deformed hips, a missing kidney, no bladder, club feet, and one leg is six inches shorter than the other one. Then there was a single mother in poor health who was cut off assistance and then magically reinstated after the MLA placed an ad in a local paper asking for help. Next they tell a 60-year-old woman caring for her disabled daughter at home that she has to start a retraining program or be cut off assistance of \$479 a month. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. What kind of dehumanizing instructions have you given your workers that would make them cut these kinds of cases off social assistance? What happened to compassion and common sense?

THE SPEAKER: The Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think it's only fair that the members in this House and the public know that this government does care when we're dealing with persons with disabilities. Our budget in that area is over \$430 million in Alberta alone. What I hear from most of the people, persons with disabilities is that as many of those people as possible want to take training and want to get back into the work force, and that is the direction this government has gone. There are cases, like the hon. member mentioned, that do fall through the cracks. What this minister and the department and this government do is deal with those people on an individual basis and resolve the issue.

2:20

MS HANSON: Mr. Speaker, where is the saving in cases if they are overturned by appeal later or if the family members end up in institutions? There is no saving there.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I don't think this government has talked about saving when we're talking about persons with disabilities. I've mentioned in this House that in this fiscal year alone – and I won't talk about next fiscal year – we've moved close to \$100 million to high-needs areas, and close to 30 percent of that goes to persons with high needs like persons with disabilities. The plan is out there and supported very well by the public and persons with disabilities that as much as possible they would like to get back into the community and be integrated into the community like the rest of Albertans, and that is exactly the direction we're going.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

Meat Inspection

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The backbone of the Alberta advantage is the entrepreneurial spirit of thousands of small businesses in our province. Recently I've had concerns expressed to me regarding proposed changes to meat inspection regulations and how these changes could have a negative impact on small meat processors. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Can the minister advise members what changes are being considered and why?

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question from the hon. Member for Medicine Hat. A number of recommendations have been brought forward by the industry-led advisory committee. As you know and as has been identified, there are some issues that are somewhat contentious; others the committee has been able to resolve in a very knowledgeable and fashionable way. The contentious area, of course, is the whole area of phytosanitary meat inspection and the area of inspected meat and noninspected meat and how it can be handled. As you know, there is a concern about the noninspected meat being mixed with the inspected meat. With the phytosanitary restrictions we have in place today, we have to find a way of resolving that, and obviously that's the challenge that's out there for the industry at the present time.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. RENNER: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the meat processors held a convention in Banff this past weekend. Can the minister advise if they were able to resolve the situation regarding uninspected and inspected meats processed in the same facility?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The recent convention from February 17 to 19 indeed did deal with this issue in large part. The particular area discussed was again the way of resolving the situation regarding meat inspection, the way of dealing with the processor who deals with inspected meat and noninspected meat and the separation and clear identification. Though there wasn't a consensus developed, there were some ideas that came forward. It was agreed, however, that the industry will carry on with their discussions and try and come forward with some recommendations that will be practical and useful to a final resolve of this situation.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. RENNER: Thank you. My discussions with small meat processors have indicated that this is a critical issue to them and to the viability of their business. Could the minister advise what the time lines are to have some kind of resolution to this problem?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes, I will. February 28 is the date that's been set by the advisory committee to come forward with some

recommendations that indeed can be incorporated. Once the advisory committee has developed a process for these recommendations, there will be a series of focus meetings held in six distinct areas of the province throughout the region to communicate with the industry so that there is a knowledgeable decision made, so that there is an understanding by the industry of just what the process is going to be.

North Saskatchewan River Boat Ltd.

MR. GERMAIN: Last year the government thought they still had another winner in the guarantee to North Saskatchewan River Boat. In fact, the then minister of economic development was quick to point out in *Hansard* his opinion that "there's no possibility of a loss with respect to this at all." Now, Mr. Speaker, let's see what difference a year makes. My question today is to the Premier of the province. Mr. Premier, is it still your government's assessment that there is no risk of loss on the North Saskatchewan paddleboat?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we're working diligently to ensure that our investment is secure, and to bring you up to date, I'll ask the hon. minister without portfolio to respond.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the court has accepted an offer of \$800,000 for the assets of North Saskatchewan River Boat. Distribution of those proceeds will be subject to a court decision and will be made public as soon as that decision is made.

MR. GERMAIN: Since the loan amount now exceeds that sale figure, would the Premier agree that the government will take a loss on this transaction?

MR. KLEIN: I will agree that we're doing the best we possibly can.

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

Social Assistance (continued)

MR. HERARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Mr. Minister, you stated a time or two in this House that since the introduction of your welfare reforms the caseload handled by your department has declined by over 40 percent. Now, you've also reported that the number of client appeals has fallen steadily since the reforms were introduced. Can you tell us what the level of client appeals is today and the reason for the continued decrease in the number of appeals being heard by the review committees?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to explain that the caseload decline of 40 percent, of course, is not in all categories in my department. Within that drop, in fact, people on assured income for the severely handicapped increased by 4.2 percent. So there are areas of my caseloads that actually increased. The member before brought that up here.

The actual number of appeal hearings has dropped considerably. In fact, the '93-94 fiscal year saw over 576 appeals being heard in Alberta. From April 1 of '94 until December of '94 the

hearings dropped to 261, which is a drop of 55 percent. Because we haven't reduced our staff - we still have 5,400 staff - what has happened here is that now my staff has more time to do the frontline work. There's actually more time to deal with client issues, deal with the issues on the spot, rather than referring the issues to appeal panels. This has worked really well.

MR. HERARD: Well, given that there's been a 55 percent reduction in appeals, has there been a corresponding reduction in the number of appeal committees?

MR. CARDINAL: No, Mr. Speaker. We still have 55 appeal committees in Alberta. What has happened is that 31 of those 55 are assigned to specifically deal with welfare or the SFI, and 24 are assigned to AISH, child welfare, and dependent adult programs. I'll give you an example. In Edmonton there used to be appeals five days a week held by the appeal board. What has happened is that now we are only dealing with appeals two days per week.

MR. HERARD: Perhaps the minister could indicate what effect this decrease in appeals has had on his budget.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, of course. The cost of the appeals process was reasonably high when you had a caseload of 94,000 or a turnover of, you know, 10,000 cases per month. The cost was very high. Of course that's not there anymore. There is definitely less cost, and we provide a better service for the clientele. It gives a better opportunity, in fact, also for the workers to be able to deal with the issues, because what has happened now is that we've defined a lot better what programs could be appealed.

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

2:30 Farm Income Program

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday the minister of agriculture stated that farmers said yes when asked: do you want a safety net program? He also commented that the proposed safety net program would be voluntary and whole farm, the intention being to create a safety net program which is GATT trade neutral. In doing so, the minister has defined whole farm as synonymous with whole industry. My question to the minister of agriculture: when you define the whole-farm or whole-industry concept, why can't you admit the cattle industry and the marketing board commodities, as these groups have requested?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that we have had in the past with our safety net programs has been the fact that we have been identifying them as being commodity specific. Though we don't have a clear and definitive ruling - and we've indicated that before there would be any safety net process put in place it would be our intention to go to the GATT appeal committee for a clear and concise ruling - one of the issues that we have is the reverse at this time. If we allow certain commodities to exit from this program, then we get back into the whole situation where indeed we're starting to become commodity specific. Therefore, as soon as you start identifying commodity specific, you've got a problem as far as GATT is concerned. So that's the reason we're suggesting that what we really have to do is develop a whole-farm program, one that includes all of the farming operation.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you deal with commodity specific under the GATT terms, is it not true that you have to deal with it in the context of production decisions? Why, then, can't the cattlemen, who want to be self-reliant and not dependent on taxpayers, be allowed out of any safety net program?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Well, certainly this is a situation that some cattlemen would like to support. On the other hand, we also have a situation, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's important to note: the cow/calf operators of the north want to be part of a safety net process. When we toured the province for our roundtable discussions, we identified the producers, whether they were grain or whether they were cattle producers, as to whether they felt that there should be a safety net program put in place. At that time, there was virtually an identical number of farmers who considered themselves grain farmers as those who considered themselves cattle farmers who indicated: yes, we would want a safety net program. So indeed there is a feeling that a certain percentage of the cattle producers do want a safety net program.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental?
The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Immigration

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend there were reports in various newspapers that there had been a case in which refugee status was granted to an individual with AIDS. Would the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development, who is responsible for immigration, please tell the Assembly what Alberta's position is as it pertains to refugee acceptance of persons with AIDS?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, immigration is a shared responsibility federally and provincially, but Alberta, like all provinces, is not empowered by the Constitution to make decisions on admittance of refugees abroad or to determine the validity of refugee claims made within Canada. These decisions are made by the federal government. However, if an individual were applying from overseas to come into Canada and consequently into Alberta and was seen to be suffering from AIDS and was for that reason deemed to be medically inadmissible by the federal government, that case would be referred to the Alberta Immigration Review Panel. The Alberta Immigration Review Panel would determine whether the province concurs with the individual's entry under a federal minister's permit. If the province did not concur, Canada could still admit the individual under humanitarian and compassionate grounds, but usually the federal decisions are respected. I might add that we have had no HIV refugee cases referred to the Alberta Immigration Review Panel so far.

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, my one and only supplemental this afternoon is: what are the diseases that are tested for in regard to refugees and immigrants before they're allowed to come into Alberta?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, every person applying to immigrate into this country takes a mandatory medical examination. The list of diseases tested for is exhaustive and includes communicable diseases which pose a danger to public health. It's also dependent to some extent on the country from which the visitor or potential

immigrant is applying. TB, for example, is tested for in general, but some tropical diseases are specifically tested for in the countries in which they commonly occur. There are frequent consultations between the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the provincial Department of Health to determine which diseases should be tested for.

THE SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Before we move on to Members' Statements, would the Assembly agree to reverting to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
The hon. Member for Highwood.

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

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a gentleman that I had the pleasure of supporting in the 1958 election. He won election that year and went on to serve this community for many years as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, as he was known then. Mr. Nugent, would you please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Members' Statements**

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

World Police and Fire Games

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. January 25, 1995, saw the official opening of the Calgary office for the World Police and Fire Games to be held in the city of Calgary between June 27 and July 4, 1997. All members will appreciate that in 1993 Calgary competed successfully with five other cities for the right to host those 1997 World Police and Fire Games. It's anticipated that 8,000 to 10,000 athletes from over 30 countries will compete. It's also anticipated that some 3,000 volunteers will be involved. The historic occasion will be further celebrated by the 1997 Calgary Exhibition and Stampede theme, which will be a salute to police officers and fire fighters.

The goal of the organizing committee is to involve the community and give Calgarians a firsthand look at the people who dedicate careers to keeping Calgary and other cities safe. There will be a trade show in conjunction with this, which is going to give Calgary and Alberta and Canadian suppliers exposure to specialty markets around the world. Best of all from the perspective of my constituents, there will be no attendance charge for people coming as spectators to any of the games. It's anticipated the games will generate in excess of \$30 million in economic impact to the city of Calgary.

I particularly want to pay tribute, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon to the two individuals probably most responsible for securing this exciting event for this province and for the city of Calgary, Deputy Chief Wayne Morris of the Calgary fire department and Deputy Chief Len Esler of the Calgary Police Service. I also want to acknowledge the very generous support of the founding sponsor, Alberta Energy.

I hope that all members will make a point of encouraging their constituents to attend what really will be a memorable event, sir, in 1997. Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Thinking Day

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since 1932, February 22 has been known as Thinking Day. Thinking Day falls on the joint birthday of Robert and Olave Baden-Powell, founding members of the guiding and scouting movements. On February 22 every Guide, Brownie, Pathfinder, Venturer, Scout, Beaver, and Cub is encouraged to consider other members in this international movement. Tomorrow their numbers will participate in international activities with the purpose of increasing the awareness of their activities throughout the world.

Because Thinking Day recognizes guiding and scouting, it also provides an opportunity to recognize their contribution to our communities. For example, Mr. Speaker, Girl Guides of Canada work to the benefit of people and communities around the world. Their community work is based on the principles of service and volunteerism. They are involved at local, national, and international levels in such issues as the environment, and they are involved in such concerns as reforestation and water, soil, and air purification. They are also involved in community education and development. On an individual basis Girl Guides of Canada provide our young Albertans with the opportunity to become responsible citizens and enable them to develop leadership skills and provide service to the community.

Olave Baden-Powell left the following words to the scouting and guiding movement, their leaders, and their friends, and I think it aptly describes their movement: behind the Girl Guides of Canada you will not only advance yourselves in body, mind, and spirit, but you will affect those around you in doing what is honourable, right, and wise and in giving out kindness of thought and action, thus striving against all ills and helping to make the world a happier and better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts of Canada and Alberta for the invaluable work that they have done on behalf of all citizens. Thank you.

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

2:40

Edmonton Bicentennial

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 1995 marks 200 years of building and growth for the city of Edmonton. Two hundred years ago Fort Augustus and Edmonton House were built along the North Saskatchewan River. With these structures came the growth of an economic and social infrastructure that is still visible today. The growth of Edmonton was spurred by the vigorous spirit of the fur traders, the coureurs de bois, and the adventurers.

Today we pay tribute to the people of Edmonton who had the courage and determination to make this one of the most successful northern cities in the world. It is the gateway to the north and has been recognized as the entrance point for northern development. The city we know today, Mr. Speaker, was developed with the energy and vision of immigrants from all parts of our world in cooperation with the peoples of the First Nations. The strength of our present-day communities have their genesis in the splendid mix of cultures that came together often in an unfriendly and difficult physical environment to build a strong, hardy, and healthy community. We live in harmony as a result of the strong ties that we have to the settling of this area.

Some historical footnotes, Mr. Speaker. In 1795 Fort Augustus and Edmonton House were built. In 1808 Marie-Anne Gaboury and her husband, Jean-Baptiste Lagemodière, arrived at Fort Edmonton along with their daughter Reine, and while there, their son LaPrairie was born. In 1825 high floodwaters forced the move of Fort Edmonton to higher ground just south of where this building stands today. In 1840 Rev. Robert Rundle took up residence. In 1846 Paul Kane visited Edmonton and documented the life of the city in sketches and in narrative. In 1852 Father Lacombe arrived. In 1857 the Palliser expedition spoke to the rich soils of the district.

Mr. Speaker, we salute and congratulate Edmonton, pay tribute to the men and women who had the spirit and vision that we all benefit from today in our capital city.

Point of Order

Brevity in Question Period

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has a point of order.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. In looking at my point of order, I started with the principles of parliamentary law. The principles, just to be brief, talk about:

The principles of Canadian parliamentary law are . . . to express opinions within limits necessary to preserve decorum and prevent an unnecessary waste of time.

When we look at sections 408(2), 410(7), and 417 in *Beauchesne*, again we're brought to: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible." That is 408(2). Under 410(7): "Brevity both in questions and answers is of great importance." Under 417: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

What we've seen this afternoon is a travesty of parliamentary procedure; we've seen an abuse of parliamentary procedure. Perhaps it can be put down to the fact that the minister of the environment is just a rookie and doesn't understand what parliamentary procedure is about. When I started to time at least the second answer to the question that was put to the minister, the answer took him one minute and 25 seconds. The first answer I'm sure took over two minutes, and I would hate to think what the third answer to that question was. If you noticed, on this side of the Legislative Assembly today we had only the main question and a supplementary, yet when you look at the number of questions that the opposition went through, we only got to question 7. That was not due to any obstruction on the part of the Official Opposition but was due to the rather lengthy responses that were put forward by the government. Again I'd like to refer the government to 408(2), 410(7), and 417.

It's quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that this is a trend that is starting. We saw this last week, Thursday afternoon, from the hon. Minister of Health. We have seen it this afternoon. Quite frankly, I think that if it continues, we will see this travesty of parliamentary procedure continue, where the principles are ignored.

That, Mr. Speaker, is my point of order. Thank you very much.

MR. DAY: I will say, Mr. Speaker, that that's the first time I've seen a point of order turn into a filibuster. For somebody who is concerned about the length of time . . .

Mr. Speaker, you were very clear to all members in recent correspondence saying that there has been in the past some difficulty with the length of question and preamble and therefore the response. Your correspondence correctly points out that the longer the preamble and the more vexatious the question, then the

longer the response is going to be. [interjections] I would suggest that the members opposite, instead of shrieking, listen for a minute. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. The Chair gave the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark every opportunity to develop her argument in support of her point of order. [interjection] Hon. Member for Calgary-West, please listen instead of trying to make your own points while the Speaker is on his feet. The hon. Member for Calgary-West and his other colleagues could give the hon. Government House Leader the same opportunity to make his point with respect to this point of order.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the members opposite would take a look at *Hansard* once it is available to us tomorrow, I think they will see that every supplementary question of theirs this session has had a preamble, in direct contradiction to what your request was. This session will be not unlike the last session, in which we saw questions and supplementaries from the Liberals totaling 1,343, whereas questions and supplementaries from the government side, only 777 – almost twice the amount of questions and time. They should look at how they're delivering the question.

THE SPEAKER: Well, hon. members, the question raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark had to do with the question raised by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West. The Chair recalls some surplusage in the preamble, but it was not a long preamble. The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West did not abuse the time allotted to preamble. The Chair must say that he never does; at least, he never has. Hon. members may have noticed that, at least according to the Chair's calculation, it took six minutes to deal with that question, which is really beyond what should be allowed. Therefore, I guess something has to be said about the answers to the questions, because the questions are quite short. The hon. minister was suffering under an inability to properly express his thoughts because of constant carping and criticism from the opposition, as the Chair recalls this particular question. The opposition is again falling into this habit, when they don't agree with the answers, of trying to drown out the person who is giving the answer. That is totally unparliamentary, hon. member.

2:50

The Chair does agree that since we reassembled last week there is a little distressing tendency on the part of ministers to not deliver the answers in a crisp and rippling and decisive way. Some ministers are doing that. For whatever reason, whether it has been interruptions or not, this particular question did take too long. The Chair would remind all participants to ask the questions quickly and briefly, and the Chair will do everything possible to ensure that they are answered in the same way if the person answering the question is given the opportunity to answer it. So we will all try to persevere in allowing question period to move more quickly, because today we were restricted to 12 questions and there really should be more answered during the time we have allotted to question period.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford had a point of order.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I had intended to raise a point under *Beauchesne* 417, but because the Member for Edmonton-

Meadowlark did such a superb job in the arguments, it's not necessary for me to repeat them.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert under an application under Standing Order 40.

75th Anniversary of Kinsmen and Kinettes

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to the urgency of the motion pursuant to Standing Order 40 which I presented earlier today in the Legislative Assembly. The motion would call for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to congratulate the Kinsmen and Kinettes on their 75th anniversary. The urgency comes down to two points: first, the anniversary was yesterday, February 20, and will be celebrated this week; secondly, the Kinsmen and Kinettes have given of their time and energy to enhance the quality of life of every Albertan and Canadian over the last 75 years. This motion would be a small recognition of their contribution.

THE SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree to allow the hon. member to put his motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Moved by Mr. Bracko:

Be it resolved that this Assembly congratulate the Kinsmen and Kinettes in recognition of their 75th anniversary on February 20, 1995.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Members of the Legislative Assembly for giving us unanimous consent to recognize the Kinsmen and Kinettes on their 75th anniversary.

I would like to say a few words about these two service groups. A young man, Hal Rogers, returned from World War I. He missed the companionship and dedication of purpose he had shared with other servicemen and tried to join a local service club but was denied because his father was a member. His father suggested that he form his own club, and that is what Hal did. He approached a man he had seen in church and broached the subject. The following Saturday, February 20, 1920, he and Hal Rogers and two other men sat down to dinner, and the Kinsmen Club of Hamilton was born. From this small start, there are 530 Kinsmen clubs and 400 Kinette clubs across Canada with over 600,000 members. Their motto is: servicing the community's greatest needs at home and throughout the world. One community's projects would be different from another's because of the needs of the communities.

In 1993-1994 the Kinsmen and Kinettes raised \$20 million across Canada. District 4, which is made up of Alberta, northern B.C., and the Northwest Territories, raised \$4 million and was the biggest contributor in Canada, edging out Ontario. Congratulations to district 4 for this achievement.

Over the 75 years \$1 billion has been raised, raising the quality of life in communities across Canada. Every Canadian has benefited. In Canada \$20 million has been raised over the last 31 years for cystic fibrosis. In St. Albert \$10 million in service and time has been raised in the past 31 years. Money has been used

for rodeo grounds, minor hockey arenas, baseball diamonds, canoe clubs, playgrounds, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker, also many other programs such as raise the flag, proud to be Canadian, and baby buckle up.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to pay tribute to the Kinsmen and Kinettes for their dedication and commitment to our communities. As Mother Teresa says: unless life is lived for others, it is not worth while. This describes the Kinsmen and Kinettes. They live to serve others. Thank you and congratulations on your 75th anniversary. We look forward to your continued role modeling and service.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne.

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to add my praise for the Kinsmen and the Kinettes across the province. What a tremendous group of people working for their communities.

I joined the Kinsmen some 36 years ago. I was a charter member of the Mayerthorpe Kinsmen Club, and I participated in that club for some 13 years before they suggested that I was too old and I had to join the K-40s. I understand they have modified that now, and that's great. I also took part by being the district deputy governor for the province of Alberta for our area, and we also took part during my term chartering a sister club in Whitecourt, Alberta.

I recall an interesting thing that happened within our club, Mr. Speaker. The national rules at that time prohibited Kinsmen from owning property, and at that time we had a theatre in the town of Mayerthorpe that was going to close. We thought it was the community's greatest need, so we as Kinsmen signed notes and picked up the debt and bought the theatre and ran it on a weekly basis. We were notified by national that this was against their rules, and we in turn wrote back and said, "If it's against your rules, we will continue, but you can have your charter back." What happened the following year: the changes were made, and we won the provincial title for being the most community-minded Kinsmen club in the province of Alberta. So I thought that was something pretty nice.

I recall so well over the years working with these young people, as we all were, how great and how community minded they were, doing things such as car raffles, raising funds. I recall the barbecue events. I understand that at this time the Mayerthorpe Kinsmen Club is preparing to undertake a pretty major upgrading of the arena facility, some \$150,000, and I'll tell you, that's no small task for a community the size of Mayerthorpe.

I would like to say on behalf of myself and all my colleagues in this Assembly that we are praising, dedicating our trust and our support for a group of young people who are just tremendous: the Kinettes and Kinsmen of the province of Alberta. I wish them well and I congratulate them.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Member for St. Albert and the Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne in extending congratulations to both the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs on their 75th anniversary. The Member for St. Albert was very correct in indicating that it was in Ontario in 1920 that a young man returning from World War I, Hal Rogers, found the initiative to basically form this club.

3:00

One thing that is very unique about Kinsmen is that there was an age restriction. You could not be a member of a Kinsmen club

if you were above the age of 40. So, in essence, what it did was drive people of a similar age to come together as the years have gone on. This a uniquely Canadian club, by the way, Mr. Speaker. It was founded in Canada by a Canadian and has now found spokes throughout the whole world. As the years have gone on, then younger women under the age of 40 were able to form their own clubs called the Kinettes. My colleague from Whitecourt-Ste. Anne quite correctly recognizes that once you reached the age of 40, you were booted out of Kinsmen or Kinettes and you had to join something called K-40s. As time has gone on, that's been changed to age 45.

I had the privilege of serving district 4, the provincial organization and part of northeastern British Columbia, as a provincial secretary in the early 1970s, Mr. Speaker. Since that time and even before that time, Kinsmen clubs throughout the province of Alberta have always been the most active in the country of Canada. It's my understanding that the most active club today, the largest club to be found in Canada is found in Medicine Hat, the Kinsmen Club of Medicine Hat, and they in fact will be sponsoring a national convention in the province of Alberta for all the Kinsmen Clubs of Canada in 1996.

Serving the community's greatest need, volunteerism is the ultimate that one can give. It's also been a tremendous networking for people in this Assembly. There were at one time, in the mid 1980s, nine Members of the Legislative Assembly who were former Kinsmen and executive officers in a variety of Kinsmen clubs throughout the province of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, again, it's the ultimate volunteerism. It's something worthy of our recognition, worthy of our consideration.

I'll close only on a note that in 1973, when I did have the privilege of being the provincial secretary for Kinsmen, we had a Kinsmen convention in the province of Alberta. The key resolution passed at that Kinsmen convention was a resolution that I had to deliver to the then Premier of the province of Alberta. Essentially these young men and women from around the province of Alberta were quite concerned about the amount of money that the government was now making available to service organizations. It was a view of Kinsmen that government should not be in the business of volunteerism and that in fact community-based organizations and service clubs should be doing the work for the community, rather than government. I presented that particular resolution to the then Premier of the province of Alberta, Mr. Lougheed, and he was quite astounded, but events of our history, growth of affluence, the incredible amount of dollars that came to this particular government then allowed government to grow and grow very dramatically in the 1970s and the 1980s. Perhaps, and only perhaps, if there had been more people listening to what these young men were saying in the early 1970s, the largess of government that we have in 1995 would never have come about.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion proposed by the hon. Member for St. Albert, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Let the record show unanimously.

The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Calgary Bid for 2005 World's Fair

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to the notice under Standing Order 40 which I presented earlier. I believe this motion deserves . . .

THE SPEAKER: On the question of urgency.

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Well, I was going to get to that, Mr. Speaker. I believe this motion deserves urgent consideration by the Legislature because the Calgary organizing committee will be making a presentation to the Canadian selection review committee which is going to select Canada's bid for the 2005 world's fair, and that selection will be made on February 24, 1995. The unanimous recognition of Calgary's bid by this Assembly would be important to demonstrate to the committee the commitment of all Albertans in holding this prestigious event.

THE SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree to permit the hon. Member for Calgary-West to put his motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Moved by Mr. Dalla-Longa:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize and support the city of Calgary's bid to host the 2005 world's fair.

MR. DALLA-LONGA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Assembly for allowing this motion to go forward. It's appropriate that all members of this Assembly support Calgary's bid for the 2005 world's fair as it will mark the centennial of the province of Alberta. Hosting the fair would be an excellent way for Alberta to celebrate its 100th anniversary as a province. In the past the international selection organization committee out of Paris has favoured cities with bids that simultaneously hold celebrations in conjunction with this fair. The only other Canadian locations in competition with Calgary are Ottawa and Hull in a joint bid. So, therefore, the chances of Calgary getting the ultimate nod to host the games are quite good.

The 2005 world's fair would continue, Mr. Speaker, in the proud tradition of previous world's fairs held in this country, starting with Expo 67, which was held in Montreal, and Expo 86, which was very successful and held in Vancouver. Coincidentally, '67 and '86, for all you mathematicians, and 2005 are spread out 19 years apart.

However, Mr. Speaker, it's important in these times that we talk about the economic benefits of holding the world's fair. That's quite important, based on deficits and budgets and that sort of thing. Based on a consultant's report, the economic spin-offs of hosting the world's fair are estimated to be in the magnitude of about \$1.8 billion. As we would expect, the fair would create additional employment, particularly in the areas of construction and tourism. A feasibility study estimates that there would be in the magnitude of about 30,800 person-years of additional employment. One of the other economic benefits is that the fair, as did the Olympics, would leave a legacy of facilities in place for all Albertans to enjoy. Another expected economic benefit is that the fair should raise approximately \$470 million in additional revenues for all levels of government, of which \$124 million is estimated to go to the provincial government. Lastly, it's expected

that hosting the world's fair will further enhance Calgary and Alberta's reputation as an international leader in tourism, industry, and technology. So, therefore, hon. members, this event, I believe, will not just put this province on the map, but I think it has the potential of having this province stand out on the proverbial map.

The world's fair bid has gotten tremendous support from the people of Calgary. As they've already proven themselves by hosting the 1988 Olympics, whereby they demonstrated the power of volunteerism and community spirit, Calgarians in a recent poll have given overwhelming support to hosting the world's fair. I believe the figure was approximately 90 percent. In addition to that, city council, all 15 members, have given their unanimous support, and there is widespread support across the province for holding this fair from such groups as business groups, tourism agencies, educational facilities. An important thing is that the organizers are well organized. As a matter of fact, on the honorary board of governors the Premier serves as the chairman. The organizers are now asking that we join in giving our active support to this bid. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that the hon. members unanimously move to support the city of Calgary in their bid to hold the 2005 world's fair, which is Alberta's centennial year.

Thank you.

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I rise in favour of this resolution. As we all know, Calgarians and Albertans are not strangers to being hosts to the world. One only needs look at recent history to demonstrate that: 1978, the Edmonton Commonwealth Games; 1983, the World University Games; 1988, the Calgary Winter Olympics; 1994, the Canadian Brier in Red Deer and the Canadian figure skating championships in Edmonton; 1995, the world junior hockey championships in Red Deer and now, of course, in this year also the Canada Winter Games in Grande Prairie. The 1996 world figure skating championships are coming to Edmonton. The 1997 World Police and Fire Games are coming to Calgary, as the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo mentioned. We've got this fantastic history in this province of raising the standards, raising the bar, raising the levels of expectation every time we have the opportunity to host these games.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I've met with ministers from across Canada who have come most recently to the Canada Winter Games in Grande Prairie. If I can paraphrase what one of my hon. colleagues from Newfoundland and Labrador said, he said: the Canada Winter Games might bring me to Grande Prairie, but make no doubt about it, it's the warmth and the hospitality and the kindness of Albertans that will bring me back.

So I am happy to put a great deal of support behind this resolution. I think it is an outstanding way for Albertans to celebrate our centennial birthday, 100 years of being a province within Confederation. Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to vote in favour of this resolution.

3:10

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to be able to join debate and speak in support of the motion of my colleague from Calgary-West. Just four observations I'd make briefly, Mr. Speaker. The first is that I can think of no more fitting way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the creation of this province than to host an event of this kind of international stature and excitement.

The second point, sir, is that I'm very impressed with the job done by Mr. Jack Perraton and the board of directors, who I think have done a very effective job in terms of researching this idea with the assistance of the University of Calgary World Tourism Education and Research Centre. I think the proposal is one that's persuasive, and we hope that it'll be treated that way when it's received by the national site selection committee.

The third point I'd make is that I have a great deal of confidence in Mr. Perraton's board that they will protect the interests of taxpayers in the city of Calgary and in the province of Alberta. When my colleague from Calgary-West tells me that the economics of the proposal make sense, I take a great deal of comfort from that. Since Calgary-Buffalo tends in many cases, sir, to be the site for these kinds of things, I'm also confident that the board of directors will be sensitive to the needs and the interests and the concerns of the different communities when the final site selection is made.

Finally, sir, just on a personal note, having had the occasion to work at Expo 67 for four months in Montreal, there's a kind of experience and a kind of magic that comes from an event of this kind of stature which is hard to describe, but it's, I think, tangible to the people who live it, the people in the host community and the host province.

I'm happy to support this motion, and I simply give every best wish to the Calgary bid, sir, when it goes in front of the national selection committee. Thank you.

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

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As an MLA from Calgary and also the chair of the Calgary caucus I would like to join my colleagues from Calgary in urging the Assembly to support this motion. The year 2005 is a very special one, as has been mentioned, as it is the celebration of Alberta's centennial and therefore is a celebration for all Albertans. The world's fair committee has assembled an excellent nucleus of volunteers and has already formulated many of the plans to involve not just the city of Calgary but the entire province of Alberta in this exciting event.

The economic benefits and the festivities which will flow from hosting the 2005 world's fair in the city of Calgary will benefit not just Calgary but the entire province. Once again the world will have the opportunity to see the enthusiasm and the organizational ability which brought the very successful and profitable Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988 the worldwide recognition as the best Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, our volunteers are part, a big part, of the Alberta advantage. These enthusiastic volunteers have joined the bid committee and are gearing up to achieve the same level of excellence that they set in the Calgary 1988 Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the members of the government are very pleased to give their full support to the Calgary world's fair 2005 bid. We would support this motion and also send our very best wishes for a very successful bid in bringing the world's fair to Calgary and to Alberta. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-West, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Let the record show unanimously.

head: **Orders of the Day**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 8(2) so that we may now recess and reconvene at 4 o'clock.

THE SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

[The Assembly adjourned from 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Provincial Treasurer. [some applause]

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to be anticlimactic, but I have received certain messages from His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I now transmit to you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

THE SPEAKER: The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1996, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1996, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the lottery fund under the Interprovincial Lottery Act for the 12 months ending March 31, 1996, for the purposes of making payments to support initiatives related to recreation or culture or for any other purpose in the public interest and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1995, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

head: **Government Motions**

7. Moved by Mr. Dinning:
Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

8. Moved by Mr. Dinning:
Be it resolved that the Assembly do resolve itself into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

[Motion carried]

10. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 1995-96 lottery fund estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

11. Moved by Mr. Day:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 58(6)(a) the number of days that the Committee of Supply will be called to consider the 1995-96 lottery fund estimates shall be two days.

[Motion carried]

12. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 1994-95 supplementary supply estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

13. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 58(6) the number of days that the Committee of Supply will be called to consider the 1994-95 supplementary supply estimates shall be two days.

[Motion carried]

9. Moved by Mr. Day:

Be it resolved that the Assembly resolve itself into Committee of the Whole, when called, to consider certain Bills on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head:

Budget Address

14. Moved by Mr. Dinning:

Be it resolved that the Assembly approve in general the fiscal policies of the government.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are watching and waiting for budget news today, and they want answers to four basic questions: how have we done this year, and will government stick to the plan; how big are this year's cuts, and when will they end; will government protect health, education, and other programs for people; and when will we attack the debt? Let me answer those questions as clearly and simply as I can.

How have we done this year? Thanks to windfall revenues Alberta will have a \$110 million surplus for '94-95, and every dollar of that surplus will go to pay down Alberta's debt. Will we stick to the plan? Yes, because we can't count on windfalls to balance the budget. With Budget '95 we will stay the course with no tax increases to get the job done and build a strong foundation for the future.

How big are the cuts this year? Four hundred and seventy-eight million dollars in program spending, far less than the \$1.9 billion we cut in the first half of the plan. With this year behind us we will be 90 percent of the way to reaching our final spending

targets. When will it end? Budget '95 is the last deficit budget for Alberta. In 1996-97 we will finish the job and balance the budget not just for one year but every year forever.

Will we protect health, education, and other programs for Albertans who need our help the most? Yes. It will not be easy because we cannot do it without fundamental change, change that takes money away from old approaches and big administration and targets that money where it's needed the most: for children, for classrooms, for communities, and for quality health care across this province.

When will we attack the debt? We will legislate a plan now, and regular, orderly payments will begin right after we balance the budget for good in '96-97.

In May of 1993 we set out a plan. We knew what we wanted: balanced budgets, a debt-free future for our children, the best possible education and health programs, the strongest economy in Canada, with low taxes, jobs, and prosperity for all Albertans. The next month, in June, Mr. Speaker, Albertans endorsed that plan and told their government to get on with the job.

We've worked hard over the last two years. Albertans have worked hard, and it's paying off. The progress we've made so far is thanks not to the people sitting in this Assembly today, but thanks are due to the thousands of hard-working and energetic Albertans, especially those in the public sector, people who were challenged to find new solutions and new ways of getting the job done. They created a storm of new ideas, energy, and determination attacking waste and duplication, reducing unnecessary administration, getting rid of rules, regulations, and red tape, abandoning old ways and old ideas. Change has become the single constant across the Alberta public sector.

Thinking back, setting out the plan was the easy part. Following it through, making the tough decisions, going the distance: that's the tough part, and we're not there yet. This year many of the changes we have talked about and planned for will actually happen, and it will not be easy, but after two tough years we know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. It is a better future for our province. It's jobs for our children; a health system that is there when we need it; schools, universities, and colleges that prepare our young people for opportunities in Alberta and around the world. It's a secure financial future for Alberta. The light at the end of the tunnel is pride and hope: pride in Alberta, pride in what we've achieved, and hope for the future, for ourselves, our province, and our children.

4:10

Mr. Speaker, all of our actions over the past two years and in the years to come are designed to meet one clear objective: to build a strong foundation for Alberta. Premier Klein compares the work we're doing to a home renovation program. Over the years we had built a house that was more than the foundation could support. We expanded rooms, we built additions, we added luxuries, but we failed to ensure we had a solid foundation in place. This renovation project has started from the ground up, and this time we're making sure we have the right foundation in place.

The foundation is made up of four pillars, or cornerstones. The first pillar: securing Alberta's future with a new debt plan. With a regular, legislated pay-down of Alberta's debt over the next 25 years we will get Alberta back to a positive position where we own more than we owe.

The second is Budget '95 and future balanced budgets. The goal is to get our spending to a reasonable level, one we can afford in good times and in bad.

The third cornerstone is our business plans. Albertans' priorities drive government's priorities: people, prosperity, and preservation. Our business plans set clear goals and deliberate strategies for getting there.

The fourth is measuring results. Mr. Speaker, it's not good enough to say what we will do. We need to show it, show it through measurable results to make sure we're getting the results that Albertans want, and if we're not, then to take action to make sure that we do. With those four cornerstones in place we are rebuilding this Alberta house, and we're making it the envy of Canada and the world.

Mr. Speaker, we've made good progress on Alberta's deficit. The latest figures for '94-95 show that Alberta will have a surplus of \$110 million. As required by the Deficit Elimination Act, that money cannot be spent. Every dollar will go to reduce Alberta's debt. It's the first time in 10 years that Alberta has had a surplus, and it's welcome news.

Mr. Speaker, the last Treasurer who could announce a surplus is a friend of mine and a mentor of mine. His name is Lou Hyndman, and he's seated in your gallery. I'd ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Times have changed in 10 years, and even Lou Hyndman would say that this year's surplus is like winning a lottery. We got lucky. Thanks in large part to robust activity in the oil patch, our revenues are \$1.5 billion higher than just two years ago. In fact, just about everything went our way in 1994. But even with that good luck, \$110 million is less than 1 percent of our spending. If our revenues had been at their five-year average, I'd be announcing a whopping deficit instead. We can't count on luck. We can't build our programs and spending plans expecting to win the 6/49 every year. We need to take control.

Budget '95 takes control. It shows our determination to get spending to a level we can afford, and it spells out a clear, legislated plan to pay down our debt, again showing our determination to get this province back to a position where we own more than we owe. Unlike most Albertans we've been adding to our mortgage every year and paying more and more interest. It's time to stop adding and start subtracting. It's basic arithmetic and responsible financial management. As one Albertan said in a recent letter to the editor: a determination to pay off one's debts calls for no special explanation; it's simply the right thing to do.

The critical step is to get rid of our net debt. That's the debt that isn't backed up by assets or by a plan. It's our net debt that puts us most at risk. It takes control of our financial situation out of voters' hands and places it in the hands of bankers, rating agencies, and international money traders.

Today I have given notice of the tabling of the Balanced Budget and Debt Retirement Act. The Act confirms the balanced budget requirement and legislates an orderly payment for the net debt. Alberta is the only province to have taken this next step to secure its future. Once again Alberta leads the way.

These are the essential features of the debt plan. The budget must be balanced every year after '95-96. The province's net debt, excluding pension liabilities, must be eliminated within 25 years. There already is a separate legislated, long-term plan to eliminate the pension liabilities in the public sector. By the time we start making payments in 1997-98, the net debt is projected to be \$8.6 billion. Five-year milestones for reducing the net debt must be met, and these milestones are locked into legislation. The average annual payment will be \$350 million. In good years we will be able to make larger payments. In years when our revenue isn't as high, the payment may be less, but the minimum payment

must be \$100 million unless we are well ahead of our schedule. Over each five-year period the milestone must be met. Revenue estimates must be prudent, and any surplus must go to reduce the net debt.

The benefits to Albertans are real and they are direct. Every dollar spent on debt servicing is a dollar lost. Every \$350 million payment we make on the debt frees up \$30 million each year forever, and that's money we can use for children, for seniors, for people most in need, and, yes, even to reduce taxes. By the time the net debt is paid off, an extra \$730 million will be available every year for Albertans' priorities. Alberta's net debt retirement plan gives us the financial security we need to plan for the future.

Let's turn to the second cornerstone, Mr. Speaker, Budget '95. This coming year we will take the next step to get our spending down to a level we can afford no matter where we are in the economic cycle. That builds in long-term protection for Albertans' priorities. We'll stick to those priorities with Budget '95. We'll assess our results and target resources where they are needed the most, and we'll take the safest course on the revenue side, staying with conservative forecasts rather than betting on another year of windfall gains.

These are the highlights of Budget '95. Our total spending on programs and services for Albertans will be \$12.1 billion. That's over \$4,400 for every person in Alberta. Program spending will be reduced by \$478 million. With these savings we will be 90 percent of the way to our targeted spending level.

Budget '95 continues to reflect the priorities of Albertans. In total we will spend \$8.7 billion on health, education, and social services. That's 72 percent of our total program spending, which is up from 69 percent just two years ago. We will spend \$835 million to support capital projects, about the same as the current fiscal year.

On the revenue side our total revenues for '95-96 are budgeted to be \$13.4 billion. That's \$598 million lower than the current year's forecast.

What's the bottom line? Alberta's consolidated deficit for '95-96 is expected to be \$506 million. That's almost \$300 million less than the legislated ceiling in the Deficit Elimination Act. Those are the highlights, Mr. Speaker.

I know there are some Albertans who will ask, "How can we go from a surplus this year back to a \$500 million deficit next year?" The answer lies in one word: windfalls. Windfall revenues boosted us to a surplus position, but we cannot rely on luck. We must follow our balanced budget plan through to the end. With Budget '95 we will stay the course with our spending reduction plan and conservative revenue forecasts.

Early signs in the petroleum sector are not as strong in the coming year. Oil prices have held fairly steady, and our projections for '95-96 are set at \$18 U.S. per barrel. On the other hand, the price of gas has defied predictions and fallen in 1994. Our budget assumes an average price of \$1.50 Canadian per thousand cubic feet for '95-96. These predictions, though, are simply that: a combination of past experience, industry forecasts, and guesswork. We can't rely on balancing the budget by counting on predictions and luck, and we won't try. We'll take out insurance on our budget by building in protective cushions for our revenue from oil and gas and corporate tax to ensure that we meet our no deficit requirement.

4:20

Mr. Speaker, on top of the volatility in Alberta's resource revenues, we have no control over the dollar or over interest rates. Recently we've seen how vulnerable we are as others outside Canada pass judgment on the questionable resolve of the

Liberal government in Ottawa. People across Canada have one clear message for our nation's leaders. It's the same message they gave us here in Alberta: act now, act fast, and don't raise taxes. In spite of that message, in spite of the fact that people are standing up and shouting "no more taxes," I don't hear our Liberal leaders joining in the chorus. Their failure to say there will be no tax increases has me worried, it's got the bankers and bond raters worried, and it's got Canadians worried.

Mr. Speaker, we even hear staunch defenders of the status quo suggesting it's un-Canadian to cut spending, un-Canadian to move quickly and decisively. Well, it's not spending that defines us as Canadians. It's spirit. It's strength and determination to do what's right, not what's easy. Taxing more: that's what is easy. Cutting spending is not – just ask Albertans – but it is right and it is absolutely essential. The go slow, no pain options simply will not work. Canadians know it, and if Ottawa is listening, they know it too.

Mr. Speaker, along with Budget '95 I am tabling the '95-96 updates of business plans for the province and for every ministry. Alberta remains the only province in Canada to prepare and publish these vital management tools. These plans focus our efforts on people, prosperity, and preservation.

Mr. Speaker, people are the first priority. That's why 72 percent of our spending goes to programs for people. That's why we're taking deliberate and difficult steps to change the health and education systems, to redirect funding in welfare to people to help them get back to work, to target benefits to seniors who need them most. If we fail to make these changes, if we don't target our efforts and money to where they're needed the most, we risk the very future of these programs and the people they are designed to serve.

Budget '95 is the transition year. In several key areas the funding reductions will end this year, but the change process will not. We know how much we have to spend, and we know what we want the new house to look like. Now is the time to make adjustments and get the renovations right. As Premier Klein has said, this renovation project has been messy at times. Tough decisions have been made, and we know it hasn't been easy, especially on the people side of our work. Albertans have said that there is a difference between tough-minded and hard-hearted. Stay the course to balance the budget, they said, but listen and make adjustments where there are problems. With Budget '95 we're listening to that advice. We will stick with the overall financial targets, but we will make adjustments within the plan to make sure that the quality of essential programs is maintained.

In Health the 17 regional health authorities have a big challenge ahead, especially as they move from the old hospital-based sickness system to a new one with people, wellness, and communities as the focus. Nineteen ninety-five will be another year of major change in the health care system. This is the year when plans and decisions made in the first two years become action, and that action will have a profound impact on communities and in hospitals, action that will change the face of health care across Alberta. The regional health authorities are determined to meet the targets and make essential changes in the health system, but they need help in the immediate short term, and we are providing that help.

Today the Minister of Health is announcing a one-time injection of \$40 million from the 1994-95 budget to help in this transition period. Regional health authorities in Edmonton and Calgary will receive \$16 million each. The Alberta Cancer Board and the Provincial Mental Health Board will each receive \$1 million, and the remaining \$6 million will be divided among the other regions.

We're listening when people say that they're worried the quality of our health system could suffer as we move from the old approach to the new. With Budget '95 we will take a further \$40 million in savings from hospital funding and reallocate it to support home and community care. We will look to the new provincial health council to monitor changes and make sure Albertans continue to get the quality health care they need and deserve.

With Budget '95 nearly 30 percent of the government's total program spending will be allocated to Health, and close to 85 percent of the total reductions will be complete.

In Education, Mr. Speaker, we listened to parents who said: "Okay, go ahead and make reductions, but make them at the top. Don't touch the classrooms. Keep the money in the classrooms." Over half of the savings in Education will come from leaner administration, reducing the number of school boards and putting a 4 percent cap on the amount they can spend on administration. That cap alone takes \$60 million out of central offices and puts that money in classrooms, where it's needed and where it belongs. This year we'll move ahead with plans to improve accountability, to phase in uniform mill rates across the province, and to give parents a more effective role in the education of their children.

Reductions in Education are almost behind us. With Budget '95 Education spending will be reduced by only 1.6 percent, and that puts an end to their school-year spending reductions. Over the balanced budget plan, Education funding will have been reduced by only 5.6 percent, Mr. Speaker, 5.6 percent, by far the smallest reduction of any area of government. That shows our priorities.

In Advanced Education and Career Development we'll address Albertans' concerns about access to postsecondary opportunities. We'll move ahead with new programs under the access fund designed to add 10,000 new places for students. New applied degree programs will be piloted in several colleges and technical institutes. By '96-97 we will implement a new grant formula for postsecondary institutions, tying funding to performance and results. With Budget '95 spending reductions will be almost complete.

In Family and Social Services welfare reforms mean that money is being redirected to where it's needed the most. With Budget '95 we will spend 30 percent of the welfare budget on employment and training initiatives. We'll redirect \$50 million to children's services over the next three years, most of it to early intervention programs so that children get help when it can make a real and lasting difference. Fifty percent of these funds will go to programs for Alberta's aboriginal children.

Last year we introduced major changes to seniors' programs, including the new Alberta seniors' benefit. We know the changes were difficult for some seniors, but we heard and we still hear from many seniors that it is the right direction and the right objective. Premier Klein has said that we will smooth out the trouble spots and introduce an appeal process. Also to help Alberta's seniors, there will be no increases this year in long-term care accommodation rates or home care fees.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's people programs are at the heart of this province. This year we will assess our results and make adjustments where they are needed to maintain the quality of these essential programs.

Turning to our next core business, our goal is to promote prosperity by building on the Alberta advantage. Albertans are making this pay off in investment, in a growing economy, and in jobs for our citizens. In 1994 Alberta's economy grew by 4 and a half percent, far higher than our 2.8 percent forecast and

soundly outstripping the Canadian economy and most other provinces. Growth was led by a strong energy sector, with record natural gas sales and a thriving oil patch. Exports were up by 15 percent.

4:30

The benefits of economic growth showed up directly in jobs for Albertans. Statistics Canada figures show employment increased by 52,000 jobs in 1994. Those new jobs were almost exclusively in the private sector, and most of the growth was in full-time jobs. Alberta's unemployment rate dropped to 7.6 percent by year-end, the second lowest rate in all of Canada.

Looking ahead for '95-96, we expect our economic growth to be about 2.7 percent. Once again we are taking a conservative approach. Manufacturing exports are expected to grow by 8 percent. Consumer spending will be up again. Oil and gas exports are expected to grow by 2 percent, while investment in the energy sector is expected to decline after two years of robust growth.

The news on the employment side continues to be positive. We expect another 24,000 jobs to be created in the private sector in 1995-96. Our unemployment rate should drop further, to 7.4 percent, the lowest it's been for five years. By the end of 1995, Mr. Speaker, we expect to reach a total of 113,000 jobs created in Alberta by Albertans since December 1992. That's better and faster than our target of 110,000 new jobs by 1997.

Looking at the whole picture – at global business opportunities, at incredible opportunities in our agricultural markets, at our resource sector – the prospects for Alberta's economy are strong. That means real opportunities for Alberta businesses and industry and for new businesses looking to invest their moneys here in our province. Most of all, it means opportunities for individual Albertans and for our energetic and well-trained young people.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with Albertans to preserve our strong Alberta tradition. In the area of justice we will focus our resources on addressing problems of serious and violent crime. We will expand crime prevention programs, family violence initiatives, and services for victims of crime. We'll continue our efforts to streamline the justice system, and we'll work with the federal government to make changes to the Young Offenders Act.

Protecting Alberta's environment will continue to be a commitment of this government. We'll target our actions to improve air quality and reduce waste. Water management legislation will be reviewed, and a forest conservation strategy will be put in place to maintain the long-term health of Alberta's forests.

On the federal scene we will continue to promote a strong position for Alberta and an effective federal system.

These are the priorities, Mr. Speaker: working for people, promoting prosperity, and preserving the Alberta tradition. The last cornerstone in this foundation we're building is measuring results. All of the initiatives I've talked about mean little if we can't show Albertans real results. Ralph Klein's government has earned a reputation for keeping promises. By focusing on results and making these results public, Albertans will know what we promised and what we delivered. That's accountability people won't see anywhere else in this country. In his most recent report the Auditor General said:

Measuring performance is critical to improving performance . . .

MLAs, ministers and managers . . .

and I would add "all Albertans" to the list

. . . need performance measures which are easily understood and which lead to wise decisions.

He concluded by saying:

Simplicity, clarity and candour are the essence of good accountability.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's the standard we want to meet when we release the first ever report on the performance of government this June. It won't be easy, and for any elected government it is a risk. Once we take this step, there is nowhere to hide. We will shine the spotlight on our strengths and on our weaknesses. We'll use what we learn to get it right: to improve programs and services for Albertans, to stop doing the things that don't produce the results Albertans want, and to take initiatives where they are needed. Then we will be in a position to tie our budget decisions not just to plans but to programs that actually work.

Mr. Speaker, that is the foundation we are building: business plans with the right priorities, measuring results, attacking the debt, and a balanced budget next year and every year from now on.

The other day I couldn't help but wonder what my favourite philosopher and purveyor of good sense, Mr. Yogi Berra, might have to say to describe the situation today. I believe he would say that it's not over till it's over. Actually, he would have said that it ain't over till it's over, but I couldn't withstand the grammarians' deluge if I were to say that. It isn't over yet, Mr. Speaker. We're in the home stretch. With one more year behind us we will put an end to deficits once and for all time.

Two years ago we set out on a new path. We knew the destination. We knew it would be difficult to get there, but we needed a reason to hope. As a province we had slipped, and it hurt our Alberta pride. We needed to get back that pride to put Alberta back on the top. Well, Mr. Speaker, we're back. From citizens across Canada to editorial boards, economists, and financial experts, from the Fraser Institute to the likes of the *Wall Street Journal*, people are saying, "Look at Alberta; look at what they're doing there." Today Albertans can take pride in the progress they have achieved, and we're almost there.

Two years ago we couldn't say that dollars were moving toward the right priorities: health care, education programs for kids in school, children who need our help, and Albertans who genuinely wanted to get back to work. Well, now we can. Two years ago we couldn't say that businesses across Canada and the United States were seeing Alberta as one of the prime locations in the world to work and do business. Well, now we can. Two years ago we couldn't say that there was every reason to look ahead with confidence and hope for the future. Well, now we can.

Mr. Speaker, we can look ahead to a better future. We can get our spending right and take the important first steps to be debt free. We can make a better Alberta, and together we will.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

THE SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

[At 4:37 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]