

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, February 27, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/02/27

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by 251 Edmontonians and residents of Alberta from the surrounding area urging the government to please ensure that all Alberta school boards receive funding that would allow them to proceed with 400 hours of early childhood services instruction throughout the school year.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave this afternoon to introduce a petition signed by 185 residents of the province of Alberta urging the Legislature to call on the government of Alberta to provide quality early childhood services for our children by maintaining a minimum of 400 hours of instruction per child per school year.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce a petition which urges 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.

Two hundred and seven signatures from throughout northern Alberta.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

MR. BRACKO: I request leave to have my petition of February 23 read regarding 400 hours of kindergarten for every school district in our province.

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 would like the petition that I presented regarding full funding of kindergarten services to please 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 Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented in the Assembly on February 23 with respect to the Horseshoe Canyon now be read and received.

CLERK:

We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government to not allow the excavation and development of Horseshoe Canyon into a golf course and to designate Horseshoe Canyon as a provincial park, for the viewing of all Albertans and for the viewing of future generations.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented on February 23 regarding the status of the Misericordia hospital be now read and received.

CLERK:

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

head: **Notices of Motions**

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to give notice that immediately following question period today, I will seek unanimous consent of the House pursuant to Standing Order 40 to recognize Freedom to Read Week.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

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

Bill 4

Medical Profession Amendment Act, 1995

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being the Medical Profession Amendment Act, 1995.

Bill 4 will enable the College of Physicians and Surgeons in particular to develop a physician resource management plan.

[Leave granted; Bill 4 read a first time]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 4, as just introduced, be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, in the interest of providing as much information to the Assembly as we can, I'm providing to the Assembly today copies of the second quarter update for the '94-95 fiscal year; the offering circular dated December 15, 1994, for the Euro medium term note program; form 18-K, the annual report of the province for the fiscal year ended March 31, '94, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission; the Alberta heritage savings trust fund annual report for the year ended March 31, 1994; the Alberta heritage savings trust fund second quarter investment report '94-95; the Alberta heritage savings trust fund assessment of market value report, December 5, '94, prepared by Nesbitt Burns, RBC Dominion Securities, ScotiaMcLeod, and Wood Gundy; the letter of intent executive summary between information systems management and the government of Alberta dated December 7, 1994; the Franchises Act discussion paper published for comment in the Securities Commission's weekly summary for the week ended February 17, 1995; the document entitled Measuring Up, December 1994, a statement by the government on proposed performance measures; reports of payments to members and former members of the Legislative Assembly as required by section 16(1) of the Conflicts of Interest Act and section 43(4) of the Legislative Assembly Act for the year ended March 31, 1994. Finally, the Liberal leader often says that he could do government better. I want to put an end to that illusion by filing with the Assembly five hours of videotape coverage of the Liberal leadership convention and fiasco of November '94.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to file with the Assembly four copies of Alberta's first ever state of the environment report prepared by my department. If members care to pick up their personal copy, they can do so at my office.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Health.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'm pleased this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly constituents from Chinook. We have with us the mayor of Oyen, Wayne Wilson, and his wife, Margaurite. Accompanying them are some business people: Don Gummo and his wife, Rita, and Bill and Myrna Smigelski. I would ask that all of the Assembly give them a very warm welcome.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSZYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce 33 Pentecostal home schoolers today. They are here

on a field trip to see how the Legislature functions, at least during question period, and I would invite them back in the evening to see when the real work is done. They are accompanied by the following adults: Mr. and Mrs. Doug Kitlar, Mrs. Germaine Berge, Mrs. Nicole Masse, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Kirby, and Mrs. Virginia McDermott. I'd ask them to all rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

THE SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly a number of members of the Liberal Youth Commission, both national and provincial. They are executive members, and I ask that they rise in the gallery and receive the welcome of the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly members of the Girl Guide 9th Rangers from northwest Calgary. They're here with their leader Mrs. Arlene Dickson and five young women who are members of that: Lynn Dickson – and I should just mention that those two I just mentioned are the wife and daughter respectively of the Member for Calgary-Buffalo – Carolyn Nyhof, Sarah Jones, Michelle Dickie, and Megan Hutton. They're in the public gallery. I see they're standing. I ask the members of the Assembly to give them a warm welcome.

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

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce 50 students from Bishop Greschuk school. This is one of the newer schools in my constituency. They're accompanied by their leaders and teachers Mrs. Neuls, Mrs. Potyondi, and Mrs. Kushnerik. I wonder if they would stand and if members of the House would greet them with their usual warm welcome.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly three marvelous women from southern Alberta: Lorna Frere, Lisa Currie, and Laura Dunham. They're very active in their communities. I would ask that we all give them a warm welcome.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Chinook stood to introduce her guests, she failed to introduce one very special guest. He happens to be the husband of the Member for Chinook. I'd ask Lloyd McClellan, the very patient Lloyd McClellan, farmer extraordinaire, to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**
Emergency Medical Services

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Harold Yule of Calgary recently fell off a ladder at work and suffered the following injuries: a broken ankle and a broken shinbone on one leg, a broken heel on the other, crushed vertebrae. When he arrived at

the Bow Valley hospital emergency centre, he was told that the emergency room was too busy, and he was sent home. To the Premier: after learning about experiences of people like Mr. Yule, does the Premier still accept his Minister of Health's assessment that this health care system is just as good as it ever was?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we bank on the medical expertise of those within our health facilities to provide the level of care that they're required to. We have within government a Health Facilities Review Committee, whose responsibility it is to investigate these kinds of complaints. I'm sure that if the hon. member will provide the minister or directly the health care review committee the details of this particular incident, they'll be glad to look into it.

MR. MITCHELL: Every time there's a problem, Mr. Speaker, the Premier sets up another ad hoc committee. If he'd done the committees before he started, we wouldn't . . .

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. MITCHELL: Since it's increasingly obvious, Mr. Speaker, that Calgarians can't get the emergency services they need now, what concrete plans does this Premier have to ensure access, proper access, to emergency services in Calgary once the situation is made even worse when they close the Bow Valley emergency centre months from now?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition's preamble shows how very, very little he knows about government and how little he knows about what has been going on, because the Health Facilities Review Committee has been in place for a number of years. It is not a new committee. They do a wonderful job in terms of investigating complaints relative to health care in institutions throughout this province.

Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority in the city of Calgary will be going through some very difficult times to restructure, but this volunteer board will above all make sure that there is adequate health care for all residents of Calgary and district.

MR. MITCHELL: Just because the Premier keeps saying it doesn't mean that it's going to happen, and evidence is quite to the contrary.

Can the Premier just pay attention for a minute? This man broke his back, and he couldn't get emergency room services. What does it take before this Premier will be convinced that it's his policy and not some committee's and not some regional health authority's fault that people aren't getting adequate health care services when they need them in places like Calgary?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I find it awfully strange coming from this member. Only a few short weeks ago: we probably don't need as much acute care hospital facility as we have in this province, said Mitchell, a former Liberal health critic. The headline: "Too many hospitals - Grits."

Now, Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority in Calgary, as I said, is going through and will be going through a very difficult period to do the kinds of readjustments that are needed to rationalize health care in the city of Calgary and indeed in the district. I would ask the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition to focus his energies and his attention to perhaps working with the RHA to make sure that this restructuring takes place in an orderly

way and that indeed people do not fall through the cracks and that indeed there will be adequate health care for all Calgarians.

MR. MITCHELL: I don't know what's more striking, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Premier can actually read the newspaper or that he . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. Second main question.

Gambling

MR. MITCHELL: This government, Mr. Speaker, is well known for returning favours to friends, and some of these new friends were highlighted sponsors for the Premier's dinner last week. When three of 15 sponsors of the Premier's dinner are casino operators, it may be just a matter of time before we see Las Vegas type, big money gambling casinos in Alberta communities. I wonder whether the Premier could tell us exactly what the status is of his negotiations with casino operators wanting to open Las Vegas type, for-profit casinos in Alberta communities.

MR. KLEIN: Well, there is no status, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we make - at least the party does, and I don't get involved in these things. The party makes public all the donors. It wasn't a secret. Nothing was hidden.

Will this party publish a list of all the donors? We'll go through it with a fine-tooth comb just to check, just to make sure that there was no one involved in gambling with the Liberal Party. I'll bet you in that list - I know it's not a very long list. It's a very, very short list, so it shouldn't be very difficult to go through, but I'm sure that we'll find someone in that list who is involved with gambling. As a matter of fact, I'm willing to bet on it that we'll find someone involved with gambling in the very short Liberal list of donors to the leader's dinner.

Mr. Speaker, to answer the question: no, there is no status of negotiations. As a matter of fact, I understand that one of the individuals was up here to negotiate with one, perhaps two Indian nations, and we are not privy to nor do we get involved in any way, shape, or form in those negotiations.

1:50

MR. MITCHELL: No negotiations with the Premier at the Premier's dinner, Mr. Speaker.

Is the Premier saying that special sponsor Jack Binion, a Las Vegas casino tycoon who has been fined \$1 million for gambling violations there, was simply up here on a northern gambling-free holiday to talk about the weather with this Premier?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you the extent of the conversation. I was introduced to Mr. Binion. I said: what are you doing up here? He said: I'm up here with my clients. I believe he said that he was up here with someone from the Hobbema nation, and he mentioned that he was doing some work I believe for the Enoch nation. I said: welcome to Edmonton.

MR. MITCHELL: Given the distance that the Premier is clearly trying to establish between himself and the likes of Mr. Binion, will he, then, here and now in this Legislature simply say no to video slot machines in this province and no to any suggestion of world-class Las Vegas type gambling casinos in Alberta communities?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as you know, there are a number of factors relative to gambling, and that's why we have set up the

committee under the hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler. First of all, I want to make a comment. What I found so reprehensible was the comment recently by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, who said that this exercise is a sham. That is an insult to the literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of Albertans who have appeared before the committee. As a matter of fact, the hon. member has gone out of her way to extend those hearings.

This is a very complex issue. It's an issue that involves casinos as they now exist. It's an issue that involves bingo. It's an issue that involves horse racing. It's an issue that involves lottery tickets and pull tickets. It's an issue that involves VLTs. It's an issue that involves emerging situations such as proposals by Northlands and Stampede Park to have enhanced casinos. It's an issue that could be further complicated by the possibility – and I say the possibility because certainly negotiations have been taking place – with respect to casinos on Indian nations. It's a very complex issue.

Now, I would say to the hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*, who has the highest concentration of gambling of any constituency in the province. I would challenge him to go door to door to all the businesses that have VLTs – and I'm sure the cameras would be glad to along with him – to go to those business operators in Calgary-*Buffalo* and say: shut them down, throw them out, and tell all the customers that they're sinful and wrong.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities, responsible for lotteries.

DR. WEST: Yes. As minister responsible for lotteries I'd like to clarify a few of the points brought up in question period here so far. There are no negotiations going on with anyone in this province at the present time for major Vegas-like casinos. I meet on a regular basis with the charitable group casinos who have questions regarding some of the rules and regulations surrounding the operation of charitable casinos in this province. The VLTs have been frozen at 6,000 in this province, awaiting the results of an in-depth review by the Member for Lacombe-Stettler on the lottery issues.

The other thing I would like to say to the people of Alberta and this Assembly is that the issue of First Nations casinos is also involved in the Criminal Code of Canada. At the present time the federal jurisdiction will dictate whether or not there's any movement whatsoever in negotiations that the First Nations have had with various Vegas-type casinos. It has nothing to do with it whatsoever, because we are not . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order please.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good answer.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. It may be a good answer, but it's probably more a subject for a ministerial statement.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Hunting Licence Auction

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From big gaming to big game. Albertans are incensed that this government would allow American hunters to take elk and bighorn sheep out of season as long as the price is right. The auction of hunting licences in the U.S. is a fund-raising venture of the Rocky Mountain elk foundation, headquartered in the environment minister's riding, who will reap the benefits of this wildlife sell-

off. Wealthy Americans are finding out quickly what this government means by the Alberta advantage. My question to the Minister of Environmental Protection: explain to Albertans why Americans can hunt bighorn sheep out of season as long as they're willing to pay for it.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that they are not hunting out of season. There is a special season that will accommodate the hunting of two bighorn sheep and two elk. One of each is available to Albertans; one of each is for nonresidents. An Albertan can go down and bid on those if they wish.

Another very misleading statement in his preamble was that it was going to be of benefit to my constituency. It's very interesting. I'll just read some of it. I can't go through the whole list, but I will read you some: Bow Valley elk monitoring, Blairmore seeding, Pincher Creek elk study, Black Diamond transplant, U of Lethbridge scholarship. Now, Mr. Speaker, quite clearly that's just a sample of the programs that will benefit by this auction and sale of extra permits.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: If the minister could listen, I didn't say that it would benefit his constituency, and I hope the minister will table that list for the benefit of all Albertans.

My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: why is the Premier allowing the Minister of Environmental Protection to turn big game into big dollars when Albertans have strenuously objected to this unethical treatment of wildlife?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this is not unethical treatment of wildlife. As I understand, this is a draw that simply allows non-Canadian residents to participate much the same as Canadian residents do but also to come up here to inject new dollars into this province, to enjoy the fantastic scenery of Alberta, to enjoy the hospitality of Alberta, and to spend significant dollars in this province for the benefit of the protection of the environment. These people who come up from the United States and pay big dollars are probably the best conservationists you'll find around.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Environmental Protection: if this government would stoop so low as to auction off wildlife, tell Albertans what's next to go. Will we auction our water next? What's next?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that the hon. member hasn't got it. The fact is that all of the money that is being raised will go back into enhancing the habitat of the wildlife and into research on wildlife. To talk about it not being available to Albertans – the fact is that no Albertan is denied the opportunity to hunt elk or bighorn sheep. There are some areas that they can't, that are on a draw basis, but generally there's the ability to hunt if you wish to. The fact is that our biologists have determined that we have a very high population of wildlife right now, and if ever our resource is threatened by disease or whatever, this program would be canceled. It's simply one right now that the wildlife can easily accommodate.

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

Cardiovascular Surgery

MR. MAGNUS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Concerns have been expressed that the Foothills hospital is bumping people that have been scheduled for open heart surgery, with no indication of when their surgery might be done. To the Minister of Health: are the concerns valid that access to cardiovascular surgery is getting worse by consolidating programs at the Foothills hospital?

2:00

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly our expectation and intention that access will improve by consolidation of programs between the Holy Cross and Foothills. The Foothills hospital has delayed some nonurgent cardiovascular cases until the next budget year, but I should point out that this year we allocated an additional \$3.5 million to cardiovascular surgery. It's certainly our hope that through co-ordination of a single site we can better manage our waiting lists in cardiovascular surgery.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. MAGNUS: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. To the minister on the related topic of pediatric heart transplants in Edmonton: can Albertans get the same quality of services and availability to transplant organs in Alberta as in Loma Linda?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate in Alberta to have a pediatric transplant program, and we have every confidence that the people who are working in that transplant program are very highly skilled, very highly trained, and will provide a very good program in this province.

MR. MAGNUS: Mr. Speaker, my last question, again to the Minister of Health: how are transplant organs prioritized across North America, and do children waiting in Edmonton have the same access to organs as people in other centres?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important point I think for people who are waiting for transplant surgery. There is no benefit or advantage from being in an American centre or a Canadian centre, particularly in pediatric transplants. There are standard criteria across North America for prioritizing transplant patients. Canadian organs are available to Canadian patients first. American organs are made available to American patients first. If there is not a match found in that country, then that organ is made available to the other country, and that way we have a North American linkage. Right now the real problem in this area is the lack of available organs or donors, and that is the area that we really have to concentrate on.

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

MLA Travel

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 12, 1989, the then Minister of Education approved covering the expenses for the Member for Lesser Slave Lake to present her master's thesis to a conference in Montreal. This three-day excursion, by the way, cost Alberta taxpayers \$1,485. Curiously, only three weeks before the trip the assistant deputy minister wrote, "There's no way" - and he underlined no way - "we can pay Pearl's expenses out of departmental funds." I've got four copies to table of the minister's memo, the assistant deputy minister's memo, and the ledger showing the expenses. So my first question is to the

Premier. Mr. Premier, is it still the policy of cabinet ministers in the government, as occurred in this case and in a well-known case even last summer, to ignore the advice of their assistant deputy ministers regarding possible conflict of interest?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I guess, if I understand it, the minister is the boss; right?

AN HON. MEMBER: No, the people are the boss.

MR. KLEIN: Well, no, no. The minister is the boss; right? The minister is in charge of the department, not the assistant deputy minister. So I guess the minister can take or reject whatever advice the minister wants to. At least that's the way I would operate. I don't know how these guys operate, but they'll never be in a position to know.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question. [interjections]

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, they keep making the wrong decisions, which is why I asked.

My supplementary . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question is to the Treasurer. Mr. Treasurer, is it still the policy of the government for the government to pay for members of the Legislature to present their master's thesis at conferences?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, if that were the sole purpose of the exercise, I believe that that would not be the case.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's good news then, Mr. Speaker.

My final question to the financial watchdog, the Treasurer, is this: what steps has the province taken to ensure that similar lapses of fiscal judgment as exhibited by the former Minister of Education have been eradicated in the Treasurer's department now?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, when I look at the four-year plan that this government put in place to balance the budget by '96-97, the three-year plans that are updated absolutely every single year, and the planning exercise that has gone on in this government to make sure that the taxpayers' dollars are used to optimum advantage, I believe a lot of those inconsistencies and errors we've tried to eliminate. If some of them should occur, that's why we hopefully have an effective opposition to bring them to our attention, and we would take all steps necessary to make sure that that kind of thing doesn't happen again.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Farm Fertilizer

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Recently I've been questioned by several constituents regarding the significant price increases in farm fertilizer. Some of these prices are reportedly up almost 50 percent over 1994 prices. I also understand that recently a large production plant in this province has changed hands thereby creating a virtual monopoly in the Alberta production market. I'm wondering if the minister

could enlighten us on this situation and advise us what effect the sale of this plant might have on the prices to farmers.

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. Member for Peace River, obviously handling his responsibilities very well because of his agricultural community in Peace River. [interjections] Yes, indeed, there have been increases in fertilizer prices. It's too bad the Liberals aren't interested in knowing the answers in agriculture, because if they were, they could go back to their constituents and explain them.

As a matter of fact, the price increases started in 1994 and have kept increasing in 1995. This is due, in part, to increased gas prices in 1994. It's true that gas prices have decreased now, but remember that we have a process here that really is competing in a global marketplace. Fertilizer producing countries such as Russia, areas of the Middle East that used to be the major producers of fertilizer in the world have diminished their supplies in a very, very noticeable way. As a matter of fact, fertilizer usage has increased considerably as well. Usage is up, something like, 11 percent over what it was in the past. Together with the rationalization, the increased demands that are out there, an 11 percent increase in demand, and the downgrading of supply in producer countries such as Russia and the Middle East, indeed we have a situation where fertilizer prices have increased.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. FRIEDEL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Again, to the minister of agriculture. As he mentioned, last year part of the price increase was blamed on the increase in the price of natural gas. Yet when the price of natural gas decreased, there was no apparent reduction in the price of fertilizer. I'm wondering if the minister could comment on that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed this is a concern to us because the agricultural community, of course, is a very important component of our whole economic development in Alberta, to the point where at our last ministers' conference I asked the federal minister if indeed he would take it into consideration. This isn't just an Alberta problem. This is a national problem. It's true throughout all of Canada. As a matter of fact, it's a global problem, where fertilizer prices are increasing. I asked the federal minister if he wouldn't consider having a task force review the whole process of escalating fertilizer prices.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. FRIEDEL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. I understand that manufacturers previously obtained most of their phosphorus for fertilizers from South Africa but now are purchasing it from higher priced suppliers in the United States. I wonder if the minister could tell us whether this is related in any way to trade agreements. Or is it related to instability in the South African markets?

2:10

MR. PASZKOWSKI: The major cost increase is in the area of nitrogen fertilizer production. That's where the largest increases

have taken place. Indeed phosphorus prices have increased, not just in North America but again worldwide, and even South African prices have increased. So there is a commonality of concern here as far as increasing fertilizer prices are concerned. This is where our objective as a department is concerned, to see that the industry improves itself by allowing the producers to capture more of the increased prices of grain that are coming about at the present time. Mr. Speaker, it's of concern because when the producers do better, the whole industry actually improves itself, and that is something we will continue to work towards.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

Logging on Private Land

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Environmental Protection has asked in this House for Albertans to report any logging that causes environmental damage. I'm sure he now knows, for he will have received a letter that I am tabling now, that Kootenay Wood Preservers Ltd. bought and logged approximately five to seven and a half square kilometres of private land in the Gold Creek area in the Crowsnest Pass for use in their B.C. plant. Now, Mr. Bradley, a former Minister of the Environment, states in an interview that the destruction is so bad that, quote, I can't bear to go up there any more. My question to the minister is: what charges has the minister laid against the company for this damage?

THE SPEAKER: The Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact the Kootenay Wood Preservers did log an area. They did come forward with a plan. They did agree to have about 150 metre buffer zones from any stream. The Department of Environmental Protection has inspected in the past, and since this letter has been written, I've asked the staff to have another look at it. If in fact there are any environmental damages, we will follow up with the appropriate charges.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the last environment minister moved at the speed of a glacier. This guy's even slower.

This question is to the Premier. I would like to file four copies of a newspaper article in a Calgary paper in 1992, when this damage took place. The Premier said just last week that when environmental problems are beginning to occur from logging, he'd move on it. Now, why didn't the Minister of the Environment at that time, 1992, the Premier, take steps to prevent this problem with the Kootenay Wood Preservers from going ahead?

MR. KLEIN: Well, ostensibly, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment was not at that time responsible for forestry, as you know. This is the truth, hon. member; you know this. The department was the Department of the Environment, and there was a clear separation of duties and powers between Environment and forestry. It was after I became minister that the departments of forestry, environment, and parks came together.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the hon. member didn't hear the answer to his first question. In fact, Kootenay Wood Preservers did come forward with a plan. They did agree to certain harvesting practices. The department of forestry did

investigate. They were following it up, and I have committed that we will do it again if the hon. member feels that in fact there has been any environmental damage.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, how can a province with so much beauty be blessed with such incompetent environment ministers?

The damage has been done. The rivers are flooded. To the minister: will the minister charge Kootenay Wood Preservers under the Canadian Fisheries Act, which is a federal Act? You can use that one. If you don't want to use the federal Act, why don't you charge them under the provincial Act for desecrating the environment?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. LUND: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member has heard me mention many times in this House that, yes, the federal Fisheries Act is one that we can use and we will use if in fact there is environmental damage, and I have committed to the hon. member that we are having our people look at it again. They have been investigating it. They have been monitoring it. They have determined that in fact there hasn't to this point been environmental damage, but we'll have another look.

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

Family and Community Support Services

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I've been getting letters and some calls from community groups in Lethbridge that are concerned about FCSS funding. Now, last year FCSS funding was moved to Municipal Affairs and under the umbrella of the unconditional municipal grant program. I wonder if the minister would tell us why this was done.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. THURBER: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a good question. The municipalities for some time now have been telling government: "You shouldn't designate different grants for different things. If you just give us the money in a lump sum, we'll decide how to spend it." So this was one of the grants that was put in with the unconditional municipal grants to the municipalities at that time.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. DUNFORD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With municipalities being given these choices, could the minister tell us the status of FCSS funding in '95 and '96?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. THURBER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. They were given the choice of either going with a conditional grant or having it included in with the unconditional portion of it. Some municipalities have chosen to go conditional to allow them access to the federal portion of the funds, and some have said, "Well, we still want to have it on an unconditional basis." So we've decided to leave it as a choice for the municipalities for this coming year

while we review it and see if, in fact, that is the appropriate way of forwarding these funds to the municipalities.

MR. DUNFORD: Well, in order that these community organizations might be able to enhance their planning, when will the municipalities know their FCSS funding allocations for 1996?

MR. THURBER: The funding allocations, Mr. Speaker, were sent out probably about a week ago to all municipalities to make them well aware of what their funding allocations are for the coming year.

THE SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Roper.

Science and Research Authority

MR. CHADI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year the Premier announced that the minister without portfolio was finally going to get a portfolio and, along with that, an additional \$25,000 a year in wages. The minister's new job was to head up the Science and Research Authority, which was to look at the total number of dollars spent on research and development and to develop overall priorities. Well, last week's budget revealed that government departments, each one of them, are still planning to continue their independent prioritizing of research dollars. My question is to the Premier. When is the Premier going to tell his ministers that they have to filter their research projects through the minister responsible for science and research?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in fact it is already done. Every minister in government has been told to have as many of those research dollars as possible managed and co-ordinated through the Research and Science Authority. Clear direction has gone out to all the ministers.

MR. CHADI: Well, Mr. Speaker, why have a minister specifically responsible for research and development if every other minister is responsible for their own research and development?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, there are literally hundreds of millions of dollars worth of research money out there in various departments, and this is a task that simply can't occur overnight. The minister of science and research is working diligently with all of her colleagues in government to co-ordinate these research dollars so, in fact, we can leave her a lot of this money in terms of getting perhaps even 2 or 3 to 1 in terms of dollars from the private sector.

2:20

MR. CHADI: My supplemental, again, to the Premier: when, then, can we expect this government to submit a business plan to this Assembly with respect to the minister's portfolio?

MR. KLEIN: The fundamentals of the business plan, Mr. Speaker, have been submitted. As we make progress relative to the co-ordination of these research dollars, we will so inform the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Currie.

Seniors' Programs

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Speech from the Throne and the budget debate a concern for seniors has

been identified and expressed, particularly that they're falling through the cracks because of gaps in programs and services to seniors. In this reorganization there was a commitment to an appeal process for seniors. My question is to the Minister of Community Development. As seniors have no understanding of what that process is, could you please tell the House exactly the details of the appeal process?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the business plan for Community Development and in the budget we've set aside a \$1 million fund to look after individuals who may be falling through the cracks in making the transition to the Alberta seniors' benefit program. In order to reduce the amount of duplication and streamline the process, we are going to be using the same mechanism as used by social services in dealing with their clients, and we're also going to ensure that there are seniors who will be on the appeal panels. At this time we're in the process of working through what the conditions for the appeal will be, and I expect to be making announcements on that some time in April.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: is this appeal process restricted to seniors who are on the Alberta seniors' benefit?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, that is the intention of this because, of course, the Alberta seniors' benefit program has replaced a number of pre-existing programs, and we're trying very hard to concentrate on those people that are having difficulty making that transition to the Alberta seniors' benefit program.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those seniors, then, who are eliminated from the Alberta seniors' benefit because of their threshold but who may have valid medical costs that could be appealed – is the minister suggesting that if you are not on the Alberta seniors' benefit, you cannot appeal?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, indeed the issue of those seniors that have high medical costs is a serious issue, and it arises in cases where by reason of the person's individual circumstances their nondiscretionary medical expenses are quite high. That is not likely to be something that we're going to be looking at so much in an appeal process as perhaps in a change in policy in how to deal with people with high medical expenses.

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

Water Management

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the past few months thousands of Albertans have made presentations at public hearings on the proposed revisions to the Water Resources Act. The interest has been so great that copies are no longer available for distribution to persons requesting them in advance of public meetings or to persons writing directly to the ministry. The minister has stated that legislation will be introduced this fall but that to allow for further public comment, voting will be delayed until the spring. My questions are to the Minister of Environmen-

tal Protection. As February 28 is the deadline by which submissions must be received before they'll be included in the report to the minister, are you willing to delay the deadline for these submissions to allow people that haven't got their reports yet a chance to read them and then make a submission? I think about three weeks after the last date would be nice.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The February 28 deadline is one that was set in order to accommodate the committee that is chaired by the hon. Member for Dunvegan. I think it is necessary that they have a reasonable amount of time to put their information together in order that they can have a report to me by the end of May. The reason for the end of May deadline is that we might be able to put something forward in the Legislature this fall that comes from government as opposed to something that comes from the Water Resources Commission. I have committed that we will let the Act lay out over the winter, and I hope to have some draft regulations along with it so that people can get a much better feel for how it is going to apply to their situation.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As many of the changes that will be made to the draft will be in response to the public input, will the minister commit that after the new draft is filed in the fall session, some kind of public hearing process will be implemented to get feedback from Albertans?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly hope that there would be a lot of public input. A lot of public interest in this Act has been shown as the committee has been out and about. We will be making sure that it will be available to Albertans so that they can have a chance to study it and make their comments to us prior to the introduction one year from now.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister please tell us what he plans on doing with the responses that come in after the deadline?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I would assume that he means after the February 28 deadline. I would hope that the committee will continue to compile those and that we will then be able to have a look at them as we are going through the drafting of the legislation.

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

Canada/U.S. Air Travel

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Friday, February 24 saw the signing of the Canada/U.S. open skies treaty. The treaty is expected to generate as much as \$10 billion in cross-border air traffic revenues. Alberta's economy is anticipating a large boost in the way of jobs and cash flow. To the minister responsible for economic development: what impact will the open skies treaty have on Alberta's economy?

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

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, yes, the open skies agreement was signed last week, and I think there has to be a congratulatory note sent from this province to those who worked long and hard in getting this agreement signed in the interest of competition. Competition, in fact, means improved air service, which will result in lower transportation costs in the area of freight and with passengers. In fact, a study commissioned by the Department of Transportation and Utilities indicates that over 10 years \$1 billion in economic activity is to be generated through this lessening of regulation. In fact, that will result in 13,000 jobs being created by the private sector.

The sector benefits, of course, are obvious. Tourism is the number one benefit as it allows us to transport more and more passengers into our marketplace here and certainly the air cargo side, in terms of advanced technology, industry, telecommunications, electronics. There are in fact better business linkages, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why did Calgary immediately get three major routes, and Edmonton, our capital city, got none?

MR. SMITH: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's indeed a good question because what it does in fact is emphasize that deregulation does create jobs and economic benefits and that, in fact, the private sector makes choices based on marketplace decisions. Both the Edmonton Regional Airports Authority and the Calgary Airport Authority have been in negotiation with these airlines, and I look forward to more flights and more linkages being established from both airports.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As minister responsible for economic development for all Alberta what will you do to make sure that Edmonton will get at least some of the routes that it considers important?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. In fact, there is an Alberta air strategy committee that works in consultation with government departments and the airport authorities. The more important question, I think, that one has to pose here is: what will those in business in Edmonton . . . [interjections] It's so interesting that members representing Edmonton aren't interested in what the private sector in Edmonton is going to do for themselves.

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

2:30

Child Welfare

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Progress on the planned changes to child welfare is mysteriously quiet in the province. Community information meetings are discreetly under way. Albertans tell us that notice of the meetings is passed by word of mouth, starting with the regional director who tells a contact in the community to forward the list to others who might be interested, making us wonder why the apparent secrecy. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Why

are you not telling the public about these meetings, as your government so carefully did with lotteries, with young offenders, and with the heritage savings trust fund? Are our children not as important as gambling?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, the hearings are going very well. In fact, I believe it's tomorrow that they're going to start in Calgary, and as far as I know, they have been very well attended by the people interested. This is the start of a long-term process. It's a very sensitive issue. It's not an issue that we are going to deal with overnight. It's an issue that has developed over 40 or 50 years. It's a very serious issue, and I know that the people out there that are interested and the people that are responsible for the delivery system will do it. The reason we don't highly publicize the processes, as we all are aware in this government, on this side at least, is that we are trying to streamline the costs as much as possible yet still do the job that needs to be done. Those dollars that we save in advertising will go to frontline services for children.

MS HANSON: Mr. Minister, why is it all right, if you're being so careful with money, to blow \$110,000 on advertising the Premier's TV address, but we have to rely on word of mouth for important issues that affect children?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, in relation to the issue of children's services, the hearings out there are just completed. I would hope that this member, at least, is serious about supporting what we are doing. It's a positive move, and it's supported by the majority of Albertans. I had asked these members close to three years ago now to come up and assist us in the development of a plan. We're still waiting. That was back in February of '93, I guess, when we asked. They haven't come up with a plan, but the same member in fact is out there quietly visiting the organizations that we've developed to deliver better services for Albertans. I have a memo here, February of '95, where she visited a site and was very supportive of some of the issues we've developed in co-ordination of the delivery system for Albertans which will directly impact the children we're talking about.

MS HANSON: Mr. Minister, the only way that we were able to find out where these meetings were and when was by phoning the commissioner, and this morning he faxed us. There has been no attempt to let a broad section of people know. How can you risk such vital communications with flimsy instructions like, "Pass it on to whoever's interested," or is it your intent to bury the meetings so that the public doesn't attend?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, the public that is interested in a good delivery system for children will attend. We are moving the delivery system to the children, where it should be. The community can do a better job in that delivery system, including the aboriginal community, which these people don't seem to favour. They are attending these meetings. The meetings have started. Give us time. They are attending.

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

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

THE SPEAKER: We have an application from the hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo* under Standing Order 40 for unanimous consent of the Assembly to hear a motion.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo on the question of urgency with regard to that motion.

Freedom to Read Week

Mr. Dickson:

Be it resolved that under Standing Order 40 the Legislative Assembly recognize February 27 to March 5, 1995, as Freedom to Read Week and acknowledge the negative impact that censorship has on lifelong learning.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. On the question of urgency, this week of February 27 to March 5, 1995, is Freedom to Read Week right across Canada. This is the week it's being celebrated, and it's an excellent opportunity for members in this Assembly to celebrate freedom and intellectual freedom. Because this is the first day of Freedom to Read Week, I think it's extremely important that we as an Assembly be seen as supporting that, sir, and dealing with it today.

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

THE SPEAKER: With regard to this, the hon. Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Dividing a Motion into Two Parts

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, referring to *Beauchesne* 557(1), under the title of Dividing Motions it says:

A motion which contains two or more distinct propositions may be divided so that the sense of the House may be taken on each separately. The Speaker has a discretionary power to decide whether a motion should be divided.

The quotations are there.

When you look at this motion, it's clearly presenting two propositions: one which is simply asking that it be recognized as Freedom to Read Week but a second one which opens another, I think, interesting and somewhat prolonged debate acknowledging "the negative impact that censorship has on lifelong learning." I hope that wasn't done in a vexatious manner so as to get a no vote on the entire motion. I think that if it were divided, the intent and the spirit of the mover would be clear to all of us.

THE SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo have anything to say?

MR. DICKSON: Well, I'd make these observations, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity. Given the reasonably elastic treatment that this House usually accords Standing Order 40s, I think, with respect, it's hairsplitting to indicate that there are two collateral and severable elements to this. I think that if the motion is together, it should be treated as a single motion. I would be opposed, unless you rule – obviously you have the last word, but my view would be that it doesn't offend the rule cited by the Government House Leader.

THE SPEAKER: Well, in the interest of progress the Chair is going to take the opportunity to divide this motion. The Chair has the sense that if it doesn't, then the whole thing is going to stop. So, therefore, it will be divided at the end of "Read Week." The rest of the motion will be put after that.

Freedom to Read Week

(continued)

THE SPEAKER: Permission will be asked for now with respect to the motion stopping at the end of the word "Week." Is there consent in the Assembly to allow the hon. member to put that portion of the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

Moved by Mr. Dickson:

Be it resolved that under Standing Order 40 the Legislative Assembly recognize February 27 to March 5, 1995, as Freedom to Read Week.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the Assembly for the opportunity to be able to deal with the merits of this motion. I wanted to, firstly, talk about what Freedom to Read Week is. Then I was going to move on to talk about why it is important, and then, thirdly, I was going to simply touch on what happens during this particular week.

2:40

This is an initiative of the Canadian Book and Periodical Council. It was started almost a decade ago, and originally the purpose was to promote in a very general sense literacy in Canada as well as tolerance, knowledge, and a love of reading. In recent years in Canada and certainly particularly in this jurisdiction the focus has become sharper. It's focused on the fundamental freedom of expression, a freedom protected now by section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In terms of why it is important, Mr. Speaker, I think it's trite but it bears saying one more time that the suppression of reading material is the suppression of creative thought. We may have come some distance since 213 BC when the Chinese emperor Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, who built the Great Wall of China, ordered all books destroyed except for books on medicine and science and agriculture, but I think we still see evidence even in 1995, in these years, in a sophisticated, literate society and jurisdiction like Alberta where there's a movement to prevent Albertans from having free access, ready access to reading material. I'd quote a United States Supreme Court justice, Justice Louis Brandeis, who said, "The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding." I think that's a concern that we have to deal with.

In terms of what happens during the week, sir, in Calgary there are marathon readings of the W.O. Mitchell classic *Who Has Seen the Wind*. This evening there is the first awarding of – it's call the Steinbeck sandpiper freedom to read award. Now, this is an award that was created after the Member for Red Deer-South had attempted to introduce a petition in the Legislature to ban Steinbeck's classic *Of Mice and Men*. The recipient this year, Mr. Speaker, is Lorne McRae, an educator with the Calgary board of education for some 30 years. I can tell all members that there's a very exciting list of activities in the city of Calgary. There was a two-day symposium last Friday and Saturday entitled: the economics of censorship. One of the speakers was the national president of Pen, which is the organization of writers that has championed freedom to read.

I can tell you that I hear members opposite anxious to join and support this important motion. So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'll invite all members to support this. In doing so, what we do

is send a very clear signal to opinioned leaders and to Albertans that the freedom to read is alive, is robust, is healthy in this province in 1995.

Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly give freedom to read support, and I say that speaking for myself. I would somewhat guard that remark by saying that I would hope the member opposite doesn't mean that absolutely anything at any time should be available in any school room at any age for any student to read. I didn't actually hear him at the time of the trial saying that he was concerned about certain teachings of the Holocaust, for instance, that were going on, but I would presume that even the member opposite has certain limitations about what children are exposed to. Given that understanding, I certainly don't have a problem supporting this.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to add another dimension to this particular motion, which I support. The statement "freedom to read" underlines for me the situation that we have here in this province and, to be fair, in other provinces as well where there are many of our citizens who cannot read. There are children and adults who are handicapped throughout this province by illiteracy. In the face of that and the overwhelming evidence that this government now faces in having to train people – and before we can train people, we have to teach people to read. We're having to pick up the damages in adults who cannot get jobs because they simply cannot keep up with the necessary reading in a modern technological world.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of this, this government is in fact cutting back on those very programs that will ensure that our young people and mature students have the capacity to develop cognitive skills in reading and writing. This government persists in reducing resources for those very programs that allow for the development of literacy in the early years as well as later in life.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to comment. This last week I was visiting a school in my own particular constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar. It was the Capilano elementary school, and to my delight, at their monthly awards and recognition program they were recognizing children who in fact could account for X number of hours of reading with their parents or their siblings at home, and I commend that school. I think that's the kind of program that we need to be sure that there are library resources in our schools to allow this to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I and my colleagues are totally committed to kindergarten, and further, we're committed to Head Start programs that help to bring along those children in our province who because of poverty or isolation or other circumstances desperately need to have access to Head Start.

Mr. Speaker, just finally, I support this motion, and I would ask the government to give some thought and consideration to the regressive steps that they have taken that in fact increase the potential of illiteracy in Alberta.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to speak in support of this motion. Individuals in groups and organizations who are commemorating Freedom to Read Week, as the Member for Calgary-Buffalo stated, are doing so for

two primary purposes: to recognize the fact that there are barriers for some individuals in terms of being able to read – and we must eliminate those – but also to address the issue of censorship or a state restriction of an individual's right to read materials. Censorship of any sort is something that we should be afraid of or wary of at least.

DR. L. TAYLOR: A point of order.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair would remind the hon. member that we are now directing our remarks to the motion that is divided, to the first part and not the second part.

MR. HENRY: I appreciate the direction, sir. I'm responding directly to some of the comments made previously in debate.

THE SPEAKER: Order. Those comments were made with respect to a point of order, not in debate, hon. member.

MR. HENRY: Thank you for your direction, sir.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a society that has won a significant amount of individual freedoms, including the freedom of expression, but with those freedoms also comes responsibilities. When one is disseminating or in fact creating written material, the responsibility includes not to infringe on others' personal liberties through that material, through the promotion of hatred or violence against a particular person or a group of people.

Our society tries very hard to strike that delicate balance: ensuring that individuals have the right to read material without interference and protecting those individuals or those groups who would be harmed by material that promotes hatred or violence. When society tries to protect those individuals against written material that infringes on their personal liberties, it has to be careful, because we need to ensure that that provision in our legal system is not used to curtail expression of personal views, whether they coincide with the majority's or whether they make us comfortable or uncomfortable.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, some of the most frequently challenged books in our school system include *Catcher in the Rye*, works by Steinbeck such as *Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *1984* by George Orwell. It's my view that we should be encouraging our children right from preschool right through the school system to read critically to be able to determine what is indeed just a disagreement, what is a manifestation of free expression, and what is in fact garbage, or trash. If we do this, young people as they become adults will be able to make their own decisions based on sound values and choices. By teaching our young people to think critically and to read critically, we lessen the desire for state-directed interventions and we ensure the widest possible access to reading material with the least possibility or the least potential for promoting hatred or violence.

Mr. Speaker, too often in the past governments have used censorship to discourage or eliminate opposition, and as legislators we have a responsibility to be vigilant about the use of censorship. I'd like to commend the organizers of Freedom to Read Week for reminding us that all citizens do have the right to read without interference but, also, that we have a responsibility to ensure that barriers are eliminated or minimized.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is rising on a point of order.

Point of Order Clarification

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it was my understanding that we were only going as far as "Freedom to Read Week" and that we were deleting "acknowledge the negative impact that censorship . . ." The hon. member is continuously referring to the censorship aspect of this.

MR. HENRY: In response to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have not been talking about censorship in the way that the minister has described. I've talked about the state's and our responsibility as legislators to ensure that people have access to read and have access to materials to read without infringing on other people's rights to liberty and protection against hatred or violence. I think that's very fundamental to the issue of reading.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order.

THE SPEAKER: Well, the Chair's prepared to rule. It's a difficult area, and I think the word "censorship" is what is offending hon. members. If the hon. member could cast his comments on the freedom to read – that is what the first part of the motion is primarily taken up with – and not talk about censorship, because that is the second part of the motion. The Chair felt that the hon. member was not transgressing the point. The Chair has to recognize that it's a difficult situation and urges the hon. member to stay with the freedom to read and this part of the motion.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry if I've made anybody feel uncomfortable by using the word "censorship." I simply wanted to point out that there is a balance. I wasn't speaking against censorship, if that's what the hon. minister was worried about, or accusing anybody of censorship. I was just outlining how it is used and how it can be used judicially and also our responsibility to ensure that it's used properly.

Freedom to Read Week (continued)

MR. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, Freedom to Read Week is being celebrated in my city, the city of Edmonton, and Her Worship Mayor Jan Reimer will be making a proclamation at city hall indicating that this is Freedom to Read Week. Also, there are many activities focusing on literacy issues as well as – dare I say it? – censorship issues.

One very positive contribution from the private sector is from the Greenwood family, a well-known family in Edmonton, who operates a book shop and has made an offer, and I understand that other book shops are doing this as well. This Saturday individuals who have books they no longer need can bring them in and get a credit towards new reading materials. I think that's really positive. Also, at Greenwood's Bookshoppe there is a censorship-free wall where visitors to the shop can write down their thoughts on censorship, on either side of the issue, however they feel, and I'd invite the hon. minister of agriculture, if he has very strong feelings, or the Government House Leader to show up at Greenwood's to put their thoughts on the wall, as I intend to do as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'd urge all members to support this motion.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSZYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it should be noted that in Alberta and in Canada Freedom to Read Week is every week.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend you on your ruling for splitting the motion. By splitting the motion and stopping it at "Freedom to Read Week," you made it into a very noble motion. Unfortunately, the debate that followed from the members opposite ignored your ruling and continued on to the total motion as written. As a result, what started out as a noble motion has turned into what I can best classify as cheap political opportunism.

Mr. Speaker, the mover of the motion implied that the Member for Red Deer-South did something wrong by presenting a petition in this Legislature, which each and every one of us should be doing whether we agree or disagree with the content. Because he presented a motion from people who were opposed to a particular book written by Steinbeck, I don't feel that warrants any kind of criticism of him as a member doing his job or any kind of criticism as to his motives. I take strong exception to that.

Mr. Speaker, when we take something as important as Freedom to Read Week and twist it – twist it – to criticize members in this Legislature and impute motives in a roundabout way, that's wrong. When we take Freedom to Read Week as an opportunity to falsely accuse the government of withdrawing educational programs, that's wrong. It can be shown that there's more money going into the classroom now than there was before, and I resent this particular direction very much.

There were two points of order on a Standing Order 40, something that rarely happens. Why? Because they couldn't follow your wise direction, Mr. Speaker. This motion that was so important, I notice now that we have less than 10 members opposite willing to either vote yea or nay on it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say in closing that rather than waste more time on this particular motion, I would admonish the members opposite for taking a good motion and making it into something that we cannot support, and I would urge all my colleagues to turn this motion down on the basis of their debate, not on the basis of reading week.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In listening to the garble from the Member for Stony Plain, I just want to correct him: one Liberal is worth 10 Conservatives any day, and that's all we need. To take an important issue such as reading and literacy and bring it down to the gutter level, that he has done, is an embarrassment to the province and the citizens of this province.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that every Albertan, every Canadian has the opportunity to learn to read and write. It's like being in prison when you cannot read or write. I'll just tell them give a little incident from my own life when I was in Japan. I had the opportunity to travel for two months in that beautiful country, and I took English books to read. I ran out of books, tried to get other English books to read but couldn't. All of a sudden I was stuck there unable to read Japanese, having nothing in English to read, and realized the tremendous advantage I had of being able to read. Every person, whether they're Canadian or not, should have that opportunity. To take that away is a disgrace.

DR. WEST: They have English books in Japan.

MR. BRACKO: That's right, but not in northern Japan where I was.

Mr. Speaker, here again everybody should know how to read and write to be able to do a critical analysis of what's happening. The Treasurer tells Wall Street that we have a \$15.8 billion debt; then he tells Albertans that we have an \$8.5 billion debt. Albertans have to be able to read and critically analyze what this government is doing, and we wouldn't be \$32 billion in debt if they understood the deficit and the debt and the incompetence, deceit, and fraud that this government has been accused of. This is why it's essential to have and support this Freedom to Read Week motion: so every Albertan will benefit, not just the Tories and their friends in high places, the Wall Street boys who take advantage of those who are unable to do it. To get an accolade from the Wall Street boys is an embarrassment, especially in this season of Ramadan and the start of Lent, when the basis for it is serving your others. As Mother Teresa said: life isn't worth living unless you serve others. With that, it's very important that we have the opportunity to read, and I strongly support this. I'm embarrassed by the government's reaction to it, yes.

Thank you.

3:00

THE SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE SPEAKER: Then the question before the Assembly is on the motion which now reads:

Be it resolved that under Standing Order 40 the Legislative Assembly recognize February 27 to March 5, 1995, as Freedom to Read Week.

Those in favour of this motion, please say aye?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE SPEAKER: Carried.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:01 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Abdurahman	Germain	Oberg
Amery	Gordon	Percy
Black	Havelock	Pham
Bracko	Henry	Renner
Bruseker	Hewes	Rostad
Burgener	Hierath	Sapers
Calahasen	Hlady	Sekulic
Cardinal	Jacques	Severtson
Collingwood	Kirkland	Soetaert
Dalla-Longa	Kowalski	Tannas
Day	Laing	Taylor, N.
Decore	Langevin	Van Binsbergen
Dickson	Magnus	Vasseur
Doerksen	Mar	White
Dunford	Massey	Yankowsky
Evans	McClellan	Zariwny
Forsyth	Mitchell	Zwozdesky
Fritz	Nicol	

Against the motion:

Brassard	Paszkowski	Thurber
Clegg	Smith	Trynchy
Fischer	Stelmach	West
Haley	Taylor, L.	Woloshyn

Totals: For – 53 Against – 12

THE SPEAKER: That portion of the motion carries.

Censorship

Moved by Mr. Dickson:

Be it resolved that under Standing Order 40 the Legislative Assembly acknowledge the negative impact that censorship has on lifelong learning.

THE SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent in the Assembly to put the second part of the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Bills and Orders**

head: **Second Reading**

Bill 12

Marketing of Agricultural Products

Amendment Act, 1995

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly my pleasure to move second reading of the Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is largely house-keeping to clarify the intent of section 24(1)(a) of the legislation. This section of the legislation establishes part of the criteria used in amending the marketing plans of a board or a commission. The establishment of a marketing board or a commission is one that demands a significant undertaking from producers and, ultimately, plebiscites with commodity producers. What section 24 of the Act does is outline that a similar process of review and consideration be undertaken before any existing marketing plan is either amended or terminated.

The purpose of this amendment is to clarify when the provisions of section 24(1)(a) of the Act apply and to whom it is that they do apply. Currently there are two commissions in this province: the Alberta Cattle Commission and the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission. Their marketing plans provided for a nonrefundable charge. This differentiates those commissions from other boards. The proposed amendment to section 24 of the Act further clarifies: 24(1)(a)(i) will apply to marketing boards, and 24(1)(a)(ii) will apply specifically to commissions. The end result of this amendment, Mr. Speaker, will be to ensure that the original intent of the section is clarified and that section 24(1)(a)(i) will not be concerned with those commissions should they wish to amend their marketing plans. Ultimately, the proposed amendment makes this intent of the legislation absolutely clear.

This is a housekeeping Bill, Mr. Speaker, but one that clarifies the legislation as it is now.

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the minister that this is basically a housekeeping Bill. It's an amendment that probably should have been made a long time ago. It would have helped eliminate a lot of the difficulties that a lot of the boards have had in trying to define what they can put into their marketing plan, how they interpret their marketing plan, and how they can actually go ahead and implement it.

In the past we've seen a lot of conflict coming up among producers, especially in the poultry industry, where new product uses develop. They end up being risk-ventured outside of the marketing board, and then all of a sudden the marketing board says, "Wow, here's something new for us," and they just go ahead and expand their mandate. So these are the kinds of things that this amendment to the Bill is going to clarify. It makes it very plain that if it isn't in the plan at the time, a plebiscite has to be held before it can be included. From that perspective, it really does make the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act a much more easily interpreted and a much more easily applied piece of legislation, because everyone really knows now where they're going to stand in terms of being able to modify it.

I think the second part of it, where they're dealing with the amendments to the commission and the checkoff, is very good. We all saw a lot of conflict, a lot of discussion as to whether or not the Cattle Commission would have to go through a plebiscite. This makes it very plain that anytime they want to make a change to their checkoff process, whether or not it's refundable versus nonrefundable, it has to go to a plebiscite.

I commend the government for their initiative in bringing this forth, and I'd recommend that everybody support it.

[Motion carried; Bill 12 read a second time]

Bill 13 Bee Act

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to move second reading of the Bee Act, 1995. This Bill will in fact replace in total the Bee Act of 1992.

I know a lot of people around feel that this isn't an important industry in Alberta, but certainly the honey produced in Alberta is \$17 million in sales alone, plus there is a lot of pollination for specialty crops. So this is a very important Bill for many Albertans. As many of you know, when the federal government closed the borders – I think it was back in 1989 – there was sure a devastating effect in the Falher area, and certainly a lot of beekeepers went out of business. Now they're starting to come back, and this Bill will take some of the unnecessary intrusion out of their lives. Their association has been contacted about this new Bill, and they are very supportive of it.

3:20

Under the new legislation there will be an appeal process to the minister in case of a disagreement regarding an order issued under the Act. This again is not allowed under the old Act. The new Bee Act is streamlined to ensure that the beekeeping industry has the elements necessary to confront the disease problems it may face and to conduct its business efficiently.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. FORSYTH: That's it?

MR. CLEGG: That's it.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Speaker, this Act basically brings into place some of the changes that are necessary to make our bee industry in Alberta the economically profitable one that it should be. It allows us to, in essence, protect the industry in cases of trade when we see jeopardy to it, yet it also provides us with the ability to encourage and to promote the expansion that's needed.

The main example that we have to deal with is potential disease transmission. In order to be active in the bee industry, we see a lot of trade going on, a lot of interprovincial and international trade. We used to bring a lot of our queen bunches in from the U.S. Disease has kind of become an issue now, and a lot of our bee industry participants are now dealing with their own wintering over as opposed to bringing new swarms in every spring. This is a good Bill, that's going to give them a real chance to protect themselves.

There are some issues that have to be dealt with in terms of the role that the inspectors are going to play and how they can enter on a person's property, and we have to deal with the idea that when these agricultural inspectors come on to search, they're going to have to use a little bit of, oh, kind of judicial judgment in terms of how they approach it. There was a lot concern about the ability to search without a warrant. I've discussed this more at length with the minister, and he's convinced me that this is an acceptable method in relation to how all the other inspectors deal with slaughter plants, with restaurants, with all of the other health-concerned aspects.

So I see that really this is a Bill that's going to be very beneficial for our bee industry, and I would recommend that everybody support it as well.

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to address this very briefly and point out some concerns that I will be bringing up at Committee of the Whole. I guess my concern is the fact that an inspector can "enter on any land or into any other building" without any other kind of warrant or without any kind of acknowledgment. It says you can

- (a) inspect and examine . . . beekeeping equipment,
- (b) examine, make copies of or take extracts from any records of a beekeeper that relate to the transportation, possession or sale of bees,
- (c) remove bees or beekeeping equipment.

That's in section 3. As I say, I'll be addressing these later.

I'm not opposed to the principle of the Bill. The Bill in principle is a good Bill. An inspector may "without a warrant" and so on: I'm just a bit concerned about that. I'll be interested in hearing the minister's comments on these issues either at committee or at a later date.

Thank you.

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue that's been raised of course is one that was of concern and certainly one that's been discussed with the industry. What's being pointed out as a concern is the whole process of health inspection. There is a difference between criminal types of activities and health types of activities. What we're involved with here is the whole issue of health inspection.

At the present time under both federal and provincial legislation there is no need for warrants for health inspections. As a matter of fact, if warrants were required to do health inspections, it could indeed jeopardize our whole industry, no matter what it is: whether it's the meat industry, the honey industry, the dairy industry, or whatever. If it was going to be required to obtain a warrant, obviously the process of health security would be somewhat at risk here. That's why indeed there is a difference between criminal activity and the health inspection process. That's why there is not a warrant asked for in this particular piece of legislation.

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a second time]

Bill 14
Irrigation District Rehabilitation Endowment Fund
Amendment Act, 1995

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because this is such an important Bill I would like to spend a little time in discussion on this particular Bill and perhaps give a bit of background as to why this Bill is proposed. First of all, I'd like to move second reading of the Irrigation District Rehabilitation Endowment Fund Amendment Act, 1995.

Irrigation, as everyone is familiar with, has been in Alberta and has provided a very successful and lengthy tradition to our province through the years, one we can all look on with pride and certainly a feeling of accomplishment because we've turned a very arid and a very warm area of the province into a very productive area. We'll continue to have a very productive area as long as we have water, of course, and the water is distributed and managed. That's all irrigation really does: manage a limited resource. I think we have to take a lot of pride in the direction that has been taken as far as the management of our water and the irrigation districts are concerned.

There are presently 13 irrigation districts located in a triangle bounded by Calgary, Medicine Hat, and south of Lethbridge right through to the United States border. These irrigation districts were started by the railroads, by land development companies, and even by farmers themselves in the early 1900s. Following the Second World War the federal government became financially involved in supporting the districts in the development and expansion of irrigation infrastructure. In 1969 the irrigation rehabilitation and expansion program, or IREP, was initiated, and in 1972 the provincial government took over most of the responsibilities of the irrigation networks. As of 1976, when the Alberta heritage trust fund was established, significant funding contributions were made available to the irrigation districts at that time for irrigation rehabilitation. That's very key, because obviously irrigation ditches are very similar to our network of highways or any other infrastructure that we have in Alberta.

When the government brought the Irrigation District Rehabilitation Endowment Fund Act into legislation in 1992, it was originally designed so that a pool of moneys would eventually generate sufficient earnings to support the capital replacement needs of the irrigation infrastructure and the government would eventually end its direct annual support. With that in mind, the province reduced rehabilitation grants in 1992-93 and '93-94 to the 13 irrigation districts, and that grant money was used to establish a \$15.5 million endowment fund. With the additional

interest that this endowment fund accrued, there's \$2 million in interest expected by March 31 of 1995.

3:30

In January of '93, during reviews of the three-year business plan for Alberta Environmental Protection and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, it became apparent that there was a need for a study, and it was apparent that at this stage it was important that we review the provincial support for the rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure for the future. The need for the study was particularly urgent because IREP and water management system improvement programs were to expire within the next two years. Mr. Speaker, in order to consult with and determine the views of the stakeholders and other interested Albertans, the standing policy committee on agriculture and rural development formed a subcommittee to seek public input on irrigation infrastructure funding issues and any other issues that indeed may be involved as far as the ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure was concerned.

The mandate of the irrigation task force was threefold: first, to review the government's role in funding of irrigation infrastructure; second, to provide advice as to how the irrigation district rehabilitation endowment fund should be dissolved; and third, to provide advice on the implications of charging a provincial water user fee for irrigation districts. The irrigation task force was chaired by my colleague the Hon. Barry McFarland, the hon. Member for Little Bow, as well as the hon. Member for Bow Valley, the hon. Member for Cardston-Chief Mountain, the hon. Member for Dunvegan, the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West, the hon. Member for Wainwright, the hon. Member for Taber-Warner, and the hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

In the summer of 1993 the task force held individual meetings with the 13 irrigation districts in the province and consulted with the public in communities such as Taber, Brooks, Bow Island, Strathmore, Cardston, and Lethbridge. That pretty well covers the entire irrigation area within the province. More than 120 people participated and attended these public meetings, and 17 written submissions were received from groups that ranged from the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers Marketing Board to local chambers of commerce.

It was through this consultative process that the irrigation task force developed three major recommendations. The first recommendation was to disburse the irrigation district rehabilitation endowment fund to the 13 irrigation districts over a period of three years, which is the subject of this Bill that we're discussing here today. The moneys which have been invested in the endowment fund were put into the IREP expenditures from the heritage trust fund in '92-93 and '93-94. The purpose of the endowment fund was to provide earnings which would eventually provide sufficient funding to support the capital replacement needs of the irrigation districts. The total of \$15.5 million has been placed in the endowment fund to date, which was the money diverted from the provincial rehabilitation grants to the various irrigation districts. This in itself proved to be insufficient for the purpose that it was originally designed for, Mr. Speaker, and that's why the review was conducted.

The irrigation task force's other recommendations were that the province abandon the idea of imposing a water fee on irrigation licensees for funding irrigation headworks as proposed by Alberta Environmental Protection, and I hope it is recognized that that was part of the recommendations that came forward: no water tax. Of all the issues discussed at the task force meetings, the water user fee was universally rejected, and that was standard

right at every meeting that was held. That came forward very clearly and very, very forcefully. The province has adopted the recommendation, and there will be, as I said, no water user fee.

The third recommendation of the task force was that the irrigation rehabilitation and expansion program, or IREP, be retained as a long-term program funded through the general revenue fund and that the cost-sharing formula be established at 75-25 in the future, a re-establishment of the original formula. The subcommittee advised that this action is desirable because of the importance of the irrigation infrastructure to the provincial economy and the health of the southern Alberta region.

As a result, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has recommended the three recommendations into the three-year business plan. Therefore, there is no need to retain the endowment fund. The earnings from the \$15.5 million fund, which will amount to about \$2 million by the end of March '95, cannot sustain the \$20 million to \$25 million annual rehabilitation cost. That's the amount that's needed to sustain the irrigation district's water supply infrastructure value in excess of \$1.3 billion. It's a massive infrastructure that's in place and one that needs ongoing maintenance, as I mentioned before.

Just as our land roadways and our railroads all need replacement, so do waterways in irrigation districts in southern Alberta. The 13 districts will have three years to access the \$17.5 million before the endowment fund will be dissolved. These funds are to be disbursed on an 86 percent provincial, 14 percent irrigation district cost-share basis. This was the formula used when the irrigation district grants were reduced to formulate the endowment fund. Rather than keep it on the books or take it into general revenue, the amendment Act seeks to return the endowment moneys to the irrigation districts, to whom it was originally intended to be forwarded in the first place.

This amendment also ends the need for an Irrigation District Rehabilitation Endowment Fund Committee.

I trust that the members of the Assembly clearly understand the actions that the government is taking to support the lifeblood of southern Alberta. The irrigation canals and reservoirs support a strong value-added agricultural and food industry and a host of municipal, industrial, wildlife, and recreation uses on 1,240,000 acres of assessed land.

As I said in my opening statement, Mr. Speaker, irrigation has a long and successful tradition in Alberta, and this government is committed to helping to continue this tradition.

Thank you.

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, this is a Bill that's being introduced by the minister basically as a process of putting in place negotiated agreements with the sector. This process of creating the endowment fund has been outlined very well. I was going to kind of go through that a little bit, and then I wanted to end up with a question, but the minister has already given the history of all this. In the sense of not wasting our time here, I'll just start with my question, and then we can go on.

It's an interesting proposition that a group such as the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association would agree to a change in their funding structure such that they move from this endowment fund, which is going to be basically under their control through the committee, to one where now all of a sudden they're back again to the same way they were before, annually having to come to the Legislature to deal with requests. Business plans, as we have

seen, can be changed every year. Even if they're a three- or four- or five-year plan, when they're initiated each year, each year they can be changed. So you end up, then, beginning to say: what was it that convinced the irrigation districts to give up a set fund, a fund that they contributed to, a fund that they were going to be in control of, to go back to what is in essence a political environment of trying to get their dollars out of general revenue every year? So this is, you know, kind of the question that sits in the back of my mind as I look at what's happening.

In the context of the Bill, it's very fair. It gives back to the irrigation districts the dollars that they contributed to create the fund. What can you say about just giving people back their own money?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in closing, an answer to the question that was raised. The realization was there that the original sum of \$25 million was not going to look after the infrastructure properly. That's what indeed compelled the total agreement: that's not an adequate amount of money; it's not sufficient to look after what the needs are going to be; let's try and find another way. We have come forward with that other way, and indeed all the stakeholders agreed with that. So that's what compelled the thought process that made the changes.

At this stage I'd like to move second reading of Bill 14.

[Motion carried; Bill 14 read a second time]

3:40

Bill 3

Managerial Exclusion Act

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a long Bill, but obviously there are some consequential and some significant changes that will arise because of it. It basically is allowing the Labour Relations Board, as it says right in the Act,

in accordance with the Labour Relations Code, [to] exclude from a bargaining unit firefighters who, in the opinion of the Board, exercise managerial functions or are employed in a confidential capacity in matters relating to labour relations.

Basically, firefighters are the only group in the province that are excluded from going through the process of having personnel in the bargaining unit who are doing managerial functions, from having that taken to the Labour Relations Board and in fact having a determination made by the board to exclude them. That happens in every other occupation. There's only one other province that also currently has this exclusion, and that's the province of Ontario, and we understand that there is some strain there also because of it.

Over the last actually year and a half, because there are two distinct opinions on this, I've met with the firefighters association and with the fire chiefs extensively on this. Basically, there was an agreement to disagree in terms of whether this should be done or not, understanding and looking at all the material, listening carefully to both sides, both the fire chiefs and the firefighters, and also, I might add, looking at some extensive written material that was submitted by both sides, not the least of which, I might mention, was written material presented to me by Rob Hartman, a representative of the firefighters here in Edmonton, not actually

a part of the provincial association, which did provide some good insight into the firefighters' position and I think some real depth in terms of what their concerns are.

Having weighed both sides and recognizing that many municipalities across the province have also requested this exclusion so that managers can truly be free to manage, then I am proposing that we go ahead and handle the firefighters the way we would in fact any other occupational group. Keep in mind that this does not give carte blanche to the fire chiefs just to go ahead and designate anybody they want to and you're automatically out of the unit. In fact, it goes to the Labour Relations Board, and it is not uncommon for that board to make exclusions under the banner of managerial. In fact, a number of things are looked at. It would have to be truly a managerial exclusion, any combination of identifying managerial functions. Manpower needs, hiring, firing, granting time off, acting as employer's representative in the grievance procedure, conducting performance appraisals, preparing work schedules: these are all as a matter of course deemed to be managerial functions as other areas are designated.

So certainly recognizing very clearly the feeling of the firefighters themselves on this and being sensitive to that, I have still made the decision to go ahead and grant the possibility – that's all this is doing: grants the possibility – for the Labour Relations Board to make a ruling on whether someone in a fire fighting unit is actually in a managerial function.

That would conclude my remarks at this point, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the hon. minister for his explanation of the genesis of this particular Bill. The history is rather long in terms of the request for exclusion of certain levels of firefighters from the bargaining unit. This is not something that's just arisen overnight but something that has gone on for many years. The AUMA, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, on a yearly basis passes a resolution that says: we'd like to have certain individuals excluded from the bargaining unit. The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association every now and then gets together and puts together their wish list, as well.

The bottom line, however, is that there are reasons that initially the firefighter unions were structured in the way that they were. One of them is in terms of the paramilitary organization that exists within the firefighter departments. As a result of the need when fires are being fought to act together as a total unit, one of the things that comes across loud and clear is the need to work together as a team and not to have the differentiations that sometimes occur in terms of management versus employee. When the firefighters are battling a fire, what they need to know is that they can trust the individual and trust the orders that they're being given, and that's one of the reasons that there have not in the past been exclusions as per some of the other unions.

One of the things that the minister indicated was that there's only one other jurisdiction that provides for this, and I would be grateful if the minister can provide us with that information. What I've got in front of me – and it might be that the list is a little outdated – is that there are a number of other jurisdictions as well. Ontario excludes everyone except the chief and deputy chief, as well does Manitoba. Saskatchewan has the district chiefs excluded, as well as B.C. I'm not sure if people are aware, but in the city of Edmonton during one of the last rounds of negotiations through arbitration what in fact happened was that which the minister is trying to put forward by legislation. In other words,

there were certain positions that were excluded from the bargaining unit. I think they're termed assistant chiefs. My position is that if the city of Edmonton could achieve through the collective bargaining process what, I guess, management was looking for, then why is government interfering, especially a government that says that they want to get out of the business of interfering, want to get out of the business of regulating, and want to allow for the marketplace to take whatever steps are necessary? Again, this is something that we see has happened in this particular case.

Now, just so we're clear as to whom this legislation deals with, there are volunteer firefighter associations in a large number of municipalities. This would not affect, it's my understanding, those associations. It is only for those municipalities that have professional firefighters on staff, and there are only 10 such municipalities across the province. The numbers that we're talking about probably – and I'm guesstimating on this – are about 3,000, with the majority being in Calgary and Edmonton. Now, Edmonton seems to have resolved its particular situation. Calgary can follow suit. So it begs the question in terms of: why are we seeing this kind of legislation in the particular climate that we seem to have in this province right now coming forward?

As I indicated at the outset, this is not something that's new. Both the Lougheed governments and the Getty governments have looked at this request previously and have rejected it for some reason. I know that the Minister of Labour would like us to think that it's just purely a housekeeping kind of an issue, but for some reason we're seeing it come forward at this time. We're seeing it come forward at the same time that we see a motion such as 503, that says: let's look at the right to work. There's another motion – I believe it's 531 – that says: well, let people decide whether they're going to be a member of a union or not. So I begin to wonder whether the reality, whether the real premise of this particular piece of legislation is just another attack on a union, and this time it's the firefighter unions that we're looking at attacking. Up to this point it hasn't created any problems that I'm aware of. So why fix it if it ain't broke?

3:50

There are a lot of arguments that the firefighters put forward in terms of why this will not work. One interesting letter that we've received is from the city manager of the city of Edmonton to one of the aldermen with regards to managerial exclusions. Basically what the city manager says is that

the existing duties of our District Chiefs do not generally involve a strong component of managerial responsibilities. Therefore, I would not support any efforts to remove them from the bargaining unit, based on an argument of managerial functions, at this time.

He then goes on to say, Mr. Picherak, that "if the Labour Relations Code was amended to allow for firefighters to be exempt," then what they would do is restructure the responsibilities of the district chiefs.

What we're doing, I think, is aiding management to get around their true managerial responsibilities to decide and to provide the actual structure of their departments. When the city manager can say, "Well, we'll play around with the job description to ensure that it fits within the managerial exclusion," then I think we're seeing a problem that I would be loathe to see the government step into. I think that is something that needs to be straightened out between the parties at the bargaining table. It's the give and take of negotiations that is going to solve this particular situation if it needs resolution. It is not something where I think the government needs to step in and be Big Brother.

I guess again when we look at the reasons for managerial exclusion, generally those are based on ensuring that there's an arm's-length relationship between the employer and the union, that there are no potential conflicts of loyalties. As I indicated earlier, the main reason for keeping the current situation as is is just such to ensure that there are no conflicts of loyalty so that when an individual receives an order from their superior, they know that the order is given with expertise and is provided for the right reasons.

I'm not sure if other members have received calls from firefighters within their organization. I would urge MLAs to listen to what the firefighters are indicating. This is something that they feel very strongly about, and I think it's something that needs to be looked at with a great deal of caution before proceeding. The minister is usually very careful in terms of the kinds of legislation that he puts forward, and I would suggest perhaps that rather than pushing this one through the Legislative Assembly, one of the things the minister might want to look at is having a consultation with all of the affected members to ensure that there is a better route to go than this particular route.

With those comments I will close my discussion on this.

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to rise to speak in favour of the passage of this Bill. My support of it is really based on 25 years of being involved in the labour relations field. I would be hard pressed to think of anything that is so disruptive in a work environment as a situation where you have people responsible for the work of others and have them in the same union.

We had an unfortunate situation years ago at a plant that I worked at where we had this exact situation, and we finally had to just bite the bullet, and we had to try to negotiate these people out of the bargaining unit. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you that it cost us a tonne to do that, something that should have been right in the sense of how we must deal with our fellow human beings in a work situation. It cost us a tonne in order to do that.

Now, I can understand why the firefighters association would be opposed to something like this, because the principle of the Bill really attacks two union prerogatives. One of course is jurisdiction, and there's not a bargaining agent in North America today that isn't rated on his ability to not only establish jurisdiction but to make it as wide-reaching as possible. The other of course is something that certainly this caucus would understand in terms of the marketplace, and that is that the more people you can draw within an organization to be covered by the bargaining unit, you in fact have established a bigger market in terms of the collection of union dues. So it's not surprising that we might receive calls from an association in opposition to this Bill.

One thing I do note about this Bill is it's seemingly paradox, and it's really why I support this government so much. Heretofore in Alberta, in this bastion of so-called free enterprise, those of us who have existed in labour relations for many, many years have oft said that while the legislation in Alberta looked like it was for free enterprise and for the right to work and for all of the rights and privileges that an investor in a business should have, in fact the legislation within Alberta was very, very restrictive. In fact, I've heard people say accusingly about labour relation boards and about past ADMs and all of that that existed in the Department of Labour that these guys if not socialists were certainly of a bent that was there to protect and to actually further the aims of the union movement within Alberta.

So it's quite refreshing to find an Act whereby the emphasis in this particular time – and hopefully you've followed up with the appropriate regulation that would put more of an emphasis back on the management side. I say this clearly or I hope clearly, because what we have had in terms of labour relations within this province is a government who has continually through expansion of an employment standards record raised the bar for unions, because if you have something already covered by an employment standards Act, that's something you don't have to bargain for.

I might make a little digression here at this point as to why I was so opposed to the naming of Family Day on a Monday when it became a holiday. They're very disruptive and unproductive, stat holidays.

So here we have a situation where instead of allowing a sort of benchmark level for the union to work from, we're allowing management, in the terms of the professional firefighter organizations within our province, to then work toward. Now they can go and they can bargain about those things that are truly important at the table and not get involved in the management exclusion types of areas.

4:00

There is a last paradox that I would like to indicate, and it might even be a reason for a firefighters association to actually agree with this Bill. Without naming the particular association and the city that was involved, I had the opportunity to sit on an arbitration case. This is now all part of the public record, so I believe that I can talk about it. But we had a fire captain who was disciplined. What for? Why was he disciplined, you might ask? He refused to answer a fire alarm. A fire captain refused to answer a fire alarm. Now, any professional firefighter worth his wader boots I'm sure would have wanted to have seen that fire captain immediately dismissed. In the situation we're talking about, however, the fire captain was part of the association, and we had the situation of seeing the bargaining agent for the firefighters association placed in a position of attempting to maintain a fire captain's position when that fire captain had refused to answer a fire alarm. It turns out, for those in the House that might be interested in this little case, that it was not a false alarm. There in fact was a fire. The association, however, under its . . .

DR. WEST: Was it his house?

MR. DUNFORD: No, it was not his house. It was a business. A business was on fire, and a fire captain was refusing to answer the fire alarm.

So we have a situation of where if that fire captain had not had management prerogative such as he had, we would not have had the association of firefighters placed in the embarrassing situation of trying to protect that man's job. It would have been gone.

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

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not an easy issue to resolve, but I'd like to suggest that the evidence swings against the position that my friend took just moments ago. As mayor of the city of Edmonton and as an alderman I was pulled into the argument that it was best to have managerial people and nonmanagerial people and that you needed these clear distinctions and that the Act had to be broadened. Well, it was broadened. When I was a municipal politician, I wrote letters, in fact, supporting the position that there needed to be more management. But I think I'm correct in saying that there are up to six deputy

chiefs now in the city of Edmonton. That's a lot of people in management.

Now, if you watch and you look at and you analyze the kind of work that firefighters do, I don't think this is so easily described as a union and a management issue, as my friend from Lethbridge-West has described. We're talking about a paramilitary organization. We're talking about an organization, in Edmonton at least – and I know that best, because I've watched and viewed this – of a firefighters group that has drill teams and black belt teams and karate teams. It has drill instructors, and it has bands. I mean, this is like an army, and it operates like an army.

Their argument is that when they're at a fire, they're just like military personnel; they're in a battlefield. They have to rely on their colleagues. They can't allow for a situation to exist where a colleague doesn't know what he or she is doing, won't allow for a situation where a colleague is parachuted into their system and suddenly becomes a manager ahead of them and suddenly that man or that woman has to take a position on the front line in that combat area, that battlefield area, that fire area. I think they make a good argument when they say: we want to make sure that everybody beside us in those places of danger are people that we can rely on, people that aren't simply shoveled in and are managers. I think there is a danger to that.

Now, our caucus had the opportunity of listening to the firefighters, the firefighters associations from all of the major urban centres in Alberta, including Lethbridge, and they made this argument. They said: don't judge us as a union; don't say that this is simply management and union posturing, because it isn't. I think it's easy to be sort of pulled into that area where you start to do a little union bashing. I was surprised when my friend from Lethbridge-West said: you know, it's nice to see legislation going to the side of management. Well, we're talking about something different than a manufacturer of tires and people working in the workshop manufacturing those tires. We're talking about people on the front lines that are doing battle; that is, battle with a fire.

I admit this is an issue that's troublesome, but I think when you have experienced, as I have, going into those fire halls and seeing how they operate and seeing the state of readiness and seeing how they rely on each other and seeing how things move at split seconds for them, their argument that they need people who they can rely on is a much more compelling argument than simply shoveling this off as a labour/management issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think an onus falls on the government, an onus falls on the minister to show how there would be improvement in the fighting of fires, doing that which these firefighters are trained to do. I don't think the minister nor any speaker from the government side to this point has shown me, has convinced me that the scales have tipped to the side where there's going to be a great improvement in the way fires are fought over a system that I think is pretty darn good in our city and in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This legislation that we're debating today constitutes a 180-degree directional change of legislation that was previously found to have the favour of this Legislative Assembly. I want to suggest to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, therefore, that they should not lightly make this 180-degree turn unless there is a demonstrable reason to do so.

There appears at this time, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, to be no demonstrable reason to do so. Quite the contrary, if you want to analyze what has appeared to happen to the lot of employees over the last little while and the lot of employers over the last little while. Whether the perception is right or wrong, there will be a perception that employees have fared worse from the directional thrust of this government than have employers. It may be indeed only a perception, and I'm not standing here today to debate who this government has treated worse in the last few years, employees or employers. We will leave that debate for another day. [interjection]

I see that once again the minister of transportation wants to relive his days as Minister of Municipal Affairs by commenting again on who an employer and who an employee is. The fact of the matter is that the firefighters, who are the target group that is picked out for this piece of legislation, are in fact paid, whether it be at the municipal level, the provincial level, or at the federal level, by the taxpayer directly or indirectly. The perception has been that employees have not been as equally treated by this government. I do not comment on that perception, I don't debate the perception, but I think all in this Legislative Assembly would agree that that perception exists. So this would appear to be an ill-timed moment to do a 180-degree turn on an issue such as this. It reminds me of the adage that if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Now, the number of positions affected by this change of legislation are relatively speaking, in the whole scheme of things, small. They are so small that, as other speakers have mentioned today, Mr. Speaker, they could be accommodated by simply good contract negotiations in the collective agreement. You could define in the collective agreement who is in and who is out of the union and live with it that way. They do not have to be excluded out by legislation that they do not want and that the public does not appear to be pressing for. Again the adage that if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

4:10

Now, the other comment that I want to talk about – and the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry raised the point very well – is the long tradition of firefighters, the military aspects to their command and chain of command, their performance under high levels of stress and often under dangerous conditions. If this is an irritant to the rank and file of the firefighters, then who are we to say that it is only in their minds or it is only an imaginary risk? They want everybody pulling the hoses with them, working the axes with them, and working the ladders with them. Irrespective of their title, they want everybody to feel that they are on their side, much like a troop deep in enemy lines wants to know that everybody in their troop is definitely on their side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my comments by urging the Legislative Assembly to not turn their backs on the previous legislation that existed in this area and to let the status quo continue. Those negotiating units and those bargaining units will be able to deal with the problem.

One other issue that I want to raise before I sit down is the issue of labour litigation. Now, I don't want this to be met with all kinds of calls to arms. I'm only concerned about litigation in its various forms in the province of Alberta. Now what is going to happen with this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is that the Labour Relations Board will be called on to referee and to define each and every excluded member, because this will be an area of labour unrest. This will be an area where more litigation and more uncertainty, rather than less litigation and less uncertainty, occur.

As a result, it seems to me that logically this Bill should be defeated, and I urge all members of the House to do so.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I hesitate to give this government much credit for planning anything more complicated than figuring out where to meet for lunch, but I have to say that when I see this Bill and I put it in the context of all of the other damage that's being done to employee groups across this province, all the other attacks on recognized unions such as the ATA, UNA, and AUPE, then I can't help but think that somehow there's some kind of conspiracy at work here.

It's particularly interesting that what we see at this point is a proposal that has come forward to previous governments – to the Lougheed government, to the Getty government – with the same arguments, the same overtures from the same people trying to cast this as a labour/management issue. The same arguments to refute that have been put forward, the very compelling arguments that the Member for Fort McMurray, the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry, and others have already mentioned as to why this is not simply a labour/management issue. There has been absolutely nothing offered from the government side in the debate to this point which would convince anyone why those arguments don't hold water.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is whether or not 10 fire departments with some management issues should create a legislative change in the province at this time. There is no reason to conclude that these fire departments cannot resolve whatever issues there are that face them through other means available to them, most particularly the collective bargaining process.

My comments on this Bill are brief and simply to say that you cannot look at Bill 3 in isolation. You have to view Bill 3 in the context of all of the other intentions and actions of this government, the motions that we've seen which would attack the ATA, the motions that we have seen which would attack trade unionism. I think we have to be very, very cautious as a Legislature before we would embrace something where the face of it may look simple and may look like it only applies to a few but in fact the consequences of which may be much, much broader.

So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support Bill 3 because the government has failed to make any kind of a case to justify its passage, and I would urge that all members vote against this Bill.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I approach this Bill with some trepidation here. It does not really affect any people in my riding because they're all volunteers, but I think there's a principle at stake. I'd like to know a little bit more about it here, being of course, as always, open minded and willing to listen to all sides.

The first thing I'd like to know from the minister is the definition. When we're talking at clause 2(1), the clause speaks to the exclusion of "managerial functions," the people who exercise managerial functions, and I really don't quite understand what that involves. Now, clearly that includes the upper chief and the assistant chief, but does it go down as far as the district chief? Whenever a team of firefighters is sent out, there is clearly a supervisor. Would that include the supervisor? I'm confused by these things all the more because of other things that have been said, for instance, by the Member for Lethbridge-West, and I'll get to that in a minute.

I'd also like to know what it means when someone is "employed in a confidential capacity in matters relating to labour relations." Then a question that probably indicates my ignorance on this whole subject is on the Labour Relations Board: who appoints these members? Because if we're going to give them the freedom and the power to make those differentiations, then I'd like to know who appoints them, and are they indeed free of any bias? I wonder who is ever free of any bias, by the way.

Mr. Speaker, on we go to reasons for change. I'm still unfamiliar with the reasons. I haven't heard, really, about any problems except from the Member for Lethbridge-West. He spoke about one particular fire chief, and I'm still waiting with bated breath to hear whether he actually lost his job or not. All I know is that the union went to his defence. But other than that, problems? I'd like to know what the reason is for all this. Again, I must admit that I, too, am somewhat suspicious because of other moves that this government is contemplating regarding the picking apart of certain unions.

Again on the matter of problems that Lethbridge-West indicated, I'd like to refer to whenever managerial positions are lumped in with ordinary members, I guess, depending on the definition. As a member of the ATA, I used to be a high school educator and an administrator at a high school, and I'm not sure whether he would consider that a managerial function. We never had any problems. We worked as a team. I think that leads me to the very last point, and that is: is there a danger perhaps that the team concept will be affected? I would hate there to be any dissension in a fire fighting team, particularly if they're trying to extinguish a fire at my house or anyone else's.

So I have a whole host of questions. At this particular moment I'm not predisposed to vote in favour of this Bill, but I'd like to hear the answers first before I make up my mind.

Thank you.

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In looking at this Bill, I'm going to support the status quo. I have not had any research from the government. They have a couple hundred million dollar research budget to supply us with research, the information here to support the position in this Bill. I think if you could count all the departments, it's between one and two hundred million dollars. Before you make a decision, you want to have the research. There are several provinces that are different from ours. If they are better than what we have here as the status quo, I challenge the members to bring that evidence forward; in other words, not go on hearsay but on facts and information, studies that have been done to show us that this is needed. I don't have that information.

4:20

Secondly, the team approach is very important, something maybe this government doesn't understand. They pit group against group instead of uniting groups to work together for the benefit of this province. It's very important that we work together, and if we don't learn that in the school system, as a class, as a community, as a family, we're not going to do it in life. We have to work as a team in this dangerous occupation: fighting the enemy, the fires. If you don't have that, if you don't have the trust and the ability, then you're not going to have a system that works at maximum efficiency.

The other is that it works in the school system, where everyone is included in it. It works well. Alberta has the best education system, the most graduates of any province in this country, and part of that fact is that we work as a team and that the students are the most important. Here the team approach for firefighters is needed to fight the enemy and come out without injuries or harm to any members but to save as many lives as possible. If changes are to be made, they can do it through the collective agreement. This is very possible. We open it up, change areas that need to be changed, negotiate it, and work it out that way.

My reluctance is that there's been no evidence and no research, no information given to us that this is going to work, that it's better in certain places by introducing this. This may cause more friction, more conflict, more disunity in a team than what we've had before.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude.

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

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm interested in this Bill, and I have some questions that I'd like perhaps to flush out and get some answers to. I'm not thoroughly sure what it is that the government is up to here or what they have in mind, nor am I certain why in this instance they are interfering with this particular group. We've heard other speakers indicate that this is just another attack on unions and it will do something toward destroying these unions.

My concern as I read through the section related to "exclusion from bargaining unit" is that I see here the government wanting to introduce a Bill that would allow the board, meaning the Labour Relations Board, to exclude from a bargaining unit firefighters who are managers and/or are employed in a confidential capacity. It begs the question from my end, Mr. Speaker, as to why you would want to exclude those individuals, those men and women who I presume carry such tremendous knowledge, such tremendous information and expertise and experience in their trade. Why would you want to exclude them from that very valuable process, that instrument of process that allows for other arguments, if you will, to be brought forward to the table? Surely the Labour Relations Board wouldn't purport to have all the expertise it needs from within its own ranks. They would do well to at least include these people. I think that gives a good sense of fair play, at least insofar as knowledge that I am privy to with regard to how these processes are intended to work.

So I asked myself: why is this happening? Why do you want to remove these people and in the process give so much additional authority, such seemingly monopolistic power, to one particular board without having the counterbalancing effect of individuals directly employed in that field, the experts so to speak? Why? It strikes me that it's in a way similar to excluding doctors from the earlier discussions on health care restructuring, which propelled them to march en masse in a number of about 1,000 people just a few weeks ago in west Edmonton. I sense that there may be something similar possible here, so I would caution the government in its move in this regard. I look forward to some of the answers to those questions.

I think arguments have already been made – and I'm just going to reinforce a few that were made in particular by my hon. colleague from Edmonton-Glengarry – that we're not dealing with just any normal situation or any ordinary situation here. We're dealing with individuals who pledge their life on a daily basis in

life-threatening circumstances, and we entrust to those individuals the tremendous regard as life savers, which they have time and time again earned our respect for. So I sense that a Bill like this might have the potential to damage what perhaps is already a fragile morale among this fire fighting group and that this is not just a simple, clean-cut, labour/management housekeeping issue as we have been told.

We don't need to be reminded too many times – or perhaps we should be – about the housekeeping government Bills that we've seen up until now, such as Bill 41, and we have yet to see . . .

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

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

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MR. DAY: Under 23(i), Mr. Speaker. The only people who have referred to this Bill as housekeeping are opposition members. As a matter of fact, when I made my comments, I said this was a consequential Bill. So the only people who've said it's housekeeping are the members opposite.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, do you wish to comment on the point of order, or do you accept?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: I'm sorry; I didn't hear the member opposite say that. I meant this in a general context, that this was put forward as a very simple, straightforward, unassuming Bill. That was the context within which I . . .

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, nobody has said that on this side. Nobody has said that; only members opposite.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Withdraw. Withdraw.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. The Chair regrets that memory, let alone hearing, precludes me making a comment as to all of the debate that may have gone on. One can only accept the hon. member's word that what he is saying is so until we get a chance to review the Blues. But I don't think the point of order in any way restricts you on the rest of your debate, hon. member. So we'd invite the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore to continue on, with that caveat in mind.

Debate Continued

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would, in the interest of fair play, rephrase it and use the terms I used in my explanation there. It seems to me that anytime Bills come forward like this, we have to always take a look at what's behind them and what their purpose is and take a look at what you might say exists beyond the obvious. That is what I would have expected to have happened, for example, as the discussion on ECS funding was about last spring. Then we find out later that the government didn't do quite as much homework as perhaps it wished it had done, and we had the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane having to retract a few of his comments with regard to statements he had made in his own press.

So here again we have a situation, Mr. Speaker, where I'm trying to look beyond that obvious. When I look beyond that obvious, I tend to find an ideological explanation for many of the things that are going on here. If this were a circumstance where

there were tremendous financial savings, then I would like to hear those arguments. If it were a circumstance where this Bill was going to create sudden efficiencies, a better delivery or better fire fighting or better protection against the occurrence of fires or something like that, I might be persuaded to listen to those points of view, but none have yet been offered by the side opposite.

So I wouldn't like to see us proceed so rapidly with this Bill without first having addressed some of these concerns. I wouldn't, in other words, Mr. Speaker, want to see something as critical to Albertans as fire care, fire fighting, fire safety tossed into possible chaos because of some tremendous alacrity on the part of the government or perhaps some oversights on the part of the government which would otherwise result in the chaos we see such as was created with seniors for example. I think we all understand that there was a little bit too much speed and haste with which the government proceeded there, and it's nice to see that they're backing off and correcting some of the errors of their ways. That may well wind up what they're having to do here as well. I would like to just caution them to not toss this area into chaos as well. It creates fears and uncertainties and everything else, but if there are arguments to persuade the House, then I would like to hear them.

4:30

Similarly, we don't want to see this kind of chaos that we see in health care perhaps brought forward by some sudden movements on the part of the government. However, I suspect that they are rather deliberate movements, and I would look forward to comments from the proposer of the Bill and others on the other side to substantiate what they're really up to here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my comments by saying how much we all tremendously respect and revere the tremendous services that the firefighters put on, whether they be firefighters on the front lines, whether they be firefighters who have gone on to other positions in management, or whether they occupy some of these other confidential positions.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that Bill 3 be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore has moved what's considered a six-month hoist. All those who wish to debate I guess are now invited to do so.

The hon. member and members are reminded, of course, that this in effect is an amendment and that the normal tradition and obligation of any person amending would be to submit the signed amendments to the Table and to the Chair and provide copies for hon. members. In the absence of any of these, it becomes rather difficult to proceed with your amendment until such time as we have all of these details looked after. Do you have them in place?

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Speaker, copies are indeed forthcoming. I neglected to mention that at the end of my . . .

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

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

**Point of Order
Admissibility of Amendment**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, in the revised Standing Orders one of the areas that was revised at the request of the Opposition House

Leader was that it be made very clear to all members that before an amendment was brought forward, it indeed would be written out and distributed to all members of the House. That was not the request of this House leader; it was the request of the Opposition House Leader, which we conceded to. We felt that was a good piece of administration. I would suggest that this amendment cannot go forward, as indeed you have ruled.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with the uncited standing order by the hon. Government House Leader and as the Chair had already reviewed with the hon. member, inasmuch as we do not have those forthcoming at this time, we'll then continue debate as if the motion had not been made.

In continuance on the debate, hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Debate Continued

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Unless I've moved.

Just as a point of clarification on the point of order from the hon. minister. I think it's important to know in terms of . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair has made a ruling on that, so I was recognizing the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark in continuation of the debate. Is that satisfactory?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark in debate on Bill 3.

MS LEIBOVICI: In debate on Bill 3 one of the points that has not been brought up in debate so far is the fact that when we look at the organization . . .

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

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

**Point of Order
Speaking Twice in a Debate**

MR. DAY: I may have missed something, Mr. Speaker, and I don't even think we need to check the Blues. The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has indeed spoken today at second reading stage.

MS LEIBOVICI: He called on me, so I obliged the Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of order is well taken.

Debate Continued

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the debate on Bill 3, do we have any additional speakers? If not, we'll call the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. All those in favour of Bill 3, Managerial Exclusion Act, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Call in the members.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:36 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Amery	Gordon	Paszkowski
Black	Haley	Pham
Burgener	Havelock	Renner
Calahasen	Hierath	Rostad
Cardinal	Hlady	Severtson
Clegg	Jacques	Smith
Day	Kowalski	Stelmach
Doerksen	Laing	Taylor, L.
Dunford	Langevin	Thurber
Evans	Lund	Trynchy
Fischer	Magnus	West
Forsyth	McClellan	Woloshyn
Fritz	Oberg	Yankowsky

Against the motion:

Bracko	Henry	Sekulic
Collingwood	Kirkland	Soetaert
Decore	Leibovici	Van Binsbergen
Dickson	Percy	Vasseur
Germain	Sapers	Zwozdesky

Totals: For – 39 Against – 15

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a second time]

Bill 7 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1995

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I will say, too, that I'm looking forward to committee stage of the last Bill. I will address those questions in detail, just to assure the members.

On behalf of the Provincial Treasurer I would move to introduce second reading of Bill 7, which is the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1995.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and talk to the appropriation Bill, Bill 7. I particularly would like to focus my attention on the part of the Bill that deals with expenditures in health care.

Mr. Speaker, \$40 million will be transferred from Public Works, Supply and Services to be spent in health care, and the money will be allocated by the Department of Health to the 17 regional health authorities. Now, earlier in debate the Minister of Health tried to assure the Assembly that there was some science attached to the allocation of those dollars, but on a careful reread of *Hansard*, it's hard to find any of that science. What we know is that \$40 million of unexpended money that would have been spent on capital projects is now going to Health so the regions can spend it on some kinds of priorities, and some of the money will be spent to deal with some sort of liabilities that have accrued. We see, just coincidentally, that \$16 million of that will go to the Calgary health region and \$16 million of that will go to the

Edmonton health region, a million dollars each to a couple of the boards, the Cancer Board and the Mental Health Board, and then the remaining \$6 million is allocated to the other 15 regional health authorities. We're told by the Minister of Health that this is to meet various and sundry needs and that somehow it wouldn't really be worth our while to understand what those various and sundry needs are. Well, I guess I disagree. I think it's very important for us to know.

What we do know, when we review those business plans of those 17 health regions, is that very few of the 17 health regions appropriately budgeted for the transition costs. Very few of them budgeted appropriately for the layoffs, for the lawsuits, for the liabilities that they would incur. Very few of them have budgeted for the legal costs they've incurred, for the legal opinions they've been forced to seek because of the poor drafting of Bill 20. Very few of the regions in fact even brought in a balanced budget in the first year of their business plans. Many of them brought in deficit budgets.

4:50

Now, at the last meeting, the terminal meeting, of the Alberta Healthcare Association, the then chairman of the board, in a public session that involved the Treasurer, asked the Treasurer if there would be any assistance given to the regional authorities if they didn't meet their budget targets. I believe, Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer used similar words and answered in a similarly rude way as he has referred to the federal Minister of Health. He simply told the then chairman of the AHA that the regions would meet their targets, that there would be no relief, that there was no option. Of course, this was very much in keeping with the "my way or the highway" plans of this government. We know that we are not looking at health restructuring but are looking, in fact, at health destructuring. We're looking at very arbitrary and very politically driven budget cuts to meet a political agenda, not an agenda that's designed to meet the health needs of Albertans.

This \$40 million is to deal with, I would suggest, the unanticipated costs of this health care destructuring. We're having to look at, as I've said, all kinds of labour-related issues, including early retirement packages, buyouts, consulting fees, head-hunting fees, and the like. Of course, we're not seeing any of this money earmarked towards the various other labour issues, particularly dealing with the immediate needs of those health care workers who not only have already been laid off but are about to be laid off. Now, we've heard many times about another pool of money that the government has made available for the health work force restructuring, but very little of that money, if any of it, has actually gone into the pockets of the health care workers who are currently out of work or who will soon be out of work because of the arbitrary actions of this government.

This one-time injection of \$40 million is being seen as some kind of good news, as some kind of recognition of the hard work the regional authorities have done. Now, certainly the regional authorities and the members appointed by the government to those authorities have done very, very difficult service on behalf of this government, Mr. Speaker, but this \$40 million isn't good news. This \$40 million, particularly the \$16 million that is going to go back to each of Calgary and Edmonton, reflects only a fraction – a fraction – of the money that's been taken out, a fraction of the across-the-board cuts. I'll remind the Assembly that \$110 million was taken out of the acute care systems in Calgary and Edmonton ahead of any of the regional plans, ahead of the appointment of those boards, ahead of the development of those regional budgets – \$110 million.

Now, the impact and the potential impact of that very arbitrary taking away of dollars was predicted not just by members of this opposition but by providers and users of the health care system. The government was warned that the money was coming out too fast, that the cuts were too deep, that it was inappropriate. They were warned to go much, much more carefully down the road of health care restructuring, but they didn't listen. Now we see that same government trying to pretend that it's doing something right by giving back \$40 million. We have no idea what the \$16 million in Edmonton and the \$16 million in Calgary will be spent on. We do know the reaction from the Calgary region is that it was at least \$1 million less than they said they needed, and we're told by the Calgary region, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to keep negotiating for the additional million dollars.

This kind of yo-yo management of the health care dollars, Mr. Speaker, does no good for anyone. The government giveth and then the government taketh away. It creates a climate of instability. You cannot plan. You cannot predict. You cannot manage in the kind of climate that's been created by this government's constant jiggery-pokery with the numbers. We can't tell what's going to happen next week or next month or next year because the government keeps on changing the rules of the game. We don't know whether we should be gearing up, whether we should be gearing down, whether there's another \$40 million coming.

We can't make sense of the budget figures as it stands, Mr. Speaker, because you see huge differences between the targets given to the regions in July and the gross budget estimates that were tabled by the Treasurer just last week. You see huge differences as well in the amounts of money that the regions were given to plan with and the amounts of money that the regions are now expected to actually spend.

Mr. Speaker, we don't know how much of this money is going to be spent on insurance liability. We don't know how many dollars are involved in ongoing lawsuits. We don't know how many dollars will go out for legal fees, how many will go to pay settlements. We don't know whether or not there is a liability exposure that the government may be aware of but they're certainly not sharing with the taxpayers of this province. We don't know whether this \$40 million is just seen as some sort of stopgap measure to try to delay the consequences of their bad planning.

Mr. Speaker, the state of affairs in health care today should be an embarrassment to every member of the government, but instead of it being an embarrassment, what we see is denial of the chaos that's been created. We see an entire government in a state of denial, and I suggest that they ought to pay attention to the phone calls and the cards and the letters that they're getting from health care providers, from health care consumers, and from other observers. The Premier may very well gloat that he gets mentioned in the *Wall Street Journal*, but I would suggest he spend more time reading his mail. I was absolutely taken aback when he said that he hasn't heard from Albertans regarding the state of concern they have about health care, because certainly I'm in possession of several letters addressed to the Premier that bring their concern forward. I would suggest that the Premier should stop reading his press clippings from New York and instead read the mail that he's receiving from Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill really doesn't answer any more questions than were answered previously by this government regarding the health care restructuring. All we know is that money is being taken away from health care, and in order to deal in some very short-term way, \$40 million is going to be put back in. It's going to be an artificial injection. It's going to be \$40 million just used

to paper over some of the very deep cracks that are emerging in health care, and it shouldn't give anybody in this Assembly cause to be comforted about the state of health care. In fact, it should convince us all the more about the trouble that this government is in in their health care restructuring.

Now, all that being said, Mr. Speaker, this leads to a real dilemma: that is, whether to recognize the need for this short-term cash infusion and to acknowledge that the dollars have to be forthcoming and they have to be forthcoming now, to acknowledge that the regions do need this money, that they weren't given adequate time to plan, that they weren't given adequate time to assess the impacts of the cuts, that they weren't given adequate time to consult with their community, that they need this money so they can at least have a little bit of breathing space, and therefore support the appropriation; or in fact to reject the appropriation as we should reject the entire process this government has used in health care restructuring.

Mr. Speaker, it is a dilemma, and it's one that at this point is still unresolved in my own mind. But what I am crystal clear about is that this \$40 million appropriation does not in any way deal with the extent of the chaos that the Alberta health care system is in today.

5:00

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had an opportunity the other day to speak to the supplementary estimates, but I didn't quite finish my questions. I'd like to ask a question or two or make some comments about the vote on Community Development. I understand that \$9.7 million, almost \$10 million, will be transferred to be used for higher spending on grants to citizens and for program administration and start-up costs. I'd appreciate some kind of breakdown on these amounts and where they're going to go. Are we experiencing more applicants, or are we being required to provide higher subsidies? Some indication of the numbers that we're faced with there would be of help to me. Have we, in fact, underestimated the problems of the program? In producing this program, did we take into account the numbers of people who would be confused by the way it was promoted, the off-again, on-again, gone-again changes that occurred? Has that contributed to program administration requirements of \$3.1 million more than was anticipated?

Mr. Speaker, the other question. That \$3.1 million, I take it, in the 1995-96 budget would not be repeated, not be necessary anymore, so that amount would not appear in the next budget. I'd like that information.

Mr. Speaker, finally, in that same regard a question was asked today of the Minister of Community Development about the appeal process, on which I think some expenditures are going to be required to put that in place. I was puzzled and concerned about the answer that the minister gave about how in fact an appeal would be conducted and what would be left out of the appeal. It seems to me that the Seniors Advisory Council has now been transferred to Health, leaving what to be appealed, ASB? Very seldom are the effects on seniors of these cuts relegated to one particular budget. They usually cross over to health and housing as well as to the programs that are available under ASB. I think the public has every reason to be anxious about this and would like a great deal more information about how an appeal would be conducted, by whom. Would all concerns with health

care and housing simply fall aside and not be dealt with by an appeal process? We need that information quickly.

Mr. Speaker, the minister of advanced education indicated that students in his program would not accumulate debt while they're taking academic upgrading. I take it from that, the inference, that once the upgrade has been completed and they are into a training program in whatever postsecondary institution in the province, in fact they would be accumulating debt. I therefore did not get an answer to my question: what if at the end of the training there is no job? Can they reapply and take more training and presumably accumulate more debt? How are those bills going to be accounted for and paid? I was also a little concerned when the minister of advanced education said that the points had begun to confuse him, that there was another \$2.7 million in question.

The Minister of Health spoke to the difference between a community health centre and an acute care hospital. Yes, I agree that there certainly is a difference. My continuing questions there are: will there be more capital moneys available where an acute care hospital is being turned into a community health centre? Certainly there will be capital improvements necessary. Have those been taken into account? Mr. Speaker, just further to it: what are the criteria? Can we know the criteria for capital health expenditures? I think we need some answers there, because many of the health authorities are deeply concerned. They don't seem to have sufficient information about their ongoing capacity to apply for capital expenditures, whether or not they are put into competition, the limits of the amount of money.

Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my questions there. I would hope to have some answers shortly.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to second reading of Bill 7, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1995. I think there are three issues I'd like to discuss with regards to this.

The first is that certainly we have seen a change in the style of government. In previous years we would have seen hundreds of millions of dollars in special warrants. We would have seen a very, very large supplementary appropriations Act. That has gone by the wayside, so that is a very positive move. Yet when one looks at this appropriations Bill, there are still a number of important questions that come to the fore. First and foremost is that the reason that we are here in fact debating this Bill is that we're still making the same mistakes that led to those very large special warrants, the very large supplementary appropriations Bills of the past, and that is the failure to plan, to use performance based budgeting, and to actually look at outcome measurement.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the two departments where we're reallocating funds, it arises because of a failure to track. It arises because of a failure to evaluate the characteristics that will lead to success. What we're seeing is that cuts have been imposed. Individuals have been reallocated from one program of social assistance to retraining but without regards to potential success, without regards to their ability to succeed, and without any effort to measure success. It is in a sense almost a program driven by expediency to make, on the one hand, the welfare rolls look better and, on the other hand, a crossing of the fingers hoping that this retraining will lead individuals to end up gainfully employed. Well, in order to do that, you have to have an idea of where the job openings are, what the success rate is of

those programs, and you want to make sure that this isn't just a game of musical chairs.

My concern, then, when we see after the fact this reallocation of funds between budgets is that we're looking at a case of musical chairs that was in fact forecast by many members of this House as it was ongoing. I remember very well the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods saying that one of the problems we were going to observe with the program and this retraining is that there was going to be a large increase in demand for student finance. Lo and behold, we now see proof positive of that, Mr. Speaker, and it was easily forecast, because you could tell there wasn't any thought in terms of numbers. There was no planning of whether or not the budget in student finance was really consistent with the shift of individuals from family assistance into retraining.

Similarly with regards to the seniors and the increase in expenditures in the seniors program, the issue there again is that these costs, which ex post the government claims were unforeseen, were very predictable on the basis of comments of many of the seniors in the consultation process and certainly in terms of the response to the 1-800 numbers. It should not have been a surprise to a government that prides itself on trying to run government on a more businesslike framework. These were predictable mistakes, and obviously in principle we'd have to support these appropriations because we would otherwise be penalizing the victims of these mistakes. So it is clear that we will support it, but I think in principle we have to argue that this ought not to have happened in the first place had there been an orderly planning process involved.

The final point that I would make is that again when one looks at what's occurring here, on the one hand you can say: well, there's an element of thrift here because we're not looking at an increase in expenditures; we're looking at a reallocation of the existing budget lines to areas of need. On the one hand you can't argue with that. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I would draw your attention to what the report of the Financial Review Commission said when it talked about imposing cuts in haste and the costs of cuts that were ill-planned. The Financial Review Commission in fact laid the ground work for a lot of the subsequent changes in the budgeting process, the shift to consolidated statements and the like, but I think that was one stricture that the government should have focused on in a little more detail, that there are real costs to cuts that are imposed in a haphazard manner. To the extent that we are cutting deeper and faster than is set out under the Deficit Elimination Act, I think there are real costs to that, and the costs show up in terms of these types of supplementary appropriations that are required. They show up in terms of the human cost of shifting structures without a clear idea of where we're going to end up.

5:10

The hon. Provincial Treasurer often talks about how you can't leap a chasm in two jumps. Well, nobody in their right mind attempts to leap a chasm that they don't think they're going to cross with one leap. You actually plan and you ask yourself, "Am I going to make it?" This is very important. It's an issue of survival. There are some of our institutions and structures that are under stress simply because of the magnitude of the cuts imposed without adequate preparation and planning. So certainly I will support the supplementary appropriation Bill, but I don't think the lessons that are embodied in this Bill should be forgotten, and I think they should be highlighted. One will hope that next year, if in fact some of the claims that have been made with regard to the business plans are true, that they're outcome based,

and with this performance based budgeting, we may not be here next year looking at supplementary appropriations.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 7 read a second time]

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:13 p.m.]