

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, March 7, 1995** 1:30 p.m.
Date: 95/03/07
[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and our province, and in that work give us strength and wisdom.
Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to file a petition signed by 46 community members of Fort McMurray urging the Legislative Assembly to work with the government to restore 400 hours of kindergarten funding in the province of Alberta.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition on behalf of 157 Calgarians urging 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.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly signed by 188 people from Calgary urging the government

to ensure all Alberta school boards provide the opportunity for each eligible child to receive a minimum of 400 hours of Early Childhood Services.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petition I presented regarding making known to communities the names of repeat sex offenders now be read and received.

CLERK:

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the Government to notify specific communities upon the release of convicted repeat sex offenders in their community.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask that my petition of March 2 regarding repeat sex offenders and the safety of children be read and received.

CLERK:

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the Government to notify specific communities upon the release of convicted repeat sex offenders in their community.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the petition I presented yesterday on behalf of 92 Edmonton and Sherwood Park residents asking the government to restore full funding to kindergarten be now read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to provide quality kindergarten education for our children by maintaining a minimum of 400 hours of instruction per child per school year and to guarantee this right by legislation.

head: **Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with Standing Order 91 I have reviewed the petitions that I presented yesterday and can advise the House that all but two of the petitions comply with Standing Orders 85 to 89. The Standing Committee on Private Bills has considered the remaining two petitions and recommends to the Assembly that Standing Order 86(1)(b) be waived for the petition for Collin Chor Wee Chew Legal Articles Act and that Standing Orders 86(1)(b) and 86(2) be waived for the petition of the Milk River and District Foundation Act. I would ask for the Assembly's concurrence with this report.

THE SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree to concur with the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(2)(a) I give notice that tomorrow I'll be moving that written questions stand and retain their places on the Order Paper with the exception of 146, 147, 148, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157, and 158.

Also, I wish to give notice that I'll be moving that motions for returns stand and retain their places on the Order Paper with the exceptions of 160, 161, 163, 165, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 174, 178, 179, and 182.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to table six copies of the following documents: one, Accountability in Education Discussion Paper; two, Framework for Funding School Boards in the 1995-96 School Year; and, three, Roles and Responsibilities in Education: A Position Paper.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling this afternoon a list of 14 different requests made by members of the opposition caucus to have statutory instruments and, more particularly, regulations referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Regulations. Those 14 requests occurred between March 7, 1994, and March 6, 1995.

Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature two people who are very important in my life and in the life of my constituency. They are Rose Marie Tremblay, who is the manager of the Edmonton-Gold Bar constituency office, and Janet Goodall, a valued addition to the constituency office, who is a Grant MacEwan student doing her practicum with us. They're in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to stand and receive the welcome of the House.

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

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take pleasure in introducing to you and through you to the House 17 grades 5 and 6 students from the downtown Sacred Heart school. They're accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Jane Burghardt and another teacher Mrs. Jean Loehr. Would the students please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. ZARIWNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly 26 visitors from Mount Carmel school in the Edmonton-Strathcona constituency. With this group of 24 students are two teachers: Audrey Costigan and Djurdja Marjanovich. I'd ask that they rise and that we give them a warm welcome.
Thank you.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to introduce to you and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 22 grade 6 students from one of St. Albert's finest schools, Neil M. Ross. They are here with parent helpers Kent Davidson and Shirley Bronneberg and also a teacher and educational colleague of mine, Dale Rurka. They are in the members' gallery. I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Utility Tax Rebate

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like our pouting Premier is planning a trip to Ottawa to wine – and I'd like to spell that with an "h", but I can't – and dine his federal counterparts about reinstating the federal utility tax rebate. Of course, the Premier conveniently forgets that it was his provincial government in 1990 that broke a 24-year federal/provincial agreement by taking away the provincial utility tax rebate. He voted to take it away. His Minister of Energy voted to take it away. His Treasurer voted to take it away. In fact, in total 25 Conservative MLAs in the Legislature today voted to take it away in 1990. Why doesn't the Premier take the advice of his close friend and adviser Sherrold Moore, who is a member of the Industrial Power Consumers' Association of Alberta, who recom-

mended in November 1993 to none other than the Premier's own Tax Reform Commission that this government, the Premier's government, reinstate the provincial utility tax rebate? Why didn't he listen to him?

1:40

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have no intentions of going to Ottawa to whine or to wine or to dine with the minister. I have said that our own minister will be working with the industry, with municipal authorities to develop a plan to present to the Ottawa authorities. Notwithstanding what happened in 1990, we still feel that the removal of the 12 percent tax rebate discriminates against those private utilities to the benefit of publicly run utilities.

MR. MITCHELL: If the Premier is so concerned about the federal government's initiative hurting Alberta's competitiveness now, why is he hiding the fact that he and 24 other Tory MLAs sitting in this Legislature today did exactly the same thing in 1990 and in fact opened the door so that the federal government could do it once this Premier had broken that very important federal/provincial agreement?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this was done to ensure an equitable distribution of taxes throughout the power companies in this province. I'll have the hon. minister elaborate.

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to go back in history to remind the hon. members about how PUITTA was established. In 1947, when the income tax was being reviewed by the federal government after the end of the Second World War – keep in mind that income tax initially was a temporary issue – it became apparent that a number of Crown corporations were being established across the country in various provinces. To stop the proliferation of Crown corporations evolving in Canada, PUITTA was put in place so that there would not be an unlevel playing field between Crown and privately owned utility companies.

What happened, then, in 1965 was that there was a reaffirming of the arrangement of PUITTA between the federal government and the provinces and the private sector. The agreement was that through the vehicle called the federal income tax system the level playing field would be maintained. Provinces had the ability to deal with their own taxation within their own jurisdiction. The province of Alberta continued to pass the rebate on to consumers within this province. Other provinces chose not to do that and in fact kept the funds. So the issue at hand today, Mr. Speaker, is an issue of fairness in the utilization of the federal tax system, which clearly is discriminatory as it puts Alberta and Alberta citizens at a disadvantage to their neighbours on either side in the provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

MR. MITCHELL: The only history that the minister doesn't want to talk about is the fact that she voted to remove the utility tax rebate in this province in 1990. She did it herself, Mr. Speaker. Nobody forced her to.

Given that the Premier has all but invited the federal action by his vote to remove the provincial utility tax rebate in 1990, will the Premier please accept our Bill 232, which will reinstate the provincial utility tax rebate? Then will he join us in Ottawa, when he has some credibility, to lobby for the reinstatement of the federal rebate?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that an extremely interesting challenge and an extremely interesting comment, because it was the hon. Member for Redwater who only two short weeks ago said: Mr. Martin, remove that tax rebate; Alberta consumers don't deserve it; remove it, Mr. Martin. Guess what Mr. Martin did? He removed it, to the detriment of Alberta consumers. That's what he did.

CFB Calgary

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that he can hardly whine – and I'm spelling that with an "h" this time – about federal cuts, given what he's doing in Alberta to Albertans himself. That may explain why he's been so silent on the CFB Calgary issue. There is a wonderful opportunity here for this government to show leadership, to create jobs in Calgary by ensuring that this huge tract of prime land just minutes from downtown Calgary will be available for development. Will the Premier invite Mayor Al Duerr to participate with other prominent Calgaryans in a task force to develop that prime land?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, I have to remind – and I'm sure that this was not politically motivated in any way, shape, or form. I'm sure that that was a pure Liberal thought: to close down Harvey barracks and CFB Calgary. I'm sure, and I've said that before. I would like to speak to Mr. Collette just to hear the rationale, and if indeed the rationale is there, I'm willing to accept that as the MLA for the constituency that is most heavily impacted.

Relative to the hon. leader's question, yes, I have already indicated to the mayor – I've had three discussions with him already relative to participating with him and perhaps with the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie on a task force, if in fact it makes sense that this base should come to Edmonton, to maximize the use of that land and become fully involved with the federal government in making sure that indeed the city of Calgary gets the maximum benefit out of the residue.

MR. MITCHELL: Will the Premier commit that civic, business, and community leaders and not politically driven Tory MLAs will be involved in this planning process?

MR. KLEIN: Well, yes. Again, the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition, sir, does not listen. I have indicated to this Legislative Assembly that I have now spoken to the mayor three times and that I will participate along with the Member for Calgary-Currie on any kind of a task force that is set up to address this situation that affects my constituency and dramatically affects the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie's constituency.

MR. MITCHELL: Will the Premier tell us what else he is prepared to do to ensure that this opportunity can be turned into a benefit for all Albertans?

MR. KLEIN: Well, sir, what I try to ensure is that everything I do and my government does is for all Albertans. That's why I am not complaining about those bases moving to the city of Edmonton, although I'm heavily impacted politically. Certainly the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie is heavily impacted politically. But if it makes sense and the rationale is there, I am willing to accept it. I'm willing to work with the federal government, with civic officials, with private-sector individuals to make sure that we maximize the use of that land.

1:50

Specialist Physicians

MR. MITCHELL: Once upon a time, Mr. Speaker, the vision of health care for Alberta included attracting medical specialists and establishing centres of medical excellence. In fact, this was one of the highest priorities for a previous government headed by Premier Peter Lougheed, who actually had a sense of the future of this province. Now we see stories almost daily of medical specialists leaving this province. I wonder if the Premier could tell us: after working so hard to attract doctors and to establish excellence, how can the Premier justify now driving these same specialists out of our province?

MR. KLEIN: Sir, no one is driving specialists out of this province. There are some who understandably don't like the changes that are taking place. Change is always tough to take, Mr. Speaker. The simple fact is that we had a health care system that I'm sure the Liberals enjoyed, because it went up by 219 percent over 14 years, and it's really the kind of spending that they seem to encourage. We knew that we had to restructure. We knew that we had to make the system more effective and more efficient. We knew that there was far too much administration in the system. We have taken dramatic and very courageous strides to rationalize health care in this province. We are not driving specialists out of this province. As a matter of fact, I had the opportunity to have a good conversation last night with a highly respected specialist, a tremendously respected specialist, who plans to stay in Alberta for the rest of his life.

MR. MITCHELL: Because he's going to sell him a hospital.

Could the Premier please tell us how many pediatric neurosurgeons, for example, there are in Alberta, how many we need, and how many he thinks we can afford to lose?

MR. KLEIN: You know, Mr. Speaker, in order to avoid providing a stupid answer to a dumb question, I simply won't respond. I'll have perhaps the hon. minister provide that kind of detailed information.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the opposition totally loses sight of is the fact that there is some planning occurring in this province among 17 regions, who will be dealing on a regional basis with physician resource management. I'm really surprised that the hon. member would raise that, because in fact in both of our major centres, where these programs are being developed, they are working with their physicians on that resource complement. One of the things that we will accomplish through regional planning is ensuring that the numbers of specialists are there in Calgary, in Edmonton, in Medicine Hat, in Grande Prairie, wherever they're required. Without proper planning you cannot have that. We have a great deal of respect for our specialists in this province in pediatrics, in cardiology, in orthopedics, in many areas, and I think what's important to those specialists is that they understand that there will be a program in this province to work in. It will only be here if we manage our resources adequately and appropriately.

MR. MITCHELL: I don't think that parents believe it's a dumb question when this province is losing 25 percent of its pediatric neurosurgeons, Mr. Speaker.

To the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker: I wonder whether she can tell us who exactly we can rely upon? Is it the Premier when he calls for the capping of physicians' salaries, or is it the

Member for Bow Valley when he says: this isn't even on the government's agenda? Who is it?

MR. KLEIN: Again, you know, you can't say that the man is a liar. That is unparliamentary. But he's coming darn close to being one; I'll tell you that for sure. At no time, Mr. Speaker – at no time – did I ever recommend capping doctors' salaries. I simply did not say that at any time.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well, and if he doesn't he should, that the subjects of AMA negotiations are conducted through a process in this province that has worked very successfully for some time. I would suggest that is the best place for those discussions to take place and that he should not base his comments on a newspaper story and prove that he really doesn't know anything about what's going on.

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

Firefighters' Union

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of my constituents are firefighters employed in Calgary and therefore impacted by a Bill being presented by the Minister of Labour. There was some suggestion in question period yesterday that one key ingredient, that of consultation, was ignored. To the Minister of Labour: will you assure this Assembly that you indeed did take time to consult with the firefighters on this issue? [interjections]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I can understand the nervousness on the part of the Liberals about the anticipated response. I am going to table today four copies of the dates when there were meetings with myself and firefighters and others specifically related to managerial exclusions. What is important to note is who raised and who suggested wrongly that there was no consultation and didn't ask the question but in fact said that there was no consultation. The very person whose credibility is being questioned today, the Leader of the Opposition, is the one who wrongfully suggested, as a matter of fact stated, that there was no consultation. With his credibility in tatters, I would like to table these four copies and also note that his comments are in *Hansard*, where he made erroneous statements last week on health care issues, which were proved wrong, and on questions related to seniors, which were proved wrong. It's important to note that when misleading comments are made, it gets pointed out. These were misleading comments.

MR. BRASSARD: In this consultation process, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could advise whether the firefighters were made aware of their ability to consult and negotiate with management on the question of who could be excluded from the union.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. DAY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Actually, what is very interesting and unique about this particular legislation is the fact that now, just as with any other labour group in the province, as a matter of fact just as with every other labour group in the country, if there is a dispute between management and labour about who should be designated a management position, one or both of those parties can now take that to the Labour Relations Board to have that decided on their well-used and well-tested list of criteria for management. Before this legislation, that wasn't possible. Now

it allows for the discussion and the consultation to happen and to be decided at the Labour Relations Board, just as with every other labour group in the country.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, before proceeding any further with this Bill, can you advise this House of how other jurisdictions handle this particular issue?

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, that forms part of the consultation and research process. In fact, other than the province of Ontario, in every other province there is that ability when a discussion comes up between the firefighters association and the fire chiefs in terms of a management position and that discussion bogs down for either one or both parties to take that to the Labour Relations Board or its similar counterpart and ask for an unbiased referee to make a decision. That clearly happens in other jurisdictions. Except for Ontario that is what is happening in other jurisdictions.

2:00

Regional Health Authorities

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, the Premier continues to pretend that he's taken the politics out of health care, but for his cabinet colleagues it's just pork barrel as usual. Now we see the Minister of Environmental Protection trying to influence decisions about hospital closures. The Member for Rocky Mountain House has directly challenged the authority of the David Thompson regional health authority board. To the Premier: who's in charge of health care anyway? Please don't tell Albertans, Mr. Premier, that the Minister of Environmental Protection is now the Minister of Health for region 6.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we encourage our MLAs to become involved with the regional health authorities as they struggle with some fairly tough decisions. Insofar as getting politically involved in health care, my gosh, it was the Liberals who were spreading pamphlets throughout the school systems. It was the Liberals who were out actively gathering petitions. It was the Liberals who were out there trying to influence in every way, shape, or form those people who might be opposed to what we're trying to do to restructure health care. So if anyone has been politically involved in the health care system, it's been these monkeys over here. [interjections] Over there. Right.

MR. SAPERS: He must have been talking about his flunkies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, given that answer, then, how can the Premier tolerate the Minister of Environmental Protection interfering in the decision-making in region 6 while at the same time excusing the backbencher from Sylvan Lake for refusing to get involved?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I would imagine that the hon. minister was doing his job as an MLA for the area, as I would expect any Liberal MLA to do, and that is to represent the interests of his constituents. Relative to the specifics of this particular situation I'll have the hon. minister reply.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, every MLA in this Assembly has the opportunity to meet and discuss with the regional health authority their plans. In fact, I think, if I'm not mistaken, that I did read an article in a paper yesterday where the hon. Leader of the Opposition was commenting on some suggested plans for

moving obstetrics in the Capital region. Is the hon. member suggesting that this member can't comment on that? I'm sorry if I'm mistaken, but I continue to read where there are comments made about changes in programs.

I think it's appropriate that members of this Assembly on both sides of the House interface with the regional health authorities on this very important issue, and I do not in any way consider that interference from an MLA. In my discussions with the regional health authorities they have not suggested to me that MLAs are interfering with their work. MLAs are here to represent their constituents and their constituents' concerns, and frankly I admire MLAs who do carry this discussion forward with the regional health authority in an appropriate manner.

MR. SAPERS: So if you want to keep your hospital open in rural Alberta, you've got to be . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order.

MR. SAPERS: When will the Premier put a stop to the inappropriate actions of his environment minister and relieve the regional authorities from political interference?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we didn't sit here and whine and complain and moan and groan when these people became totally engrossed and fully involved with the Misericordia hospital, with the Grey Nuns hospital, now with the Royal Alex hospital, with the University hospital, fully involved, involved in such a way, Mr. Speaker, that they probably went a little bit overboard, because some of the information that they were handing out was nothing more than pure, absolutely misleading poppycock.

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

Tax Deductions for Education

MR. PHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently parents who put their children through postsecondary education may deduct the tuition from their income tax. However, parents who put their children through ECS or private school have not been able to claim such deductions. My constituents feel that tax deductions should be fairly applied to all levels of education. My question today is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, is there any way to allow parents whose children attend private schools or ECS programs to make similar deductions on their income tax?

MR. JONSON: At the present time there is not a parallel provision, as I understand it, to that provided for postsecondary tuition. This is something that the hon. member has raised which should be investigated, but at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that there's no such provision.

MR. PHAM: Can the minister, then, work with the Treasurer and the federal government to change the existing regulations to create a fairer tax system?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly prepared to review the issue raised in the hon. member's question. I think this would have to be reviewed, though, with the federal authorities certainly and in the context of other tax provisions which currently apply with respect to child care costs and other deductibles.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Nortech Surveys (Canada) Inc.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question about a shell game. The 1995 budget reveals that the government paid out its guarantee to Nortech Surveys. The principal and accrued interest on this amounted to \$837,000 and was paid to Alberta Treasury Branches. Two disturbing facts stand out about this guarantee. First, Nortech received the guarantee in 1988-89, transferred it to its subsidiary, Norstar Instruments, which then went into receivership in 1989. Second, Nortech received \$700,000 from the sale of assets of Norstar and got to keep the money. So what do we see? Nortech is up \$700,000, taxpayers are out \$837,000, and the Alberta Treasury Branches and the Treasury countenanced this disgrace. My questions are to the Treasurer. First question: will the Treasurer confirm that Alberta taxpayers have an \$837,000 loss this fiscal year on the loan guarantee to Nortech Surveys?

MR. DINNING: No, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PERCY: Can the Treasurer, then, explain why Nortech was allowed to keep the \$700,000 that was realized from the sale of assets of its subsidiary rather than applying it to the loan guarantee, which was paid out?

MR. DINNING: No, Mr. Speaker.

DR. PERCY: Well, at least I don't have to sit down, Mr. Speaker. It's one of the few times I've ever seen him brief. You should see him in debates.

This should take more than a monosyllable, Mr. Speaker. Can the Provincial Treasurer explain what deal was struck between Alberta Treasury Branches and the government to allow this obscene business transaction to occur? Taxpayers are out of pocket on this deal, and the Treasurer will not answer the question in this House.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was only asked the question, so now is my first opportunity to say so. I stand before the Assembly and refer to my colleague the minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism. The fact is that I know the minister would want to get the information and be able to provide that to the Assembly when he's got it.

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

2:10

Irrigation Services

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Environmental Protection. The highway system, the primary and the secondary roads throughout Alberta, acts almost like an artery bringing rich blood to provide for continuing agricultural growth. In the south part of the province the irrigation systems provide basically the same life-giving support. Now, it has come to my attention that employees in the land survey branch of Environmental Protection have received notice that their positions will no longer be required to provide engineering survey services. I would ask the minister to explain this recent event.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The folks that are involved in the land survey and design area of the department are involved in more than just irrigation. They're involved in a lot of

the water projects throughout the province. This government has committed that we will try to reduce overlap and duplication, and this service can readily be provided in the private sector. Our three-year business plan requires us to reduce our positions by about 844 positions. This is just another move in fulfilling the terms of our three-year business plan.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. DUNFORD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: what effect will the elimination of the engineering survey services have on providing service to Albertans and to the irrigation sector in general?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, this service will still be available, but it will be through the private sector. As most people recognize, the projects now are tendered out, and the total cost also includes the engineering. So it really didn't make a lot of sense that we'd continue to do that in-house. There are still going to be eight people involved that will make sure the surveying and engineering are proper, and they will remain in the branch. I think it really gives, as well, the employees an opportunity to move possibly into the entrepreneurship program that we have developed. That gives them an opportunity to move into the private sector. I would hope that some of them will take advantage of that.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental?

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Tourism Promotion in Montana

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A news release from the state of Montana reports that our Premier has offered people from that particular state free admission to six Alberta historic museums this spring. I've got some documents here to table. At the same time, Albertans have to pay as much as \$13 for a family of four in order to visit those particular institutions. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism – and I think it's the Premier; he does that in his spare time. I'd like to ask him: why do we let Americans get the Alberta advantage for free while Albertans, including students, have to pay to get into their own heritage sites?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this letter indeed was sent to the governor of Montana inviting people from Montana to come up here and enjoy our great scenery, enjoy our marvelous facilities built over the years by this government such as the Remington museum and Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and the Tyrrell museum and the Reynolds museum. Basically we have asked the governor to provide a reciprocal kind of an arrangement for Alberta students.

Mr. Speaker, over the years we have been tremendously generous with our museum programs relative to access to those facilities by Albertans. Correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Minister, or I'll have you elaborate, but I do think that on Tuesdays all Albertans are allowed into these facilities absolutely free of charge.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: One day, Mr. Premier.

Can the Premier explain, then, why Albertans must pay ever increasing fees to visit these sites when Montana does not charge any admission whatsoever to visit their sites?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the member was not listening. In my letter we asked if the state of Montana would consider some kind

of reciprocal program. As I understand it, that is now under consideration.

I would point out that as these Americans come up to this country to take in our fantastic beauty and our wonderful facilities, you know what they're also going to do, Mr. Speaker? And this might offend the Liberals; I don't know why it would. You know what they might do while their up here? They might do a lot of shopping and spend some money.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order. There seems to be a little debate between the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert and the Provincial Treasurer, and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre has a lot to say too. [interjections] Order. Order.

Final supplemental, hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Premier could explain why Albertans were hit in the last budget with new user fees for Alberta historical sites, and then he turns around and lets people from Montana in for free.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this is a one-time-only offer to the people of Montana to come up here and experience Alberta. Perhaps when they've had the opportunity to visit some of these magnificent facilities, they will return and return again to take in the Stampede, perhaps go to Jasper. Now, is the hon. Member for West Yellowhead not in favour of the province of Alberta promoting tourism so more people can go to his beautiful constituency? I find this absolutely outstanding coming from a member who represents one of the most highly visited tourist attractions in North America.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development to augment.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are, of course, millions of tourists that go to Glacier national park, and there can be some incentive to provide to them to come across the border and visit some of our facilities in southern Alberta and throughout the rest of the province of Alberta. As it came out in our estimates last night for Community Development, it's correct that there are some charges being made where there were not charges before at some of our smaller historical resource facilities, a charge of \$1 for admission as opposed to free admission in some cases. There's no doubt, as I indicated last night, that some of these facilities are not only world class; some of them are in fact world's best. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, in your own riding in Drumheller, of course, one only needs to look at the Royal Tyrrell Museum and examine how important that facility is to economic development in that particular area.

So, Mr. Speaker, certainly drawing people, providing for people from Montana to do a two nation vacation here in the province of Alberta is an outstanding idea and a very good initiative for tourism.

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

2:20

Social Assistance

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been some cases in the past where welfare clients have had trouble cashing their welfare cheques without identification. Has the Minister of

Family and Social Services made any recent changes to assist these clients with their financial assistance?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have made a lot of changes in the last 25 months, a lot of positive changes in the department. As you're aware, the welfare caseload has dropped to just over 52,000 in 25 months. This has allowed us to look at new ways of improved services for our clientele. What we have done in this particular case is provide an option for the clientele to have a system of direct deposit at their choice. It seems to be a process that is well accepted, especially by clientele that have a problem getting around, such as persons with disabilities.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, what impact will this changeover to direct deposit have on the cost of issuing assistance?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, at this time the department processes approximately 900,000 cheques each year. We predict that 75 percent of the clientele will take the option of the direct deposit system. If that is the case, the saving will be around \$500,000 per year.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. AMERY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: how does this new system impact on the other programs and on the monthly caseload turnover where people only need about one month's assistance?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated to this Assembly before, we do have a high turnover. We have anywhere from 7,000 to 8,000 cases opened or closed each month. In those particular cases where people come on a short-term basis over a period of a month, we will continue using the existing system. This option will only be available for people that are on a long-term basis.

Disabled Persons' Programs

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, this government has undertaken to transfer the co-ordination of all programs offering support to persons with disabilities to the regional health boards through the crisis-riddled Department of Health, yet funding for these programs will remain in the Department of Family and Social Services. To the Minister of Family and Social Services: what assurances does the minister give consumers affected by this decision that they will not take a backseat to ongoing health care problems that seem to be in complete chaos before he agreed to this transfer?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, to start with, I want to clarify the issue. The question is not right. There is no transfer finalized anywhere yet. The community support model is a review that's only gone to the second phase. The third and fourth phases are not completed yet and not approved. That is what the hon. member is talking about.

In relation to persons with disabilities, we are very serious when we say that we are redirecting dollars for high-needs areas.

My department's budget alone is over \$430 million for persons with disabilities. In addition to that, in the next two years you will see an increase of over \$30 million, again to the high-needs area. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think we are very, very serious in Alberta when we say that we want to provide the best programs available for persons with disabilities.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, what assurances can the minister give to this House that this decision, if made, will not simply be a backdoor approach to user fees for services for persons with disabilities?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, we are very serious when we are dealing with such a sensitive area. The only decisions this government will make is if we have a new process that will provide a better service than what we have out there now, then we should move forward with that process. I would hope the opposition supports that also.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what assurances can the minister give this House that those persons affected by any transfer will be able to first fully participate in all steps leading to transferring these services and that their concerns will be acted upon?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there is any concern from the people that represent persons with disabilities as to what this government's plan is in relation to services provided to those individuals and families. I am confident that we do have the consultative processes out there to deal with most people that will be impacted. I know we will not make any changes unless the services are going to be better than what we have today.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Special Waste Management Corporation

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, which is trying to dispose of the Swan Hills white elephant, has undergone many changes recently. In December last year this corporation hired friend Bob King as its highly paid chief executive officer on the recommendation of the new Tory-run board of directors. In February of this year the Minister of Environmental Protection all but wiped out the Crown corporation by announcing staff cuts and budget cuts amounting to 80 percent of its budget. My question to the Minister of Environmental Protection: since the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation is now virtually consumed into your department, why do Alberta taxpayers have to pay Bob King to be the chief executive officer of the corporation?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were simply reorganizing and right-sizing the corporation. Any corporation that is doing the kind of work that is being done by the special waste corporation certainly needs a chief executive officer. The fact is that we didn't roll the entire administration into the Department of Environmental Protection; we rolled in some of the things that were being duplicated by the corporation, such as advertising and that sort of thing.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: when the board recommended Bob King as the new chief executive officer of the corporation, what qualifications and past experience was considered to come up with this recommendation?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, certainly Bob King has done an admirable job in his former position with the ALCB. I think to try to question his credibility is really something that I don't appreciate. He's done a tremendous job for the ALCB, and I believe that he will do the same in his current position as CEO.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: I guess there were no qualifications.

My final supplemental to the minister: in the restructuring of the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation is it anticipated that Bob King's position will be eliminated, or will he be protected in this position?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Bob King was seconded. He is not going to be there permanently. As a matter of fact, it could very well be that his position there will expire by the end of June.

DR. WEST: On a point of clarification, Mr. Speaker, Bob King was seconded from my ministry, and he still performs his duties as chairman of the ALCB. As the word seconded means, he will be coming back. We're getting a good bang for our buck in this province because he's being paid the same salary right across the board and doing two functions now instead of one.

Research Council

MR. CHADI: Mr. Speaker, this government is actively working towards decreasing its subsidy to the Alberta Research Council. Yet while its economic role is decreasing, there seems to be no limit on the government's administrative role in this council. Not only does the Alberta Research Council sit under the jurisdiction of the department of Economic Development and Tourism, for which the Premier himself is responsible, it also has the benefit of falling under the authority of the minister responsible for science and research, and the MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat sits as chair of this council. My question is to the Premier. Given that the government is committed to eliminating overlap and duplication, would you commit to eliminating the overlap of responsibility which has occurred with the Alberta Research Council?

2:30

MR. KLEIN: Well, I'll certainly have the hon. minister for science and research supplement my answer, Mr. Speaker, but when it comes to eliminating duplication and overlapping of services, I think this government's record speaks for itself. We have done a phenomenal job – a phenomenal job – over the past two years of breaking down elimination and duplication in all areas of government. We have embarked on a very aggressive program of deregulation. We have embarked on a remarkable program of restructuring health and education. The minister for science and research is now going through a program of restructuring to pull government research dollars together so we can lever those dollars against money that might be out there for research in the private sector, and I will have the hon. minister tell the member exactly what is going on.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, in fact the Alberta Research Council and the research authority work hand in hand, and we are

developing a policy and setting out criteria whereby research in this province will be second to none in all of Canada. We are focusing on partnership programs with the infrastructure we have in place, not only with the Alberta Research Council but with the universities and the departments right across the government, relative to research projects.

MR. CHADI: Three of them, Mr. Speaker, handling one area. There are three of them. How can the Premier justify paying the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat an extra \$15,000 a year to sit as chair when you've got the minister from Calgary-Glenmore and you're paying her an extra ministerial salary? How do you justify it?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, the hon. minister isn't getting an extra salary. If she is, I would sure like to know about it. She's getting the same as other ministers, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the stipend paid to the chairman of the Alberta Research Council, that is very reasonable considering the phenomenal amount of work he does. Mr. Speaker, I would say that Albertans are getting far more than their money's worth out of this MLA, a lot more than they are by paying \$5,000 to the Assistant Opposition Whip. Will he please stand up?

MR. CHADI: The three blind mice: that's what they are. The three blind mice.

To the minister responsible for science and research: given this government's commitment to ending direct subsidies in economic development, I'm wondering if the minister might tell the Assembly when she expects that the ARC, the Alberta Research Council, will function completely free of direct subsidy.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, it's a very good question. As a matter of fact, the Alberta Research Council has already taken a 20 percent reduction in dollars from the government and is working on a partnership with the private sector and will be receiving more and more income as the business plan progresses and as we do wind down some of our administrative details and work together with other departments in developing research projects.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The time for question period has expired, but before calling Members' Statements, the hon. Minister of Health has indicated that she wishes to clarify an answer she gave earlier.

Regional Health Authorities

(continued)

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to clarify and indeed withdraw. I was incorrect in my date of what I had read about the hon. member. I do stand by the fact that all hon. members in this House have an opportunity to speak to the regional health authorities, and I will share with the hon. Leader of the Opposition the reference that I was referring to.

THE SPEAKER: One other matter before calling Members' Statements. The hon. Deputy Government House Leader has mentioned that in her notice of motion she inadvertently deleted Written Question 155 from her oral comments, as I understand, which was included in the written material filed. Does the

Assembly agree to an editorial change to this motion to include 155?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Members' Statements**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

Helen Ridgeway

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week Helen Ridgeway, a wonderful and caring person, died. She was better known as Aunt Helen to many who worked with Alberta wildlife. She dropped me a letter in 1990, a poem. As you know, she was quite interested in poetry, and I thought there was no better tribute I could make to Helen Ridgeway than to read it. It says:

No man stands alone. Through all the centuries of recorded time, men have set into motion influences that affect your life today . . .

You are the heir of the ages. Men reaching for the stars have created for you a world of wonder and challenge . . .

On a more intimate note, your mother, father, teacher, clergyman, friend have built their influences into your character . . .

More enduring than skyscrapers, bridges, cathedrals, and other material symbols of man's achievement are the invisible monuments of wisdom, inspiration and example erected in the hearts and minds of men. . . .

Your example, your words, your ideas, your ideals can also be projected into the future to live forever in the lives of others . . .

As you help men to grow, as you work for peace, understanding and good will, your influence will merge with the good influences of men and women of every age.

I believe this is how Aunt Helen, or Helen Ridgeway, would have loved to be remembered.

THE SPEAKER: L'hon. député pour Calgary-Egmont.

Canadian Unity

MR. HERARD: Merci, M. le Président. C'est un grand privilège et un honneur pour moi d'exprimer ce que je sens dans mon coeur envers un Canada qui, pour moi, comprend le Québec. C'est un honneur double, M. le Président, de pouvoir offrir mes pensées dans ma langue maternelle dans l'Assemblée législative de la province de l'Alberta.

La culture québécoise de mes ancêtres est venue s'installer en Alberta en concert avec plusieurs autres cultures il y a plus de cent ans. Depuis ce temps l'Alberta a toujours démontré un accueil spécial envers toutes les cultures ainsi que la langue française. Nous possédons ici en Alberta un secret que nous gardons jalousement et un avantage albertain en ce qui concerne la francophonie.

En Alberta nous sommes très fiers du fait que la plus grande proportion de notre population scolaire prend ses cours en français, un avantage qui n'existe pas dans les autres provinces du Canada. A l'heure actuelle à travers notre province environ 204,000, ou 41 pour cent, de nos élèves étudient en français. Tenez compte qu'en Alberta nous avons seulement une population francophone d'environ 75,000.

Ici en Alberta nous avons toujours été capable de négocier avec le gouvernement fédéral certains changements nécessaires à notre croissance comme province. Nous croyons que le Québec peut le

faire aussi tout en demeurant part de notre famille constitutionnelle. En Alberta nous croyons aussi que le Canada peut continuer d'être le meilleur pays au monde mais seulement si le Québec continue à partager son peuple et sa culture avec nous.

Je reviendrai un jour rechercher mes origines sur la côte sud du St-Laurent autour de Sorel, Québec, et je suis confiant que ces racines, tant qu'elles sont québécoises, resteront toujours canadiennes.

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

2:40 Farm Safety Week

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Legislature reflected on Agriculture Week. Well, this week is also Farm Safety Week. This takes on special significance since from the period 1984 to '93 an average of 18 persons lost their lives on farms in Alberta. These deaths ranged from preschoolers being accidentally killed because they were allowed to run free on the farm to a 73 year old who was killed after operating a tractor at the end of a 10-hour day.

Mr. Speaker, farm accidents also result in the hospitalization of 700 to 900 persons per year. This level of accident rate would not be acceptable in an employee-based industry. Because farming is mostly family operated, the WCB and labour codes do not apply as strictly. We have to recognize that legislation and regulation are not used to control individuals, that manufacturer-installed safety equipment on many farm machines is soon removed or let become nonfunctional. This creates hazardous situations.

Mr. Speaker, I speak from a personal experience, and it was little consolation to me at the time that a 10 year old was also in the hospital with an arm removed in a grain auger and that another farmer was there, having lost both hands in exactly the same machine as I was involved with in my accident.

Mr. Speaker, for farmers and farm families it's education and awareness that are important. I would like to congratulate Mr. Solomon Kyeremanteng of Alberta Agriculture for the work he has done to develop school and community-based education and awareness programs. If we track the farm accident rates, especially the death rates, from the 1980s into the 1990s, there's been a significant reduction, from nearly 30 deaths per year to well below 20, except for 1993 when farm conditions created extremely stressful conditions. Each injury costs Albertans directly almost \$70,000 per accident. Any reduction in accidents brings about significant dollar savings and human suffering reductions for all of our communities.

As we recognize Farm Safety Week, we would also like to thank Mr. Kyeremanteng and say keep up the good work.

THE SPEAKER: Before moving to the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Calgary-North West, which the Chair understands the Leader of the Opposition will speak to, may we briefly revert to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to Members of

the Legislative Assembly two people who are in the gallery today. They are Rob Hartmann, the president of the Edmonton firefighters association, and John Downs, who's an executive member of the Edmonton firefighters association. I would ask that they stand in the gallery and receive the welcome of the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Point of Order Misleading the House

MR. MITCHELL: I would like to address the point of order that my colleague raised earlier today, Mr. Speaker, under section 23, which raises questions about a member's behaviour in imputing the motives of another member. The House leader on the government side used some pretty aggressive language in this Legislature, some of which in fact is actually unparliamentary, in referring to comments that I made in the Legislature yesterday. He said that I was deliberately misleading. I think he said that I was erroneous. I think that somebody of his stature and importance in this government would be inclined to get his facts right before he used that kind of language and began to tread on the rules and the dignity of this very Legislature.

It calls into question what in fact I said, and I would like to indicate the basis upon which I said it. I said that the Premier of this province one month before the last provincial election made two important promises to the firefighters of this province, promises which he subsequently failed to keep. He broke those promises. The first promise was that he would ensure there was proper, full, complete public consultation with firefighters before he did anything to change their code. I quote from a letter that he wrote to the Calgary firefighters' association, the past president, Mr. Brent Pedersen, on May 6, 1993, just over a month before the June 15, 1993, provincial election, a very convenient time to be making these kinds of promises. The Premier said:

You have my assurance that no legislated changes will be made affecting who is excluded, without a demonstration of the completion of a comprehensive consultative process.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if firefighters were consulted before Bill 3 was brought in, they certainly don't know it, which is surprising, of course, given what the House leader said. In a letter, March 1, 1995, to all Members of the Legislative Assembly the St. Albert Fire Fighters Union indicated:

However, we were advised by the Labour Minister's Office that there wouldn't be any changes to the Labour Code and we were assured that a meeting was not necessary.

I refer further to a note from the Alberta Fire Fighters Association president, Terry Wilson, where he says:

Contrary to Premier Klein's letter the Alberta Fire Fighters Association has not, nor has been invited to, engage in any form of meeting or consultative process with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

They are, of course, referring to a further statement in the Premier's letter that any negotiations wouldn't be with the government in any event. They would be with other important and significant parties to this matter, one of which would surely be the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. Well, they didn't get a chance to negotiate with them.

I go on to point out that in a letter of March 1, 1995, the International Association of Fire Fighters' vice-president and Canadian director wrote this letter to the Minister of Labour:

We regret that your government has not allowed all parties affected to testify to Bill 3's impact. Proper public debate on this matter would reveal, for example, that other jurisdictions have rejected your approach for valid operational and administrative reasons.

They obviously weren't consulted on this matter, Mr. Speaker, and they weren't given a chance to be consulted or to negotiate.

I go on to a final statement, to add insult to injury, and this is pointed out by the St. Albert Fire Fighters Union again:

We understand other organizations directly involved in this matter were given an opportunity to discuss this issue with the government prior to its introduction. All we ask for now is [some] equal consideration.

I would say that when the Premier promised that he would ensure there would be a demonstration of a complete and comprehensive consultative process, surely the firefighters would have known when it was undertaken. Well, clearly, Mr. Speaker, they do not. That's the first promise that this Premier broke.

The second promise, Mr. Speaker, is: "I still support the Fire Fighters," May 6, 1993. You don't support the firefighters of this province if you believe in excluding members from their bargaining unit. If you support the firefighters, you don't believe in that. Well, the Premier goes on to say, funnily enough, that – and get this – "the beauty of the process that I envision, is that it doesn't require government to get it started." I wonder whether the House leader could explain to us: if government's bringing in legislation, is that not government doing something to get something started? Clearly, this piece of legislation lays out the foundation for excluding firefighters from the bargaining unit.

The Premier said that he wouldn't bring in that legislation. He said that he supported the firefighters. He has now brought in that piece of legislation. This minister says that he's consulted with on a range of meetings. Well, I'll tell you for sure, Mr. Speaker, that on October 7 what he told the firefighters is that he would not be bringing forward that kind of legislation. The Government House Leader said that I deliberately misled. He said that I was erroneous. I'm not going to say that the Premier deliberately misled, and I'm not going to say that the Premier was erroneous. I'm going to say here and now in this Legislature that the Premier broke two fundamental promises to the firefighters of this province, and he should stand and be accountable for it in this Legislature.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, as usual I'm impressed with your graciousness in allowing the member a lot of time to address this particular issue, so I anticipate that same time. I will ask him, in an uncharacteristic way, to also remain silent, as I did while he was perpetrating his particular views on this Assembly. I would hope he would maintain that, because by the time I am done, he is going to be feeling very warm, so warm in fact that he will be calling for firefighters to put out the flames.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite rose on a point of order: that I suggested that he made statements which were erroneous. I did suggest that, and I did it very deliberately so that he would fall into the trap of getting up on a point of order so that I could address this. He has walked into it, it has snapped around him, and he is now going to have to face his comments. The disputed leader across did everything except refer to his own comments in *Hansard* – wasn't that interesting? – the comments in *Hansard* which he spoke yesterday which I referred to as being erroneous. He referred to everything else under the sun except his own comments.

2:50

Now I will read from *Hansard* the recorded comments of the disputed leader, Monday, March 6, where he said:

The Premier brings in Bill 3, which not only excludes firefighters from the bargaining unit but also does it without the Premier's promised consultation.

Those are his exact words. So the question is: is he correct? Was there consultation? Because consultation was promised. That is the only question here today on the point of order. Was there consultation? [interjections] They're getting nervous already. They're starting to yatter. It is known that with people who are immature and unskilled in debate, when they lose the argument, they begin to shout and raise mindless chatter. That's what we're hearing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will quote from the document I tabled today. These are only the official meetings that took place. This does not count conversations that took place in and out of meetings, phone calls, and correspondence. This is official: November 10, 1993, a meeting with the Alberta . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: Who's it to?

MR. DAY: This is to all members. I tabled this today, Member for Redwater, four copies.

February 23, 1994, with myself and the Fire Fighters Association on this topic; March 8, 1994, a joint meeting with the Alberta Fire Fighters' Association and the Fire Chiefs. A joint meeting.

Now, Mr. Speaker, remember, this disputed leader said that there was no consultation. That is the only issue that is being dealt with on this purported point of order that he raised. He said that there was no consultation. I could stop there, and that would be enough, but I will go on. April 7, 1994: another meeting with the Alberta Fire Fighters Association. This is asking my deputy to be there to hear directly all the intricacies of what their concerns were. April 15, 1994: in my office in Red Deer another meeting on this very issue, not with provincial but with a representative from the Red Deer firefighters association. October 7, 1994. What did he do? He took comments maybe from somebody else who was at that meeting, comments about what I was alleged to have said. I assured the firefighters at that particular meeting – we talked about this issue – that in the fall session there would be no legislation coming on this unless there was a private member's Bill of which I was not aware. I also told them very clearly that I was under constant pressure from municipalities and MLAs to go ahead with this legislation. I told them further that if this were to go ahead, I would alert them to it before it ever got to the Table here in the Legislature. That's what I said on October 7. On March 6 there was another meeting with the Fire Fighters Association and the Edmonton Fire Fighters' Union.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: did consultation occur? Yes, it did. The further question and the purported point of order is: the disputed Leader of the Opposition said that there was no consultation.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to read. This is a news release that came out today, not from me but from the Fire Chiefs Association, where they said – and I notice the member doesn't want to listen to this. It's very painful, as I said, for him, because he's about to be seen in the face of his own colleagues to be misleading and erroneous.

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, on the direction of Alberta's Minister of Labor, Stockwell Day, undertook an extensive consultative process in support of our proposal (Managerial Exclusion Act, Bill 3).

He still ignores my speaking because it's so painful. Another quote:

Mr. Day made it extremely clear to the chiefs that an extensive consultative process was essential for him to [even] entertain [this] proposal.

On November 10, 1993, the fire chiefs presented a brief to the minister proposing that the labor relations code be amended . . . Following submission of [the] brief we had the opportunity to meet with the minister to discuss our proposed amendments. The chiefs also advised the Alberta Firefighters Association that [they] were requesting amendments to the Labor Relations Code. Once the firefighters were made aware of [the] proposal, the firefighters then submitted a proposal to the minister outlining their opposition to the chiefs' ideas.

The minister subsequently met jointly with representatives of the firefighters association and the fire chiefs on March 8 . . . to review each of the proposals. Meetings were then held between Department of Labor representatives and the chiefs and the firefighters [association] on separate occasions.

On June 10, 1994 the president . . .
Is it getting warm yet, hon. disputed leader?

. . . of the Chiefs' Association, [Dave] Hodgins, met with the then president of the Calgary Firefighters' Union, Harvey Rindfliesch, to discuss the issue of managerial exclusion.

Two weeks later, on June 24, 1994, fire chiefs and firefighters from various locations in Alberta met in Red Deer to, once again, discuss managerial exclusion. The chiefs submitted their final report . . . on October 19, 1994.

On and on it goes. Meeting after meeting after meeting. I would ask the members opposite to realize that there's a possibility that their leader made a mistake. There's a distinct possibility. I've made mistakes speaking in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and you are witness to the fact that I have stood and I have apologized and asked forgiveness of the Assembly when I have made those mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to postulate, if I may, that this is a trend we are seeing. Last week there was a specific item related to health care about somebody who was supposedly a victim of service related to health care cuts. The very hospital that was mentioned by the disputed leader across the way came out publicly – and it was reported in the media that that was wrong information. It was wrong information. A similar type of approach was taken again on a health matter which again was proven to be wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the point of order that was raised by the leader of the Liberals was that no consultations had taken place and that in fact his statements were correct. I said that was erroneous. That is the only point here, and I have taken I don't know how many minutes to go into an extensive series of official meetings, never mind the unofficial ones, to show there was extensive consultation. The Premier's promise was fulfilled.

I will go on to say, Mr. Speaker – and I will close with this – that I did make a commitment also, though I speak to provincial groups, to contact not just the provincial groups but Mr. Rob Hartmann, which I did by telephone, I believe to his own home, which is somewhat unprecedented – I felt I should do that – to let him know this was coming forward, to let him know that if there was anything that he had to offer that was new to this, that would bring new light on the situation, we would be willing to entertain that. This Bill went through second reading some days ago in this Legislature. After hearing back from Mr. Hartmann, who was ill at the time that I was trying to set up meetings with him, which I acknowledge, I said to him and to the other firefighters: "I'm going to hold this. It's already gone through second reading. We could put it into committee, but I will not allow that to happen. I will hold it until we have met." We met again this week on it, and I have given the commitment again to hold it this week while all my colleagues have the opportunity to see not just the points that Mr. Hartmann had raised but in fact the entire document, which they do have in their hands.

Mr. Speaker, there has been consultation. There is only one thing left that is required on this particular point, and that is for the member opposite, the Liberal leader, to do the honourable thing and apologize for his remarks to me and to the Premier.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to respond?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes. There's one apology that needs to be made in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and that's on the part of the House leader to the firefighters of this province.

THE SPEAKER: As has been pointed out, the Chair has been lenient with the protagonists on this point of order. The Chair notices that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark wishes to participate, but the Chair does not feel the need to have further illumination or elucidation on this topic.

The point of order was raised on behalf of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, as the Chair understands it, because there was objection to the use of the words "misleading" and "erroneous" by the hon. Government House Leader. This word "misleading" seems to be getting altogether too much time and attention in this Chamber. The use of the word "misleading" really has to be connected to "intentionally misleading" in order to be out of order. It is perfectly in order for people to say that another hon. member misled the House. It would be nice if they said, "I'm sure inadvertently." Nevertheless, it's perfectly in order to say "misleading." It's also perfectly in order to say, "The hon. member is erroneous in what he said, because these are the facts." That's just a matter of debate.

3:00

The Chair did not hear anywhere in this point of order that the hon. Government House Leader had used the word to say that he felt that the hon. Leader of the Opposition had intentionally misled the House. I think the hon. Government House Leader could have couched his remarks more subtly than he did, but nevertheless the Chair does not feel that the hon. Government House Leader was unparliamentary in the use of his word "misleading."

The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake wishes to raise a point of order.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order 23(h) and (i). It's in reference to . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order please. We're on to the next point of order. Don't be rehashing the last one.

MR. SMITH: Are you going to campaign, Lance?

MR. DINNING: Bye, Your Worship.

THE SPEAKER: If the hon. Provincial Treasurer and the hon. minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism could please pay some attention to the reasonable requests of the Chair.

The hon. member.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

MR. SEVERTSON: Thanks. Mr. Speaker, my point of order was in reference to the first supplementary question from the Member for Edmonton-Glenora. This member implied that the

Minister of Health directed me to stay out of the work and discussions with the David Thompson regional health authority. This statement is completely false. In fact, the minister has encouraged all members of the Legislature to get involved and work with the regional health authorities throughout the province. He not only implied that I was restricted from doing my job as an MLA, but he also made allegations that the minister was interfering with members of this Legislature doing their duty as MLAs. I think he was wrong in both cases to imply that the minister was interfering and restricting MLAs' ability to do their job. It implied that I was not allowed to do my job.

Thank you.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I know the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake wouldn't deliberately mislead the Assembly. I know that when he gets a chance to read *Hansard*, he'll see that at no time during my question in that supplemental did I mention the Minister of Health. In fact, I mentioned the Premier. I know that he'll read *Hansard*, and I know that he will stand in the Assembly and withdraw his remarks.

I will also point out that reported in the Red Deer *Advocate* on March 1 under the headline "Groups lament missing MLA," there is a story that says in part:

They are particularly mad. Gary Severtson, MLA for Elnora and Sylvan Lake, is standing clear of health reforms made for their towns, saying politicians can't get involved.

"We can't even get him to come out here for a meeting," said Sid Moore, member of the Elnora East Committee on Health Reforms.

The article goes on.

The MLA wouldn't comment on the actions of his colleague. But he said he would personally feel uncomfortable to be seen as putting political pressure on the region's decision-making.

Perhaps the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake should check his press clippings.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that my question was to the Premier about the Premier allowing a cabinet minister to directly interfere in the decisions of a regional health authority at the same time saying that the regional health authorities will not be interfered with. Then somehow because the Premier's answer was saying that all members should feel free to do that, the reference was to the inaction of the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake in this regard. So I don't see where the member has a point of order.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I only want to speak briefly to the point of order. I will be interested to review the Blues and see the member's comments as written, because I clearly understood it another way. Whether it was the Premier that was alluded to for interference or not allowing members to take part or the Minister of Health, I think it's perhaps one and the same point. I again say that the members in this Assembly have been encouraged to work with their regional health authority, which is, I believe, the case for all members on this side of the House, and they've done it in a way that they saw appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I would caution the hon. member across that receiving all of your information from newspapers, with the greatest respect to the press, is not always the wisest way, because full discussions are not always enunciated.

I am in contact with the regional health authorities, all 17 of them in this province, and in fact they applaud the efforts of particularly the government MLAs to keep themselves aware of the process, to hear their plans, to discuss issues with them. I

certainly encourage them to continue to do that in the way that they feel is most appropriate in their constituencies.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection wishes to participate in this point of order.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's absolutely disgraceful that a member would stand in this Assembly and make the accusations that that member has made today in question period. The accusations were based purely – purely – on a report in a newspaper. I think that when they've got over some \$3 million in research funds and they go and spend that on checking newspapers, it's absolutely disgraceful.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my constituency have contacted on many occasions the regional health authority. The answer that they were getting from the regional health authority was: talk to your MLA. I simply went to the regional health authority and offered them some assistance, a plan that could possibly assist in the problem we were having in a certain area. That was my involvement.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order. So far what has been said seems to indicate that there is a dispute between the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora and the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake as to certain facts. That seems to be the extent of this point of order so far, except for what the hon. Minister of Health said about what she thought she heard in the Assembly and this point of order. Therefore, the Chair will say that so far it doesn't look like a point of order, but the Chair will look at the Blues to see if there is in fact a point of order.

Before calling Orders of the Day, would the Assembly agree to revert to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Actually, I'd noticed a constituent in the gallery, but I think she's left. So I'll forgo. Thank you, sir.

head: Orders of the Day
3:10
head: Public Bills and Orders Other than
head: Government Bills and Orders
head: Second Reading

Bill 203
Family Day Amendment Act, 1995

[Debate adjourned March 1: Mr. Smith speaking]

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

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege to be able to stand up and continue the discussion about a statutory holiday we now have in Alberta that they don't have in neighbouring provinces.

In fact, if we were to look at the economy from a perspective of global competitiveness, what we're going to have to do to maintain some sense of economic growth, some sense of economic

drive in Alberta is become more competitive. Just leafing through my favourite magazine, *The Economist*, I noted that the United States Department of Commerce has created its own war room. The war room consists of tracking export contracts around the world, worrying about strategic interventions, working with charts that indicate successful advocacy projects. This is in fact our competitor, our competitor next door. We're moving into NAFTA, which has 20 percent of all the trade on Earth, over 320 million people. After the highlights of the federal budget the Canadian dollar, which traded as high as 71.96, is now trading down below the 70.5 level. Competitiveness is very critical to the success, Mr. Speaker, of what this province has to do in order to succeed. Part of what we lose in Family Day is in fact that competitiveness.

As I finished speaking the last time, I had noted for the House that Family Day was the second lowest spending three-day weekend. The lowest spending holiday is in fact Christmas. So in fact the hit that Family Day provides for specific markets in Alberta is little more than \$2 a day on an average expenditure basis on a normal weekend. The average expenditure is \$67 on Family Day versus \$65 on a regular day. So in fact the business community can work on the savings side of the equation with the movement of Family Day from Monday to Sunday. The revenue side, other than specific pockets which we recognize, is very marginal. There's no question that proponents and those operators particularly of ski hills, which Alberta is well noted for, do experience some inordinate growth, and in fact that is taken into account.

From a businesswide perspective, a survey from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Alberta chapter, surveying 7,200 Alberta members in September of '94 found that 72 percent were in favour of eliminating the family holiday. In every one of the 11 different types of business the vote was overwhelmingly in favour of eliminating the holiday. In fact, retail businesses had a response rate of 73 percent in favour of eliminating Family Day. In Edmonton, Mr. Speaker, a company with over 1,100 employees estimated the additional payroll cost at more than \$150,000 for each statutory holiday. This commitment to the business community would lead me to indicate to you that my position in the vote would be to in fact move Family Day from a Monday to a Sunday.

One of the things that you find as technology moves along and global competitiveness becomes more important is that in fact you cannot control the revenue side as well as you can control the cost side. So in fact you then take a look at what you can do in costs. We've indicated some anecdotal examples of reducing costs for business through moving this holiday. That is consistent with the business plan of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, which finds that economic development is best stimulated in two ways: by taxation strategy and deregulation. With respect specifically to the Alberta government, with approximately 18,000 employees on the payroll there's a direct cost of about \$2.6 million as well as about \$125,000 in overtime charges.

The Alberta Chamber of Commerce, which has over 90,000 members in Alberta, does favour the elimination of the holiday. The chamber notes that there's any number of other holidays that Family Day could be dovetailed with, and the current statutory holiday is an unnecessary expense for Alberta business. In fact, when one takes a look at the Father's Day holiday and the Mother's Day holiday, that are not statutory holidays, and reflects some of the spending habits that take place on those particular holidays, they are coincidental with the revenues associated with Family Day, yet they do not have the additional costs. So from a perspective of business development and creating an opportunity

where people can continue to make the living that they need to make in Alberta and also to be able to provide the independent entrepreneur, the businessman – the ability to move Family Day to Sunday I think reflects a much better position of being able to provide recognition for the day for all Albertans, not to have half the population working to serve half the population that has the day off. In fact, I think that by having Family Day we're sending a very, very mixed message. It would be my recommendation to this House, from the facts that I have tabled with respect to Economic Development and Tourism, that we are looking at the option of moving Family Day to a Sunday as opposed to a statutory holiday on a Monday, which would reflect substantial and efficient cost-savings for the business community of Alberta.

It's probably a good time for me to remind this House that this government is committed to creating the environment that allows the private sector to drive towards the creation of 110,000 jobs, the creation of \$24 billion in export sales, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, we are on pace. In order for us to get through the ceiling and make those targets, I believe it's a responsibility of this House to recognize that Family Day is something that's celebrated very often in Alberta families but can also be celebrated very effectively on a Sunday.

Thank you.

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

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I listened to the debate on Bill 203, it occurred to me that apparently the reasons the government wants to eliminate this midwinter family holiday are that it costs too much money and that some people don't get a holiday, so nobody should have one. In terms of the money argument, I haven't heard any real figures. They're just vague ballpark estimates of costs. Many of the businessmen I have spoken to would like to keep the day. They think it's well worth it.

The second point: some people have to work, so everybody doesn't get a holiday. That's regrettable, but I see no way around it in our system because people are working, doing essential services, every day of the year whether it's a holiday or not. I don't think that's a good reason for taking a holiday away from others. It does cost money, but in the bigger picture it's peanuts in exchange for a day in the dark winter months when people relax, spend time with their families or their friends. It's time to appreciate each other and take part in winter activities: skating, winter picnics, skiing, carnivals, and festivals.

Many families, actually most families, have two working parents these days, people who, like everyone else, are working longer hours for less pay. The winter is dreary and long. It has often been said that one of the reasons for the increase in social and family problems is that families are spending less time together.

3:20

I recently received a copy of volume 5 of the Premier's council bulletin on the International Year of the Family Edition. It was an informative and interesting publication. In the report on community input on rights and responsibilities a particular paragraph caught my attention. After confirming the importance of families in transmitting beliefs and values, the text said, however, that children today are seen to be increasingly in peril. The impact of family conflict and divorce, the lack of support from the extended family, and changing social values all contribute to family unraveling, which ultimately contributes to the high social cost.

This government and its members speak a lot about family values. So far there's been a lot of talk but not an awful lot of action. Here we have one small time period, one day set aside each year, something that means a great deal to the thousands who do spend that day together with their families. This day will not solve broader societal problems. It won't get at the root of family violence, but it is an opportunity to do something that is a building block for any family relationship: just spending a little time together.

To keep this day would be to do the right thing, and I cannot vote in favour of the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Barrhead-Westlock.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. At the outset let me make it very clear that I am not supporting Bill 203. In fact, I am opposed to Bill 203. I've had the privilege on two occasions since this Bill was in fact an Act and a law, the election of 1989 and the election of 1993, to in fact deal with this in election campaigns. At the outset let me make it very clear that it was not an issue in either one of those provincial elections in the province of Alberta, and secondly, I received increasing votes in both of those elections, and I never had anybody come to me and tell me that they wanted to re-elect me so I could come here and eliminate one of the holidays in the province of Alberta.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, this Bill has nothing to do with the family. I know of no member in this Assembly who's against the family, traditional or not. In fact, everyone here, in my humble opinion, believes in the importance of the family. Family Day is every day. It doesn't have to be on this particular day.

This Bill deals with a holiday, pure and simple, in the month of February. In the United States of America there is a holiday called Presidents' Day in February of each year, Mr. Speaker, and for those who suggest that Alberta's in an uncompetitive situation with respect to that, I think perhaps they're forgetting the fact that there is such a holiday in the United States.

Alberta winters are long, cold, and harsh, Mr. Speaker, and it's a long time from New Year's Day to Easter. It's a long period of time, and I believe that this one day provides some respite, although modest, from one of these long, cold, and harsh winters.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, a paid holiday does cost dollars for Alberta business and Alberta taxpayers. There's absolutely no doubt at all about that. So perhaps we should retain the Family Day weekend and eliminate one of the other existing holidays that does exist in the province of Alberta. Who in 1995 knows the purpose of Victoria Day in May? I daresay that if you walk down the streets of Edmonton or Calgary or Banff or Jasper or Barrhead and ask a hundred people, "What are you celebrating on Victoria Day?" and then ask them, "What's the purpose of it?" – they do know what the importance of family is, if that is a symbolic thing. Thirdly, in the month of May it's warm. People can go out and enjoy themselves. We have daylight saving time in effect at that point in time, but we don't have such a variety in the month of February.

Why do we really need a Boxing Day? We already have Christmas Day as a holiday. My understanding is that we have Boxing Day and it's turned into one of the biggest business days of the year for small business in this country, Mr. Speaker. I look at the millions and millions and millions of dollars that are spent in commerce. I've never had one businessman come to me yet and tell me, "Shut down Boxing Day in the province of Alberta."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Bill, Bill 203, could have been greatly improved. The way it sits right now, if it is approved by this Assembly, it would be perceived by some that the Members

of this Legislative Assembly are attacking the family. This Bill does not do that. If this Bill is approved, as well I think it will be perceived by some as a cave-in by this Assembly to the vested-interest group. I've heard MLAs repeatedly in the last two years say that they were not here to represent a particular vested-interest group. It would be a wrong perception, if this Bill were to be approved, that in fact we are caving in to a vested-interest group in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not supporting this Bill, because I believe that Albertans do enjoy the weekend and are all benefiting from the weekend.

There's one final argument, Mr. Speaker. Some members I've heard say, "Well, this is now and that was then," in terms of their support for this Bill when it was dealt with in this Assembly in 1989 and 1990. I do know that all government MLAs at the time supported the Bill. Not one government MLA opposed the original Family Day Bill. So if they are those who have stood up and used this argument during this debate, that this is now and that was then – there are some certain weaknesses with that argument. It means that this Assembly does not pass legislation based on thorough attentiveness. I was here, and I heard those debates. Secondly, it means that the principles agreed to in 1989 and '90 somehow changed and changed rapidly over five years. I don't know what those principles were that have changed dramatically. Perhaps it would mean as well that the people cannot have confidence in their MLAs because of the frequent changes that this Assembly does.

The citizens of Alberta were not consulted on if they wanted a holiday eliminated. If they had been consulted and given a choice, "Which one of these days do you want eliminated?" it may very well be that the debate on this particular Bill would not have been on this particular day of the year, Mr. Speaker. We might find that they would want a different holiday eliminated than this one. Because of that lack of consultation, I cannot stand here in great confidence and vote in support of the Bill. It may very well be that my constituents would have said to me: "No, get rid of Victoria Day, because we don't know who this Victoria is anymore. Why do we continue to have it?" It seems to me that that ultimate degree of consultation is extremely important.

Tourism is at an all-time low in the province of Alberta in the wintertime. We boom in the summertime. Tourism is low, low, low. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the efforts of the people in Quebec City, as an example, who have a winter festival and take the harshness and coldness of the outdoors and turn it into a positive. We have to do more of that, and it seems to me that during that dark, bleak period from New Year's Day to Easter in fact we should be doing more to encourage people to get out of their buildings and enjoy the outdoors of this province. One way we can do that is by, in fact, perhaps readjusting the holiday schedule in this province. Eliminate one of the others, but retain the holiday weekend in the cold, dark, bleak, long winter in Alberta. Retain the one that we have in February of each year.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, if it means that the other member gets up to speak and closes debate and we vote today, I'll forgo my time to speak.

THE SPEAKER: The Chair was going to ask whether there was going to be unanimous consent to go past 3:30 to allow the time

to be used in the way it is. If the House agrees to that, the hon. member would have a couple of minutes. Is there agreement to allow this matter to be concluded today?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford until 3:30.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'll keep it very, very short. I have spoken to many, many people about this particular Bill. At one time I was going to support the Bill, in fact last week, but since that time, I've had the opportunity to speak to a number of my colleagues in this caucus that I respect and some on that particular side that have fed in as well.

There are a number of points. My constituents made the difference to me, without question. They pointed out to me that it is during the three months of what they call "blah" and that this is a period of time that they get to spend with their families, and they do it. They actually go out there with their families. Now, there are some that have to work within the retail sector, but by and large, from asking questions at these little shops, it's normally done on a voluntary basis, and they get time and a half, or they get double pay.

So really there is no downside that I can see, with the exception that there are a number of federal employees that are shortchanged, because they don't get the advantage of this holiday like the rest of us do.

Thank you. On that note I'll conclude.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek to conclude debate.

3:30

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise again. Family Day does not have to fall on a Monday to be a meaningful show of support for Alberta families. The intent of Family Day was to encourage Alberta families to spend time together and build strong, lasting relationships. We are having to face harsh fiscal realities. Family Day as a statutory holiday cannot be supported in today's fiscal climate. Spending reductions are taking place in all places. I believe that Family Day being moved to a Sunday and celebrated like Mother's Day and Father's Day can be worth while for all Albertans.

At this time I'd like to close debate.

THE SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion for second reading of Bill 203, the Family Day Amendment Act, 1995, 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 3:31 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Fritz	Percy
Black	Gordon	Renner
Brassard	Herard	Rostad
Burgener	Hierath	Severtson
Carlson	Hlady	Smith
Chadi	Langevin	Stelmach
Coutts	Lund	Tannas
Day	Mar	Taylor, L.
Dinning	McClellan	Thurber
Dunford	McFarland	Trynchy
Fischer	Mitchell	West
Forsyth	Oberg	Yankowsky
Friedel	Paszkowski	

Against the motion:

Abdurahman	Germain	Nicol
Amery	Haley	Pham
Beniuk	Hanson	Sapers
Bracko	Henry	Sekulic
Bruseker	Hewes	Soetaert
Calahasen	Jonson	Taylor, N.
Cardinal	Kirkland	Vasseur
Clegg	Kowalski	White
Collingwood	Laing	Wickman
Dickson	Leibovici	Woloshyn
Doerksen	Massey	Zwozdesky
Evans		

Totals: For – 38 Against – 34

[Motion carried; Bill 203 read a second time]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

Referral to Committee on Law and Regulations

502. Moved by Mr. Mitchell:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly refer all regulations enacted pursuant to Acts of the Legislature which received royal assent subsequent to June 15, 1993, to the Standing Committee on Law and Regulations, hereinafter described as "the committee." The committee shall review such regulations said to include but not be limited to the following questions.

- (1) Is the regulation consistent with delegated authority provided in the relevant statute?
- (2) Is the regulation necessarily incidental to the purpose of the statute?
- (3) Is the regulation reasonable in efficient provision of service to Albertans?

The committee shall report to the Legislature on or before May 1, 1995.

[Debate adjourned February 28: Dr. Nicol speaking]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray. [interjections] Order please. The hon. Member for Fort McMurray has been recognized.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Dr. Nicol was speaking.

THE SPEAKER: He didn't want to speak.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: So it should have been Mr. Severtson.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray was up on his feet well before the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: He's just shorter. You didn't see him; that's all.

MR. GERMAIN: That's a good point.

Mr. Speaker, to recap. The Member for Lethbridge-East left off debate. There are only four minutes remaining, as I understand it, in debate on this motion.

I listened carefully when the Member for Calgary-Shaw spoke about how we didn't need a bunch of extra work at the committee stage and made the allegation, I believe, across the floor that it would only be an attempt to take committee fees. Now, I don't know how members of this Assembly feel about committee fees, but I want to speak as a member of this committee. I do not take committee fees. I feel it comes with the territory of being an elected MLA. Each MLA has to make his own decision in that regard.

What we have here is a very sound and very practically constituted committee that has, frankly, in the two years since I've been elected never met and never had any business to do. The reason is that it is either the Executive Council, the cabinet, or the Legislative Assembly that must call this committee and not the chairman of it. As a result, this motion has come forward, Mr. Speaker, suggesting that it would be appropriate to utilize the expertise on this committee to vet some of the regulations that have been passed – the motion speaks only in the past – and indeed, looking in the future, that will be passed and become the law.

One of the things that we've noticed at all levels of government over the last few years, is that more and more of the actual rules that govern our life are not found in the statutes but are found in the fine print, if I can use that expression, underlining the statutes, and that is the regulations. There seems to me, Mr. Speaker, with respect, to be no practical reason for us as a Legislative Assembly not to approve this motion and have the committee review those regulations that have been passed. We might find some good constructive criticism that would allow us to revisit some of them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are my comments on this motion. If my timing is correct, I believe that just about exhausted the time.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe next time I'll have to stand on my chair so I get recognized.

Mr. Speaker, in the brief time I have to speak on this, I would like to agree with members on my side of the House that spoke last week on this and are voting against this motion.

The Member for Calgary-*Buffalo* went on quite at length last time about a select committee of the Legislative Assembly that was in 1973. It was appointed to study the Alberta system on regulations. I'd just like to point out to the members that most of the 32 recommendations were adopted and led to some of the significant changes in the process of making the regulations we have now. There were two, I think, out of the 32 that weren't approved. So I think that stands for a pretty good record of any committee's recommendations made to the House: 30 out of 32 recommendations were accepted.

3:50

One of the regulations was for drafting a style manual for the Acts and the regulations, and an order in council was developed by the Legislative Counsel office on the basis of these recommendations. Today regulations are drafted under the strict control of the Legislative Counsel. Government departments are not involved in the actual drafting process except in the initial stages of establishing the policy for the regulation and at the final stages of approval by the relevant minister.

Mr. Speaker, there is also a procedural guide to the steps which are taken in approving the process. This includes that regulations of a significant nature must be reviewed by the appropriate standing policy committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted for this order of business has now expired.

All those in favour of Motion 502 as proposed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE SPEAKER: The motion fails.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:51 p.m.]

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Hon. members are reminded that we are not voting on Bill 203, but we're voting on the motion as proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung, Motion 502.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

For the motion:

Abdurahman	Hewes	Sekulic
Beniuk	Kirkland	Soetaert
Bruseker	Leibovici	Taylor, N.
Chadi	Massey	Van Binsbergen
Collingwood	Mitchell	Vasseur
Dickson	Nicol	White
Germain	Percy	Wickman
Hanson	Sapers	Zwozdesky

Against the motion:

Ady	Fischer	Paszkowski
Amery	Forsyth	Pham
Black	Friedel	Renner
Brassard	Fritz	Rostad
Burgener	Gordon	Severtson
Calahasen	Hierath	Smith
Cardinal	Hlady	Stelmach
Clegg	Jonson	Taylor, L.
Coutts	Laing	Thurber
Day	Langevin	Trynchy

Dinning	Lund	West
Doerksen	McClellan	Woloshyn
Dunford	McFarland	Yankowsky
Evans		

Totals: For – 24 Against – 40

[Motion lost]

Right-to-Work Legislation

503. Moved by Mr. Friedel:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to initiate a study to examine the implementation of right-to-work legislation in the province of Alberta.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to be able to move and speak to Motion 503. At the outset I'd like to emphasize that this is a motion to investigate the practicality of right-to-work, not to press for any direct legislation. I think we have to discuss this issue thoroughly and look at the impact it would have on this province. The changes that we have implemented over the past couple of years have made Alberta a leader in this country and I think indeed in North America. These changes have come from putting good ideas into action, and this motion supports the search for more good new ideas. Right-to-work can be a very contentious matter. In fact, I know that many people are likely to be concerned about it. I believe it's important that we give them the chance to see what could be expected from such legislation. This issue deserves to be examined thoroughly.

Right-to-work legislation would give an employee the right to get or keep a job without being forced into union membership or any other activity. It would allow workers the freedom to associate with whatever organization they chose, or not to associate if they so wish, without fear for their job. This is not union busting, as some might have you believe. In fact, in many areas where they have right-to-work, an employee is still required to pay union fees if he or she benefits directly from a negotiated union contract. What this is about is giving employees the freedom of choice. We're talking about giving employees the opportunity to get ahead on their own merit and on their own ambition if they want to. I believe that right-to-work is a very positive thing. Besides giving the option to the employee, it can also be attractive to business. Many believe that jurisdictions with right-to-work have better standards of living than those without.

This type of legislation is not uncommon or unusual. It's been made available in quite a number of countries. In 1991 New Zealand passed the Employment Contracts Act, which includes the right to work. That country has gone through many dramatic changes, and this was one of the improvements that they felt was necessary. Giving people freedom has always been the best way to achieve prosperity.

Another country that implemented right-to-work is Britain. Through the 1980s the Thatcher government made very significant reforms in its labour laws. Through a series of steps they progressively banned the closed shop. In 1982 the government banned union labour only and union recognition requirements in contracts. Dismissal for nonmembership became unfair if the agreement was not approved by an overwhelming number of employees. Then from 1980 to 1983 those British industries with closed shops suffered the highest unemployment in the country.

By giving increased freedom to its citizens, the government helped many weather that period much better than they would have under the old system.

The reforms continued in 1988, when the government removed all statutory support for the closed shop. This made it illegal in all circumstances to fire an employee for nonmembership in a trade union. Then in 1980 the last reform took place. It was now unlawful to refuse employment on any grounds related to union membership. What's important to note here, Mr. Speaker, is the progression of the reforms. This allows labour groups and employers the time to adjust to the new laws and see what effect they were having, and that's what Motion 503 is all about.

As lawmakers we need to understand the issue before we can legislate. That's why I propose a study into the matter. If the right-to-work laws can make Alberta a better place, then we ought to find out. The reforms in Britain appear to have had a very positive result: wage differentials appeared to narrow much faster, and productivity has increased during the last decade. These are the kinds of results I'd like to see for us here in Alberta.

New Zealand and Britain are not alone in their conviction that people deserve this freedom. The European convention on human rights also has right-to-work statements. It gives every employer and every worker the freedom to join or not to join professional organizations or trade unions of their choice without any personal or occupational damage being thereby suffered by them.

4:10

In the United States 21 states now have right-to-work legislation, and at this point the findings on the effects of right-to-work have been fairly positive. The national institute for labour relations compared the wages and income of these 21 states with right-to-work legislation against those without it. The results were definitely in favour of right-to-work. The institute found that the average worker in a right-to-work state was better off. It showed that the average urban family in a right-to-work state had \$1,377 more per year in after-tax buying power than in non right-to-work states. The institute also found out that right-to-work creates more jobs. In fact, over a 10-year period non right-to-work states lost over 1 and a half million manufacturing jobs, while right-to-work states in the same period of time created over a quarter of a million new jobs.

A specific example of a state reaping the benefits of right-to-work is Idaho. They passed their legislation in 1986. Mr. Speaker, I think it's particularly relevant to look at this state as Idaho passed its law so recently. I think it's a good example of what this legislation can do. This last year the national institute for labour relations' research study about Idaho was published. It stated, and I quote, that Idaho has enjoyed growth in virtually all major areas of business. Unemployment is down 30 percent, wages have risen by over \$500 million, and state coffers have realized a \$77 million surplus.

The report also shows that in the six years before right-to-work laws were passed, Idaho's manufacturing employment fell by 2.1 percent, but in the six years after right-to-work it has risen by 32.8 percent. This was the fourth largest growth rate in the United States. In comparison, neighbouring Montana, with no right-to-work laws, had only an 8 percent increase over the same six-year period.

Idaho's revenues from state taxes have also risen despite the fact that their tax rates are lower than those of any other western state. Personal income growth has also been substantial. In 1991-92 personal incomes rose over 7.3 percent, well above the national average of 5.1 percent. The only two states above Idaho

in this category also have right-to-work legislation. Mr. Speaker, I believe these statistics are some that we cannot ignore.

Another interesting fact is that businesses tend to relocate in areas with right-to-work. The Fantus company in the United States, which is the country's largest industrial relocation firm, reports that about half of all businesses looking to relocate won't even consider moving somewhere without a right-to-work law. In fact, 91.3 percent of all surveyed businesses say that right-to-work laws have a positive impact on businesses looking to relocate.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta could use right-to-work along with its many other advantages to attract businesses and new jobs. Instead of tax incentives and concessions, which other provinces use and of course their taxpayers pay for, Alberta can use its own merit to attract them. Employers would be given more flexibility to hire the best qualified workers, and workers could enhance their ability to get ahead if they want to.

The effects of right-to-work appear to be positive for many countries, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I propose Motion 503. I believe that we need to look at every way of making this province stronger and more prosperous. A comprehensive study needs to be done to examine the applicability of right-to-work legislation in Alberta. May I remind all of you that this is a motion for the study of right-to-work, not the direct implementation of it. I believe that we should all examine this issue very thoroughly.

Alberta has always been ready to enhance its economic potential and to better serve its citizens. I think the Alberta advantage stands to become even stronger than it is now. With new businesses, increased jobs, and higher standards of living, we can make Alberta an even better place to live. The potential benefits, in my opinion, are just too great to ignore. We have to study this issue. For the benefit of all Albertans I encourage all of my colleagues here to vote for Motion 503.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, I wonder if we might get unanimous consent to briefly revert to Introduction of Guests. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. This is one of these rare occasions when residents of downtown Calgary make it all the way north to the Legislature. I'd like to introduce three Calgarians. One of them, Marilyn Sealy*, is a constituent and has proven to be a very able and committed advocate for low-income Albertans. With Marilyn are two other members of the Calgary Poverty Focus Group, and they are Jody Chorney* and Mike Bonner*. I'd ask all three of them to stand and receive the usual gracious welcome from members of the Assembly.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also actually like to introduce Audrey Cormack of the Alberta Federation of Labour, Rob Hartmann of the firefighters association, and from

*These spellings could not be verified at the time of publication.

CUPE local 30 – and I've forgotten your name. If they can please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**
(continued)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark on the motion.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I try to sit back and listen without getting too emotional . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: That'll be a first.

MS LEIBOVICI: That'll be a first.

. . . in terms of the particular motion that's in front of us this afternoon. I listened to some of the words that the hon. member used. He talked about "the search for more good . . . ideas." So there is a presupposition in terms of the motion that's brought forward. He talked about, well, we just need to examine this thoroughly and we don't really want to do anything more than study this. Then I thought to myself: well, why do we have a Department of Labour if that's not the function of the Department of Labour? In fact, has that happened with regards to the Department of Labour? Have they in fact ever done a study? And sure, lo and behold, this summer they did a study on right-to-work. That's not a motion that needs to come forward to this Legislative Assembly.

The member talked about, well, this is just freedom of association, it's not union busting, don't worry about it, and then went on to talk about how attractive this could be. Quite honestly, I found the words from the member to be deceptive. These are words that are romancing words. These are words that are: don't worry, trust me, and it'll all be fine.

He then talked about New Zealand and Britain and how wonderful life is in New Zealand and Britain now, when the facts as we know them are that New Zealand has the highest suicide rate in the world, that it has an incredibly high unemployment rate, that bankruptcies are on the rise in New Zealand. This is the country that we wish to emulate.

He talked about the fact that we need to make Alberta a better place, and this is a major issue of differentiation between us, the Liberals and the Conservatives. When I hear a statement like Alberta should be a better place, I think: for whom? When I look across, Mr. Speaker, I see that that "for whom" are very specialized interest groups, that the for whom is not the average worker, the for whom is not children, the for whom is not seniors, but it is for the special corporate interest sectors that this government wishes to ensure that Alberta is a better place.

Now, the member went on to talk about this as going to create more jobs and used the Idaho example. Well, in a study that we have with regards to the 21 states – this is a study that's put forward by the AFL-CIO – what it says about Idaho, this wonderful example of a right-to-work state, is:

Ranks 45th in average annual pay and 39th in personal income.

Forty-fifth out of 51 states, and that's the state that we wish to emulate. This is the example.

It is also ranked 39th in the level of maximum weekly workers' compensation benefits . . . It is rated third lowest . . . and we're heading that way in Alberta

. . . in the level of per pupil public school expenditures. [It] has the 15th highest number of citizens not covered by health insurance.

And as we move closer to a two-tiered health care system, Albertans will be there too.

It ranks 14th highest [out of 51 states] in the number of personal bankruptcies. [It] also has the 6th worst rate of on-the-job fatalities.

Those are people who have lost their lives. Sixth worst rate.

[It's] among the 20 worst jurisdictions in terms of the overall health of its children and level of average weekly unemployment benefits available to those out of work . . . Idaho ranks in the bottom half of all states with reference to: weekly earnings for production workers; the level of poverty within the state; and the overall general health of its citizens as compared to other states.

I could take another state. I could take Iowa: "ranks 44th in average annual pay and is 36th in per capita income." Another right-to-work state. I can take Kansas: "ranks 35th in average annual pay and is only one of seven states whose minimum wage is below the federal rate." Louisiana:

Ranks 46th in per capita income. The state has the distinction of having the highest level of poverty in the nation. It is also one of only seven states in the country that has no state minimum wage law.

Interestingly enough, for those avid readers of the Fraser Institute, guess what the Fraser Institute is advocating? To get rid of minimum wage laws. Right?

4:20

Nebraska: "ranks near the bottom (46th) in average annual pay and 39th in weekly earnings." Mississippi, another right-to-work state, "is dead last (51st) in per capita income, 50th in weekly earnings in manufacturing and ranks 49th in average annual pay." Now, these are states that we wish to emulate. This is what's called creating the Alberta advantage, if we follow these states; right?

I can go on, but perhaps what I should do is send these on. For those members who are not aware of the 21 states, let me read them out to you: Alabama; Arizona; Arkansas; Florida, "47th in the level of average hourly earnings in manufacturing [and again] one of only seven states in the nation with no minimum wage law"; Georgia, another one of those seven states with no minimum wage law; Nebraska; Mississippi; Nevada; North Carolina; North Dakota, "ranks next to last (50th) in annual income and 45th in weekly earnings in manufacturing"; South Carolina; South Dakota, another wonderful state we should emulate, "ranks dead last in annual income and weekly earnings in manufacturing"; Tennessee; Texas; Utah; Virginia; Wyoming.

Now, when the hon. members from the government side talk about the Alberta advantage, I would hope that this is not what they're talking about. When we look at what the Department of Labour indicates with regards to right-to-work in some of the studies they've done, they also indicate that there is no economic advantage. It seems that the only thing this government understands is dollars and bottom line. The Department of Labour of this government has indicated that there is no economic advantage at all to right-to-work.

So why do we need another study, I ask the hon. member. In his speech he did not indicate at all. My contention is that we want a study so that the doors can be opened, so that maybe we can find an example somewhere in this world which says that right-to-work is a good thing. Maybe there is some place. New Zealand, we already know, has had problems, Britain has had problems, 21 states have had problems, yet we still want to do a study. The Department of Labour says that when they looked at right-to-work states – and this was a 1988 source they quoted – the number of new business incorporations was 11,310 in the

right-to-work states, in other states 15,360. So you get more business incorporations in non so-called right-to-work states. The unemployment rate, which is what the hon. member referred to, is also higher in the right-to-work states: 5.7 percent to 5.3 percent. That was 1988. The statistics go on. We can show a trend.

Now, the other bit of information with regards to the right-to-work laws is that since 1955 in the United States there have only been three states which have decided that perhaps this is a good idea. All the other states had their laws in place before 1955. Now, I would like to think, as we approach the millennium, as we approach the year 2000, that we're going to look ahead, that indeed we are going to look for some good ideas, but that we should not look at old ideas, ideas that have been proven not to work.

Now, why would somebody want this so-called right-to-work, which is really a euphemism for union busting? You don't need to beat around the bush. That's all it means. Right now if I am in a place where there is a union and if for religious reasons or for some reason I do not wish to be a member of that union, I don't have to. I do have to pay my dues, and those dues can go to a charity or some designated institution, but I don't have to be a member of that union. I have that right.

When we look at what unions are and what unions are about – and if I can make a parallel to what happens in this Legislative Assembly – unions are the epitome of democracy. For the members to think unions are anything else but, then look at how a union works and look at the laws that are set up – I don't necessarily agree with all those laws – in this province.

In order for a union to certify any of the members, there has to be a vote. In order for there to be an executive of a union, there has to be a vote. In order for a collective agreement to be agreed to, there has to be a vote. Is there anything undemocratic in any of what I have just said?

MR. DINNING: Is there a secret ballot?

MS LEIBOVICI: Yes, actually it is a secret vote for certification. Yes, it is a secret vote.

MR. DINNING: A secret ballot on collective bargaining?

MS LEIBOVICI: For certification it is.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Hon. members, we'd like to hear the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark in the last minute remaining for this business.

MS LEIBOVICI: The union, as I indicated before I was so rudely interrupted, is the epitome of democracy, and one of the reasons this government does not like that idea is that they have no use for democracy. We have seen it over and over and over again in this Legislative Assembly. When you look at this government's record on closure, you know why we suddenly need to study this right-to-work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members are reminded that we are in fact debating a motion of a private member, not a government motion.

We now have come to the time limit for consideration of this business.

head: Government Bills and Orders
head: Committee of the Whole
4:30

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. Hon. members are reminded that we are going to continue with the convention that only one member be standing and talking at the same time.

For the benefit of those in the gallery, to let you know, this is the less formal part of the Legislature. Committee stage allows members to remove their jackets, to move around the Chamber, and to sit at desks other than their own. They may only speak out loud, though, in their own place when the occasion warrants.

Bill 12
Marketing of Agricultural Products
Amendment Act, 1995

THE CHAIRMAN: Before inviting hon. members to make comments, observations, or amendments, we'll call on the hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to make his opening comments at this stage.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've appreciated the comments from the Liberal caucus as well as our own.

The basic situation here is to make a clear definition of 24(1)(a) and 24(1)(a)(ii), and I think that's really the critical aspect of this.

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with what the minister has just told us, that this Bill goes a long way toward basically giving us a better definition of the process through which plans can be amended, the process through which a plan can be terminated. It brings out the issue of the plebiscite that's necessary for these to go on. This basically is going to create a situation now which will give a lot clearer operational pattern and expectations for both the executive running the board and the members in the field who have to live by the plan that's been developed.

Mr. Chairman, there appears to be yet one case that is left out of the current amendment as it's presented to us. With that in mind, I would like to submit to the Legislature a subsequent amendment to this Act.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We'll take a brief moment, then, for the pages to hand out copies. The committee is reminded that the Table does have, in fact, the amendments that the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East is proposing. They are signed by the member and by Parliamentary Counsel, and they're in order. If you'll just give us a moment, Lethbridge-East, we'll commence.

Everyone now appears to have a copy or will soon have it. We would like to invite, then, the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East to continue on in explanation of his proposed amendments.

Can I presume, hon. member – sorry to interrupt you after inviting you to begin – you're taking them as one amendment?

DR. NICOL: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

DR. NICOL: Yes. [interjection] No. This is an amendment. They have to be put together as a package; otherwise, they don't

work. So I think it has to go as a single amendment in two parts to the currently presented amendment to the agriculture marketing . . . [interjection] I'm not speaking loud enough yet? Is that helping?

First of all, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to apologize to the minister that I didn't get this to his desk prior to the session today. It was just something that came up in a comment over the weekend, and I worked with the Legislative Counsel yesterday and this morning to get it put in place. If I can take some moments to explain the situation, I hope the minister will consider this as an option and allow it to become part of Bill 12, which deals with this possible change.

I looked over the amendments that were presented by the minister in connection with the process to change plans. Effectively, they cover the areas that normally exist in terms of plan changes and in terms of regulating control of the product, control of the production; in other words, all of the basic aspects that deal with the product that's currently authorized under the marketing agreement. But what we see, if we go through this, is that essentially there is still a situation that needs to be dealt with in terms of an expansion of the jurisdiction of the plan. This is a situation which I didn't see basically being covered here.

If I could take a minute and give as an example the situation that arose when the broiler producers decided they wanted to take in the heavy broilers that were being raised to produce the large breast required for the grilled-chicken type uses. The producers that originally started in this area had to deal with contracts that they developed on their own with the processors. The marketing board itself did not want to get involved, but after they saw that this was becoming a very lucrative part of the chicken meat production industry, they proceeded to amend their own business plan to incorporate chicken meat as opposed to broilers. They then had a vote of their members, but the people who were actually out in the community producing the heavy broilers for the specific market weren't treated fairly when they were brought into the marketing board.

We see a situation arising where this kind of process could occur again in the sense that there now appears to be a new type of poultry meat product coming up on the horizon, and it's called free-range chicken. It's now starting in a specialty market. It's being raised by some people who are now outside of the current marketing board. What this amendment does is it basically says that if the definition of the product defined by the marketing board is to be expanded to include another product, even though it's still maybe chicken or maybe milk or maybe whatever, it has to be done with the concurrence of a plebiscite of the producers who are affected by the inclusion, not by the producers who are already in the marketing board.

This way what we're going to have is a situation where the new producers effectively are almost, essentially, creating their own new marketing board, but they're saying, "We'll be glad to do it under the auspices or under the umbrella of an existing marketing board; we'll move in under their jurisdiction, under their management, under their process," rather than having their product dragged into the current marketing board without them having the full authority and jurisdiction to cast the vote that says to go ahead and do it.

What this amendment would do, then, is essentially expand the intent of the minister's motion, which, as I said in second reading, is very good. It will clarify a lot of the aspects of the plan change process for our boards, commissions, and councils. So I would like to say that this I think is something that we should support.

I would ask all of the members, as they look at this amendment, to look at it in the context of the clarification that the minister's amendment is making and say, "Gee, this amendment actually adds to it." I would ask for their support on it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4:40

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. minister of agriculture.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, I wish we'd had some opportunity to consult on this because I think I'm not totally clear on the objective here. Our original intention was to specifically designate the meaning and the operations of boards and the meaning and the operations of commissions. It is my understanding of the intention of the amendments here that we are now going to break off into little segments of the various boards and commissions and to identify various aspects of that. I don't think that's really what's wanted out there, I don't think that's what's needed out there, and I can't see any reason to support this.

What we're really asking for is a clear definition that a board is not a commission and a commission is not a board. That's all we're asking for. We're not asking for additional identification of free-run chicken, or we're going to have drumstick chicken or chicken breast chicken, as was alluded to. I don't think that's what's necessary out there. We're to the point where we're trying to bring things together, not trying to set up other little areas, so I cannot support this amendment.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Chairman, I assume I get a chance to speak again under committee. Is that correct?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. We're in committee, hon. member, and the rules, as we've mentioned, are a bit relaxed. If you run your 20 minutes, you can sit down, then stand up and begin another 20.

DR. NICOL: Yes. Thank you.

In clarification of what the minister was just asking, the amendments he has proposed deal with specific aspects of how the plan, under section 24 that they're dealing with, can be amended or terminated. "Amended" talks about "the control or regulation of production or marketing, or both." It doesn't specifically clarify an expansion of the product line, almost.

You know, there was a lot of confusion created in the industry when the broiler industry moved to include in its mandate the heavy broilers for the specialty product that was being developed by people outside the board. My amendment would in essence enhance and support the kinds of things that the minister is suggesting under subsection (i) of his amendment, but it would just say that anytime they're expanding the product definition, it would allow for the plebiscite as well. So in essence what we're doing is providing a clearer definition of conditions under which case the plebiscite needs to be called. Also, when a plebiscite directly affects a group of producers who are currently outside the board, then they should be the ones who are involved in the plebiscite.

Mr. Chairman, I think if the minister would like further explanations of this, further discussion on it, I would suggest that we might want to delay the motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Rather than delay, which would be unparliamentary, you're looking for "adjourn."

DR. NICOL: Okay. Then, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that we adjourn the debate on this so that the minister can attend to

further discussion on the amendment and deal with it at a later time.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East has moved that we now adjourn debate on Bill 12. All those in agreement, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: The motion to adjourn is defeated.
The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there seems to be a lack of understanding as to what was intended here. As I've listened to the debate and we've looked at the agricultural industry, if we look at the push in that industry today, it's certainly to diversify. As I see this amendment, it is simply an attempt, a contingency so to speak, to ensure that we incorporate or include some areas or some products that in fact can't be covered here. In my reading of this particular amendment, it does not detract from the principle that the minister is attempting to capture.

I would suggest and the way I view it, Mr. Chairman, is that, if anything, it expands it a bit to ensure that if in fact there are new products coming in, they can also be included in the exact same principle that he's trying to envelope the rest of the industry in.

With that explanation, that is the reason, Mr. Chairman, I would support this particular amendment.

[Motion on amendment lost]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 12 agreed to]

MR. PASZKOWSKI: I move the reporting of Bill 12 when the committee rises.

[Motion carried]

Bill 13 Bee Act

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Dunvegan to give the preamble before we entertain further discussions and amendments.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we're trying to do with this Act, as I said in second reading when I made the statement, is get out of beekeeping and leave the beekeepers without government intrusion. But when the Bill was processed, there was a little reference that we should have taken out of the definitions, so I want to propose a very simple amendment to the Bee Act.

Section 1(f) is amended by striking out "or controlled bee diseases." Those words should not have been put in there, and it was a problem.

Everybody should have a copy of that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The Chair just wants to determine that everybody has a copy and also to say that the Table understands that this amendment has been signed by the appropriate Parliamentary Counsel and we have signed copies.

With that preamble, we will allow Dunvegan to continue with the explanation of his amendment.

MR. CLEGG: Well, I'd pretty well done it before you cut me off, Mr. Chairman. It's a very minor amendment. It's a deletion more than an amendment, but in order to make it concurrent with the Act itself, we have to have a definition change there. It's something that was overlooked in the drafting. So I would like support for the amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. On the amendment, any comments?

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out that when we deal with these Bills, it's a little frustrating to watch when a superb idea comes forward from a man of wisdom on this particular side of the House and it's treated so lightly and just discarded when there is some real meaning to that. I would hope that the minister of agriculture respects the comments that were made. Possibly he can bring them back in some other form if he can't find himself able to support a member of the opposition, despite how good it might be.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, are you referring to the amendment that's before us?

MR. WICKMAN: I'm talking generally about amendments. There's an amendment on the floor, and we had been discussing an amendment. I'm just pointing out the irony of the amendment.

4:50

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, if you wish to speak to the amendment on the Act proposed by the hon. Member for Dunvegan, we would be pleased to hear that. But if you're going to generalize about amendments and who should participate in them and that kind of thing, this isn't really the right time to do that.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I respect your advice. I simply wanted to make a point. I think I made the point.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Chairman, I have to respond.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is asking to speak on something that we've already ruled is inappropriate?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Well, I think the allegation is that I've treated this with arrogance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is this a point of order?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: It's a point of order.

THE CHAIRMAN: On a point of order, then, if you'd care to cite it.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Standing Order 23(h)(i). I have great concern over allegations such as this, because here we have an urban MLA who did not speak to the issue, who had ample opportunity to speak to the issue. I felt I answered that question in a fair and a responsible way. The reasons I gave are those that would indeed impact directly on boards and on commissions. If we want to have a board for chicken feathers, if we want to have a board for chicken wings, if we want to have a board for chicken thighs – that's what you were advocating. Now, if that's being fair and if that's the responsible way, that's fine. [interjection]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order. We now have two people who are essentially talking about a previous Bill. They've each made their own point in spite of the fact that they really were out of order. So if the committee would ignore that. As in a Perry Mason movie, to the jury, please ignore those remarks.

Debate Continued

THE CHAIRMAN: We are on Bill 13, the Bee Act, and we have before us an amendment as proposed by the hon. Member for Dunvegan. If you have further comments on the amendment to this Bill 13, the Bee Act, please be upstanding.

If there are no further comments, then, on the amendment to Bill 13 as proposed by the hon. Member for Dunvegan, all those in favour of this amendment, please . . .

MR. CHADI: Mr. Chairman, I haven't had an opportunity. Allow me. It's rather simple, and I'll be rather brief.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper wishes to speak to the amendment?

MR. CHADI: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a concern. I just have a comment to make, and hopefully my concerns on the amendment will be clarified. I would ask the hon. Member for Dunvegan perhaps to respond with respect to the amendment, because quite clearly subsection (f) states that "beekeeping equipment," in the definition of, "means hives, parts of hives and bee containers, that are capable of transmitting bee diseases or controlled bee diseases." Now, within that definition of beekeeping equipment, we're about to remove "or controlled bee diseases." Quite frankly, I don't understand why it was in there and why we're taking it out now. Could I get an explanation, perhaps, with respect to this amendment, why it is that we're taking it out?

Thank you.

MR. CLEGG: Well, I thank the hon. member for those comments. It's my understanding that it changes no intent of the Bill. The Bill wasn't in harmony with the definitions; that's why. When we talk about controlled bee diseases, then that's something that is controlled. What we're trying to do here is give the right to people to be able to import them from B.C. into Alberta without all the intrusions.

[Motion on amendment carried]

THE CHAIRMAN: On the Bill itself, the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a Bill where I think the minister and the member that proposed the Bill have worked well with the industry. It puts in place a lot of safety precautions and a lot of safety conditions that clearly define some of the problems the industry was having and opens it up to meet the conditions they want. I'd recommend everybody in the Legislature support it.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Taking that direction from the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, I will vote in favour of the Bill. I only want to pass one constructive criticism or comment on to the minister and to the sponsor of the Bill, and that is the issue that is found on page 3, section 4(3) of the new Bill. To refresh the memory of the Assembly – and I know the Assembly is now rustling paper as they turn to page 3 of the Bill and that section.

The comment that I want to make in the House, Mr. Chairman, relates to page 3, section 4(3). What that contemplates is that there will be certain issues that a beekeeper may take to the Court of Queen's Bench. The problem which that section presents is that if you think about where beehives are found, I suspect that they are mostly found in rural areas of Alberta. In fact, the minister commented to that extent earlier. That being the case, one has to look at whether it is appropriate for a beekeeper to have to appear in court after only three day's notice. I want to say to the minister that that is an inordinately short-notice time period. In fact, in the corresponding Alberta Rules of Court the time period in which someone must be given an originating notice of motion is in fact 10 days. So if you took a clue from that section, you might want to say to beekeepers everywhere: we're going to give you more than three days to come to court, if we want to take you to court. That is the only constructive criticism that I would make to the minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Just in response, we have to realize the nature of the business, and I appreciate the hon. member's advice here. I also appreciate that three days is not a lengthy period of time, but we have to also understand and appreciate the nature of the honey industry and the beekeeping industry. What we're trying to do here is be careful of diseases, be careful of the propagation of diseases and the dangers that that presents. With the industry, because of the reproduction, because of the ability of the bees to travel over a large area, irreparable damage can be done unless some immediate and early action is taken. It's the nature of the industry.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 13 as amended agreed to]

Bill 14 Irrigation District Rehabilitation Endowment Fund Amendment Act, 1995

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development wishes to make comments?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't really have additional comments to make over and above the ones that

I made at second reading. This is something that's critical. This is something important. This is something we have communicated on extensively with all the irrigation districts. This is something that the irrigation districts themselves have indicated that they want, they like, and is something that will indeed assist the industry to continue to function. So I'll listen to the hon. members from across the way or any of our members.

5:00

Bill 13
Bee Act
(continued)

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Dunvegan rose at the same time as the minister to give an explanation, and as he has an interest in this area, I thought the minister was requesting that member to make additional comments.

The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't rise with additional comments on this. I just rose because I thought it was procedure that I should have said that I move that Bill 13 be reported. That's why I was standing up.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. How subtle you can be. We'll have to stop for a moment, and the Chair apologizes.

[Motion carried]

THE CHAIRMAN: Now back to Bill 14.

Bill 14
Irrigation District Rehabilitation Endowment Fund
Amendment Act, 1995
(continued)

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said in the discussion on second reading of this Bill, this is a process that was negotiated with the irrigation districts. It represents basically giving back to the irrigation districts dollars that they had put into an endowment to support their rehabilitation program. I think the question that we have to beg in terms of how the process was undertaken is how a group in the community could be enticed to give up a situation where they are going to have money under their own control, which would have been larger than this had the whole plan been put in place, yet they end up now with these dollars being returned to them. Now they're totally at the pleasure – I guess is a way of putting it – of the Legislature for their funds every year as the annual appropriations are debated.

So what we've seen now is essentially a group that has gotten into a situation where they're going to be politically at risk each year, even though the intention is that possibly these dollars may not have been sufficient to carry out the program. It might have been more appropriate to have negotiated a situation where these dollars could have been left in place, and then supplemental dollars could have come out of the general revenue fund to provide for the program. I guess it's a question of the process, but in the end result, given the negotiations, I would suggest everyone support this Bill.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 14 agreed to]

MR. PASZKOWSKI: I move that Bill 14 be reported.

[Motion carried]

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports the following: Bill 12 and Bill 14. The committee reports the following with some amendments: Bill 13. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this day for the official records of the Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
head: **Second Reading**
Bill 1
Alberta Taxpayer Protection Act

[Adjourned debate March 6: Mr. Day]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 1. I'll start my comments, when I look at Bill 1, by quoting the Premier and comments that he made when we were debating in this House not that long ago Bill 201, which was the Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act, 1995. At that point, when the Premier spoke on that Bill, he used these terms, and I read from *Hansard*. I voted against the Bill because it was redundant. "It was nothing but a cheap political trick." I would suggest that the words the Premier used to describe Bill 201 describe his Bill very well.

Now, this, as you know, is nothing more than an attempt at a political trick. It's an attempt to say that if those opposition members don't vote for this particular Bill – it will be twisted of course to suggest that we're in favour of a sales tax. Well, that's absolutely nonsense, Mr. Speaker. In this case the Conservatives are about two years behind us one more time, because if you will recall the election of '93, that was certainly included in our platform. We advocated at that point that a referendum should exist before any sort of sales tax was introduced in this province. So again we were leaders. We have been upstaged in a few of our very fine ideas and platforms from the last election, and I concede that the government has done a good job of stealing those good ideas. To me it really doesn't matter, because if it's for the benefit of Albertans, then I'm willing to support it regardless of where it comes from.

Unfortunately, this truly is nothing more than a political trick, Mr. Speaker, and any that have been involved in politics over the years, be it at the municipal level or other levels – I think my friend from Fort McMurray probably said it best. I didn't have the opportunity to read his debates, but I've heard his comments on this matter. Really, what we're saying is that we're attempting to govern from the grave. We're attempting to handicap somebody that follows this government into the position of power next time by suggesting this legislation would prevent that. We know that with the stroke of a pen we can eliminate that quite easily. We just introduce new legislation and chuck it out. So it truly is a political trick, and it's a poor one, quite frankly, when we look at it.

We wonder why we're attempting to handicap the next government. I had to wonder, in fact, whether the sitting members were concerned that they were going to lose the next election and that the Liberals may take over, so they were attempting at that point to handicap our attempt to govern. Well, we would never introduce a sales tax unless we went to the people. When I say that, you would think that I would support this particular Bill, but I support it on principle. It is trickery. It's nothing more than manipulation and attempting to work the political press, which we're so concerned with in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can tell from my comments that I think the Bill is redundant. I think the Bill certainly will not achieve anything that in fact won't be achieved with good government. If we were to look back at some of the other legislation, the legislation that comes to mind as I chat here is the Act that preceded the Deficit Elimination Act. Now, that was an Act that was introduced. It wasn't fulfilled by the government of the day, so it became redundant. What we're talking about here is that same redundancy, and I would suggest that in fact it's a lot of wasted paper up to this particular point.

5:10

When we go back through any of the Legislature Buildings, where legislation generally comes from, you'll find that there's more integrity involved when you bring forth legislation and don't attempt to handicap the next government. The debates will go on, and they'll go on from one party to the next party, one government to the next government, depending on what year it is, and that's always a healthy discussion, Mr. Speaker. There's no need, in my mind, to attempt to lead or govern into the future. Policies that are set in place by this government are supposed to do that if they are quality policies.

I would suggest that this would be one of those very weak policies. I think if you talk to the members on the side opposite, you will find that this is not a Bill they feel is a great Bill in principle and integrity. They know full well that it is a waste of our debating time here simply because when we take over power next term, it will probably be left to sit on the books and grow mold on it, I would expect.

As I say, no matter how you view it, it is political trickery, and there is a great deal of redundancy involved with it. That being the case, Mr. Speaker, I find myself in the position that even though I know there will be attempts to twist it and indicate that by not supporting it we the Liberal side intend to introduce a sales tax, that is absolutely patently incorrect and wrong. When we formulated our policies and took them to the public in '93, we put our policies and positions in print at that particular point and campaigned on them. Had we been elected to the position of power, you would have found the integrity on this side certainly would have introduced them. We had no shame about bringing

our policies to the public, and I would suggest that that's why most of these members were elected: based on those policies.

I give assurance to the people of Alberta that we as Liberals have no intentions of ever introducing a sales tax. Even though it will be twisted and a political spin will be put on it to suggest that because we don't support it, we are in fact for a sales tax, Mr. Speaker, I have the courage to stand up and defend my opposition to the Bill to anyone, the people of Alberta or the press, and to indicate that it's not my intention, by not supporting this Bill, to introduce a sales tax. It's a simple means of saying that this is a waste of time and paper. It's redundancy.

We talk about debates in this House. We would like to have good, solid debate, and we would like not to waste the Assembly's time. We have been criticized many times over for chatting ad nauseam about some issues. Mr. Speaker, if we tally up the amount of debate that the introduction of a Bill that has built-in redundancy takes, I would suggest that the government side is very guilty of the same thing that we've been accused of.

Mr. Speaker, I won't support the Bill. I will stand before the public and indicate the very sound reasons why I didn't. The electorate of this province is very, very intelligent. They will certainly be able to see through the political trickery that's involved here. I would give the government side a B for attempting to put us into a squeeze on it and suggest that you will find that the courage of conviction over here will probably carry us through the day.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I would turn the floor over to someone else.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to add a few comments, too, following the Member for Leduc. When we talk in terms of fiscal responsibility, there is no question that not only in Alberta, not only in Canada there is a whole new attitude about money management. We've seen in the past how many governments, not only the government of Alberta but many governments including the federal government and previous federal governments, be they Liberal, be they Tory, had some difficulties with money management and, of course, ran up debts and spent money that wasn't theirs, money that hadn't yet been collected, thereby leading us into this situation that we've now got ourselves into.

I think that when it comes right down to it, we all agree. It's no different than running our household. We have objectives: to live within our means and to pay down the mortgages, whether we amortize those mortgages, whatever. We realize that our dream in life is to not have any deficit, to be debt free, and to be able to pay cash for everything, that we go on from there, and we leave behind what we have. We leave behind a legacy for the next generation. That's what this government is doing, and that's what other governments are starting do.

Let's look for a minute, Mr. Speaker, and let's give a little bit of credit where credit is due. It was interesting that just – what? – two days ago in this House, our new leader, the leader now leading this particular caucus and this party, stood up and asked questions about the Neon Rider, and the second day he asked questions about the Neon Rider again. The Premier of the province stood up and acknowledged that he listened to the Leader of the Opposition. He said that that's what the purpose of the opposition is, to speak out, and when the government hears something good, they'll listen. And they listened.

Our previous leader, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, spoke out two years ago on the need for legislation to force any talk of approval of a sales tax to a plebiscite. Obviously, the Premier said: hey, that's a good idea; that's what opposition is for; give us good ideas and we'll run with them. The government has now decided to run with that particular proposal that first came from the mouth of the Leader of the Official Opposition, and I commend the government for listening to us.

Let's not play this little game, as the previous speaker said, that they simply intend to try and pull a little bit of snookery to make us look like the bad guys, that we in fact want to go out and be the big-time spenders, which is not the case at all. The record of the previous Leader of the Opposition has been fiscal responsibility, money management all the way down, and the same holds true for the new leader.

We all want to accomplish the same goal, Mr. Speaker: wipe out that deficit; pay down the debt. It's a question of how we achieve that. Fighting the deficit: we would have done it a bit differently. We would have done it smarter; we would have done it with less pain, with less hurt. In terms of eliminating the debt, we would have defined the debt somewhat differently, and we would have attacked it differently. I have some difficulty with how the government arrived at the so-called net debt, which is now going to be amortized downwards over the next 25 years. Net debt, of course, is including a certain valuation for the heritage trust fund that a lot of economists don't agree with in

terms of the government. So even 25 years down the road, following what the government has done, does not necessarily mean we're going to be debt free.

Mr. Speaker, I will give credit to the government. They have picked up an idea that has come forward from us; they're acting on that idea. Unfortunately, there's a little bit of snookery going on. It's the way it's been preached to the members for a period of time.

I'm going to conclude my remarks before I move adjournment by just referring to the current Provincial Treasurer, who speaking about Alberta September 20, 1994, made the remark: normal doesn't live in Alberta anymore. What more can I say? It becomes obvious from the government's approach to deficit management and such that normal doesn't live here anymore.

On that note, I'm going to adjourn debate for the day.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has moved that we now adjourn debate on Bill 1. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:20 p.m.]