

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 3, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/04/03

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank You for Your abundant blessings to our province and ourselves.

We ask You to ensure to us Your guidance and the will to follow it.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table a two-page petition signed by Albertans again urging the government "not to make sexual orientation a part of the Individual's Rights Protection Act."

head: **Notices of Motions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to give oral notice that at the appropriate time on the Order Paper today I will rise and ask for the unanimous consent of the Legislative Assembly to allow us to debate and approve the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly congratulate the new municipality of Wood Buffalo and extend to them the best wishes of the Legislative Assembly on their future endeavours as a municipal government.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also at the appropriate time I intend under Standing Order 40 to ask today for unanimous consent to consider the following:

Be it resolved that this Assembly congratulate Douglas Cardinal, Dr. Maggie Hodgson, and Marie Smallface Marule on receiving the 1995 national aboriginal achievement award.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

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

### Bill 5 Public Health Amendment Act, 1995

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 5, being the Public Health Amendment Act, 1995.

This Bill will provide legal authority for qualified registered nurses to provide extended health services based on community needs. In this role these nurses will deliver comprehensive primary health care services as part of the primary health care team. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, Bill 5 will permit two projects to bring these services to five northern Alberta communities which have historically had difficulty accessing health services. It enables regional health authorities, provincial health boards, and Alberta Health itself to employ registered nurses to provide

extended health services with the approval of the Minister of Health.

The intent of the Bill is to extend primary health services to underserved areas under carefully controlled arrangements. This initiative was developed in close consultation with the provincial Association of Registered Nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and with employers. I believe it is a clear step forward in enhancing access to health services in this province.

[Leave granted; Bill 5 read a first time]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 5, as just introduced, be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to table four copies of the souvenir newspaper issued on the occasion of the incorporation of the municipality of Wood Buffalo. I have copies sufficient for every Member of the Legislative Assembly.

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of a letter from the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education indicating their support and approval of this government's decision to introduce the new applied degree credential in Alberta.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table four copies of the Health Disciplines Board annual report to year-end December 31, '93.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to table a letter signed by the artistic director of the Just for Fun Theatre in Leduc. It caters to 250 children in programs that they undertake each year. It asks that lottery funds for arts be maintained, that in fact the funds be distributed by "a knowledgeable arts board," and that the distribution of lottery funds "should be fully accounted for in the legislature" of Alberta.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly the president of the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, Dr. Lillian Douglass, and the executive director, Ms Liz Turnbull. Dr. Douglass and Ms Turnbull are here today to witness the introduction of Bill 5, the Public Health Amendment Act, 1995, which has exciting challenges and implications for registered nurses in this province. They're standing in the members' gallery. I would invite all members to give our guests a very warm welcome.

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the

Legislative Assembly Henry and Norma Bosman. They're a fantastic couple from Lethbridge, fun to be with. Henry is the general manager of environmental utilities with the city of Lethbridge, and Norma is one of our outstanding women entrepreneurs here in Alberta. I would like the Legislative Assembly to give them a warm welcome.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you some wonderful people from Calgary who spent the weekend here at our convention: Mr. Ted Bowers, accompanied by his wife, Ann, and his son Kevin and his friend Pat Pellegrino. I'm sorry if I mispronounced that name. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask those who are accompanying Ted to rise and receive the warm welcome. Ted, by the way, is associated with the Calgary Handi-bus Association and has been instrumental in facilitating the handicapped and their transportation in Calgary.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly three classes of grade 6 students from Eastview community school in Red Deer. Their teachers are Ms Sheridale Pearman, Mr. Milton Williams, Mrs. Eleanor Coene. With them are parents Mrs. Brenda Boulet, Mrs. Debbie Schroderus, Mrs. Hilary Eade, Mrs. Noreen Spencer, Mrs. Diane Ford, Mrs. Lori Brooks, Mrs. Carol Jamieson, Mrs. Liz Wielinga, Mrs. Joan Dorosh, Mrs. Anne Mooney, Mr. Bob McGhee, and Mrs. Bobbie Bothwell. They are seated in both the members' and the public galleries, and I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As our Justice minister and Attorney General strives to maintain himself as being squeaky clean, to avoid a possible conflict of interest, I would like to introduce some of his constituents today, one being his wife, Debbie. The three children accompanying her are Logan, Taylor, and Kylee. I understand they're here to make a presentation on the issue of bringing back the lash or something related to that. I would ask that they all stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

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

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly 38 very important visitors from Cardinal Leger school, who are presently being taught about life skills and government politics. They are accompanied by their guest political teacher, Mr. Thomas Lukaszuk, by Mr. Burghardt, and Mrs. Margaret Deme and are seated in the member's gallery. I would ask that they all rise and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

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

### National Soil Conservation Week

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April 2 through 8 is the 10th annual National Soil Conservation Week. This week is designed to increase society's awareness of the need for soil conservation. The week also highlights the efforts of farmers, the public, industry, and government to reduce soil degradation.

While 1995 marks the 10th anniversary of this week, efforts to conserve prairie soils actually began in the 1930s, when chronic drought turned many farmers into conservationists. Within the agricultural community soil conservation has gained a year-round presence. Government, industry, and farmers have joined together to undertake more comprehensive research and practical on-farm testing of conservation practices.

In Alberta a series of federal/provincial agreements have expanded these efforts. The current five-year, \$44 million agreement was signed in 1992. Called the Canada/Alberta environmentally sustainable agricultural agreement, it promotes environmentally sound practices, including soil conservation, in the agrifood industry.

As stated in Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's business plan, the department is responsible for encouraging "stewardship of soil and water resources used" by the industry. Its stewardship is growing. Direct seeding, placing seeds directly into previously untilled soil, has increased fourfold in the past year. The practice of direct seeding conserves soil and soil moisture. In addition, over 2,000 miles of shelterbelt trees have been planted to help prevent soil erosion. This is roughly the distance between Edmonton and Toronto.

Alberta farmers are always striving to reduce their industry's impact on the environment, yet farmers are not the only people who are concerned about soil degradation. Society has a stake in soil conservation because soil is one of the basic resources that we depend on for producing our food supply. Our food ultimately comes from one place, and that place, Mr. Speaker, is the soil. It is important to realize that a few inches of topsoil are all that lie between having or losing the ability to grow and to produce food.

Alberta's farmland is a legacy we will leave to our children. All Albertans should be challenged to protect, maintain, and enhance our soil resources for future generations. As the week's theme emphasises, soil conservation is in all our hands.

Thank you.

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the minister has given us a good idea this afternoon about the importance of National Soil Conservation Week. This is a week in which we recognize the fact that the soil is important to us both as an economic resource but also as a resource which provides the food we eat and the basic sustenance we all need to carry on.

As we look into the idea of soil conservation, we have to recognize that in Alberta agricultural land covers about 21 million hectares. Out of that we have about 5 percent of this land which is susceptible to wind erosion and another 5 percent which is at risk each year from the possibility of water erosion and then about 650,000 hectares also that have their crop yield potential reduced because of the impact of salinity. So what we basically have is different areas of the province subjected to different mechanisms or different forces that could reduce the potential of our soil to produce and to contribute to the economic success of our agriculture sector.

The minister has also referred to the idea that summer fallowing has changed from being a major part of our land use patterns now to where it's down about 20 percent of the current land use pattern. This is a good trend that they're creating. The approximately 2 million hectares is still quite high, and we need to drop this as farmers learn to deal with more appropriate tillage methods and develop the moisture conservation opportunities that are there so that we don't need summer fallow to deal with that moisture conservation.

We also show that in 1991, from the latest data that we could get, approximately 83 percent of our farmers were reporting that they were using some kind of conservation method. This is the kind of effort that we can see promoted.

The minister also mentioned the Canada/Alberta environmentally sustainable agreement. This is one of the major efforts that the government is looking at both provincially and federally to recognize the fact that our soil is an important part of our economic base and that we need to be able to focus on the ideas of education and new technology development to protect it.

As we look at land conservation, the idea that agriculture is the major source of possible degradation has to be looked at within the context that we also have soils that are in jeopardy because of development. We need to look at protecting our soils for agriculture use, providing more stringent zoning and land planning opportunities so that we can control and prevent the unwarranted transfer of land. We also need to look at the idea that forestry and the soil loss from clear-cutting cause some problems.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

head:

### Oral Question Period

#### Private Health Services

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Health are forcing the closure of hospitals in this province which they now want to sell off to commercial interests to provide for-profit health care to Americans. In fact, the Premier says that he's actually talking to some doctors right now about setting up private hospitals, but he's keeping the details secret. To the Minister of Health: I wonder why she won't tell us what hospitals she's going to be selling to what doctors and at what kind of subsidized prices.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I find the hon. member almost doth protest too much. I read an article not very long ago in the paper that suggested that the Liberals felt that we had too many hospitals in this province. You know, I guess it depends on what day it is as to how we talk about this issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that in this province there will be some facilities that will be available. There are none to my knowledge today. The first activity that will occur with all of our facilities in our regions is that the individual regional health authorities will assess whether they have a need for those facilities for another use should there be some that are freed up. I think that's a very responsible route to go. I tell the hon. member that I don't have any proposals before me, nor should I have, because if they are looking to purchase a particular facility, they should be discussing that with the regional health authority. I'm sure that if people are interested, they are doing that very thing.

MR. MITCHELL: So could the minister please confirm that these decisions to increasingly commercialize our health care system in Alberta won't be left up to the Premier, won't be left up to the minister, won't even be left up to the Conservative Party

at its weekend convention, that they will be left up to unelected, unaccountable regional health authorities?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to bring this up, but the hon. member did. In fact, yes, we had a very successful convention on the weekend, where I think our leader was confirmed with almost a hundred percent support.

Mr. Speaker, I could also point out something else that occurred at that convention that is not unique at a Conservative convention. There were a number of new ideas put forward, something that is sadly lacking on the other side. As is customary at our conventions, when new ideas are put forward, they are discussed, debated, and brought forward. I have made it clear, the Premier's made it clear, this government has made it clear that we want to hear from people in this province and that we are very open to listening, to exploring new ideas that people may wish to bring forward. That is one of them, and we will explore it.

1:50

MR. MITCHELL: Does the minister's plan, let's say, her new idea for health care in this province, include a system where wealthy Americans fly into Calgary, receive surgery, and return home while Albertans wait in line for the health care services that they need?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, there is a paranoia in some quarters about the private sector in health care. I've said this before and I'll remind people again: the private sector has been involved in health care in this province for many, many years, and they've done an admirable job of supporting services.

Mr. Speaker, there are options where people from other countries might wish to come to Alberta to take advantage of some of the expertise that's here. As I mentioned before, we should be looking at opportunities and not always at negatives, the opportunities that there might be to maintain our expertise, to bring in more research. I think we can look on these suggestions and these new ideas as something that we can view in a positive way, weigh very carefully the pros and cons of such things. This government is not afraid to explore new ideas.

MR. MITCHELL: They're not afraid to Americanize our health care system, Mr. Speaker.

#### Immigration Policy

MR. MITCHELL: The minister responsible for immigration says that he wants more immigrants that better fit the province's social makeup and has portrayed, as has his government from time to time, immigrants as a drain on our health care and our social services systems. To the minister responsible for immigration: why will the minister not table his new immigration policy in this Legislature and put to rest Albertans' concerns that the policy is racist and discriminatory?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, the member across the way has drawn some conclusions that are totally inaccurate. They've never ever come from this government or this minister. I would just like to say that I can't table a policy because presently we don't have a policy on immigration in Alberta, and we won't have one until we've ironed it out with the federal government in negotiations.

MR. MITCHELL: If this government's immigration policy, stated and/or unstated, isn't exactly racist, then why did the

Conservative caucus refuse to allow a vote last week in this Legislature to officially recognize the UN-sponsored day to eliminate racial discrimination?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I believe that what the hon. member is concerned about is that he didn't get his day in the sun to toot on about some issue that he wanted to have. He was pre-empted in the Legislature by a ministerial statement, and there was really no reason for it to be debated again.

MR. MITCHELL: So, Mr. Speaker, I guess it is that one minister can speak for this government, and votes don't particularly matter.

My third question is to the minister responsible for the Human Rights Commission. I wonder whether he would commit to educating his caucus and his party on the important work that the Human Rights Commission has done in this province to create and enhance acceptance and understanding amongst all people in this society.

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course we have a very multicultural caucus, and people indeed do understand in our caucus the nature of the work done by the Human Rights Commission. But I point out that there is nothing wrong with simply asking the question as to whether the protection of human rights can be done in a better way. That is a legitimate debate that takes place in our caucus and within our party.

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

#### Special Waste Treatment Centre

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bovar has just released its 1994 annual report, and among the gems in the annual report is the fact that Bovar has earned – and I use the term loosely – 12 and a half million dollars. It's drawn down about \$80 million of its \$100 million loan guarantee. My questions are to the Minister of Environmental Protection. First, can the minister indicate how much Bovar would have lost had it not received the 12 and a half million dollar subsidy?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That report was just issued today. We are going to be looking at it, analyzing it, and we will have a look at the hon. member's question. It is very hypothetical, but we'll see what we can get out of that question.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister explain how the top four senior executives at Bovar can rack up cumulative salaries of \$511,000, cumulative bonuses of \$36,600 all the time they're dealing with a guaranteed rate of return and drawing down a loan guarantee?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that in fact those kinds of things have changed.

To give that kind of detail, I will ask the chairman of the special waste corp. to answer the question.

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

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I find myself in the same position as the minister of the

environment. I did just receive the report today myself. I think it's an excellent question from the hon. member, and I'd be more than happy to pursue it once I've had a chance to review the document itself.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of Environmental Protection explain how in light of the financial forecasts for the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation the corporation can expect to make a minimum payment, as set out on page 28 of the annual report, of \$44 million on its long-term debt? That's what the payment is for 1998: \$44 million. How can they do it without taxpayers footing the bill?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, we are going to be studying that report, and we will get back to the hon. member once we have done that analysis.

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

#### Corrections Facilities

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister of Justice and deal with the operation of provincial jails. In this Assembly I went on record as saying that I had three concerns when we were discussing the privatization of jails. One, of course, was public safety. Secondly, I was concerned about adequate care for inmates. Then, thirdly, I was concerned about cost efficiency. Now that the minister has arranged a deal – I guess I'll call it that – with the current employees, I wonder if he would advise myself and the members of this House as to the process, then, to determine the efficiency of these costs.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we have done is we've initiated a process that will allow both management and frontline workers to participate in our efficiency review team. We are moving very quickly towards the determination of the makeup of the committee. We'll have, hon. member, 12 of our staff, one nominee from each of our corrections facilities. Their mandate is to involve the frontline workers and management in identifying ways that we can be more efficient and more effective in our corrections in this province.

As you said in your preamble, the most important issue is safety and security, particularly for the law-abiding citizens of the province of Alberta but secondarily as well for the prison inmates. They will be reporting back to me by October of this year, after they have taken input from our staff and after they deal with this issue of efficiency measures and find out how they can make them more effective.

2:00

MR. DUNFORD: My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, then is: given that the safety and security issues are presumably handled, what are the expected results on the side of cost efficiency?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've asked the efficiency review team to try to identify a minimum 10 percent saving in the overall budget of corrections by this fall, when they report back to me. With a \$110 million budget, that would be a minimum of

about \$11 million as a saving. Now, I've heard some chirping across the way from the Liberal opposition saying: well, this has already been looked at, and this has already been reviewed. But, you know, the interesting part is that obviously our corrections staff feel that they have creative ways of dealing with the issues that they face, and like everything else that we're trying to do in this province, we're looking for made-in-Alberta solutions.

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, in terms of performance measures for the efficiency review team, will there be any variables as to their performance besides the cost efficiency measure?

MR. EVANS: Well, effectiveness, of course, hon. member and Mr. Speaker, will be one of the focal points for this review. Now, I think one of the very important initiatives of our government in having three-year renewable business plans has been an impetus for this kind of effective review that I hope will be coming from our corrections review. We have to continue to look at ways of doing business better, more effectively, more efficiently, and I think that will happen through this process. Our staff have said that they want to be more involved in the decision-making process. I think it is a much more effective way of making those difficult decisions that we are in downsizing our budgets, and I'm very hopeful that this six-month process will transcribe to a more overall and broad perspective in the Department of Justice in the years to come.

#### Health Care for the Disabled

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health keeps on claiming that there is no discrimination facing children with disabilities who require health care. The parents of these children know differently. Lizzie Hampson is an 11-year-old girl with Down's syndrome. She lives in pain, and she needs physiotherapy. Can the Minister of Health explain why Lizzie cannot get the treatment that she requires?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I certainly can comment on the programs that are in place in physiotherapy in this province. Today we have physiotherapy for our citizens. We have a partially insured physiotherapy program, one of only four provinces in Canada that provide any insurance for physiotherapy. That will be moving to a community rehabilitation program beginning on July 1, and it's certainly our hope that by coming into an integrated program, we will be able to better serve our people.

Mr. Speaker, I would also point to the community supports program. That certainly deals especially with persons with disability. There has been a lot of work done by a number of departments in this government to ensure that we can co-ordinate those services so we can ensure that persons with needs have those needs met and that there is easier access and better access to those programs.

MR. SAPERS: In spite of all that, this 11-year-old child is living in pain.

Maybe the minister will tell us when she will live up to her commitment to ensure that disabled children will not be discriminated against by this health care system.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, what this minister will commit to is to ensure that no one is discriminated against by this health system. There are vehicles for persons to bring forward their concerns and to have them dealt with. I've outlined those a

number of times in this Assembly, and certainly I am prepared personally to talk with anyone who has a concern with access to our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, again I will repeat that in this province we provide partial insurance for physiotherapy, and we are one of only four provinces in Canada that provide an insured program. I also repeat that we are moving to a community rehabilitation program on July 1 which has been developed by all of the stakeholders, including physiotherapists, to make sure that the persons with the highest needs have those needs met.

MR. SAPERS: Will the Minister of Health require every parent of every disabled child to appeal their case directly through the minister or through this Assembly or through the press? Or will she demand that the regional health authorities immediately put into place nondiscriminatory policies and ensure that early interventions become core services for disabled children?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I take great exception to the hon. member's comment that an individual is being discriminated against because of a disability. I would want to address that question separately from the other.

I have not directed the regional health authorities, but I have worked with my colleagues on this side of the House, with the stakeholders in all areas of therapies to bring together a community rehabilitation program that will be available in every regional health authority in this province beginning July 1 which will ensure that all high-needs persons have their therapy needs met. Mr. Speaker, that is a positive action that this government has taken.

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

#### Rat Control

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. People in Alberta have been very fortunate. They have not had to live with one of the most destructive creatures known to man.

AN HON. MEMBER: Liberals.

DR. L. TAYLOR: No, not Liberals. The rat.

AN HON. MEMBER: The same thing.

DR. L. TAYLOR: No. Mr. Speaker, I must say that although the characteristics might be similar, I'm talking about a four-legged rat.

AN HON. MEMBER: And a long tail.

DR. L. TAYLOR: And a long tail; that's right.

They destroy and contaminate. They undermine the foundations of buildings, undermine water and sewer lines, and they deface everything in their way. [interjections] It does make you think, though, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order.

DR. L. TAYLOR: I must have hit a sore spot, Mr. Speaker; I'm sorry. A soft spot, too, probably.

Will the minister advise members of the Assembly why Alberta has not been infested by these rats?

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue of great importance, particularly to the people living along the Saskatchewan border. Rats were first introduced into Canada in 1775 in the maritime provinces and gradually worked their way west until they first came to Alberta in 1950. At that time it was decided that perhaps an effort should be made to keep Alberta rat free. So an area three townships wide from the Montana border right through to the Cold Lake area was identified, and at that time that area was going to be under tight scrutiny to try and keep the rats confined within that area. To date, obviously, we've had a great deal of success. It's one of the true success programs that have been put together. This is 45 years now, and we are still the only area in North America that is rat free. [interjection]

DR. L. TAYLOR: Yes, perhaps we could get them out of Ottawa too.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise what the government of Alberta does to assist Albertans in keeping these rats out of the province.

2:10

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is indeed a major challenge. In 1993 we had 13 rat infestations in Alberta. In 1994 there were 11 rat infestations. Through an arrangement between the Alberta government, municipal governments, and the farmers and the residents along the border we've been very successful in maintaining that diligence. The provincial government has a program that provides Warfarin, so bags of Warfarin are actually put out there to maintain the rat control program. There is one provincial person put in place accompanied by six municipal pest control officers. They survey the area. The actual communication between the residents, the local municipalities, and the provincial government is intense, and that's why we have been able to maintain that tremendous success rate.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Can the minister tell us how much a program of this magnitude costs the taxpayers of Alberta and what is done outside the pest control zone?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: The actual budgetary cost of this program is \$250,000. The benefit that's derived from this is just immeasurable. With the damages that the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat identified, the cost that's involved in something like this is just horrendous. So indeed we're able to control. We're able to keep the program in place through the diligence of the local residents along the border, through the diligence of the inspector, and through the diligence of the municipalities.

#### Video Lottery Program

MR. WICKMAN: Opposition to the large number of slot machines continues to grow at a startling rate. One comment, Mr. Speaker, from hundreds that have been filtering through to various people: Judge Dave MacNaughton agreed that the machines are destructive, that they're one of the worst things to

ever hit this province. They take funds from people who can ill afford it, the judge said. To me, it's not even gambling; it's a money-raising scheme, MacNaughton said. To the minister responsible for lotteries: how is the minister dealing with the alarming growth in Albertans who are objecting to the number of slot machines that are now readily available?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, it's under review at the present time.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, then why has the minister accepted an increased cap of 6,000 slot machines when he recognizes that there's a review going on at the present time?

DR. WEST: Well, Mr. Speaker, we capped it at 6,000 because that's exactly the number that were out there when we decided to review it.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, there were 5,400 out there at that particular time.

Mr. Speaker, my second supplementary question to the minister: on whose advice was it decided to budget revenue from 6,000 slot machines in the '95-96 budget?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the revenues that come in are a fact. That is what is generated and that is what is budgeted. I mean, I don't understand the question. The question is completely irrelevant to our budgeting process.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Three Hills-Airdrie.

#### Gopher Control

MS HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the minister of agriculture regarding chemicals used in the control of the gopher population on agricultural land. Many of the farmers and ranchers in my area are very concerned, not just because of the incredible damage the gophers are doing on their land but because of the lack of available products that are effective in controlling the gopher population. Could the minister please advise us whether he has had any success in reaccessing supplies that contain a 2 percent strychnine solution?

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have discussed this with the federal government, who has imposed this legislation. The federal government had indicated that the reason the 2 percent was removed from the market and not allowed to be used on an ongoing basis was because there were traces of strychnine starting to show in the water supplies. That being the case, the 2 percent was done away with. So, no, there would be no coming back to using the old formulations as they were.

MS HALEY: Mr. Minister, with the new products that are available, is there a different application process that could be used to make them more effective?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes, there is, and this is the key to the success of the whole program. As a matter of fact, there is a different application process in that it's very key and very important that the product be applied, in order to be effective, before the grass turns green. So we're into the key season, we're

into the key time for implementation of this program. I understand the success rate is even better with the new formulations we have today than with the old 2 percent providing they are applied at the key time, which is between spring breakup and the time the grass has turned green.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, could you please advise us if there's any evidence to indicate whether or not the new products have any effect on controlling gopher populations?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes, there is, and this is important to recognize. Last year four municipalities were used as pilot program areas to determine if indeed the new formulations were as successful or even more successful if they were used properly. The four municipalities that were the pilot program areas all indicated that used according to direction, used before the grass turns green, the success rate is actually better than the old formulations that were used in the past.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

#### **WestView Regional Health Authority**

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's health care restructuring did not include at all a change in criteria for funding of health care regions. As a result, there are still vast inequities in the funding. Now, obviously the health authorities in Edmonton and Calgary should receive more because they provide very specialized services to rural Albertans as well, but the WestView health region receives only \$300 per capita, the lowest amount, while other rural regions get at least twice as much per capita. So a straightforward question to the Minister of Health: will the minister explain why the WestView health region is receiving so much less per capita?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult to get right into the very specifics of WestView without having all of their information in front of me, but I can tell the hon. member that this funding year the regions were funded on a historic basis. So they were funded in the same manner that they were in past years, and that was on the basis of program. We have an acute care funding plan which dealt with facilities that had over a thousand admissions in a year. We introduced this year a funding formula for smaller hospitals as well. We use a case mix index on long-term care, and of course the public health dollars are distributed on the basis of program and certainly to some degree on population.

What I would tell the hon. member is that there is a funding committee in place right now that is looking at how we fund the regions for the 1996-97 year. If the hon. member has some suggestions as to how that funding arrangement should change – and I mean specific suggestions that would assist them – I would encourage him to talk with them or to write them a letter.

I can tell the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that I met with all of the members of the Council of Chairs last Friday, and we did discuss these issues of this year's funding. I can also share with the hon. member that the regions understood last summer that they would be funded in this way for this year.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister doesn't realize that the lack of sufficient funding now may force

the WestView region to send more patients to Edmonton, where there isn't any room either.

**2:20**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that I don't believe would occur, because indeed the region is funded on the services they provide presently. If they stop providing those services, the funding is going to be moving to the persons providing the services. Certainly if Edmonton is going to be providing further services, it would make sense that they received the funding for it. So I think that is not the case at all.

I think what we will see is perhaps that more services are provided in the community when we can offer those services at a lower cost. Certainly in our major centres some of our speciality hospitals have high costs, but that is because of the specialized equipment and the specialized services they do provide. So we would encourage, where it's appropriate, that those services be delivered in the communities.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Speaker, since none of that is helping WestView right now, can the minister in the very near future come up perhaps with a basis for funding that is going to be fair and sensible?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, as I say, if the hon. member had listened to the second answer, he would have understood that there is a funding committee that is presently in place that is going to develop the funding methodology for 1996-97. Again I encourage the hon. member to have a discussion with that group if he has something to offer.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that I met with WestView on Friday, as well as with 16 other regions, and I discussed these issues with them. I did suggest to them that if they had some transitional difficulties – remember this regional health authority has assumed the authority for delivering services and the institutions and the programs from previous boards – that our department was there to work through those issues with them. We've made that commitment to them, and we'll continue to work with them.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

#### **Charitable Fund-raising**

MR. HLADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the Public Contributions Act the city of Edmonton, for example, could set criteria for charities and professional fund-raisers who wanted to fund-raise in the city. One of those criteria was that professional fund-raisers could only receive 50 percent or less of the total donations collected for a charity. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: why do municipalities lose this power or control under Bill 15?

#### **Speaker's Ruling Anticipation**

THE SPEAKER: Order please. For the benefit of the hon. member this matter is going to be debated later this day according to information received as to the business of the House, and therefore it offends the rule of anticipation.

#### **Physiotherapy**

MR. BRACKO: I'm tabling four copies of a letter from Elke Blodgett expressing her concern regarding physiotherapy. As of

July 1 publicly funded physiotherapy will only be available to the yet to be established community rehabilitation clinics. Even physiotherapists don't know exactly how Albertans will have access to physiotherapy in the future. To the Minister of Health: who will determine whether a senior with arthritis gets publicly funded physiotherapy from a centre or has to pay for treatments from an independent therapist?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent question, actually, on the program that we are instituting. I'm very pleased to assure the hon. member that the assessment and referral will certainly be done by qualified professionals.

Mr. Speaker, all of the details of implementation of the community rehabilitation program are not completed. In late February the budget was released and the allocations for that. I can tell the hon. member that the external stakeholder group, which includes physiotherapists, is working on that. In fact, I met with the physiotherapists last week, and we discussed some of these very issues.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very positive program. It will ensure that persons with needs have their needs met without a cap. Remember, the \$250 cap that we now have will be lifted under the community rehabilitation program. What that will do is ensure that people who have high needs in these areas will have all of their needs met within the program without having to pay even a portion of it.

MR. BRACKO: To the same minister: how would the minister restructure Blue Cross insurance for seniors so that they will have coverage for physiotherapy?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, seniors and every other Albertan who has a physiotherapy need which meets the program will have their needs met. The issue of private insurance, be it Blue Cross or a private insurance company, is another one altogether, and today you can access private insurance for these services. I have to remind the hon. member again, as I did the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora earlier, that there are only four provinces in Canada that offer this to their citizens with any assistance. I think what we should really be working to do is to make sure that the community rehab program will meet those high-needs areas so that people who need those services receive them.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you. To the same minister: could the minister please explain exactly what the criteria for access to publicly funded physiotherapy will be? How badly will a person have to be hurt before they qualify?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer that today because, as I outlined in my answer just before, there is a stakeholder group which includes physiotherapists, which includes audiologists, which includes speech therapy and two other disciplines that is working on this very program implementation now along with the regional health authorities. What is important is that there is an assessment and that there is a service.

As I indicated to the hon. member in my first answer, persons will be referred to the program by professionals, and they will be assessed into the program by professionals. I think they are the appropriate people to say whether a person requires a service or not. So let's put some faith in our professionals out there, who

are trained and understand whether a person has high needs or needs of any kind.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I talked about with the physiotherapists is: how do we communicate with their membership? How do we communicate with all the speech therapists and audiologists to ensure that they are aware of the efforts that their associations are making on their behalf to make this program work? I think that if the member is concerned about physical therapists not knowing what's going on, I invite him to contact their association, which is directly involved in developing the implementation of this program.

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

### Sexual Assault

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Women's confidence, everyone's confidence in the judicial system continues to be shaken. A woman is attacked in her bed in the middle of the night by an intruder. The attacker rips off the covers and tears at her clothes. Yet the judge rules that this is not sexual assault. My questions are to the Minister of Justice. Will the minister immediately review the circumstances and remarks made during this court case?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that we do not discuss court cases in this Assembly. When a decision is made by a judge, it is up to the prosecutor and to the defence to determine what the merits are of an appeal. When we have the media interpreting what is said in a courtroom and coming out with an excerpt, it riles people, it gets people's interest up, and people come up with very emotional reactions. But that's not the way that we determine whether an appeal is appropriate. As in every other court case we will have our staff review the comments, the decisions that are made, and they will come to a conclusion as to whether an appeal is appropriate.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister meet with women's groups, including the sexual assault centres, to find out what needs to be done to ensure convictions and that sentencing in sexual assault is fair and consistent?

2:30

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to meet with women's groups to discuss any justice issues that are relevant, but the hon. member should realize that as the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of the province of Alberta I do not tell our judges how they should find, a finding of guilt or innocence, and what the appropriate sentence is. We have a rule of law in this country. It works very effectively. It is based on precedent; it is based on higher court, lower court decisions. I believe that that system works effectively, but in order to be as up to date as possible with the issue from my perspective as the Minister of Justice, as I've said, I'm happy to meet with those groups.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once the review is done, which the minister indicated he would direct, would the



minister consider directing his department to file an appeal to the case after the review has been looked at and considered?

MR. EVANS: As I said, Mr. Speaker, in my first answer, a review of all court cases, all decisions is done by the prosecutor involved to determine whether an appeal by the Crown is appropriate. If it is a contentious issue, then there is usually a second review by a higher level than the prosecutor involved in the specific decision. That system works quite effectively, and I would certainly claim to all members of this Assembly and to Albertans that the system does work. I would, as well, commit to ensuring that that kind of process continues while I'm the Minister of Justice.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

### Special Places 2000

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans fondly remember John Lennon's legacy from his words, "let it be," but in losing the fight with this government to set aside protected areas of land, our kids are only going to remember that in Alberta our legacy will be the words: it was not to be. To the Minister of Environmental Protection: given that the minister said he would announce at the end of March the areas of Alberta that would be set aside and protected from industrial activity under the Special Places 2000 program, why didn't he do that?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the hon. member is doing his research. I never said that I was going to announce by the end of March the areas that could be set aside. I did announce that we were going to be announcing the process and that we would be taking nominations for sites, and we have done that. Along with the announcement, I did announce 29 sites that were going to be rolled into the Special Places 2000 program. Two-thirds of those are protected areas, totally protected.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have to take the minister's word, because there's nothing certain about this program.

My supplementary to the same minister: why didn't the government follow the example of New Zealand, which in the midst of its fiscal reform set aside a realistic amount of protected land which is protected from industrial activity? Why didn't you follow their example?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, when this program was announced, it was announced that it was going to be a made-in-Alberta program, and that is exactly what we have done. To say that we're going to follow the lead of some others – I'm sure that he can find other places in the world that in fact are doing similar to what we were doing, but we started out that we were going to make it made in Alberta, and that's what we're doing.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Alberta is now the only province that doesn't have a protected areas policy.

My supplementary to the minister of economic development: how does this plan to allow industrial activity in every corner of Alberta fit with the minister's future plans to develop a strong and meaningful ecotourism industry in this province?

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

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, staying on the member's original line of questioning, we will have, as the Beatles would say, a *Norwegian Wood*, and in the words of Small Faces, we will have *Itchycoo Park*, which will enforce the fact that tourism is a strong component of economic development. Ecotourism is another component of tourism. In fact, those markets will be developed; those markets will be worked for the benefit of all Albertans, not only the Albertans involved in specific areas but something that is more wide ranging in terms of policy.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection wishes to augment.

MR. LUND: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't allow the hon. member in his preamble to get away with saying that we don't have any protected areas. The fact is that we have parks; we have ecological reserves. We have a whole host of areas that are set aside. Some of them, like the Willmore wilderness area, are set aside under legislation. We have the Siffleur area set aside. A whole host of them. As a matter of fact I can find . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order.

The hon. Member for Redwater.

### Logging Regulation

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the same minister, so he can get in shape jumping up and down here. The minister of forestry has stated that he is increasing fines for logging infringements, which is a step in the right direction. However, it's difficult to ensure that out-of-province brokers or logging contractors do a responsible job or to collect fines from them when there are infringements. Now, the state of Idaho – I tabled their rules last week – indicates bonding for out-of-state operators. My question to the minister is: what recourse does the government currently have if logging is not carried out in the way it should be if an out-of-province operator is the one doing the logging?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, the situation currently is that we have very, very few contractors that are operating from outside the province. We are doing inspections. We are making sure that in fact the logging is done to an environmental level.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raised a question about a week ago about an incident that he raised back on February 27. I contacted the fish biologist that's responsible for the area immediately after the member raised it, and on February 28 the fish biologist went to the site, which happens to be on Gold Creek. The Kootenay Wood Preservers are the company that did the logging back in 1991, and in fact the biologist informed me that upon another inspection – they've inspected this site many times – they still do not feel there was damage to the environment that would warrant any kind of charge under the Fisheries Act or the Soil Conservation Act.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you for that additional information that you do not consider there was any damage done. I think a lot of people think differently.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that there are few out-of-province operators and contractors, what recourse does the minister have when an out-of-province operator or contractor tells him to go fly a kite?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, we have the ability to make seizures, and as a matter of fact, just last week right in my hometown there was a seizure of a truck from the United States. We've got those abilities in law, and we'll use them.

AN HON. MEMBER: What happened to the 249 that got away?

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, somebody said: what happened to the other 249 that got away?

What I'd like to ask the minister: will he introduce a bonding system in Alberta for out-of-province operators and truckers the same as is done in all the northern U.S. states?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seemed to be indicating that there were a number of infractions and that we haven't had the ability to do anything about it. If the hon. member knows of one infraction – one infraction – caused by some contractor from another province, I would like him to tell us about it. The fact is we are following things up very closely. We're controlling it.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, the time for question period has expired. Could we have unanimous consent in the Assembly to revert to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

**head: Introduction of Guests**  
**2:40 (reversion)**

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I get a second chance. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 38 very important visitors from Cardinal Leger school who are presently being taught about life skills and government politics. They are accompanied by guest political teacher, Mr. Thomas Lukaszuk, and helpers Mr. Burghardt and Mrs. Deme and are seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, there are some of you in the gallery who will remember when Mr. Marconi invented the radio. Then there are some people who have performed on radio when Mr. Marconi did his thing. One of the fine gentlemen who did such a thing is in the gallery today, a constituent from Calgary-Lougheed, Mr. Don Slade, Mr. Radio. Would he stand and receive the warm welcome.

**head: Motions under Standing Order 40**

THE SPEAKER: We have two applications under Standing Order 40. The first one to be received was that by the hon. Member for Redwater.

#### **National Aboriginal Achievement Awards**

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I believe I'm just speaking to the urgency of the matter. Giving congratulations is

sometimes hard to prove urgent, but certainly congratulations that are withheld are not as good as congratulations that move immediately ahead. So I will just move that to give congratulations to three people from the aboriginal community – Douglas Cardinal, Dr. Maggie Hodgson, and Marie Smallface Marule – is indeed an urgent enough matter for me to present the motion later.

THE SPEAKER: Is there consent in the Assembly for the presentation of this motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

The hon. Member for Redwater.

Moved by Mr. N. Taylor:

Be it resolved that this Assembly congratulate Douglas Cardinal, Dr. Maggie Hodgson, and Marie Smallface Marule on receiving the 1995 national aboriginal achievement award.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the rest of the audience. I see we didn't get all the rats and gophers. One of them is blinking away at me from his hill on the other side. A little bit of Warfarin for you too, Mr. Minister.

These three awards present the highest honour the aboriginal community bestows on aboriginal people, Mr. Speaker. They were given out to 14 recipients recently, on March 31, in Vancouver. Three of them were from Alberta. They are sponsored by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Indian and northern affairs Canada, CBC, Canada Post, Air Canada, and 13 federal departments and agencies. These awards were established in 1993 to pay tribute to the UN International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, and we've continued since that time. This year three of the 14 awards were allotted to Albertans.

If I may say a short word on each one. The first one I'd like to speak on is Douglas Cardinal, who is a worldwide-known architect and in Alberta is known for his design of St. Mary's church in Red Deer, on which I had the honour to work with him some. I can still remember the look on the church fathers' faces when he came up with those curved walls, which Mr. Cardinal is so famous for. He went on of course. He built the Grande Prairie Regional College, the Edmonton Space and Science Centre, the government services centre in Ponoka, and what he's mostly known for in Canada is the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. His buildings are known for their curvilinear shapes, and he's credited with developing really an indigenous Canadian style of architecture. For 18 years he actually practised in Edmonton and moved to Ottawa in 1985. Most important here, he's currently working on the National Museum of the American Indian in the mall in Washington, D.C., probably the highest award that any member of the indigenous peoples could get. His work has been exhibited in France, Belgium, Poland, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York as well as throughout Canada. He's published in educational philosophy, computers, city planning, old-age housing, public health: truly a Renaissance man, a person that Albertans can be very proud of indeed. [interjections] This is getting a certain amount of heckling. I think it ill befits the government over there. If they could listen for a bit, it might help, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Maggie Hodgson is also famous. She received an honorary doctorate of laws degree from the U of A in 1992 in recognition of her work. In 1980 she joined the Nechi Institute on Alcohol

and Drug Education and is in charge of the Nechi adult education institute now. It's located out here in St. Albert with a staff of about 45. In addition, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Hodgson initiated and drove a campaign to have National Addictions Awareness Week in Canada, which has 700,000 participants annually. Also, she was the driving force behind the first world addictions conference in 1992, which drew approximately 3,200 aboriginal people. Presently she's chairman of the special section on indigenous peoples for the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions in Lausanne, Switzerland, and is a member of the board of directors of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, an appointment recently made by the Prime Minister's office. Here again is somebody that everybody in Alberta can be very proud of.

The last person honoured was Marie Smallface Marule, who is the president of Red Crow College, and for some who might not be aware, that's on the Blood reserve and is affiliated with the University of Lethbridge. She is developing an educational curriculum to meet the needs of aboriginal students, is known as an educator, an advocate of human rights for aboriginal peoples around the world, and was earlier a University of Lethbridge professor, as was our Member for Lethbridge-East. She was also an executive director of the National Indian Brotherhood. That's the forerunner of the Assembly of First Nations. She helped create the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, which brought the concerns of indigenous peoples around the world to international attention, and presently is president of the Red Crow College as well as acting as chair and vice-chair of the Blood Tribe Police Commission.

All of these are very worthy of our accolades and our congratulations today, Mr. Speaker, and I think I'd like to close off with a quote from Dr. Maggie Hodgson. She said that when aboriginal people receive awards, they are viewed differently from the rest of Canada.

If the chairman of a major corporation gets an award, he is praised as a self-made man. In the aboriginal community, these awards are seen as the result of a collective effort. I'm part of a whole. I couldn't have accomplished what I did without all the people I work with.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to rise and congratulate the 1995 national aboriginal achievement award winners. I happen to know all three individuals and am so pleased that the Member for Redwater had the vision to bring forward the motion to congratulate these three statesmen for aboriginal Albertans and all Albertans.

I want to speak from a different perspective, Mr. Speaker, regarding the three winners. The first one, Douglas Cardinal, of course, as the Member for Redwater has indicated, is a Canadian Metis architect, well known internationally for his work. He started out in Alberta. For example, he built the Grande Prairie college. He built St. Mary's Catholic Church in Red Deer, and he also did the St. Albert city hall and numerous public buildings and homes in the Alberta area. Since then he's moved on to bigger and greater things: the national museum of man and civilization in Hull, Quebec. Of course, as the Member for Redwater has stated, he has moved on internationally. I remember him when he was just beginning. He had a tough time trying to convince architects across Alberta and across Canada that you can build buildings in a circular fashion. There were many that

disagreed, and he decided that he was going to prove to everyone that you can do this and you can also use computers to be able to do this impossible task. So I believe Douglas Cardinal certainly well deserves congratulations from Albertans because of his achievements in the architectural world. He took on the world with a zest that I'm sure most of us would begin to wonder whether or not we have.

2:50

The second one, Mr. Speaker, is Marie Smallface Marule. I remember her when I first started to do all my work regarding education. She's probably one of the greatest members of the Blood tribe, a very proud member of that tribe and very proud of being a woman and of course a mover and shaker in the Blood tribe. There were times when people thought that if she came, the world shook, and it did because of the way she was able to deal with things. She brought out the facts. She dealt with certain things that needed to be done and made sure that people listened to her so that these kinds of things could be taken care of. She is quite a member for Albertans to pay tribute to, a wonderful person, a real role model for people who are from southern Alberta but especially all of Alberta. I think as a woman she certainly has done a lot to be able to prove that women can get where they want to go, and I want to congratulate her personally.

The third one, Maggie Hodgson. Of course, everyone in Alberta knows Maggie. Maggie has been involved in the Nechi native adult counsellor training program for so long and has been at Nechi for such a long time. She is one of those individuals with a quiet demeanour who carries on the kinds of things that need to be carried on relative to what is important for people and the future of aboriginal children and aboriginal adults. Recently Maggie and her group took on the Innu and the problem they were experiencing in the Innu nation. It is with a great deal of pride - she deserves to get this award for all her hard work in the social sphere. She has not been one of those individuals to sit back and take it. She has been one of those individuals who has taken on an issue and carried it through, to be able to deal with it and to be able to carry it to the point of where there is something that has to be done. She certainly deserves the honour that she is receiving.

Mr. Speaker, all three individuals I believe should be congratulated for everything they have ever contributed to this province, bringing the highlights to an international scale in many ways for the achievements that these three individuals have made.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray on the question of urgency.

#### Municipality of Wood Buffalo

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dealing with the issue of urgency, this event which occurred in the northeastern Alberta region centred around Fort McMurray on the weekend

was one of the largest political events that we have experienced in 1995, and the fact that it occurred last weekend also makes it timely and fall within our criterion of urgency.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Assembly prepared to permit the hon. Member for Fort McMurray to move his motion under Standing Order 40?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

Moved by Mr. Germain:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly congratulate the new municipality of Wood Buffalo and extend to them the best wishes of the Legislative Assembly on their future endeavours as a municipal government.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this afternoon I had the privilege of tabling in this Legislative Assembly the commemorative newspaper published courtesy of the *Fort McMurray Today* and handed out to the residents of the new municipality of Wood Buffalo on the weekend. The achievement that occurred in northeastern Alberta this weekend was nothing short of spectacular for a government. We sometimes allege and suggest that government moves very slowly, but the citizens of Fort McMurray, when they got the idea to amalgamate, moved very quickly and got the support of both sides of this Legislative Assembly in their efforts and in their achievement.

So what happened on April 1, Mr. Speaker, was that the largest municipality in all of North America was created. How large is large? Larger than the country of Switzerland. Larger than P.E.I. and Nova Scotia put together. A large percentage of the province of Alberta. An area of Alberta rich in oil resources, rich in lumber resources, rich in tourism potential, and rich in culture, the culture that flows from Caucasians and the First Nations peoples and other visible minorities that have learned to get along in Fort McMurray and in northeastern Alberta. Why? Not because their government tells them to but because they have the adversary that comes from the distance, the adversary that comes from the climate, and their mutual desire to help one another in succeeding and getting ahead. The road ahead will be rocky for this new municipality. There will be issues to be explored, discovered together and solved together that we have never had to confront in the province of Alberta before: a municipality of this size with the population spread very thinly through a large geographic section and concentrated in one area.

The citizens of the municipality of Wood Buffalo, however, Mr. Speaker, want to try and they want the opportunity to succeed. This Legislative Assembly, being the provincial level of government, ought to encourage them in their task, congratulate them in their task, and help them wherever we can. As a result and to show our appreciation to the new municipality of Wood Buffalo, I would like to move the motion, which has been read into the record earlier, that we congratulate this municipality, this new municipality, and wish them the very best of luck in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to get up and join for once with the hon. Member for Fort McMurray in congratulating the people of the new municipality of Wood

Buffalo for their foresight and their good thinking in these times of fiscal restraint and joint services and all the rest of the different scenarios that we see around the province.

As we go into these different times of fiscal responsibilities, I think every municipality in Alberta would do well to look inwardly at their particular situation and of course watch the municipality of Wood Buffalo. I don't see them as having a rocky time, as the hon. member mentioned. I think they'll have a lot of debate. I think it will be intelligent debate. I think they will be able to iron out their problems or any concerns in a very mutually beneficial way in that area.

I, too, think it's rather interesting that it is the largest municipality probably in North America, encompassing more land than the province of Prince Edward Island. It'll be also interesting to see the mix that happens there between a very vast rural area and a very concentrated urban area with the large industrial base that is shared by both of them.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the time that we need to have this afternoon for other issues, I just say again that I congratulate the people up there for their foresight, and I join with the Member for Fort McMurray in congratulating them. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the words that I was going to say the hon. minister has already said. This is something so dear to my heart that I just have to say a few words. In the last 20 years it's something that I've been promoting throughout rural Alberta. I've often said that if we live in rural Alberta, too often the town gets ahead of us and the town says that we're not going to look after the rural. I think this is great co-operation that's far past due. When people ask me where I live, I say that I live in Fairview. I truly don't live in Fairview, but I live in the MD. I think that when it benefits the rural areas in these jurisdictions, it certainly helps the urban areas. I'm excited and I hope this model follows through in other parts of the province.

I want to thank the member for sending me this commemorative edition. I was just looking at it, certainly not that I wasn't paying attention during question period, and reading through it. I see a name there, Miss Corinne Huberdeau, who was well trained in the constituency of Dunvegan, who in fact helped them with this amalgamation, along with many other people.

I just throw that challenge out right across Alberta for municipalities to amalgamate, and I don't personally believe this government should ever force any amalgamations. We can all read, so I don't have to read the benefits there. But when we see the benefits of these municipalities getting together and working in co-operation – and I'm like the minister; I don't see any rocky roads ahead for them – I think this will be a plus, plus, plus. I just throw the challenge out to other areas in the province to do the same thing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. Let the record show the motion carries unanimously.

**head: Orders of the Day**

**head: Government Bills and Orders**

**head: Second Reading**

**3:00**

**Bill 22  
Science and Research Authority Act**

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill 22, the Science and Research Authority Act.

This Bill is a result of the strong commitment made to Albertans for a strong new focus on science and research. This commitment was made in both the Seizing Opportunity document and the 1993-94 Budget Address. The Budget Address announced that a major reorganization of the province's research and development funding will be implemented, and this will be led by representatives from Alberta industry. This initiative was also supported by the government's Technology and Research Advisory Committee, otherwise known as TRAC. One recommendation in TRAC's April 1994 study of government research expenditures was that the province act quickly to implement a mechanism and to implement research co-ordination. Mr. Speaker, this Bill 22 is that mechanism.

Bill 22 will ensure effective management of Alberta's extensive research infrastructure, and the fact that our province already possesses a highly developed science and technology infrastructure is easily demonstrated. We have considerable investment in numerous areas, varying from the Alberta Research Council encouraging small business partnerships to the medical research administration. A partial list of agencies and organizations we fund includes the TRILabs, the Alberta microelectronic test centre, the Alberta Laser Institute, the Centre for Frontier Engineering Research, the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research, the Alberta Research Council, and the High Performance Computing Centre. All of these are partnerships with the universities here in Alberta, with the government, and with the private sector. In addition, we have cutting-edge research occurring at the environmental research institute and the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute as well as the Alberta Cancer Board.

In terms of actual dollars, TRAC's scientific and technical activities overview, which was tabled in this House, shows that for 1994-95 science and technology investment by departments and agencies was \$195.72 million. This investment supports a range of program activities to promote the economic and social development of the province. It should also be noted that of the \$195.72 million, \$118.40 million is spent on actual research and development activities. The remainder of those dollars is not a direct R and D expenditure, but it does focus on science-related activities.

This investment represents an extremely valuable and important component of the Alberta advantage. It is an investment that we need to manage carefully and thoughtfully, particularly in a time of fiscal restraint. In return for our investment, upwards of three to four times the annual investment is shown by studies of a number of research programs in this province. In other words, for every dollar we invest, there is upwards of \$1 to \$4 in leverage spending, in leverage investment as well. This investment provides immeasurable benefits to Albertans. Whether it be in terms of improved health, quality of life, increased economic development, or creating new jobs, we're all beneficiaries of research. The fact is that science and technology is key to the

future economic strength and growth of our province. It is estimated that over one-half of our economic growth results either directly or indirectly from technology innovations. This fact reinforces the idea that it is essential that we maximize the return on our research investment. Bill 22 will help us accomplish this goal.

One of the important aspects of this legislation is that it allows the government to draw on the expertise of the private sector. This will be accomplished through the authority's board of management. The board will be charged with numerous responsibilities that will ensure effective stewardship of our research investment, and this means more than simply tracking dollars that are being spent and offering advice on these related matters. In fact, this board through the authority will have a very real role to play in defining our province's approach to research. This includes working to stimulate research and developing related scientific activities in Alberta. The board will also work to develop a science and research policy and priorities that reflect the objectives and priorities of the province as a whole. It will ensure that there is a proper balance between short-, medium-, and long-term provincial economic and social needs.

In order to ensure that our research investment is well planned and co-ordinated, the board will develop and monitor a financial management plan for our research funding. This will be done in order to ensure again that we get the maximum return on our investment through promoting leverage, reducing duplication, and identifying opportunities for commercialization and technology transfer. The board will also act to encourage the science and research culture in our province through promoting communications on this matter in this area. It is essential, Mr. Speaker, that the business community, research community, and general public are involved in all the discussions on scientific matters on an ongoing basis.

This Bill also dictates that an annual review and evaluation of all government science and research policies, priorities, and programs be undertaken. This periodic review will ensure that our research effort is complementary to the overall goals of the province.

Mr. Speaker, this government has taken great strides in regards to accountability. Whether it be in three-year business plans, performance measurements, or extensive public consultation, accountability is one hallmark of our Premier's administration, and this is yet another example of this trend. There are numerous provisions in this Bill that ensure our research efforts are accountable. The primary mechanism is that this authority's board of management, with its unique blend of private-sector research experience, will ensure that our investment is certainly maximized. The board will also submit an annual report on its activities to myself, and this report will allow for results to be measured and studied and will ensure the board's efforts are accountable.

A further level of accountability comes from the fact that an international expert review panel will conduct a regular review of the work undertaken by the board. This process will ensure that the Alberta research investments are benchmarked against international criteria. This approach is modeled on the very successful approach of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research.

I think it is particularly worth while to note that a considerable amount of public consultation was undertaken while we drafted this Bill. Two science and research workshops were held, one in Calgary and one in Edmonton, and there are more ongoing consultations. This provided the Science and Research Authority with a great deal of information regarding how we can best work

with research stakeholders in order to maximize our investment. Through this consultation we learned about the leverage opportunities that exist in areas such as agriculture, environment, energy, and health. We also received input regarding how scientific activities can be best measured and what needs to be done in order to encourage commercialization of the results of research.

All participants expressed support for this government's renewed focus on science and research. It has sent a welcome signal that this is an area of priority for this province. In particular, there was considerable enthusiasm for the idea of a science and research fund as a vehicle to increase our ability to leverage the fund, that will allow for the consolidation of appropriate provincial research funds other than related capital expenditures and facility maintenance funding. Through the minister the board will make recommendations to cabinet for allocating annual research funding. The board will play an important role as it relates to this fund, and one of the duties will be to utilize its expertise and contacts to capitalize on these leverage opportunities with the private sector. It is essential that we forge strong partnerships with the private sector when undertaking research. It helps to ensure that our investment is viable, relevant, and provides dividends to the taxpayers.

### 3:10

The Alberta Research Council with its joint venture programs is an excellent example of what can be accomplished through effective partnerships. Similarly our role in TRILabs here in Edmonton demonstrates what can be accomplished when we join forces with the private sector and the University of Alberta. The result has been the creation of the cutting edge again in technology. It has increased employment, and it has created wealth.

The authority's board will immeasurably assist us in determining if a partnership is worth while and valuable. The fact is, Alberta has always been recognized as a leader in science and research and technology development. It is for this reason that over the past year we have witnessed an Alberta medical neurosciences researcher, Samuel Weiss, receive one of the largest university grants ever awarded in Canada, and that is \$3 million. It is why the Protein Engineering Network of Centres of Excellence, which is called PENCE, will establish its administration centre at the University of Alberta. This represents a four-year commitment of \$17.25 million. This is why Northern Telecom spends nearly \$250 million in Alberta annually, and each year it exports products from Alberta worth over a billion dollars. This is why current research and development expenditures by the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada have increased 425 percent in Alberta since 1988.

We've also gained recognition from abroad. In 1993 an international board of review concluded largely due to the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research activity that Alberta is one of the top 10 medical research centres in North America.

What we need to do now is ensure that Alberta does remain a leader in the field of science and research. This is the focus of Bill 22, that it better prepares Alberta for a future that will place great emphasis on the province's and the country's ability to undertake, commercialize, and promote research. We need to focus on increasing the return on our province's investment in science and research through activities, co-ordination, planning, and prioritization. We need a strong and well-defined strategy so that we can communicate to industry that our province is committed to research and economic growth.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

MR. CHADI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right after the minister concluded her comments, there were suggestions that perhaps we should just go straight to the question. I have to advise the hon. members across that there isn't a Bill that will be presented in this House today to be spoken on or debated that I will not rise to. I'll rise to every one, and of course Bill 22 is no exception. So let's start.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by congratulating the minister. I think the minister has done a great deal of justice so far to her portfolio of science and research. In bringing forth Bill 22, I do have some concerns, as do members on this side of the House, and I'm hoping that members opposite will come at the appropriate time and rise in the House and express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction to try to make it the best possible Bill. Obviously, that is the intention of members on this side of the House. I know that every time I get up to speak, I try to provide some constructive comments, constructive criticism, if necessary, and Bill 22 is no exception. So, Mr. Speaker, listening to the minister just starting off her opening comments, she suggested that we need a strong and defined plan, and that's in fact what I certainly would argue for. Looking at the Bill itself, I think that we have to agree that there are some deficiencies in the Bill that need to be addressed and I think can be tightened up. It certainly is a step forward, bringing this Bill now in the state that it is, but I'm certain that the minister at the end of the day will agree that there are areas that could certainly be improved upon.

The one area that I have to agree with and I know that members all over will agree with is the fact that there is overlap and duplication. There's a concerted effort now by all governments everywhere to try to eliminate as much as possible the overlap and duplication. Firstly, we must identify it, Mr. Speaker, and I know that in identifying overlap and duplication in a study earlier done by the government of Alberta with the federal government, they identified something that was just astronomical. It was in the billions of dollars. If my memory serves me correctly, overlap and duplication amounted to somewhere in the range of about \$4 billion out of a total amount that was spent by the federal government in this province of about \$8 billion. Research and development and research and technology are no strangers to that overlap and duplication. I'm certain that if we were to look at what the federal government is spending in this province and in that field, at least look at what the Alberta government is spending in research and development, I think we'd find that there is much overlap and duplication that could be eliminated.

With respect to overlap and duplication in our own province and, in particular, in all departments of government, Mr. Speaker, looking at the amount of money that is spent each year in each department, it amounts to about \$200 million. Now, no department is immune from expenditures in research and development. Technology, as we know, is changing so rapidly that we would have to stay on top of what's going on certainly to keep in tune with the rest of the country and the rest of the continent and, in fact, the rest of the world. So the \$200 million that is being spent by all departments – including agriculture, the Department of Environmental Protection, Alberta Economic Development and Tourism, Transportation and Utilities, Labour; it goes on and on – is a fair amount of money each year, \$200 million.

One thing the Bill does not address – and I have grave concerns, and I want to highlight these concerns now as I know members on this side of the House want to highlight those concerns – is: what is it that would ensure that the different departments of government are going to participate in this new portfolio of science and research in this new Bill or what this Bill proposes to do? In fact, in the minister's comments she said that the board would make certain recommendations to cabinet on how many dollars would flow through to this authority. I would have thought that the minister would be taking all the different research dollars from all the different departments and bringing them forward and saying: "This is what we have. This is what the different departments want us to do for them," somewhat similar to, say, what public works does for all the different departments in government. I mean, when the Department of Health needs a hospital, it goes to public works to do whatever has to be done, everything from the architecture, I would imagine, to the painting of the building and the finishing touches of it and perhaps even the landscaping. So I would have thought that's what the research authority would be doing, not only the research authority but in fact the minister's department: act as a facilitator, act as the equivalent, if you will, of what the public works department does for all departments in government. But this Bill doesn't identify that at all.

3:20

As a matter of fact, I'm not certain now what it would do or what powers the authority would have, because in section 3 of the Bill it says that the powers of the board are to

- (a) solicit and receive donations, and
- (b) with the approval of the Minister, charge fees for any service, material or program provided by the Board.

Now, there were no additional powers to ensure that different departments will funnel the dollars to this department. So I'm not convinced that there really is a role for this Bill just yet other than just creating an authority. It would enable you to create the authority, and that is as far as it would go. There is no guarantee that the different government departments are going to come forward and supply the different dollars to have the research authority and the department that the minister has power over function.

The other area of concern we've got with this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that other Bills that have come forward in the Legislature have clearly identified the board members, the makeup of the board, not who they would be but from what backgrounds, professionally. Would they be members of government? Would there be members from the different professions that are going to be involved directly? I notice that Bill 21, that was presented in the Legislature and which we spoke to just briefly on Thursday last, makes it absolutely clear that the 20 members that they would have would be "professional members appointed . . . in accordance with the regulations, and one member of the public appointed by the Minister." It clearly defines what it is that we would be looking for in terms of board members. Bill 22 doesn't do that, and I'm wondering why it doesn't do that. I would think we would want to ensure that all members are satisfied that the board is put together in a fashion that would be at least reasonably nonpartisan. I think that would go a long way to alleviating some of my concerns as well.

Another area that I want to bring to the minister's attention now is the fact that I think you have to define research. We don't know what it is in fact that the research authority would be undertaking, is going to do in terms of research. What research?

The Bill does not clearly identify what it is. We talk about definition of the board, and we talk about definition of the fund being the science and research fund. We talk about definition of the minister, and we talk about definition of the panel, that being the international expert review panel. But nowhere does it say the definition of research, and I think it's important and appropriate that we identify what that is right from the outset, Mr. Speaker.

Another area that I think can be tightened up in this Bill and ought to be looked at very seriously is the area of payment from the fund, being section 7(1) where it says: "The Minister may request that payments be made from the Fund for grants authorized by the regulations." There are a couple of questions or concerns that come to my mind right off the bat, Mr. Speaker. First of all, there don't appear to be limits that have been set that the minister would be entitled to make those requests for payment. It seems to me that if you have a \$200 million research budget in the province funded by the province of Alberta, that amount of money could very well be handled right from the minister's own department without going to cabinet at all. So there don't appear to be any limits.

The minister and I had a conversation a couple of days ago, and the minister made it clear to me that it could be well covered under regulations. In fact it probably could be. There are some definitions of the regulations in the Bill itself. That is a problem that I've always had. Inasmuch as we're approving or trying to make the best Bill possible, you create the framework of a Bill and you're satisfied with this thing, and then all of a sudden there are regulations that have to be dealt with that are in fact not debated at all in the Legislature. So there is a concern there with not having the regulations as well to be able to ensure that they are adequate, the substance of which would be in agreement by members of this Legislature.

There appear to be no criteria for the approving of the grants. It clearly says under the regulations in section 9: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations . . . respecting applications for grants." So it almost appears that it's either going to be cabinet or it's going to be the minister that is going to suggest yes or no to a grant. They have the final say: "Authorizing the Minister to make grants on the recommendation of the board . . . [or] on the recommendation of Executive Council." These grants would in fact go ahead. But the board is trying to do its job, and I can just see where we can have politics being played and a grant application shot down simply because the minister or Executive Council doesn't see fit to approve it, whether the board decides that it's a good idea or not. So I've got a bit of a concern over that. I understand that we do want to keep, you know, a safeguard, a safety net, if you will. Somebody has to be able to veto a decision if absolutely necessary, but I would think that the board is put together by reasonable people and, as I suggested earlier, that we wouldn't have a situation that would have to have the minister or the Lieutenant Governor in Council or cabinet disapprove of these applications.

Another area that I have concern with in the Bill is again part of the regulations, and it says:

Notwithstanding subsection (1)(d), the Minister may impose further conditions not prescribed in the regulations on the making of a particular grant.

I see this as being not a level playing field at all, Mr. Speaker, and I bring that forward to the minister. I think we need to be able to have regulations that everybody can abide by and not just when it's feasible or acceptable for the minister or cabinet. It would have to be whereby everyone knows the rules of the game prior to going in to play and has an opportunity to continue under

the same rules that somebody else gets to play under. So I have that concern, and I want to bring that to the minister's attention. Other than that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making a solid, sound Bill out of Bill 22.

I think for science and research in this province, as the minister mentioned earlier, for every dollar spent there are about \$4 of benefits accrued to the province. That's very laudable. I noticed that in fact it's starting to go down. It's being decreased as time goes on, of course, from the heyday of 1980 where we had somewhere around \$500 million allocated to science and research to where we're at today: less than half. It appears that it will continue to decline. With the Bill itself, though, there is an opportunity for donations, for funding from the private sector, and this could go a long way to alleviating some of the tax burden on Albertans with respect to this research.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll allow other members of this Assembly to engage in debate. Thank you.

3:30

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased you recognized me, and I'm pleased to be able to get up and speak to this Bill. I'll just say a few words. A big priority of this government is research, and we are working on ways to capitalize on our research, capitalize on research that we are good at, capitalize on skills that we are good at. That's what the Alberta advantage is all about. In fact, research and development in Alberta is one of those particular areas that we feel we can capitalize on.

We have many dedicated scientists and researchers in this province, and they are doing some of the lead works in the world. I can think of one particular example, Synsorb Biotech, in which they have developed a cure for hamburger disease. It has done its first series of clinical tests, will be going into its second series of clinical tests this summer, and that, hopefully - it appears it worked on the first one, so there's every expectation that the drug will continue to work, and out of Alberta we'll have a cure for a disease that will affect all of the world.

I can think of some other young researchers that are working at the University of Alberta. They have developed a technique that can map drugs and change drugs, and they've just now purchased a building in downtown Edmonton, have hired the former MP Ken Hughes, and are going into a massive area of expansion, all done with private-sector money, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're talking about in the Alberta advantage when we're talking about science and research in Alberta. We are on the leading edge of technology in this country, really, so research and development will be an integral part of the growth of the Alberta economy. Science and technology are synonymous with the future.

Now, the government's role in this field is not to provide necessarily a whole bunch of money; the government's main role is to facilitate research activities and provide an environment that is conducive to research and development activities. Bill 22 provides the framework for this. The Science and Research Authority will be the hub of research in this province. It will be the hub, and it is necessary to have the hub so that we can coordinate the direction that the spokes are working in.

I think one of the concerns of the member opposite was the co-ordination. He suggested that the Bill didn't adequately deal with the co-ordination aspect. I would point out that the Bill quite clearly under section 4 deals with the co-ordination of the research. It says quite clearly that the board will

- (a) stimulate research and development and related scientific activities in Alberta;
- (b) develop a science and research policy and priorities . . .

Now, that quite clearly indicates to me that the board will be responsible for developing priorities, and if that's not co-ordinating, I don't know what is. It goes on to say,

- (c) conduct an annual review and evaluation of all Government science and research policies, priorities and programs and their compatibility with the economic and social policies and priorities of the Government and recommend to Executive Council the amount of public money that a program should receive.

That deals with another issue the hon. member raised. The board will be telling Executive Council, the cabinet, how much money they should be getting. It's very clear what the responsibility of the board is.

Another point in the Bill. It says the board is to "develop and monitor." Develop. That means they have to create a financial management plan for the science and research investments of the government. Now, if that's not co-ordination, I don't know what is. They must "develop and monitor" the way the government spends its money.

It has to "evaluate applications for grants under this Act." The member opposite was quite concerned that for some reason the minister's going to be handing out grants here, there, and everywhere. It's quite clear in the Act that it is the board's job. So I think, Mr. Speaker, that if we look carefully at what the hon. member opposite was saying, we will find that it's all covered under section 4 of the Act. He only referred to section 3, but I would encourage him to read section 4 as well.

The other point the member raised is the board itself: what kind of board we would have. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the board, as the member obviously knows, is already appointed. It's been appointed. It's been published. He knows that Dr. Bob Church, an internationally renowned and respected scientist, is the chairman of the board. He knows that there are bankers on the board. He knows that there are scientists on the board. He knows that there are industry leaders on the board. He knows there are people from the petroleum industry. He knows there are people from the biotechnology industry. All these names have been public and made public, so quite frankly, you know, other than trying to bring up, really, objections that are inappropriate and not factual, I can't see what the concern is when we get down to examining the nature of the board. As I say, they're public, they've been published, and everybody in this province, both in the business community and in the scientific community, recognizes the high quality in the nature of this board. We have the industrial leaders of this province, the scientific leaders, the creative leaders, and the banking business. All are part of this board. We have the university people as part of this board as well. A former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary is on the board, Mr. Speaker.

These people are high-quality people in the province that know science, that know research, that know industry, that know banking. I would encourage the member opposite to have a look again at the published list of the board members, and then if he's got any criticism, by all means, bring that criticism forward. Don't criticize it on an invalid basis, Mr. Speaker. What bothers me about all of this, you know, is that we have something that is going to work, that's going to work well, yet there's this criticism that's simply not valid. So I would encourage that particular member and other members to make sure they know what they're talking about before they get up and make their comments. It says quite clearly in the Act, in Bill 22, that the board will be



responsible to "develop a science and research policy and priorities," and I think there's no doubt that this will happen.

Now, I think it's important to point out that the board will not work separately with government and separately with the research industry. What is going to happen is that there's going to be a co-ordination of government and private research so that we can hopefully – and the goal is to build on the funds that are available. This is one area that the Alberta Research Council is being very, very successful in doing, and it provides a good model, I believe, for the Science and Research Authority. What could happen is what does in fact happen at the Alberta Research Council: funds are matched. An industry or a particular business has a problem that it wants solved. It comes to the Research Council and says: "Here's a scientific research problem that we want solved. Can you help us?"

For instance, I can give you a particular example that we're working on. As you know, we have effluent from pulp and paper going into the river, Mr. Speaker, and there's a company that says that it has a technology to solve that, that no longer will effluent be going into the rivers, that it'll be all, 100 percent, recirculated so that you won't have any problems with some of these chemicals and so on that some of the environmentalists get concerned are being pumped in the rivers. They came to us with the technology, and the Alberta Research Council said: "Yes, we're interested. It looks like it'll work." It went through an appropriate validation procedure, and our scientists said, "Yes, it looks like that'll work." So what happens then is we say to the company: "Well, you put up three-quarters of a million dollars. We'll put up three-quarters of a million dollars, and we'll do some research and get it working." The three-quarters of a million dollars of public money is then matched by three-quarters of a million dollars of private money, and you have a unique and well-run system. So the private sector also has a commitment to this. I can see quite clearly that the Science and Research Authority could work like this as well. We could have matching dollars and matching grants. [interjections]

3:40

THE SPEAKER: Order.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] Pay attention.

We will have a system where, you know, it's possible to double or triple, really, the amount of money that is available. In fact, this has happened with the Alberta Research Council. Approximately 50 percent of its budget comes from private-sector sources, and probably that will be growing over the period of the next several years. To do this, we have to be able to all move in the same direction, Mr. Speaker, and to move in the same direction, there must be effective communication amongst all the people that are involved in the voyage.

The Science and Research Authority will be able to be the centre hub that provides the communication. It will be able to consult with the research community. It will be able to consult with government departments and agencies. As well, it will be able to consult with the private sector and through this consultation process will be able to set goals for research and development in Alberta. Not only will it set the goals; it will monitor the progress towards these goals, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice that we have a Speaker that attempts to keep these rowdies in order here.

Related to the co-ordination of activities and priorities is an important area, Mr. Speaker: the area of duplication and the importance of maximizing the single focus of research and doing away with duplication. Under Bill 22 it is part of the mandate of the Science and Research Authority board to

develop and monitor a financial management plan for the science and research investments of the Government [of Alberta] that maximizes returns to economic and social development, minimizes duplication and promotes co-operation.

I just want to talk about the idea of duplication and promoting co-operation for a minute or two, Mr. Speaker. One of the comments that the member opposite made was on duplication. He said that the Bill didn't do enough in terms of duplication. Well, I'm not sure, but that's exactly what we're talking about here: minimizing duplication. If I might provide a bit of an example. In the province of Alberta right now there are three or four different groups that do research in the area of water. [interjections] I know you find my words soothing, Mr. Speaker.

There appears to be very little communication between these groups. What we're saying is that each of these groups has a budget, and what this board will be able to do is examine the research of the various groups and say, "There's duplication," or "There's no duplication." Is there duplication of administration? Is there duplication of research? If there is none, fine. Do your job. But if there is duplication of administration, the board will be able to provide advice as to how to reduce the duplication. If there is no duplication of administration, then it will carry on. If there's duplication of research, then the board will be able to provide advice as to how to do away with the duplication of research. Now, that's just one area where there is possible duplication.

As you probably know, we have the Energy department that's doing research in the area of the oil industry, oil sands research, for instance. We have the Alberta Research Council doing research in the area of oil sands. Is there duplication between those areas?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, we say.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Well, some members are indicating there is duplication between these areas. If they know that . . . I'm sure the member who's in charge of the – which board is that you're on?

AN HON. MEMBER: Syncrude.

DR. L. TAYLOR: If the Syncrude board is aware perhaps that there's some duplication there – he seems to be indicating there is – we will be able to then, Mr. Speaker, as a Science and Research Authority say that the Alberta Research Council is the best place to do this research in the area of oil sands research.

Now, I can see that the Minister of Energy perhaps would have some discussion on that. I think this is a positive and powerful influence that this board can have in the area of duplication. I believe we can get a much bigger bang for our buck, and that's one of the things this government is concerned about doing, getting a bigger bang for our research dollar, and that's simply by process of co-ordination. That's what the research authority is all about.

Now, the points that I have mentioned so far are reasons for everybody to support Bill 22. I think I would just like to take a quote from the Alberta Research Council. It's the vision of the Alberta Research Council, and it says: "By the year 2000, the Alberta Research Council will be . . ." Is that my time, Mr. Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: No.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

DR. L. TAYLOR: No, apparently it's not. I thought I heard the beep, Mr. Speaker, but obviously somebody was fooling with their watch to try and put me off track. Anyway, I'll go back to my quote.

By the year 2000, the Alberta Research Council will be an internationally recognized technology corporation, a valued and important partner in the emergence of a globally competitive Alberta.

Basically, what that's saying, Mr. Speaker, is that science and research is a huge field in Alberta. It encompasses many different areas. If we're going to succeed as a society, if we're going to be competitive on the world market, it is in the area of science and research and technology that we have to succeed. We are moving into the information age: the third wave, as Toffler calls it. Basically, what Toffler talks about is the information processing age. That's where we are, right at the very edge. One of our members, actually – Denis, what's your constituency?

MR. HERARD: Egmont.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Calgary-Egmont is heading a committee on this, looking at information processing in this province, at how we can move our information processing ahead, because this area, Mr. Speaker, is one that is vital to us. I've talked to the hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont, and I'm sure he's going to have some very unique and creative suggestions as to how we can move this information processing ahead. Now, some of it has to do with the fact that our technology is not quite developed enough. We haven't included all the technology we need in our system. For instance, we have that supercomputer in Calgary, but we do not have the technology to allow everybody to get in and out of that computer as quickly and as easily and as cheaply as they should. I think this is something that the hon. member is going to come up with. But it all works together. It's all going to be co-ordinated through the Science and Research Authority.

That's what I see in Bill 22, Mr. Speaker: the availability to co-ordinate this process. Right now we don't have it. You know, one department's doing this, another department's doing this thing, and a third department's doing that thing. Very little communication between the departments. It will be the goal of this research authority to pull all of that out of the department, pull it all out and put it under one authority.

I must say that I do agree with one thing that the member opposite said: the fine job the minister has done so far in creating this, in creating the quality of the board that she has, and putting it together. She's held a number of workshops around the province, Mr. Speaker, that have been very well attended, in Calgary and Edmonton. In fact, there's one in Lethbridge this weekend that will be very well attended by the leaders of business, the leaders of industry, the leaders of science and research, where they'll get together and communicate how the province can go forward in this area, how their business can go forward in this area, how they can co-operate between science, scientists, and businesspeople.

I see my time has gone, Mr. Speaker. I had some more comments but I'll sit.

3:50

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few comments. I hope the member who has just spoken won't see my comments as criticism but as a sincere questioning and commentary about this Bill, as my comments always are, one hopes.

Mr. Speaker, I want, first of all, to thank the minister for bringing this Bill forward. I've been a longtime supporter of science and research in our province, and I think as the intent is expressed to co-ordinate the efforts, that is one of considerable merit. I remember way back when this province in the late '40s and early '50s was struggling with the burgeoning oil and gas industry and how we were then the recipient of the vast amounts of science and research that came to us mainly from the United States, where a great deal of work had preceded the work here. Now, fortunately, we're on the other end. We're in a position to export that immense technology that we have developed in the oil and gas industry over the years. We can export not only our technology; we can also export our skills, and I have watched that happen with tremendous interest. However, the Bill raises some questions that I hope the minister will be able to answer for me and perhaps set my mind at rest on some of them.

One mainly has to do with the former speaker's comment that this authority will "pull it all out," to use his words. Now, I didn't really see this as part of their mandate. I understand from the minister that this is a co-ordinating kind of function, at least in the initial years of the authority, that it isn't one which simply takes over that research that's being done in different departments and by other authorities or research organizations which exist in our province. Perhaps I was wrong, and perhaps the former member saw something here that I did not read into the Bill. I'd like the minister to comment about that.

There are some rather fundamental questions that I have. We have just seen the development of the Economic Development Authority and its various committees, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not sure exactly how this particular authority will relate to that. If we are trying to avoid duplication, is there some cross-pollination or cross-referencing between the two of them? It seems to me that that would be absolutely essential. There is a subcommittee of that particular authority that deals with science and technology, and perhaps the minister can assure me that this authority, then, will eliminate the need for that one or will become the research arm or the research collaborative arm of the Economic Development Authority. I wonder. I guess I'm essentially questioning not just the relationship but the rationale for two authorities which, in my view, have some very, very similar and appropriately similar kinds of objectives in them. Why do we have two? Could we in fact have one authority that would deal with economic development, science, and research? That would seem to me to be an even more appropriate kind of collaborative tool to use.

Mr. Speaker, I'm assuming that this authority will be responsible for developing the criteria as to what research would be funded separately from that which is already going on in the departments of government. Would in fact the criteria be made public as they are developed by the authority itself? That is, what is acceptable as a submission to the authority? What is not? Is social research also a component of this authority, or are we simply talking technological research? The relationship, then, to the Economic Development Authority and how that works out is one of my major concerns.

Another one is the relationship to the Alberta heritage fund for medical research. Once again we have a primary activity happening in our province that has given rise to a great deal of interest around the world and from which we can export skills and

knowledge, one that we're very proud of, but I need to know from the minister how that fits in with this one. Will this Science and Research Authority have some interaction with the medical research authority, and if not, why not? That again seems to me like a logical fit. It seems that if we are trying to make this thing more efficient as well as more effective, that would be a very sensible kind of interaction that could take place.

Mr. Speaker, on the same vein, will the authority, now being responsible for the Alberta Research Council and the Alberta environmental research institute, collapse those two organizations and take over their mandate as an initial step? The member is shaking his head. Well, are we in the business of trying to avoid duplication of effort in our province and compound the capacity of the province to make use of these immense technologies? If so, that seems to me to be, again, logical, that this would be one thing that could happen and could happen relatively quickly. I've already spoken to the government's technology – oh, I didn't mention that the government has, I understand, in existence the Technology and Research Advisory Committee of deputy ministers. Where will that go? Will that committee collapse? Will it somehow relate to the new authority, and if so, how?

Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke about accountability. I'd like perhaps some further explanation of that. Would the authority then, not just for its expenditures but for its criteria and its mandate, the principles that it will develop, be accountable to this Legislature through the minister, I assume, with something rather more timely than just the annual report a year or so later? Can we expect to have updated reports on what the authority is undertaking and its rationale for doing so?

Mr. Speaker, just a couple more questions. Once again we see a Bill, a very important and significant Bill, without seeing the regulations and the criteria that go along with it. I think that's a trend that I deplore, where we are asked to respond and support and, as the member has indicated, not criticize Bills. The essence of the Bill is simply a very broad, sweeping kind of mandate and doesn't really give me and my constituency a good fix on exactly how this is going to go down over time, and I think if we could see the regulations at the same time, simultaneously, this would be a great support. Now, I'm assuming in this case – and perhaps the minister can correct me – that the regulations are also going to be developed by the authority. I imagine that's the kind of answer I'll get, but I think we need to hear that. We need to hear and we need to know from the minister that as the authority moves, those regulations will come to us for some kind of acknowledgment, if not for some acceptance and debate in this Legislature.

4:00

Mr. Speaker, the amount of money: there's no indication in the Bill. Perhaps the minister could comment on how much money is going to be handled by the board and how that is going to once again be responsible, through the minister, to this Legislature and what kinds of amounts the board can approve without coming back here or going through the Treasurer.

Mr. Speaker, the international expert review panel reviews the operations to tell us at six-year intervals; I'm assuming because research doesn't prove itself overnight. I haven't watched one of these from another standpoint, but I wonder if the minister would say if within the science and research field that is the yard mark or the measure that is generally used in order to measure research.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to have the minister's comments on this as well as her comments on whether or not agricultural research, environmental research – and I've already asked for

health care – will in fact in time be rolled into this one authority, and if not, why not?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was interesting to me to hear the comments from the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat and the friendly fire which the member had to endure from some of his own caucus members. That Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat has managed to give 250 speeches in his short time in the Legislative Assembly: three of them on his feet and the other 247 sitting in his chair berating other members who are trying to make constructive criticisms.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Point of Order Factual Accuracy

DR. L. TAYLOR: He certainly is quoting incorrect facts. He has no evidence that I have done that, and I would ask him to withdraw those vicious and vitriolic comments.

MR. GERMAIN: If I have made an error on the number of speeches the member has given in the Legislative Assembly, I do indeed apologize and withdraw the number I commented on.

MR. SPEAKER: To the Bill, hon. member.

#### Debate Continued

MR. GERMAIN: I do want to talk, Mr. Speaker, about Bill 22. That's why I came this afternoon, and that's the purpose that I want to get to.

I want to, first of all, say to the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat that the fact that we have a well-appointed and a highly recognized and a credible authority does not take away from the weakness of the appointing procedure, just the way that highly trained firefighters will make do on occasion if their pumper truck is broken. They will make do because of their skill and because of their expertise, but it only masks the flaw. It does not deal with the issue.

This Legislative Assembly has fallen, in my respectful estimation, into the trap – and we had awhile back when we talked about the dual role perhaps of the Ethics Commissioner – of looking to the quality of the appointment and saying, "The system must be good because the quality of appointments is good." Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker. The system proposed in this science and technology Bill is flawed because the methodology of appointing the people to it begins with the premise that they will be political appointments, and science and technology is, in my respectful suggestion to the members of this Assembly, too serious an issue to leave it in the hands of politicians.

You know, with the greatest of respect that I have for the minister in charge of this area – she is herself a professional woman; she's an educated woman; she's a learned woman – I cannot help but feel that this entire piece of legislation is simply a make-job project for another minister of the Crown. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what we should be doing is reducing the number of ministers of the Crown, not increasing the number, which appears to be the government's most recent current trend. I want to suggest that this particular piece of legislation will accomplish that

and very little more. This is a make-work project for the minister, and I think it is difficult for the government to stickhandle around that public concern.

Now, the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat commented on section 4 of this Act. The hon. member suggested that my colleague on this side of the House should look at section 4, thereby insinuating by insult that my colleague on this side of the House had not read and carefully studied the entire Act. Nothing could be further from the truth, but it falls to me now to discuss section 4. I want to urge all Members of this Legislative Assembly to look at the definitions, the so-called definitions, of the policy of this legislation and to close their eyes and think back for a moment about how dangerous . . .

DR. L. TAYLOR: We'll go to sleep if we close our eyes.

MR. GERMAIN: No. I've already commented in this House that this is a dangerous place to fall asleep in, so I won't ask the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, who is making another one of his speeches, to do that.

I do want to ask the members to listen while I read into the record this section:

Develop a science and research policy and priorities that are compatible with the economic and social policies and priorities of the Government.

Where else in evil history have we heard a definition just as that? Where else in evil past history have we heard a science technology definition that is tied to a government agenda? My friends in this Legislative Assembly, surely the test of any scientific research or any scientific approach should be its benefit to mankind. Do we see that in this legislation? No, we don't.

Now, I want to suggest some things to some members here in the Legislative Assembly – the temperature will drop, and you will greet me with icy stares – that sound incredible. But what about genetic engineering? How far away are we from genetic engineering, where to fit into the economic and social policies and priorities of the government, we get into genetic engineering? What if some young scientist comes to this council and says, "I have found a way where we can cut carbon emissions and we can get 70 miles per gallon of gas"? In a province such as this, where we rely heavily on gas consumption, do we send that person away to develop his research in another part of the world because it does not fit with the priorities of the government? What about those issues? What about the times when economic policy clashes with true science? Who then is going to be the winner in this new Alberta? Surely, my friends, somewhere in a Bill on scientific research we could find, for the benefit of the Member for Calgary-Currie, an opportunity to insert in there a provision that the research shall be for the benefit of mankind. Surely in this province that would not be so novel an idea. I want to suggest that you look at that very, very carefully when you consider this make-work project for cabinet creation in the province of Alberta.

I also want to dwell – but I will not do it as eloquently as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar – on the issue of, once again, regulation without government scrutiny. You would have thought that because of the number of times Members in this Legislative Assembly have raised this issue, government draftsmen would now insert in their regulation sections a requirement that they be reviewed by the committee of this Legislative Assembly on rules and regulations. But we do not find that, and it remains again an opportunity for this government to basically create a bunch of make-work projects, make-work grants for their friends and their colleagues.

We have here a government that campaigned on the basis of saying that it was inappropriate to deal with grants to business, yet this particular legislation invites grants to business. All it does is put a separation between the government, and that is this new authority. What we can't do directly anymore, the government says, we will do indirectly and hope that the opposition and the Alberta public are not able to spot that. So I want to suggest that that is a flaw that sooner or later has to be rectified, and hopefully the minister herself will bring forward a friendly amendment to this piece of legislation. I'll even tell her where it should be tucked in. In section 9(2), after the wording there, she should tuck in the phrase, "but shall not take effect" – we're talking about the regulations now – "until they have been approved by the standing committee of this Legislative Assembly that deals with regulations." What an open and honest approach that would be to deal with a problem that is troubling to the opposition and to Albertans generally.

#### 4:10

I want to also point out, Mr. Speaker, that this piece of legislation removes legislative control from science and research. Now, members in the Legislature will say that the members of this Assembly are not trained and not adequately prepared to handle science and research, and with that I agree. But in the interests of divorcing the Legislative Assembly from handling science and technology, what we have done is vest basically in one minister and the Provincial Treasurer an opportunity to give away Legislative Assembly money, which is taxpayer money, without the scrutiny of this House, without debate in this House, and without the attention for detail that sometimes does come out of debate in this House, particularly long into the night, when most normal and sane citizens have gone to bed.

Finally, I am concerned about the international review. I understand why the minister puts that forward, but the issue that I want to leave with the minister is that while an international review is a decent safeguard to ensure that science and technology is reviewed by other scientists and other technologists, it also leaves us with the position: what about the issue of intellectual property? The issue of intellectual property, Mr. Speaker, is one that some Members in this Legislative Assembly are concerned about. Anytime you have an international group reviewing your science and technology without the expression in this legislation as to what the ground rules are, it leads me to wonder whether we are simply going to be exposing and giving away vast areas of Alberta-paid-for, taxpayer-funded technology that we ought to have better control on for the benefit of all Albertans.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I will defer to other Members of the Legislative Assembly, who will, much more eloquently than I, point out additional shortcomings of this legislation. Thank you.

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

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjection]

THE SPEAKER: Oh. In the interests of pro and con, the hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to speak to Bill 22 and in support of it. I'd like to commend the Premier for his vision and leadership in promoting research and investing our resources in research in the

province of Alberta. All other provinces, including the federal government, are reducing dollars in research, while this province is increasing dollars. As a result, what has happened is that we are attracting many of the premier scientists and researchers to this province.

Advances in research and science play very important roles in creating wealth and building prosperity. The 20th century has seen great progress in science, research, and technology. More inventions and discoveries have been made in this century than in all previous centuries combined. Our efficient food production system, our high standard of living, our overall economic performance, and the health care system we are so proud of in this province were made possible by the knowledge and technology created through science and research.

Science and research has played a particularly important role in agriculture and the food sector. It was the use of research that enabled Alberta producers to develop one of the most productive agricultural industries in the world. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we surpassed \$5.3 billion in food processing in the year of 1994, which surpassed the petrochemical industry revenue. By applying science and technology, Alberta producers have placed on the consumer's table some of the most safe and nutritious foods in the world, right here in the province of Alberta.

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Excellent research, Mr. Speaker, is being done in the area of canola in looking at producing a substitute for ink. As you know, when we recycle newspaper, for instance, we can certainly make use of the paper, but the ink we have of course accumulated has to be somehow disposed of, and it is a hazardous chemical. Canola as a fuel source and also the use of canola in pharmaceuticals are other new ventures that research dollars are being spent on.

We've also created opportunities in the value-added industries, processing food and beverages, as I mentioned before. At a time when the middle-class economies in Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Japan, and Mexico are growing at a rapid rate, the demand for processed food and beverages is ever increasing. To give you another example, Mr. Speaker, of the development of research in this area, we know that because the middle-class economies are growing and the demand for processed food is there, we have to package it somehow to keep it fresh as it arrives in these countries. In this province, as a result of dollars invested, we were the first to develop what we call modified atmospheric pressure packaging, which allows us to keep our red meat fresh and to deliver it to different countries in the world as much as 45 days later still retaining its freshness. As a result, we have received international acclaim for the exceptional quality of all our agriculture, food, and beverage products.

We have over 400 agricultural and food research projects conducted in Alberta annually. These projects are performed in the private sector, in the universities, and in the government research centres. The high economic benefits resulting from these projects, Mr. Speaker, are quite staggering. For every \$1 invested in agricultural research, for instance, we generate up to \$60 in the economy. One out of every three jobs in this province is somehow related in some way to the agricultural sector, whether it be in marketing, food processing, transportation, or in manufacturing.

Various agencies within the Alberta government perform or fund agriculture and food research. They include the Alberta Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; the Environmental Centre, located in Vegreville; the Alberta Research

Council; and the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. In fact, in the area of the environment Alberta again has been the leader in soil conservation and water conservation research. As the hon. minister mentioned before, we are leaders in direct seeding in this country and have sponsored some of the most innovative manufacturing of direct seeding equipment.

Another area that will benefit all of us – and, quite frankly, this will be a benefit for all mankind and not, as the hon. Member for Fort McMurray said, for some friends of government – is biological weed control. We know that we have a problem with Canada thistle in this country. We're doing some very exciting research at the Vegreville research institute using insects to control weeds; in this case Canada thistle. That new technology is being adapted to our climate. In a number of very few, short years we'll be able to use insects to control Canada thistle, sow thistle, and some of the many other weeds that we presently are using chemicals on. We will now be able to control those weeds with insects, quite frankly.

The Alberta Agricultural Research Institute co-ordinates and funds agriculture and food research. Its co-ordination and activities in agriculture and food research are not confined to Alberta government agencies only. It links and co-ordinates agriculture and food-related research activities of provincial government agencies and the private sector. The private sector is involved through the matching grants program at the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. It involves universities and federal government research centres.

In fact, we have some interesting research going on with the use of potatoes. Many are wondering why it's so exciting. At the moment our food processing centre in Lethbridge has a difficult time keeping up with the processing of potatoes as a processed food for some of the countries I mentioned before, especially Mexico. A tremendous demand. They have come up with a way of mashing the potato, adding hamburger to it or peas and carrots – it looks like a deep-fried fish fillet – packaging it under the modified atmospheric packaging, and sending this out to Mexico. We have difficulty keeping up with the demand. In fact, the York food plant in Lethbridge has doubled its capacity and still can't keep up with the demand. Those are some of the very exciting things that research has done to increase wealth in this province, and again I say: for all mankind, not for a few business leaders in this province.

4:20

The institute supports the Science and Research Authority, which does have a broader mandate that relates to all science and research functions of the Alberta government. As I mentioned before, agriculture and food research is a very important part of the government function. Presently we do have 300 highly trained agriculture and food researchers working in Alberta. They are among the most talented experts in their respective fields within Canada. Many of them have earned international recognition. We're fortunate to have men and women of this calibre who have dedicated their intellectual capacities, proven skills, and experiences, making this province's agriculture and food industry the very best it can be.

The challenges we face, Mr. Speaker, as a province in a highly competitive world are many. Our best chance for continued success depends on how effectively we mobilize our intellectual talents. The creativity and innovation that will emerge from scientific research will be a powerful force for overcoming the challenges and capitalizing our opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the new Science and Research Authority and the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute are vital instruments of government for harnessing the immense potential of science, research, and technology for the prosperity and well-being of all Albertans, and that's why I support Bill 22.

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

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to actually speak against Bill 22, and that will probably surprise many people. I'm certainly not against science and research at all. In fact, I'd be the first person to say that that indeed is the way to go, but as the Member for Fort McMurray clearly pointed out, we don't need a Bill 22 to achieve co-ordination and effective science and research within the province of Alberta.

You know, when you first look at this Bill, it looks innocuous, but in actual reality when you start to read it, it gives the same message that's concerned me for the past decade: that governments don't understand their role. I once again see the same thing happening in this Legislature. The role of government is to be the servant of the people.

Now, the Member for Vegreville-Viking very eloquently stood up and talked about agriculture. Well, the agricultural industry and research and technology were here long before the Conservative government of the province of Alberta existed. When you look at the research that's been done around the world, it wasn't governments that showed the intellect and the intelligence and the challenges and the inquiring minds. It was individual people that came together as scientists and looked at why certain things didn't work or what had gone wrong in a certain process.

Here once again is a piece of legislation that is bureaucratic; it's costly to the taxpayers; it's also in conflict. When I look at the reality of them asking for donations and then I look at the composition of this board – and we listen to some of the membership being identified by the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat: industry, bankers – and then I look at the areas of research where I firmly believe government should have a co-ordinating role, I start to see some conflicts here. In fact, it frustrates me no end when I hear the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat eloquently talking about hamburger disease and knowing that for the past 15 years in public health when we've tried to make sure that the most basic of public health education is enforced in the province of Alberta and that the legislation is enforced, what do we see? A government that doesn't have the political will to do it. So what happens? It ends up costing the health care system significant dollars. It didn't need Bill 22, Science and Research Authority Act, to make sure the scientific information that we have out there in the health care field was put to good use. It took political will.

Now, an area that I can think of – and I see this in conflict, particularly when you look, as the Member for Fort McMurray was talking about, at duties in section 4(b) and (c). This is where I base my opposition to this Bill. In case you've missed it, I would like, Mr. Speaker, to once again read it into the record.

Develop a science and research policy and priorities that are compatible with the economic and social policies and priorities of the Government.

Immediately I start thinking about health and I start thinking about the environment. If that's in conflict with the government of the day, do you think the research is going to be done in that area?

I would love, Mr. Speaker, for some scientist to go out to Fort Saskatchewan and look at the gypsum pond out there and start

researching how we can remove that gypsum pond in a way that protects our health and future environment for future generations. That's the role of the government, because industry hasn't been able to do it, and it would clean up our environment.

I can also see where we're having contamination of our water tables. When we're looking at the water table being contaminated, every Albertan has a responsibility.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: I can't believe it. Because it's in her constituency, that's the role of government.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: I'm hearing the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky saying . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Wapiti.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Wapiti.

. . . that it's the member's constituency, but never let us forget that when you're dealing with the . . .

MR. JACQUES: I never said a word.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: I've obviously got the wrong – it's the minister of agriculture I'm referring to, Mr. Speaker. So it was Smoky. I was correct in the first instance.

When he's making the comment, "It's in her [own] constituency," I think he has to remember that when you're dealing with environment, it's much larger than your own constituency, particularly when you have gypsum sitting on the North Saskatchewan River. So to try and say that it's a self-interest does us no good in this Legislature, because we're dealing with significant environmental issues when we're talking about potential contamination.

Now, we move on, then, to 4(c).

Conduct an annual review and evaluation of all Government science and research policies, priorities and programs and their compatibility with the economic and social policies and priorities of the Government and recommend to Executive Council the amount of public money that a program should receive.

I immediately start thinking of health and the conflict that can often happen between the private sector and health related areas. The way I interpret (c) is that indeed if it was in conflict with the philosophy or the policy of that government of the day, the recommendation probably would be that we don't support research in a given area.

When you look at meaningful research from a government perspective, I would say that what this government, Mr. Speaker, should be doing is sitting down with their federal counterparts, other provincial counterparts and looking at what we can do in this latter part of the century to see how we can come to grips with the health related problems we're seeing that are on a significant increase. That would be meaningful research, and it doesn't need a Bill like this to be able to do it. All it needs is political will and co-operation within government departments and other levels of government, yet we don't see that happening. What we see once again is the pitfall of governments, where they come in for the wrong reasons with a Bill creating another ministry, creating a political appointment process, and also tying research and technology back to a political process and political patronage. That basically is what I believe is fundamentally wrong with Bill 22 so that it shouldn't be supported in this House. And to say that because you don't support it you're against science and research is a bunch of nonsense. [interjections]

4:30

Mr. Speaker, it's always interesting that when certain members in this House don't like to hear the truth as I see it and particularly in interpreting this, they like to throw out the fact that I was on the Public Health Advisory and Appeal Board and Alberta Hospital Edmonton. I believe I was amply qualified, and if indeed the minister who stills sits in this House who put me there didn't believe that for one minute, then I think the question should be put to that individual.

When we're talking about political processes and research and science, they don't go together. They have to remain independent. There has to be no political interference. This government continues with the same past practices of tying politics to the type of legislation that's being brought before this House. You know, the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat said to be constructive. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the British parliamentary system had a role for the Official Opposition, and that was to critique the legislation that was being brought forward on behalf of the citizens of that so-called democratic process. I have stood here and sat here and listened to members over there: "Well, tell us how we would do it." That is not our role. Our role is to see that we get the best legislation for Albertans, and if this government . . .

MR. PASZKOWSKI: People would be pleased to hear they voted for a responsible person like this.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Why don't you listen for a while, minister of agriculture? You're full of hot air.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Through the Chair please, hon. members.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, the role of an Official Opposition is to make sure that we get the best legislation for Albertans. This government does not allow that to happen because they will not put in place meaningful legislative committees. They put them in place when it suits them. When we bring forward meaningful amendments, they ignore them. Now, if they are serious about bringing good legislation, good government to the province of Alberta, they would start listening to what's being said from all members of this House, who were elected by the same people, Albertans. [interjections]

When you're finished having your little side remarks, I will continue.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking is rising on a point of order. Would you care to share with us, while you're there?

**Point of Order  
Questioning a Member**

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under *Beauchesne*, may I ask this hon. member . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Cite the section.

MR. STELMACH: It's 459; no, 408.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You're asking a question.

Before Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan entertains this, if you say yes, fine; then the question will be asked. If you say no, you do not need to make an explanation of why "no," and we can go on, because it's your entitlement to do either.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, before I answer. You know, they constantly remind us that they got elected, we didn't, and I keep reminding them that yes, I did get elected to this Legislature. We ask the questions; they decide whether they want to answer them. Sure, I'll answer the question.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right. The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking has been granted his wish.

**Debate Continued**

MR. STELMACH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan would be able to advise this Assembly if, when she was appointed to the Alberta public health advisory board and also to the Alberta Hospital board – and I believe she served as chair – that appointment was political patronage, or was she appointed because of her skill and knowledge?

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: I'd be delighted to answer it: political patronage and skill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question has been answered. Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, continue.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe in being honest. I said it when I ran during the last election, and I have no problem with that. So, you know, if you didn't get the answer that you wanted, really I'm sorry to disappoint you.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we were listening also to the Member for Vegreville-Viking talking about genetic engineering of, I could assume, food. It could be food, and indeed that's what's happening today. There is genetic engineering of food in the food chain.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Like your beef.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Exactly. Educate the so-called farmer, please, because it's important. He raised an important issue.

But with every piece of science there also is a responsibility, and that responsibility, when we talk about genetic engineering, is to the consumers, to Albertans. I see a government here sadly lacking in that. When we talk about genetic engineering of food, we have a responsibility to Albertans to make them aware of what they're eating. It's no different than, for example, in the U.K. I'll use an example where, unfortunately, because of Chernobyl there was significant fallout. The government of the day there drew an artificial line and said, "You can only eat lamb outside this boundary," because the lambs were contaminated, highly contaminated, but you could eat lamb that came from a farm just over the hedge or the fence. Now, this is where a government has a responsibility. When you're looking at research . . .

DR. L. TAYLOR: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat is rising on a point of order. Would you care to share?

**Point of Order  
Relevance**

DR. L. TAYLOR: Yes. Relevance, Mr. Speaker. Eating lamb from one side of the fence to the other side of the fence I don't think has absolutely anything to do with the Science and Research Authority. In fact, of everybody on the Science and Research Authority I don't think there's one person that likes lamb.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Given the nature of the inquiry, do not respond to that point of order. A point of order is a point of order, not a debating point and not a shot.

The hon. Government House Leader rising on a point of order.

**Point of Order  
Imputing Motives**

MR. DAY: Just a very brief one related to the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat on impugning motives. I, in fact, do like lamb.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, not to add anything further to it, but 'ewes' can do what you wish.

DR. L. TAYLOR: Could I respond to that?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.  
Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, continue.

**Debate Continued**

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the House reduced to a new low today. If it wasn't rats, it's now been lambs. It all came from the government side of the House as well.

Now, going back to the Member for Vegreville-Viking, he made the statement that in fact this province was increasing their moneys to research, yet in the numbers that I look at, we're looking at it dropping from \$233 million to \$195 million. So unless my math is different from the Member for Vegreville-Viking, I would say that that's a significant drop. Now, while we look at that reduction, I'm not going to be critical of it because, I mean, there are fiscal realities. But where I will be critical – instead of introducing Bills like this, as I said once before, why don't you get together with the federal government, get together with the other provincial governments, look what's happening in agriculture, look what's happening in health, and work co-operatively with those people? You'd get the best bang for the buck for Canadians, because the bottom line is that we're all Canadians. But no, no, no; we get ourselves all boxed into little boxes and we've got to create bureaucracies, as we're doing through Bill 22.

**4:40**

So, Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I will not be supporting this Bill. I don't think it's necessary. I think we can have very effective co-ordination and efficient and effective science and research done out there by getting our act together and making sure that we get the best bang for our buck by working co-operatively with the federal government, with the other provincial governments, and in partnership with the private sector. I'd also say that education is a key component of research and science, where we make sure that the young people who come out of our universities and schools have the qualifications to move into the petrochemical industry, the oil and gas industry, to be the researchers, to do what needs to be done without being retrained.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a few comments that I'd like to make on Bill 22. I look at the function, I guess, or the focus that this research authority is going to have, and if I try to evaluate it from the perspective of kind of the history that I've had involved in research, both as an academic

conducting research and as an administrator trying to supervise people who have received research dollars, I guess I would like to start off by commending the minister that this is the kind of thing we need to have as a broad perspective to look over the focus and the direction of research that goes on in the province. But when we look at what's within this Bill 22, I have a few questions that I'd like to place to the minister and see if we can't get some clarification before subsequent debate on the Bill.

In terms of the board, as I said, I think this is the kind of board that we need in the province to co-ordinate and give direction to our research, but it's really quite general in terms of the information that's provided to us in terms of the membership. I was wondering if the minister has looked at all at the possibility of bringing on to the board representatives from some of the other major research parts of our province, whether that be from the universities, whether it be from the Alberta Research Council, from the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, or maybe a representative from the federal government. Are these people going to be representative on the board so they can serve as either an active member of the board or as a liaison partner on the board so that we can get really good feedback and a lot of co-ordination, which needs to go on between these groups?

You know, you kind of look at it and you say, well, maybe there isn't that much similarity in the type of research that goes on at the Alberta Research Council as opposed to, say, the research that is going on in the Alberta Ag Research, but you know, you get involved in issues that cross over, like the environment, like health care, like personal safety. These kinds of things all need to be looked at from a co-ordination standpoint, and I'd just like to recommend to the minister that that kind of consideration be given when she makes up the board. She has suggested 20 members on the authority, and what we could do is set aside, say, five of those for liaison functions with some of these other groups.

The next part that I looked at was under section 3, where the Bill outlines the activities of the board or the powers of the board. It says, "with the approval of the Minister, charge fees for any service." Basically what we see here now is an open invitation for the board to start looking at cost recovery, fee-for-service type aspects. Part of the activity or the function of this board is going to be allocating dollars for use by researchers at subsequent institutions. What we see then is a lot of the research institutions, especially universities and some of the private research areas, now starting to look at very significant overhead costs, anywhere from 50 to 200 percent, on the research grants that come into the institution for scientists to conduct the research. So what we're going to have is essentially a public dollar going to our research authority, they're going to take a cut off it, and then it's going to go to another institution, whether it's a private group or a university, and they're going to be taking another cut off it.

I'd like to see the minister kind of outline conditions and parameters that would regulate the relationship between these fees, the magnitude of these fees, maybe a relationship in terms of what proportion of the total dollar. When we deal with education, we talk about how many dollars are in the classroom; when we deal with health care, how many are in the hospital there or at the patient providing care. Well, here when we're talking about research, I think we need to be looking at how many dollars are actually being utilized in the active conduct of research. So in her regulations that come out later on, where the minister has the responsibility to set all these regulations, I would hope that she either incorporates it there or else takes a more proactive part or function and actually incorporates right in the Bill some kind of



regulation or some kind of limit on this proportion of the dollar that can be used for service fee and charges.

The other part of the Bill that I've already made note of we've had a number of people speak to already today, so I'll just mention it very briefly. That's under section 4, where we're talking about the priorities of the government again. I think it would be more appropriate if we said, "The priorities of the people of Alberta," instead of "the government." The board is there to develop the scenario, to develop the focus and the aspects of research for our province. Why not give them the mandate to deal with the priorities of the people of the province and deal with it from that perspective? That basically is brought up both in section 4(d) and in 4(c), where they bring out that relationship. I think it would be much more appropriate to deal with it there, in terms of the priorities of the people of Alberta.

The next comment that I'd like to make is in the context of section 8 of the Bill, where they're talking about the international export review panel. Here what we have is the panel being set up with not fewer than six members for a term not to exceed six years, yet when we look down under subsection (3) of section 8, this panel only has to prepare a report every six years. In essence, people are being appointed to a board for six years, but they only have to file a report once every six years. If we're going to try and judge the credibility of the action of the authority that we're creating through Bill 22, I would like to suggest that six years is not frequent enough to be looking at some review of the activities of how that kind of mandate is carried out. We need to look at it possibly on a biannual basis, every two years, so that we can get a good review in terms of what focus and direction the authority is taking and whether or not they're actually carrying out the mandate that was given to them under Bill 22. So that's basically the issue there. I think six years is a little too long in between, and I'd like to see the minister consider a more frequent review by that panel.

The final comments that I would like to make basically deal with kind of a review or a reading of section 9 on the regulations, where the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations, (a), "authorizing the Minister to make grants," and then down to (ii), "on the recommendation of Executive Council." This is probably the part of the Bill that puts up the biggest red flag when I read through it, in the sense that if we're creating an authority to look at the priority and the co-ordination of research in the province, then what we need to do is have the research priorities being developed from the research community in Alberta, from the people of Alberta, whereas this basically is telling us that the Executive Council can come along to the authority and say, "You must do this research."

Mr. Speaker, I think that's a little bit forceful, a little bit heavy-handed in terms of the mandate of this authority. I would like to see that if the Executive Council is in a position at some point in time where they'd like to see research take a particular direction, they have the option there to do promotion within the research facilities, they have the option to deal with universities, get them excited about the kind of research that they want done and have them make the appropriate applications. If the Executive Council is truly speaking on behalf of the people of Alberta, they will be making the same kind of submissions that the authority is hearing from the people of Alberta and using to prioritize their allocation of grants.

4:50

The final issue that I'd just like to address very briefly is that the Bill doesn't really give us a firm indication of what the

relationship is going to be between the Science and Research Authority and all of the other research institutions that are presently funded and presently operated by the government of Alberta. Does this authority take precedence over, say, the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute? Does it take priority over the heritage fund funded research functions in medicine or in agriculture? Does it deal with co-ordination and mandates to the Alberta Research Council?

So I guess the relative power of the authority needs to be more fully spelled out so that we can look at the relationship between these different groups and this authority, because if the authority is really going to have the mandate to provide good direction to the way we're going in research and technology in the province, it's got to have the ultimate say. It's got to be the top dog in the research world. It's got to be the one that says: this is the direction we're going. It also should have the authority to make recommendations in terms of the budget that goes out to these other groups: whether the ARC budget stays the same way it is, whether the Alberta Ag Research Institute budget stays the same. It's got to have that authority to basically look at the priorities, co-ordinate and redirect the Alberta taxpayer dollar.

So I would like to see some things in this Bill that would give that kind of authority and power to the research authority. With those kinds of changes in this, I think it's the kind of institution or the kind of authority that we need in the province to look at our research, and I think it's a Bill well worth supporting.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a second time]

### Bill 23

#### Treasury Statutes Amendment and Repeal Act, 1995

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Provincial Treasurer I am pleased to move for second reading Bill 23, the Treasury Statutes Amendment and Repeal Act, 1995.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising to speak to an omnibus Bill such as this, it's very hard to maintain a consistent discussion of principle, so I will be jaunting about, speaking to a number of the proposed points in there, each of which will be dealing with a specific principle.

The first thing I'd like to do is compliment the government, actually, on some sections of this Bill, particularly section 59.1. What 59.1 does is something that has been long required. That really requires, then, the government, through an amendment to the Financial Administration Act, to table share and loan agreements made pursuant to supply votes or material amendments to an agreement. These have to be tabled within 45 days of the end of the fiscal year, and if the Legislature's not sitting, not more than 15 days after the beginning of the next sitting.

Now, in effect what this does, on one hand, is that as a Treasury critic, it removes some of the sport of asking and requiring those types of things to be tabled. On the other hand, it allows for far more transparency in terms of the types of obligations that the government has undertaken on behalf of Alberta taxpayers. Had such provisions been in place at the time the Swan Hills special waste management facility was set up, then in fact I think we would not be looking at the financial liability that we are today. So that is something, section 59.1, I support wholeheartedly.

I have some concerns in that it doesn't necessarily apply to indemnities, and there are some loopholes through orders in council by which indemnities can be offered and still will not be required to be tabled. So there is some slippage here, but in terms of the principle, Mr. Speaker, about transparency, particularly as it relates to loan guarantees and loan agreements, this is a significant step forward and should be seen as such.

Now, there I was speaking to section 59.1, and it's part of the amendment to the Financial Administration Act. The other area that I'd like to speak to concerns amendments that you find on page 17 of the Bill. These amendments basically deal with streamlining and clarifying investment strategies that are pursued by the Provincial Treasurer with respect to a variety of funds. I think it's noteworthy on page 10 – and I'll just read this because I think it's interesting. Section 50 is repealed and the following is substituted:

50(1) The Provincial Treasurer may make investments on behalf of the funds in subsection (3) and when doing so shall adhere to investment and lending policies, standards and procedures that a reasonable and prudent person would apply in respect of a portfolio of investments to avoid undue risk of loss and obtain a reasonable return.

That, in fact, I think is a statement that you can live by with regards to the investment strategy of the heritage savings trust fund, because it links prudence, rate of return, and it's a reasonable criterion. I mean, one still has to ask the question: what's an acceptable level of risk?

Now, the reason I focus on the amendment, then, to section 50(1) is because it also answered one of the questions that the Provincial Treasurer had failed to answer in estimates with regards to cushions. As you know, in the budget itself there are these cushions. Cushion after cushion after cushion has been set up because of the requirements, really, that arise in Bill 6. Now, what this appears to do under section 50(1) is it really requires the Provincial Treasurer to invest those funds of the cushion in such a way that a reasonable return is offered. I had wondered, in fact, whether or not these cushions were just setting up money to be – what was going to happen to any of those funds that materialized and were in the cushion? Well, it appears that they will be invested, subject to this criterion here, and it's probably the best you could hope for. Again, I would prefer a little more flexibility with regards to whether or not you want cushions built into a budget as opposed to other mechanisms of stabilization, but this at least answers that question.

In terms of a requirement that the Treasurer act with prudence, again, had such a provision been in place with a previous Provincial Treasurer, we might not be looking at such a large gross debt and such a large number of loan guarantees. So I think that's the best you can ask of an individual, and this is sort of open ended in the sense that it says these are the general criteria.

In many instances the sections like 50(1) are often prescriptive; they give you a list of what you cannot do. I do think there is room for providing discretion with regards to investment strategies, so one that provides for discretion rather than being prescriptive, necessarily, and defining only what you can do makes some sense. So I certainly can support section 50(1).

**5:00**

Another area, though, where I have some concerns – I think it's on page 17 of the Bill. Because this is an omnibus Bill, it's hard to get a consistent theme running. This concerns section 65.1. Again, speaking to the principle of this, "for the purposes of this Part," et cetera, et cetera, it basically gives the Provincial

Treasurer a lot of discretion when the Treasurer wishes to calculate the Canadian dollar equivalent of outstanding loans, debts, et cetera. Under the old legislation the conversion factor was based on

the nominal rate of exchange between the Canadian dollar and the currency or medium of exchange . . . on the business day immediately preceding the day on which the order in council authorizing the Government securities [or indemnity] to be issued is enacted.

So at least you had a window. When the action was undertaken, it was the exchange rate of that date, then, that was used in the budget document or in the public accounts. This removes that, and it appears to be much more closely linked to realization, when the U.S. dollar debt may be due and its Canadian dollar equivalent. It appears in a sense to give a lot of discretion to the government. I read the section "using a method of calculating the conversion approved from time to time by the Lieutenant Governor in Council." That's pretty open ended. I would prefer, you know, at the date of transaction or at the date of the budget or two weeks before the budget is issued rather than "from time to time." Mr. Speaker, since we have a large stock of U.S. dollar debt – offhand I think it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$2 billion to \$3 billion, at that level – you can get a lot of movement, then, in terms of the Canadian dollar equivalent. It depends on when you choose to convert it to Canadian dollars for the purpose of a budget or public accounts or what have you. To the extent that there's an element of discretion, that discretion allows you to choose in a sense a nice adjustment factor for your consolidated surplus or deficit, because you can always choose it when it's in your favour. From time to time, on occasion from day to day, hour to hour we have seen the government choose to undertake things when it's to their favour.

When I read the passage "conversion approved from time to time by the Lieutenant Governor in Council", that is too open ended. It doesn't talk, as, say, some of the earlier sections did, about prudence and what's reasonable. This allows I think too much discretion in terms of what is allowed the Provincial Treasurer.

One other area that I want to speak to concerns the provisions for sunset clauses, and this is something that we were hoping to see in this particular set of amendments. When amendments to the Financial Administration Act were passed – it was in fact section 81(2) of the Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1993, that provided for the sunset of all provincial agencies and Crown-controlled organizations every five years unless specifically continued by the Legislature. This recommendation was in accordance with the Financial Review Commission.

Well, this particular section of the Financial Administration Act hasn't been proclaimed yet. I mean, it's fine to pass amendments such as this, but on the other hand, it's even more important once they're passed and have the approval of the Legislature to proclaim them, because the failure to do so sort of eviscerates what this whole exercise is about, which is careful scrutiny of legislation and, after protracted debate, passage. That presumes that they reflect the will of the members of the Legislature, and they ought to be enacted. That hasn't happened. The sunset provisions that were passed, section 81(2), in 1993 as amendments to the Financial Administration Act have not been proclaimed. So we find that disappointing. As we say, although there are some very worthy elements in this Bill 23, particularly with regards to transparency and the tabling within the prescribed period of time of loan agreements and guarantees, et cetera, we hope that when these are approved, they're also proclaimed.

Now, just to jump around a little bit, one further element of this Bill that we certainly have no problems with concerns the consistency of reporting under the Financial Administration Act with the structure set out under Bill 41. What this Bill does is continue what Bill 41 did in terms of leveling responsibilities, particularly financial administration, within departments. It does so by repealing certain sections of the Financial Administration Act. It's a clear rationale, and the principles were set out in Bill 41 in terms of moving away from a top-down type of administrative structure, where the Provincial Treasurer and Deputy Provincial Treasurer set out the rules of the game, delegating that responsibility across departments to authorized officers and making each department, then, more responsible for its own financial position and having Treasury play less of a watchdog role.

Here the province is moving away from the tack taken in other provinces. I know in Saskatchewan, for example, the Treasury Board does provide a watchdog role, particularly in administration issues. What the Treasury Board does in provinces like Saskatchewan is that they have the expertise there to do cost-benefit analyses, to do financial reviews, and since they're outside of the department, they can bear the bad news, bring it in and say: well, this doesn't cut the mustard in terms of financial viability, in terms of meeting any reasonable cost-benefit criteria. Here this is all being delegated at the departmental level, and if an individual is housed within a department, it may be more difficult, then, for them to work their way up the chain saying that a particular policy being pursued by the minister doesn't make economic sense. In some instances the minister may just shoot the messenger. So it's nice having, in a sense, that policing function set outside of the departments with a cadre of skilled professionals who go in, evaluate programs, make recommendations, and are arm's length from the departments. We're moving away from that.

You know, it appears that on one hand decentralization and autonomy at the departmental level may sound good, but I think what happens is that, since the deputy minister and minister have a lot of discretion about advancement within departments, cultures will emerge where there's a groupthink. So I think there is a valid role for the Treasury or Treasury Board to play a more proactive role in evaluating policies and programs that emerge within departments.

Again, had such a function been in place, we may not have had NovAtel; we may not have had MagCan. Instead, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism or its various names – their ministers and bureaucrats were able to basically run at will in terms of bootstrapping various types of projects which have come home with significant cost to taxpayers.

So this particular Bill continues us on this road to decentralization. As I say, on the one hand, there may be some merit to it, but on the other hand, entrepreneurial government is an oxymoron. It got us NovAtel, it got us MagCan, and it certainly got us Bovar. There is room for a particular department to play a watchdog role, to be hated by all, to be there defending the taxpayer and ensuring that policies and programs in investment meet some reasonable criteria. I think we're losing a bit of that with some of the amendments that are here. Again, the government has chosen to move down this track with Bill 41. I believe the expression is: they won; we lost. It's the government's prerogative to do that, but it's our responsibility to point out that there may be pitfalls that emerge from this. It's also our responsibility to say, "I told you so," at some point, which of course we will. There are significant problems, I think, that emerge from Bill 41 tied in with this.

So with those comments I will take my seat.

5:10

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is always these omnibus Bills that the Treasurer in his smooth approach markets as being necessary housekeeping and to help us along with necessary housekeeping. Well, I know that when the Treasurer says that, his members opposite are soothed. I suspect and suggest, Mr. Minister, that despite the fact that Members of the Legislative Assembly are paid to scrutinize the legislation of this province, if we were to take a poll right now as to who has read, digested, and understands this particular legislation, there would be few, if any, hands that go up.

Now, my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud indicated that the legislation would allow fiascos such as NovAtel and MagCan to repeat themselves, and indeed I will point out shortly some sections that not only allow them to repeat themselves but virtually guarantee that they will be repeated, proving that we've learned nothing with the passage of time in this province. I want the various members of this Legislative Assembly, if they don't mind, to clutch this Bill 23 in their hands while I point out only a very few of the concerns that I have, and some of you may join with me in expressing these concerns.

When you analyze these sections of the legislation we're debating now, remember that everything cycles and that every political process cycles. Ask yourself, as you read the sections with me, if you were not in this Assembly and better yet if you were not in the government of this Assembly, would you be concerned when you heard sections like this? Now, let's focus on section 12(2) as an example. It's found on page 5 of the legislation. I'm not able to make one of my free-flowing speeches at this time because, as my friend from Edmonton-Whitemud pointed out, this is a chopped up piece of legislation that deals with several issues. Let's just look at section 12(2) on page 5, where it says, "The Provincial Treasurer may prescribe the form and contents of the financial records of the Crown and of Provincial agencies." Well, these are mathematical accounting records, my friends. Surely the test should be in Alberta that the government records analyzed, published, and produced will satisfy generally accepted accounting principles. Since when are we going to delegate to a government official the methodology by which the material is presented without ensuring that it deals with standard policies of accounting?

Now, let's look at the granddaddy of all the potentiality for abuse in this legislation. Let's all turn to page 10 and look there at section 50(2). I know that both the hon. members for Lethbridge-East and Lethbridge-West will want to look at this section and read what it says in subsection (2). Remember that we are herein talking about legislation of the Provincial Treasurer. Before we read subsection (2), we have to understand that subsection (1) attempts to ensure that the government makes wise investments. But suppose they don't. What does subsection (2) say? It is tantamount to rubbing salt in an open wound, because it says that "the contravention of subsection (1) does not by itself make any agreement or transaction void or invalid." How could we as a Legislative Assembly legislate and prescribe legislative incompetence and condone it and tolerate it and allow it? How could we do that? [interjection] Have I stolen your good point? Have I stolen the good point from the Member for Calgary-Currie, who I know would want to raise that issue? How could we do that? Other Members of this Legislative Assembly will

more eloquently than I review this point at a time when the members opposite will have had a chance to review it.

What I stood up to speak about this afternoon as well is the power that we give to deputy treasurers to go to court and to take away people's rights and to trespass on people's legal rights. We don't even want to do that now in the name of the Treasurer. We will do that only by the Deputy Provincial Treasurer or deputy head.

You need not go any further than look at page 7 and see that before the department of the Treasury would sneak off to court *ex parte*, which means behind a citizen's back, and get financial records by court order. At least the Provincial Treasurer would have to be a watchdog of the public's rights. Does the Provincial Treasurer have to watchdog the public's rights anymore? You know, I ask the Member for Peace River. The response is no. I ask the Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne. The answer is no. They do not have to protect the rights of the public at least by ensuring that the Provincial Treasurer authorizes court orders. Now a deputy head can do that. Talk about the downgrading of the protection of the citizens in this province. Was that a point from your speaking notes?

MR. SEKULIC: Yeah, that's one of my points.

MR. GERMAIN: Well, I'm sorry to hear that.

Now, I want to take the members, as well, to section 28 of this legislation. It was recognized last year during the debates – and it was in fact during the debates on transportation but not restricted to transportation – that you could get into a situation where you could have a nil vote, where you could have to vote on nothing because the credits and the debits equaled each other and as a result there was nothing to vote on. It was suggested by members on both sides of the Legislative Assembly that where that occurred, the tax potential of the estimates should be separated from the spending potential of the estimates so that if a person wanted to vote for the package, they would not be voting for tax increases such as utility taxes and gas taxes and licence fee increases. We thought that when you vote on estimates and the manner in which this government spends money, you should be able to vote on how the government spends money and not have to vote on how the government collects money in the same breath. Now, sensitive, right-thinking Members of this Legislative Assembly on both sides of the House thought that that was right, but you don't. The opportunity to correct that section has come and gone in this legislation and is in fact not corrected.

Mr. Speaker, I have other points of a technical nature to debate, but I sense that I've worn out my welcome with the Legislative Assembly this afternoon, and as a result I'm going to defer those other points to when we deal with the Bill at another stage. Thank you.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 23, the Treasury Statutes Amendment and Repeal Act, 1995. I speak in favour of the Bill. I think what we have to do is review and perhaps pose a number of amendments in the Committee of the Whole, because I know that the Bill can be improved, and I'm sure that the Treasurer would want to improve this Bill and not carry it further unless it had those improvements.

In addition to those comments made by the hon. Member for Fort McMurray, I look to section 28 on page 8, and there are some concerns there. Bill 23 here proposes a subtle narrowing of

the definition for the requirement of disclosure of write-offs, compromises, and remissions under the Financial Administration Act. Currently under section 28 – and they've got them on two page 8s, flip sides – it reads:

The Provincial Treasurer [is required to] prepare a statement of all remissions, compromises and write-offs made or approved under sections 26 and 27 during any fiscal year.

Now, that was then. What Bill 23 now proposes to allow:

The Provincial Treasurer shall prepare a statement of all remissions and compromises made or approved under sections 26 and 27 and any write-offs made or approved during a fiscal year.

So we're going from stating "any fiscal year" to "a fiscal year." That's narrowing it. It's a subtle change, but it's a change nonetheless. The effect of this amendment is to leave the reporting of a particular write-off in the public accounts to the discretion of the Provincial Treasurer and to limit reporting to write-offs that occurred in a given fiscal year.

5:20

Now, while one could argue that this change merely streamlines financial reporting, making it easier for the reader to comprehend, an allowance for loss is already made for accounts receivable when it is determined by management that collectibility may be impaired. The allowance is included as part of the consolidated deficit for the fiscal year when the allowance is made. Any cash payments or recoveries made through the general revenue fund on accounts receivable are already presented in the statements of guarantees and indemnities given by the Crown and provincial corporations in volume 2 of the public accounts.

Providing a write-off in the statement of remission, compromises, and write-offs can often be confusing to the reader and lead to double accounting. Write-offs should be viewed as an accounting mechanism used to recognize that management will no longer attempt to collect a debt obligation. Write-offs do not increase the province's deficit and debt since the liability has already been booked on accrual under the general provision when the loss is deemed to have occurred.

I believe that a detailed list of compromises, write-offs, and remissions by entity should continue to be presented in the financial statements of the province. While we recognize that there may be confusion created between cash payments made through the general revenue fund and later recognition of the uncollectibility of these debts, it is important that the government remain committed to full disclosure rather than reducing the amount of financial disclosure by limiting the reporting of write-offs. I believe that the government should provide more useful information to Albertans on the use of write-offs, remissions, and compromises as an accounting mechanism within its management discussion and analysis documents; i.e., the 1993-94 overview of the consolidated financial statements of Alberta.

Now, I think this Bill is going partway in the right direction. Some of its objectives I think are correct. One of the first objectives is to pursue a commitment to implement the recommendations of the Alberta Financial Review Commission and the Auditor General to eliminate multiplicity of regulated funds with transactions with the general revenue fund, and I think that's a fair objective. A second objective that I see is to repeal a number of legislative statutes which are redundant and no longer in force, and I think that's proper and in the spirit of where the government should be going with legislation. One of the third objectives is to pursue two amendments to the Credit Union Act. Although I've read both of the amendments, the second one apparently is driven by the industry, by the credit unions.

The first amendment is a government initiative, and I just have a question there. Now, it reads, if you'll follow it on page 1:

(4) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations requiring the board of a credit union with assets not exceeding \$500 000 000 to place before its members at least at every 5th annual general meeting a resolution in the prescribed form respecting the disclosure of the remuneration of the credit union's executive managers.

Now, the way I read that and the way I understand that is that if a credit union has over \$500 million in assets, then there's a required disclosure for the remuneration of the executive managers, yet if the amount is less than half a billion, that requirement is no longer there. I'm curious as to why this inequity exists, because one can make the assumption that the managers in those two different branches could be making the same amount, yet one's disclosure would be required and the other's wouldn't. So I have a question as to why that was brought in, why it is a government initiative, and how the government feels about it.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I'll take my place and rise at some later point to speak to the Bill.

I would move to adjourn debate at this point as well.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has moved that we adjourn debate at this time. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oppose, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30 and return again at 8 o'clock tonight for the express purpose of finding ourselves in Committee of Supply.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader has moved that the Assembly do now call it 5:30 and that when we reassemble this evening, we'd be in Committee of Supply. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:27 p.m.]

